

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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The New "Princes" and the Church

Not long ago seminarians asked me whether there were any similarities in the travail of the Church at the time of the Council of Trent and her difficulties following Vatican II. Obviously, no two historical circumstances are ever the same, although history does seem to repeat itself. In the 16th century there were doctrinal denials to be sure. Among the critical questions to which "no" was the answer was the following: Did Christ choose Peter (and thus his successors) to be the head of the Church? The moral problems of that time were also acute, especially the venality of the papal court, the selling of episcopal sees and of indulgences to repay money lenders, and the corruption of religious life, evils against which the Protestant reformers railed with boisterous fury. In our time, the doctrinal issues are much more fundamental: Did Christ establish a Church at all? Is there really any such thing as the gospel of Christ which is true and binding for all ages? Among influential Catholic opinion-moulders the answer to these questions are also "no." From the viewpoint of morality, the Catholic community in recent times has fallen to a new low in its sexual behavior, has abandoned the sacrament of penance almost completely, while clerics and religious defy with abandon the norms set down by the Church for priestly and evangelical life. Here we speak not so much of the human weakness involved, but of the brazen rejection of the Church's right to establish norms of acceptable behavior.

There is one more thread that possibly links the post-Tridentine to the post-Vatican II Church. It is a political thread, if you will, viz., the interference of "princes" in the internal management of the Church. In the 16th century Emperor Charles V, King Phillip II, Henry VIII, and more than a few French and German petty princes, intervened in Church affairs to satisfy their private wishes or to protect some vested interest, sometimes to prevent Church reform, sometimes to protect heretics. For the sake of his empire Charles V worked deals with the Lutherans. Luther himself achieved power because he was protected by German princes who lusted after Church properties. More than one pope feared to offend Luther's protectors. The Emperor, for example, sought a Council to reform the worst abuses, but not one which defined doctrine. Although he was overridden in this case by Paul III, Rome followed the path of expediency in dealing with 16th century princes for fear of multiple schisms. Such papal expedience only confirmed the power of the princes over the religious life and the churches of their constituencies, leaving the Church vulnerable to unnecessary compromises and ultimately to the division of Europe into religious satrapies based on the religious preference of the local prince (Treaty of Westphalia, 1648). Northern Germany, Scandinavia, and England were lost to the Church. Spain and Middle Europe had their Catholicism determined more by Philip II and his successors than by popes. Good priests (Canisius and the Jesuits) saved Southern Germany, while Poland's escape from Lutheranism was due to Jesuits again and to the stalwart episcopacy of Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius.

The indirect result during those years of ambivalence in Church leadership was the isolation of the Church from

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS ISSUE?

On Dr. Ratner

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His Eminence John Cardinal Wright stated the following about Dr. Herbert Ratner:
"Dr. Ratner is the Number One Pro-Life physician in the United States." (1972)

Cardinal Ratzinger on Faith

p. 5

"Faith is threatened with destruction every time science sets itself up as an absolute."

On Church Unity

p. 8

"Be united again in your belief and practice." (1 Cor. 1, 10)

"They remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles." (Acts 2, 42)

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political influence and the rise of the secular state.

We no longer have a Henry VIII with power to behead a bishop for fidelity to Rome. And Rome, not the Philip II's, names the Church's bishops today. Indeed, we do not have kings any more, at least any who are really monarchs.

But we do have "princes" in the Church who are not Cardinals. They are the modern academics and media men who claim jurisdiction over whatever part of the Church they control, usually a college or a classroom, a printing press, a microphone or a camera. Like princes of old, they claim a "divine right," this time of academic freedom, to interfere with the right of the pope to teach the faithful, to challenge his authority to determine the content of Catholic creeds, or to set moral norms or to supervise religious institutions and religious orders or to condemn heresy and semi-heresy, and so forth.

Although the word "prince" comes from the Latin "princeps" which means "chief," and derives from another word meaning "first," all princes are usually nothing more than "little chiefs" and in any kingdom are never first. But they do have pride, they do wield unusual power, and within the Church they often cause trouble for the popes of any era, when they no longer know their place or cease being virtuous, or lose their faith.

The problems of princes are the same everywhere, and we should be guided by the lessons of the Tridentine Era. John Paul II obviously is more like Paul III and Paul IV, than like Leo X, who had to be pushed to face up to the significance of what Martin Luther was all about. Paul III, Leo's successor twice removed, called a Council in 1536 for Mantua, but it never got off the ground because only five bishops showed up. As historian Philip Hughes describes it: "The pope, apparently, stood alone in his zeal to reform the Church." Nine years were to pass before Paul III finally got his Council, this time at Trent (1545). Still eighteen more years were needed to conclude its deliberations. During all this time royal princes everywhere helped damage the Church and the faith it represented.

Twenty years after Vatican II are by the standards of history hardly an inopportune time to evaluate Vatican II. But John Paul II has his work cut out for him. Like St. Pius V (1566-1572) to whom it fell to enforce obedience to the decrees of Trent. Like those Tridentine popes, John Paul faces a host of new "princes," this time from the academe and the media. These latter cannot cut off a head, but they have the power to bruise and batter any bishop who dares implement Vatican II as the New Code of Canon Law would have its decrees enforced.

Only time and the collegiality of determined bishops with a determined pope will make Vatican II the success that Trent became. A few new religious institutes and a dozen saints *à la* the Trent Era would not be bad either.

— George A. Kelly

Did the Bishops Get a Hearing?

Reporters these days are interested in the opinions of bishops. When the NCCB last June invited the media to its summer meeting at Collegeville, Minnesota, nearly everyone came, correspondents from major secular newspapers as well as the Catholic press. Some were old hands who had covered previous NCCB meetings; others, like me, were able for the first time to observe the deliberations of the U.S. Catholic bishops assembled. Most listened to the slow-paced proceedings with attention, and reported them with decent accuracy. Did they hear correctly what the bishops were saying?

Archbishop Rembert Weakland is the chairman of the committee writing a pastoral letter on *Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*. His progress report, and episcopal discussion of the first draft, were the major business of the conference. In his introductory address, he indicated that, except for complaints about length, preliminary reaction had been positive. "You have given us the assurance that we are on the right track," he said.

His summary of comments already received did not seem to support his claim, however. Many re-

spondents had warned that specific prescriptions for public policy fell "outside the role of bishops." The Archbishop admitted that "there are risks involved," but said his committee nevertheless decided to provide "descriptions of what policies should contain," because "our people... are not accustomed to (the) deductive reasoning processes" required to move "from principle to action." They often "ignore principle and seek pragmatic solutions," he said. The committee's careful efforts to "nuance these conclusions" were not always "rightly understood."

Criticism tended to fall "along political lines," according to Archbishop Weakland. While conceding that "government has not always been the best provider of social services," he declared that "one cannot exclude government initiative... It is not contrary to Catholic social teaching to ascribe such a positive role to government." Champions of private sector solutions, he said, must show that such approaches provide the best application of social justice principles.

The Archbishop asked the bishops to focus discussion on "specificity," as well as other questions arising in early criticisms: "linkage" to the 1983 pas-

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toral on nuclear arms, and effective ways to implement the current letter. His own recommendations, in view of the problem of length, was that a later document address "linkage." Implementation "in the realm of the political" is a task suited to "the competence of our lay people," he said. To prepare them, he proposed continued NCCB/USCC research on a host of topics: economic influences on the family, women in the work force, the "feminization of poverty," banking, money, taxation, militarization and the role of government.

In groups of eight, the participating bishops conferred at round tables, their discussions inaudible to press and spectators. When their spokesmen reported, the majority echoed the advance criticisms. Of the thirty-two groups, fourteen said the pastoral should speak for them as moral teachers, refrain from prescribing solutions, and avoid even an appearance of political partisanship. Twelve said the letter should explicitly acknowledge the achievements of the free enterprise system and the generosity of the middle class.

Among the most outspoken were Bishop William Houck (Jackson MS), Bishop Elden Curtiss (Helena MT) and Auxiliary Bishop Alfred Hughes (Boston). Bishop Houck asked for a definition of poverty. Poverty is discussed "six or seven times, so you must have had a working definition," he said. "What was it?"

Bishop Curtiss asked for documentation for the "offensive" charge that unequal distribution of American wealth "violates the minimum standard of distributive justice," and is "among the greatest in the Western industrialized world." Bishop Curtiss asked, "On what scale?"

Archbishop Weakland entered into direct exchange only when Bishop Hughes complained that the draft seems to imply that "secular self-realization" is the purpose of the economic order, instead of addressing the relationship between the economic order and man's eternal destiny. He asked that a link be made between economic injustice and the capital sins of "greed, envy and sloth," as an "appropriate contribution from bishops" to the debate on economic justice.

The Archbishop replied that his committee "didn't want to moralize" or "put people on guilt trips," so they avoided mention of capital sins. Bishop Hughes responded that "a spiritual point of view" need not be judgmental.

A distinct minority — six group spokesmen and a few individual bishops — asked for stronger language. Bishop Frank Rodimer (Paterson NJ) said the draft "is not shocking enough." Bishop Michael Kenney (Juneau) was disappointed that it failed to point out "the inherent weaknesses of capitalism."

During one pause in the sessions, a veteran newsman gave me some enlightening interpretive insights. "The language at these meetings is always so diplomatic that at first it's hard to know what it means. It's the kind that let's someone tell you to go to hell in a way that makes you look forward to the trip. Anything negative, any criticism, is very very significant. The response here has been very strongly negative to the policy parts of the letter."

After three sessions, Archbishop Weakland summed up the discussion as he heard it. Clearly, the bishops see themselves as moral teachers, he said, not as teachers of economics. They want the pastoral to speak specifically on problems and principles, but to keep any policy recommendations "carefully articulated, well-founded and defensible." So his committee will try "to restrict its conclusions to moral matters."

In some cases, though, he said, it will be necessary "to spell things out." Some specificity is required to "help shape the way society sees economic issues." For example, the letter "will state that the bishops seek full employment on moral grounds." And specificity cannot be avoided when discussing the effects of plant closings. When discussing poverty, it must be specific about "racism and the feminization of poverty." Then, too, effective implementation will require that State Catholic conferences be involved in seeking desirable legislation, he said.

It would be difficult to cite the achievements of capitalism, Archbishop Weakland said, because it would also be necessary "to deal with its costs"; too much of that sort of thing "would make the document lose its pastoral character and take on a theoretical cast."

When the Archbishop thanked all those who had provided comments, he did not sound like a man who had heard strong negative criticism. He did promise to take all remarks into account when writing the second draft.

— Donna Steichen

Item of Interest

- Two recent articles by Fr. Leo Elders on Holland appear in *The Canadian Catholic Review*. This magazine, which is about two years old, is doing the work that the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars is doing. The editor is Rev. Daniel D. Callam, C.S.B. The address is: 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W6 Canada.

Herbert Ratner, Philosopher-Physician, Receives Wright Award

Dr. Herbert Ratner of Oak Park, IL, became the seventh recipient of the Cardinal Wright Award for outstanding service to the Church on September 29 in Chicago.

A surprise guest at the award meeting sponsored by the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, was Carl Anderson, special assistant to President Reagan, who read a message of congratulation from the President.

"Your work for the well-being of America's families and the strengthening of our moral values," said President Reagan's letter, "has contributed greatly to the lives of so many of our fellow citizens... Your example gives us all confidence that our nation has a very bright future indeed."

Bishop Edward Egan, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar of Education for the Archdiocese of New York presented the award. He praised Dr. Ratner's outstanding work for the family in his quarterly journal, *Child and Family*, in his support of the Magisterium, in his contribution to La Leche League and to medical education, and his long-term involvement in national and international prolife activity.

Responding to the award presentation, Dr. Ratner talked on "Nature: Mother, Teacher, and Vicar General," stressing that Nature always reinforces traditional morality and family values and penalizes deviant behavior. Of the folly of unnatural sex practices, he said: "As the anonymous saying goes, 'God always forgives, man sometimes forgives, Nature never forgives.' The Canadian philosopher, Donald DeMarco, makes it contemporary when he says, 'Nature is the home team, and the home team bats last.' It must be added that *this* home team never loses, because Nature calls the strikes. Nature, the inexorable vicar-general, confronted by widespread homosexual activities, retaliates with a new disease, the highly lethal Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, with rectal cancer, and with an array of opportunistic infections."

Disregard for Nature as our teacher, Dr. Ratner said, is widespread in the prescriptive practice of medicine, including the prescription of birth-control pills. These drugs, he said, "are powerful synthetic chemicals which baffle the protective physiological processes of the body. Consequently, the prescription pad has become a lethal weapon."

Turning to current erroneous attitudes about marriage and the family, Dr. Ratner asserted that "Today's prime threat to Western democracies is not from without but from within—not from the nuclear bomb but from our failure to recognize, accept, and implement the great universal teaching of *Humanae*

Vitae concerning the two inseparable meanings of the conjugal act—the unitive and the procreative. Experience teaches that neither the unitive meaning nor the procreative can make it on its own. Human procreation means not simply the generation of a new born but the generation of a mature, emotionally stable adult who is capable of taking his or her place in a functioning society. Thus, in marriage the unitive aspect is the handmaiden of the procreative. This relationship is so basic to the health of a society that its disruption or absence can lead only to catastrophe."

On feminism, Dr. Ratner said, "Feminists, sadly, have been possessed by and have espoused the concept of unisex, as if by the wave of a wand, Nature's great artistry, which has given us two distinct sexes, can be dissolved. The issue is not equality, for sexes have equality as persons—the issue is equivalency. I say with all the earnestness of which I am capable: Achieving equality with the male would be a demotion of womanhood!"

The award ceremony, in Chicago's Hotel Continental, was attended by a capacity audience. Father Earl Weis, S.J., of Loyola University, described the aims of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, of which he is president. Father Stephen Almagno, O.F.M., of Pittsburgh, who was scheduled to describe his work as literary executor of Cardinal Wright's estate, was prevented by illness. In his place, chairman John Farrell displayed the first three books of Cardinal Wright's sermons and papers brought out recently by Ignatius Press.

Items of Interest

- Philip Lawler has gone to the Extraordinary Synod in Rome to listen and to report. He expects to write a book about the proceedings upon his return. Doubleday and Company is also interested in doing such a book. They have contracted with Peter Hebblethwaite to provide such a report.
- Msgr. Eugene Kevane has a valuable article entitled "Toward Research in Fundamental Catechetics." Published in *Angelicum*, Vol. 62, 1985, Fasc. 3.
- Fellowship member Stephen Porcelli is the editor of a new publication entitled *Ancient Man: Information Exchange*, dealing with interdisciplinary studies of primitive peoples and their artifacts. This first issue deals with early monotheism, ancient tools, culture, practices, and pre-historic mammoths. Write him: 8171 Willowdale Court, Springfield, VA 22153-3623.

Concerning Catholic Higher Education

The *Congregation for Catholic Education* presently is receiving reactions to its "proposed schema (draft) for a pontifical document on Catholic Universities." The purpose of this consultation with bishops and institutions of learning throughout the world is to help regularize the meaning and administration of Universities which identify themselves as Catholic. Little in Cardinal Baum's proposed schema on Catholic Universities should surprise those who take for granted that institutions normally are defined by the purposes which alone explain their existence. Those who place Catholic Universities within the Church are not likely to object seriously to the provisions of this schema. Prior to the Land O'Lakes' Declaration of Independence of Catholic Universities (1967) from the proper authorities of the community which gave them birth, the definitions and norms contained in this schema were taken for granted.

In former days a Catholic University was presumed

- To be Catholic and a Christian witness in the field of higher education.

- To exist within the Church and, among other things, was established to study and disseminate the truths taught by the Catholic Church and the relation of those truths to other areas of knowledge.

- To deepen people's faith and to spread the Church's message as part of the Church's evangelizing mission.

- And, although the university members had the primary obligation to protect its Catholic character, the ultimate guarantor of Catholicity was the magisterium and those Church officers who were its guarantors.

Prior to 1967 the religious community (occasionally a diocese) which established and administered Catholic universities (mostly colleges) accepted these as the rules of their Catholic profession. These institutions recognized, too, the radical difference between their institutions and secular universities. In addition to the dissemination of scientific truth they were committed to the truths revealed through Jesus Christ. These truths were found in Christ's Church, were not the private possession of a faculty, nor were they discovered by empirical procedures. The final responsibility for disseminating these truths, those which fashioned the specifically Catholic nature of those institutions, was the Church's magisterium, not the faculty. Assent to magisterium was assent to Christ Himself. Only irreligious or anti-religious observers denied the significant difference between secular and religious subjects, between religion as human experience and religion as the revealed word of God. Until 1970 the *American Association of University Professors* recognized that academic facul-

ties in colleges and universities, owned and operated by religious bodies, had orientations different from institutions with no religious commitment.

Following Vatican II most Catholic colleges and universities, especially those affiliated with the *National Catholic Education Association*, chose to be independent of the institutional Church and effectively from Church authority. The religious communities which originally sponsored those colleges divested themselves overnight of Church ownership, ceding this to so-called lay boards of trustees. Early intentions aside, it soon became commonplace for "owners" of one-time Catholic colleges to consider themselves free from the "interference" of Catholic authorities. Only the civil authority incorporating the institution and the accrediting professional associations are recognized as having binding authority over the college. Freed from juridical responsibility to the Church, the Catholic witness remained only that which individuals or groups of individuals chose to institutionalize. In so doing Catholic higher education followed a pattern of alienation first set by 19th century Protestant divines, whose well known Protestant foundations at places like Harvard and Yale became secular in purpose, neutral in theory about the Christian religion, but in practice often hostile, if divine claims were made for it. Historians of the future will trace the many factors which contributed to this secularization of once religious colleges, not the least of which were overexpansion and professionalization. But apart from the particular circumstances explaining the process of de-Christianization, the Catholic Church of its nature must respond to this development.

Catholic alienation, however, is more complicated because of the special claims of the Catholic Church. Vatican II declared that "The Church is by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth." (*Dignitatis Humanae*, No. 14). Those who only recently reconstructed Catholic colleges as "private," rather than be Church-sponsored or Church-supervised, still wish to retain their link with what they call "Catholic tradition." But they deny responsibility to look upon the truths of the faith as true. They go further to assert their right to reject Church teaching and to encourage such rejection in students whose parents expect a fully Catholic education for the sons and daughters. The educators in question appeal to the need for government funds if only to survive, for approval from secular accrediting or professional associations as a way to gain respect and to the American experience for acceptability from today's young people. They also allege the necessity of wide latitude in research and writing, if the Church is to communicate effectively with opinion-moulders in our time. Implicit in this demand is a

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claim hostile to Catholic faith: Duties formerly judged to flow from Catholic faith are deemed now to be arbitrary external impositions on human freedom.

This proposed schema, properly understood, is an effort by the Holy See to situate the Catholic system of higher education within the Church. Not only is the exercise a proper use of authority by those charged with responsibility for the Church, but one would think the effort would be appreciated by those institutions which consider themselves Catholic or which promote themselves as Catholic. The Church cannot be a house divided against itself or a society with undefined or conflicting centers of authority.

Pius XII once told warring leaders of the world why it was necessary for society, any society, be it State or Church, to live under law. His 1942 Christmas message said the following:

"That social life, such as God willed it, may attain its goal, it needs a legal order to support it from without, to defend and protect it. The function of this juridical order is not to dominate but to serve, to help the development and increase of society's vitality in the rich multiplicity of its aims, leading all the individual energies to their perfection in peaceful competition, and defending them with appropriate and fair means against all that may militate against their full development. Such an order, that it may assure the equilibrium, the safety and the harmony of society, has also the power of coercion against those who only by this means can be held within the noble discipline of social life."

Within this world view, the present schema, properly understood, transcends both private ideologies and private vested interests. No attempt is being made to defraud the Catholic university/college system of its proper freedom of expression and teaching. Perhaps, the document could outline more fully, and in better language, the Church's awareness of how important due freedom in Catholic higher education is and to indicate how these liberties can be fitfully exercised in a truly Catholic institution. Two freedoms are involved here — professors' academic freedom to study and teach, and the Church's right to have the Catholic message taught authentically, to protect herself from heretical or semi-heretical teaching under Catholic auspices.

Freedom proper to the true university should, of course, be safe-guarded and responsible faculties are its proper guardians. But faculties can be irresponsible, just as higher authority can abuse its supervising role. For this reason rules are normally enacted to protect both faculty and supervising authority from excesses. But these are not the only polarized positions. Funding authorities, accrediting

agencies, and teachers associations, too, have abused their power, perhaps more often than bishops who attempt to impose personal views on institutions under their jurisdiction. Freedom is also abused when partisan ideologues restrictively dominate both college and university. Every institution of higher learning has its special coloration, be it secular, fundamentalist, black, Protestant, Jewish or Catholic. Some orientation is a normative reality, one which controls every college, especially its choice of faculty and kind of education given to students. The name "Catholic" (or any other name) presumes certain institutional affirmations, those which simultaneously exclude the legitimacy of contradictory corporate assertions. Denials of the Catholic faith should be unacceptable in Catholic colleges. The fact that the Church's supervising authority — or any other outside agency — may act improperly ought never be a legitimate reason to liberate Catholic colleges from their Catholicity.

A Catholic University is a corporate body of higher education with a soul, a teacher with a religious faith, a place where academic officers join with Church leaders in the search for proper ways to use their respective freedoms toward a desirable Catholic end — the formation of a student's mind and spirit in the wisdom necessary for life here and hereafter. In the well-ordered Catholic University absolute freedom flows no more from its civil charter than from its Catholic faith. Neither is absolute authority so granted. During Her longer life the Church has developed a wide variety of pieties and theologies which find their place on the Catholic campus. But these pluralities must always coalesce in one faith, under one Lord and one Vicar, a unity which requires that Catholic communities, whatever their variations, agree with each other about those things which God has revealed through Jesus Christ and his Church.

Since Vatican II the Catholic academe, in the U.S. at least, has demanded the right of self-expression without episcopal overview (*episcopé*). This autonomy has become a fact of life in one diocese after another, but is outside the normal intent of Catholic law. Those who claim this right, even of public dissent against Church teachings, have managed to escape criticism from U.S. bishops. Rome, however, has regularly objected to the present distance between Catholic higher education and Church authority. While the Church wishes scholarship to flourish and has established procedures for dealing with new theories and those who propose them, Vatican II did not grant to anyone, nor does the New Code of Canon Law, the right of public dissent against the Church's authentic teaching. Indeed, Catholic administrators/theologians who make these choices set themselves up as

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a rival "church" within the Church, a situation whose possibility was considered by John Henry Newman a century ago. In the Cardinal's *Idea of a University* (Discourse IX, No. 1), we read his concern about the identity of the Catholic University. He argued that "a direct and active jurisdiction over it and in it is necessary lest it should become the rival of the Church with the community at large in those theological matters to which the Church are exclusively committed." Protestant churches, as a matter of principle, often tolerated contradictory theologies emanating from official sources. But the Catholic Church in its faith, "one fold, one shepherd," could not be a house of God divided against itself, with two or more contradictory creeds, each laying claim to truth, nor a congregation of opposing beliefs, worships, and codes. This would make Her an unlikely Body of Christ for whose oneness the Lord prayed the night before he died. *Lumen Gentium* No. 25 affirms the obligation to assent to the ordinary non-infallible teaching of the Roman Pontiff. In 1974 Paul VI went to great lengths to condemn any pluralism which contradicted important Church doctrines and which dissolved the sacramental unity of the Church (*Paterna Cum Benevolentia*). The Holy See had in mind here the many doctrines which have been challenged in Catholic classrooms since 1965 — concerning Creation, Jesus' divinity and resurrection, Mary's virginity, Christ's establishment of the Church and the sacraments, papal infallibility, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, moral absolutes of any kind, even eternal life. What is involved, of course, is the objective truth of the Christian message. No Catholic has a right to reject teachings of the Church because they oppose his personal philosophy or the mind-set of an opposing secular culture. Nor can the Church sponsor within Her own institutions indoctrination of her young in positions contrary to the faith, especially when those colleges have been set up to study within an atmosphere of and to pursue knowledge within this framework.

Dissenting scholars insist on freedom of research, but the issue really is the indoctrination of undergraduate students against received Catholic positions without the Church position ever being presented in its integrity. Required courses, required first so that Catholic students would come to know and be convinced of their faith, are often taught by professors who no longer believe the Catholic faith as the Church receives and teaches it.

Contemporary dissenters argue that never before were Catholic colleges so regulated, but they fail to add that local superiors of college presidents or the presidents themselves corrected anyone inclined to dilute the Catholic faith or scandalize the faithful. Dissenters further allege that the present Roman course is really anti-American because the Church in the

United States alone conducts a vast complex of higher education institutes. The scope of the American Catholic post-high school education enterprise is impressive, a tribute to the initiative of U.S. Religious Orders, which seized the opportunities offered by a dynamic American culture when that culture began to emphasize higher education as a necessary goal for Americans qualified to attain academic degrees. All the more reason, then, for the Church to safeguard the faith of collegians and graduate students, especially since higher education is now the only component of general Catholic education in the United States which continues to expand, from which the future leadership of the Church will derive, if it is to have leadership at all. The Church cannot afford to jeopardize its own future by permitting Catholic academics to continue on their present anti-Church course.

The *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* summarized its position in February, 1980 and reaffirms this earlier position today:

"The *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, recognizes that institutions which function in two worlds or with two loyalties, not excluding a university, by the nature of its affiliations undergoes strain. Wherever two or three people gather together, in a single community, so that individual rights, personalities, differences are competing values, there is tension. However, principle must determine the general policy of every institution, and a university's guiding principle ought to be the reason for its existence (*finis operis*). The Catholic college or university, for example, owes its being to the intent of its founders, sponsors, or owners to communicate the truth. While it wishes to communicate every kind of truth, it has a primary concern with communicating the truth it has received from Jesus Christ and to reflect on all other truth in the light of that revelation. A Catholic institution of learning, therefore, if it is Catholic in reality and not just in name, begins with a mission based on Christ's gospel mandate and growing out of Christ's Church, whose hierarchy is the divinely appointed guardian of His revelation. If a Catholic college cannot accept this conception, it ought not claim the name Catholic, nor should the Church permit it to make this claim. In order that this commitment to the Catholic faith be maintained some sacrifice of support or approval may be necessary. The founders of most prominent Catholic colleges endured similar difficulties. Catholic institutions today can enjoy a wide body of support, including government money, precisely because they are open and direct in maintaining their identity as private and

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Suggestions for Reorienting American Catholicism

By Professor James Hitchcock

[Author's Preface: *Lumen Gentium* in its very last paragraph of Chapter I says this about the Church:

"The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,' announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). But by the power of the risen Lord she is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, her sorrows and her difficulties, in both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that she may reveal in the world, faithfully, however darkly, the mystery of her Lord until, in the consummation, it shall be manifested in full light."

Faithful Catholics believe this to be true absolutely. But, while praying as if everything depends on the Holy Spirit, they also know they must act on their own initiative to make disciples of all nations. The Lord may have chosen the weak and less wise to confound the world, but he did not design them to be inefficient or to distort his gospel or to encourage his disciples to follow mammon rather than the Heavenly Father.

With this as the understanding the following commentary is intended to serve positive thinking about how to deal humanly speaking with her present "sorrows and her difficulties."]

Any analysis of the present situation of American Catholicism has to begin with the fact that, by and large, most of the official machinery of the Church is in the hands of people who actively or passively support dissent. While certain teachings are undermined more vigorously than others, there are in fact few if any doctrines of the Church which can be considered so secure that they are immune from question or attack.

In reality, dissenting positions, especially on issues which have become publicly controversial, have almost become the new orthodoxy (birth control is the best example). Even where those in positions of authority in the Church do not themselves dissent from these teachings, they are prepared to be almost endlessly tolerant of those who do. In most situations the tendency of those in authority is to tip the scales in such a way as to benefit those who dissent. At a minimum the behavior of those in authority helps to establish an aura of ambiguity and uncertainty about official teachings, so that dissent is at least seen as a legitimate "option" among others. In order to triumph, dissenters need only establish in the public mind the idea that Catholic teaching is in an endless state of flux, not necessarily that their position is the correct one. This they have done quite effectively, because of the passive support of those in authority.

Ironically, even as dissent has achieved a somewhat privileged position in American Catholicism, outspoken orthodoxy has been relegated to an inferior position. It is no exaggeration to say that the most outspoken defenders of orthodoxy are often treated as semi-pariahs, precisely the status which dissenters ought to occupy.

This thesis could be proved with numerous specific examples. If its essential correctness is accepted, it follows that strategies to be used to reinvigorate orthodox Catholicism in the United States must be radical strategies. At a minimum, any strategy which is effective will be perceived as radical and

will be publicly branded as such. Any attempt to reverse the present situation slowly and by small degrees will fail - the power which dissenters have is such that they can smother small efforts. (For example, appointing one orthodox professor to a seminary faculty might even be counterproductive if he is the only unambiguously orthodox man there.)

Any serious effort to reorient American Catholicism must simply assume the likelihood of bad publicity, even of an intense, prolonged, and vicious kind. Dissenters have long-standing and close working relations with the secular media and for a variety of reasons the media are hostile to authentic religious values. At a minimum, the media are simply interested in controversy for its own sake, and thus give almost endless attention to dissenters.

This fact argues the need for swift and radical action on the part of Church leaders. Once it becomes apparent that such leaders are prepared to act boldly and decisively, and will not let themselves be deflected, much of the hostility will become impotent. The worst situation would be one in which a series of modest steps in an orthodox direction are subjected to withering criticism in the media and this criticism seems to have effect. Any sign of indecisiveness or timidity on the part of Church leaders will be seized upon and will encourage further attacks. (That these attacks have been effective in the past is a major cause of the present disarray.)

The general mood of the country is perhaps now receptive to a kind of Counter-Reformation in a way in which it was not ten years ago. The Reagan example is instructive, whatever one might think of his specific policies. He had espoused a program which is perceived by many as having radical implications. He faces mass media, firmly entrenched bureaucrats, and an academic establishment all of which are overwhelmingly unsympathetic. Yet, as he has demonstrated his determination to stick to his program, and the program itself has attracted public support, this

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hostility has been rendered either impotent or quiescent to a considerable extent.

Put another way, nothing succeeds like success. Overwhelming hostility in the public arena cannot persist against persons or programs who are recognized as achieving their goals. Much of the hostility against the Church in the United States stems from the long-held perception that the Catholic leadership itself has been confused and demoralized.

Opinion polls seem to show that a majority of American Catholics dissent from, or at least doubt, important Church teachings, especially in the area of sexual morality. However, the fact of a "conservative" religious revival, and an accompanying search for religious certainties, is also well known. Liberal Christianity is obviously on the wane, and much of the certainty which used to characterize Roman Catholicism seems to have passed to the Evangelicals and Fundamentalists. A major movement to reaffirm the truth of Catholic teaching, done in such a way as to show that the leadership of the Church is serious, might have the effect of galvanizing long-dormant Catholic loyalties. The atmosphere is not likely to be more propitious in the future than it is right now.

Hierarchy

Obviously the behavior of bishops is crucial to every other part of the process. It is imperative that bishops, including those highly placed, speak out boldly and constantly on issues which involve Catholic doctrine, especially where this doctrine is publicly disputed.

As this goes on, it is obviously essential also that bishops be appointed who can be counted on to speak boldly and act decisively on behalf of orthodoxy. If necessary, appointments should reach outside the ordinary channels to find priests, some of whom perhaps are not well recognized, who will act in such a way. It is likely that many of those who might be said to be currently in the "episcopal pipeline" have been placed there precisely because they possess the qualities of accommodation, tolerance of endless ambiguity, permissiveness, and other things which have brought about the present crisis.

The system of episcopal courtesy — by which bishops are reluctant to criticize, or even disagree with, each other publicly — has not served the Church well in recent years. For one thing, those bishops sympathetic to dissent have not hesitated to violate that courtesy from time to time. For another, if some bishops mislead the faithful and other bishops do nothing to correct these impressions, dissent is thereby reinforced.

It can be assumed that, for a period of years, perhaps a majority of the American hierarchy will be unsympathetic to any bold strategy of reaffirming or-

thodoxy. So long as this is the case, it is important that other bishops indicate, either implicitly or otherwise, the inadequacies of the majority position.

Priests

Much of what is said about bishops applies also to priests. However, there are certain matters which are unique to the priesthood as such.

Proper formation is obviously essential, and at present it is likely that a majority of seminarians in the United States are not getting this formation. In addition, there are empirical reasons for believing that, where strong and orthodox seminaries exist, they attract students. Thus proper formation would go a long way towards easing the vocation crisis.

In many cases, the malaise of the clergy is traceable to weak episcopal leadership, or to leadership which is actually supportive of dissent. The essence of the priestly crisis is a deep uncertainty, often coupled with resentment, about what the priest is supposed to be. If strong and inspiring bishops articulated such a purpose, the priestly crisis would gradually dissipate.

Bishops must act decisively in situations where there is open or covert priestly rebellion, as it touches matters of doctrine and discipline. Although such confrontations may be painful at the time, in the long run they can be like successful radical surgery.

On this point and others it is essential that a number of bishops act in consort. The strength of the dissenting position has been such that the occasional bishop who does take a strong stand on a particular issue has been left isolated by his fellow bishops. It has thus been possible to paint that bishop as a marginal case who does not represent the Church's authentic self-understanding.

Much of the dissenters' strength also derives from their sense that the future belongs to them. Many are convinced, for example, that women will be ordained, or celibacy will be made optional, if only they step up the pressure sufficiently. If it is made clear that this is not the case, dissent will lose much of its credibility and will itself become quiescent and demoralized.

With regard to priests and others who support dissent, it is desirable that bishops take appropriate disciplinary measures. Where this is impossible or is genuinely unwise, it is at a minimum essential that bishops publicly contradict dissenters. If, for example, a particular priest is known to mislead his parishioners about certain things, it would be startling but salutary if the bishop appeared in the pulpit of that parish and gave the people correct instruction. Since the media love controversy, they would give attention to a bishop willing publicly to contradict those, including some of his own priests, who teach dissent.

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Religious

Much of what has been said about priests, is also of course applicable to religious.

In particular, bishops should be willing to contradict dissenting religious publicly when appropriate.

With regard to both priests and religious, it is strange but true that bishops often not only fail to oppose dissenters, they also fail to offer support to orthodox priest and religious, a fact which is noticed by many of the laity and which has devastating consequences.

Bishops should be more willing to exercise their authority to require religious communities to leave their dioceses. The threat of doing so may sometimes bring about needed changes. However, a few well-publicized cases of actual expulsion would probably have a significant effect on other religious.

Bishops should try to get to know the religious communities of their dioceses from the inside. Often highly publicized radical leaders of these communities do not by any means speak for all their members. By getting to know loyal and orthodox religious, and encouraging their activities, the bishops may be able even to effect a change within apparently disloyal communities. At a minimum they can undercut the credibility of the radical leadership, if orthodox religious are brought into prominence.

Bureaucrats

By this is meant all those who hold specialized offices in the church — in chanceries, education, liturgy, etc. Many are priests or religious, but many also are laymen.

There is a widespread impression that, where bishops are not actively sympathetic to dissent, they have allowed themselves to be intimidated by professionals who claim superior knowledge to that of the bishops and have in effect achieved autonomy in their particular specializations. Nowhere is official Church teaching more effectively undermined than by the Church's own bureaucrats.

Every bishop should make it a major part of his responsibility to scrutinize very carefully the activities of his various officers. He should routinely read the memos, position papers, etc., generated by such officers. Matters of complaint brought to his attention should be investigated carefully. If the bishop feels uncertain about his own knowledge of a particular area, he should seek advisors (if necessary outside his diocese) who can inform him adequately (for example, as to the true orientation of a particular expert who is being brought in to speak to the diocesan religion teachers).

Bishops must firmly assert their authority over their bureaucrats. A few incidents where unacceptable bureaucratic action was rebuked or overruled

would suffice to cause the bishop to be taken seriously. There will perhaps be threats of resignation, claims of professional independence, etc. If anything, threats of resignation should be taken at face value, and the opportunity used to hire new personnel who understand what is expected of them.

Concerted action in this regard by a number of bishops would soon establish in the bureaucrats' mind the fact that their power is once again being firmly subordinated to that of the hierarchy. Eventually they would learn to accommodate themselves to that situation.

A bishop should not content himself with merely opposing particular things. If such things happen with some frequency in his diocese, he must conclude that those in positions of authority lack proper understanding and should be replaced.

Whether or not they are replaced, the bishop should bring in reliable professionals in particular fields for protracted conferences (in which the bishop participates) which aim to generate a positive program for the diocese (e.g., in catechetics), which local bureaucrats would then be expected to implement properly.

With a little effort (mainly by contacting known orthodox professionals in a particular field) it is possible to identify solid professionals available for jobs in particular areas. There needs to develop an orthodox "network" comparable to the dissenters' network which has existed for years.

Laity

The greatest service the bishops could give to the orthodox laity would be to encourage them in every way possible. At present episcopal policy in many places seems to be almost the reverse.

Some orthodox laity, and some conservative lay organizations, are imprudent or strident in tone. This in turn, however, can usually be traced to the extreme frustration they experience at being almost totally shut out of the machinery of the Church in America, even as they see dissenters flourishing. Episcopal support and guidance could have a necessary moderating effect on many of these people.

However, at present outspokenly orthodox laity are perceived almost as cranks. Many other orthodox laity thus slide into a troubled silence. If bishops publicly supported and encouraged orthodox lay activities, many more lay people would be emboldened to become active and vocal.

Dissenters

The problems of dissent run through this entire analysis. However, dissenters are also an identifiable group, and they are likely to be those who claim special expertise. They also tend to have almost unli-

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mitted access to the mass media.

Dissenters who are priests or religious can be dealt with by proper authority. All dissenters, however, whether or not they incur disciplinary measures, can be de-authorized by the hierarchy. This means that bishops are in a position effectively to prevent dissenters from operating in such a way as to imply that their positions are acceptable to the Church.

This can be done in a number of ways: (1) By insuring that they are never allowed to speak under official or semi-official auspices. (2) By publicly contradicting them. Dissent thrives on deliberately induced confusion among the laity. If the dissenter were made to appear as exactly that — a dissenter not merely as someone ahead of his time — much of his influence would be eliminated.

Bishops should be systematically vigilant for ways in which dissenters now make use of official forums of various kinds, and should systematically shut off those possibilities.

Professional Organizations

The majority of Catholic professional organizations are presently in the hands of those who passively or actively dissent from official teaching. Bishops have no direct control over most such organizations.

However, if a group of important bishops met privately with the leaders of a particular organization, in order to express dissatisfaction about its official publications, the agenda of its meetings, etc., the likelihood is that such an organization would change its ways.

Where this is not possible, and where it looks as though a particular organization is determined to persist in its dissenting ways, individual bishops (again acting in consort) should simply forbid their own staff members — canon lawyers, journalists, religious educators, etc. — to belong to the organization in question. Before long such a policy, if widely followed, would have effect.

Seminaries

There is a general impression that most seminaries are rather far gone in their departure from authentic priestly formation or theological education.

The closing of many seminaries, and the decline in religious vocations, presents bishops with an opportunity to consolidate seminary education in such a way as to eliminate those institutions which do not function properly.

The bishops should consider the closing of all but a handful of seminaries in the United States, and choose for survival those which seem to be the most solid in their present condition. Seminarians from all over should be sent to the latter. In addition, a concerted effort should be made to find good faculty to

staff those institutions, not simply relying on whoever might be available in a given diocese. Faculty should in a sense be thought of as national resources, like the seminaries themselves.

If, as seems likely, the improvement of the seminaries results in increased vocations, new seminaries can once again be established, taking care to form them properly from the ground up.

Colleges and Universities

Bishops have little direct control over Catholic colleges and universities. Certain actions are open to them, however.

Above all, they should take seriously their responsibilities for theological education as outlined in the new Code of Canon Law. This might, in some cases, result in direct confrontation with academic officials.

If enough bishops do this, academic resistance may wither away. Where it does not, however, the purpose will at least have been served of alerting the Catholic public to the deficiencies of theological education in particular institutions.

Privately, bishops should indicate to the academic officials that, if the institution does not take steps to regain its authentic religious character, the bishop will withdraw all sign of official support from it, and will if necessary indicate, privately or publicly, his belief that the institution does not deserve support as professedly Catholic.

Alternative Institutions

The Church in America is presently badly served by those institutions generally having to do with the intellectual formation of its people. In large measure those institutions produce graduates who have been steeped in dissent.

Unless the intellectual life of American Catholicism is to be let go by default, bishops must take vigorous steps to implement programs — both strictly academic and professional — which will educate people for intellectual and professional leadership in the Church.

This can be accomplished in several ways:

(1) A few Catholic colleges and universities have retained a sufficient religious character that, with the cooperation and support of the bishops, they can be strengthened and possibly turned into national centers.

(2) There are a few very small, lay-controlled Catholic colleges founded in the past ten years. Efforts to expand and encourage these should be explored.

(3) In cases where a Catholic college is on the verge of closing for financial reasons, it may be possible to change it radically in exchange for the support necessary to keep it open. (In effect this might

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amount to using the name and buildings of the institution but remaking it into a very different place.)

(4) If the higher administration of a particular institution is sympathetic to orthodoxy but the theology department is not, ways can be found to render the latter irrelevant. For example, the school could establish a new department of Roman Catholic Studies and give that department strong support. Gradually support could be withdrawn from the theology department, which would wither by attrition. (In part this could be accomplished by no longer requiring students to take theology courses, while introducing required courses in Catholic Studies.)

(5) Where solid seminaries exist, there might be the basis on which other kinds of professional programs (e.g., religious education) could be built and even, in some cases, advanced programs in theology granting doctorates. For the latter purpose, the best and most orthodox theologians from around the country could be gathered to form what would be intended as a prestigious national center of Catholic thought.

Bishops could encourage solid programs and discourage dubious ones by letting it become known that only graduates of the former would be hired as teachers and bureaucrats in the Catholic system. Dubious programs would soon wither if it became known that their graduates could not gain employment in officially supported institutions.

Catechetics

A special word should be said on this subject, because it is so crucial to the entire future of the Church. At present probably a large majority of young Ameri-

can Catholics do not receive adequate instruction in their faith.

Many of the suggestions offered above relate to this subject. However, one point — textbooks — deserves special mention.

Surely it would be possible for a group of bishops, even perhaps a relatively small group, to meet with textbook publishers to indicate to them certain minimum desiderata which are to be present in all future books. Proposed texts would then be scrutinized carefully by the bishops before publication. Publishers would be told that, unless the books proved to be acceptable as to orthodoxy and adequate grounding in the faith, they would not be adopted in certain dioceses (an increasing number, as the character of the hierarchy changed), and would even be publicly criticized by certain bishops.

Items of Interest

- Ernest Fred Dube, a New York State University Professor at Stonybrook, whose teachings equating Zionism with racism was denied tenure by the University. Dube, 56, was a South African born professor in the African Studies department.
- *Lifeletter* (#11) reports an HHS study which shows 56% of single women's pregnancies end in abortion, only 7% of married women; most likely to abort are women aged 20-24, with two-thirds of all abortions performed on women under 25.

Concerning Catholic Higher Education

Continued from Page 7

religious schools. Even the American Association of University Professors admits in principle that this open commitment is acceptable. Accrediting associations, also, permit educational institutions to define their own nature, evaluating them only on the basis of how well they effectuate their self-proclaimed objectives.

Why the corporate body of Catholics that constitutes a university community cannot make a Catholic commitment is difficult to comprehend. Personal witness to the faith by Catholic academicians at secular and state universities is commonplace. This private witness is not, however, what defines a Catholic University. By definition a Catholic university must be a corporate moral person committed totally to the mission of the Church — the pastoral mission,

no less than the intellectual."

To this end the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars endorses the present plan of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic education to enact legislation establishing universal norms for the conduct of Catholic Colleges and Universities throughout the world.

Submitted by the Fellowship Committee on Higher Education.

Kenneth Baker, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*
James Hitchcock, St. Louis U.,
William May, Catholic University of America
Richard Roach, S.J., Marquette University
Joseph Scottino, Gannon University
William B. Smith, St. Joseph's Seminary, N.Y.

November 1, 1985

Books Received

- Paul Quay, S.J., *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality*, (Credo Books, P.O. Box 7049, Evanston, IL 60204, 109 pp. \$6.95)

Fr. Quay, a founder of the Fellowship has eight clear chapters relating human sexuality to the mystery of our life in Christ. He describes the Church's teaching perfectly, with ample documentation from scripture. It is intended for adults and teens.

- Fr. Paul Marx, O.S.B., *And Now Euthanasia*, (Human Life International, 418 C Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002)

- Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Wilke, *Abortion Questions and Answers*, (Hayes Publishing Co., Inc., Cincinnati, OH 45224 316 pp. \$2.65 with discounts for bulk orders).

A valuable catechism by two of the country's most informed and involved Right-to-Life leaders.

- Fr. James Downey, O.S.B., *Religious Life: What the Church Teaches* Institute of Religious Life, 4200 No. Austin Ave., Chicago, IL 60634)

Ten papers on Religious life by well known experts. With an appendix.

- Fr. Anton Morgenroth, C.S.P., *Splendor of the Faith*, (Christendom Publications, Front Royal, VA 22630) 203 pp.

Ninety-six meditations on each doctrine mentioned in Pope Paul's *Credo of the People of God*.

- Hellmut Laun, *How I Met God: An Unusual Conversion*, (Franciscan Herald Press, 1434 West 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60609) 154 pp. \$10.50.

The unusual part of this story is that the conversion took place during the worst Nazi years. Vienna's Cardinal Koenig urged Laun to write his story.

Fr. Joseph Fessio and his Ignatius Press have published a 197 blockbuster with *The Ratzinger Report*. Available now. \$9.95

Ignatius Press, Box 18990, San Francisco, CA 94118

- Adrienne Von Speyr, *The World of Prayer* (311 pp. \$10.95)

This Swiss convert who entered the Church under Fr. Von Balthasar (who writes the foreword) begins her treatment with the nature of prayer and takes the reader through nine chapters of meditations on the Trinity, Christ, Mary, Religious Life, etc.

_____, *The Handmaid of the Lord*, (178 pp. \$9.95)

A book length contemplation of the Mother of God, her person and her role in Christ's life and in the Church.

- Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, (336 pp. \$11.95)

A complete overview and history of Catholic spirituality from the Apostles to the present day. No major trend, group, or saint-leader is omitted. Fr. Aumann, a Fellowship member, teaches at the Angelicum.

- Cardinals Ratzinger, Suenens, Ciappi, etc., *Towards a Civilization of Love* (272 pp. \$10.95)

Meditations and lectures on the Sacred Heart.

- Evelyn (Timmie) Vitz, *A Continual Feast*, (Harper & Row, 1985, \$16.95).

A discussion of cooking and meals and Christian hospitality in relation to the Christian year, especially the liturgical year. A good gift for Christmas, showers, weddings.

- P. J. Kavanagh, *A Chesterton Anthology*, (515 pp. \$16.95)

Those old enough to be Chestertonians and those young enough to have been improperly educated in ignorance of "the great one" will appreciate these five dozen excerpts from G.K.'s disquisitions on poetry, literature, England, man, woman, philosophy, politics, the Church.

Fr. Fessio has made a valuable contribution to culture with this one.

Book Reviews

Robert Magliola. *Derrida on the Mend*. West Lafayette, IN.: Purdue University Press, 1984, xiv + 238 pp. \$18.00.

According to an ancient mystical utterance, God is as a circle whose center is everywhere, whose circumference nowhere. Jacques Derrida, the widely lionized French philosopher, may be said to have reversed the formulation: God is as a circle whose circumference is everywhere, whose center nowhere. The Derridean project is precisely a *decentering* of the Western metaphysical tradition. This tradition, Derrida claims, in all its manifestations—from the pre-Socratics through structuralism—has been “logocentric;” that is, it has assumed as its basis an ordinary *logos*, or “transcendental signified,” that governs meaning and being in its luminous presence. Derrida maintains that if the metaphysics of presence is pursued to its logical conclusion, then every possible signifier unravels into a free-floating “pure signifier” — a contradiction in terms. Hence *différance* (a Derridean neologism)—nonsubstantial, alogical, the mark of absence and deferral—precedes and governs all present being. Although the Derridean “deconstruction” of metaphysics thus questions all the norms of rational discourse, Robert Magliola is correct in pinpointing as the heart of “Derrida’s endeavor... an assault upon the principle of identity,” (p. 5).

Derrida on the Mend is a subtle and erudite book, and its value is increased by the author’s attitude toward his subject, whom he approaches neither as an outraged antagonist nor adulating disciple. Magliola is a Catholic—indeed, he identifies himself in the “Preface” to this book as a Carmelite tertiary (p. ix)—and he is wary of Derrida, as any Christian must be. Yet at the same time, Magliola acknowledges Derrida’s brilliance and originality and recognizes that deconstruction provides a critical opening for serious theological discussion in the context of “the latest thing” in academic literary theory. Derrida’s incessant “soliciting” (in the sense of “shaking the entirety of”) the Western metaphysical, or “ontotheological,” tradition has made a basic reconsideration of the nature of being, of the relation of language and reason to the Deity, an acceptable activity in the most respectable circles of secular scholarship. Magliola has seized this opportunity by the forelock.

The first section of *Derrida on the Mend* is a critique as well as an exposition, and if Magliola is respectful of Derrida, he is certainly not reverent. While arguing that the method of deconstruction is substantially successful in tracking down internal inconsistencies in the logocentric tradition, Magliola highlights the irony that Derrida can only deploy his antimetaphysical stratagems within the logic of

metaphysics; that is, Derrida cannot be aware of logical flaws without recourse to logic, cannot observe discrepancies between “the philosophy of presence” and “the real state of affairs” without a conception of reality furnished by the suspect philosophy. Since Derrida rejects both absurdism and negative mysticism, Magliola maintains, he necessarily operates on the basis of a “modified phenomenology” in which “authentic Husserlian experience” is privileged. Since Derrida’s career began with his dismantling of Husserl, this is a very keen blow. Another important point raised by Magliola—in fact, he might well have given it more emphasis—is that Derrida is most telling in his encounter with the “critical” philosophers arising out of the enlightenment: “Though Derrida rehearses (1) the ancient Greek, (2) the Hebraic, and (3) the Christian (including early, medieval, and Renaissance Christian theology) lineage of logocentricism, his purpose of course is to take aim at modern ‘thought,’ be it post-Hegelian, anthropological, structuralist, or even ‘Heideggerian’” (p. 4).

It is Heidegger who is foregrounded in Part 2; here Magliola sets forth the way in which logocentrism emerges intact from Heidegger’s own deconstruction of post-Cartesian rationalism. The “hermeneutic circle”—while allowing for a diversity of attitudes and approaches—nonetheless affirms the oneness of Being which is intuitively available to the consciousness. The apparent conflict of interpretations grows out of the inherent limitations of the rational mode of human knowledge: “Practically speaking, all interpretations contact only some facets of a multi-faceted work” (p. 80). It is clear that Magliola remains deeply attracted to the possibilities Heidegger offers for literary interpretation, but he does not quite accede to the Heideggerian approach, and this section of the book—though interesting and insightful—rests somewhat uneasily within the whole.

In part 3 a genuine novelty is introduced: the argument that an obscure (to me at least) Indian Buddhist, Nagarjuna, both anticipates and solves the deconstructive crisis. So far as I can judge (out of an immense ignorance of Oriental thought), Magliola mounts a convincing demonstration that the second-century Buddhist preceded Derrida in laying out the fundamental *aperçus* of deconstruction, but did so in a way that rises joyfully above the suspicion, anxiety, and (not infrequently) snide cynicism which often vitiate Derrida’s work. In what could be taken as an interesting footnote to *Derrida on the Mend*, the Chinese scholar, Zhang Longxi, has recently written, “Perhaps this is precisely where the *tao* differs from the *logos*: it hardly needed to wait till the twentieth century for the dismantling of phonetic writing, for the Derridean sleight of hand, the strategy of deconstruc-

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tion" (*Critical Inquiry*, 11 [1985], 397). Still, interesting as Part 3 is in itself, it is not clear to me that it is a necessary step leading to the book's climax in Part 4 which, "while acceding to Christian orthodoxy on all counts," seeks to "apply Derridean method to the theology of the Trinity." (p. 134).

In both of the two final parts, I am bothered by Magliola's apparent acceptance of the Derridean premise that the entire "Western tradition" is monolithically "logocentric" *in virtually the same way*; that is, he seems to assume that an Augustine or an Aquinas bears essentially the same relation to Derrida as a Descartes, a Rousseau, a Hegel, or a Husserl. This kind of leveling out, however, requires a reading of Cartesian or Kantian postulates back into the Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages and overlooks the extent to which the fissures and antinomies of logical discourse has (always already?) been taken into account by Christian wisdom. There is, as Gerald Bruns has noted in another context, no reason to be compelled by "the Cartesian-Kantian relationship of subject and object, mind and world—as if everything hinged on this relationship, or as if nothing were thinkable without it" (*Renascence*, 37 [1985], 167). If one's main interest lies in comparatively modern thinkers, there is a constant temptation to give only superficial attention to their medieval and ancient predecessors and to see in them only those tendencies which appear to lead inevitably to modern formulations. Now apart from Plato—the fountainhead of idealism in antiquity—Derrida deals in a systematic way only with thinkers on our side of the Cartesian faultline and views the metaphysical tradition in terms of the problematic of transcendental idealism. Hence it is a moot point whether Augustine or Aquinas or, for that matter, Duns Scotus slides helplessly into the Derridean Abyss and can be fished out only with recourse to Nagarjuna.

Such reservations notwithstanding, Part 4 of *Derrida on the Mend* is a splendidly daring undertaking: a deployment of Derrida's critique of metaphysics to arrive at an interpretation of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity more consonant with the infallible pronouncements of the Magisterium than any yet provided by theology. The thread that Magliola seizes is the important concept that the inter-relationship among the Persons of the Trinity is *relationis oppositio*, as defined by the Council of Florence in 1441 (Denzinger, 703). Hence Magliola argues, "The Son is the Son by virtue of His difference from the Father" (p. 139). "The Father and the Son, through the perpetual 'doubling back' of the Son in knowledge and love, release the third 'subsistence'—the Holy Spirit who 'proceeds from the Father and the Son' (DZ 39) in infinite dispersal" (p. 140). Magliola's purpose is to

avoid the dangerous tendencies towards the subordinationism and modalism inherent in the neo-Platonic foundation of St. Augustine's classic account of the Trinity. Derrida's notion of *différance* furnishes a basis of clear distinction among the divine Persons without attributing to each a separate substance, since *différance* denominates the plurality of what is one. Magliola maintains "that the purely negative differences among Persons *constitute* the Divine Unity. That is to say, the dynamics of this constitution are analogous to the constitution of Derridean 'trace' by way of 'interval'" (p. 145).

Doubtless many Catholic scholars can find much to question and contest in *Derrida on the Mend*, but the book deserves attention and respect. Robert Magliola has undertaken a daunting task with audacity: to sift the grains of truth from the chaff of falsehood in the work of one of the more perversely brilliant contemporary thinkers. I am uncertain to what extent he has succeeded, but his argument does most surely illustrate the infallible sure-footedness of the Church's Magisterium in avoiding the intellectual pitfalls into which secular ideologies are wont to stumble. Magliola demonstrates the sense of excitement and intellectual adventure available to the scholar who resolutely and sympathetically explores the Magisterial formulations of the mysteries of the Catholic Faith.

— R.V. Young
North Carolina State University

A. N. Gilbey. *We Believe, a Commentary on the Catechism of Christian Doctrine*. Portsmouth, N.H. (258 pp., \$23.00 hardback, \$14.00 paperback)

Msgr. A. N. Gilbey is the long-time (1932-65) Catholic chaplain at Cambridge University, and this basic work of apologetics and catechetics is based on lectures which he gave over the years both to Catholic students and to potential converts, of whom he was instrumental in making a large number. It follows the plan of the official catechism approved by the bishops of England Wales.

This is classical apologetics and exposition, beginning with St. Thomas' five ways to the existence of God and moving systematically through the principal truths of revelation. Along the way the author deftly deals with possible objections to or misunderstandings of Catholic doctrine, fleshing out his personal observations or citations from pertinent literature.

Altogether this should be a highly useful book for those looking for a classical, succinct statement of the Catholic faith.

— James Hitchcock

Book Reviews

William Kilpatrick, *Psychological Seduction: the Failure of Modern Psychology* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 239 pp., \$5.95).

Arguably the greatest disasters of the post-conciliar Church have been caused by the misapplication of modern psychological theories and techniques, especially the process whereby human "needs" have come to be accorded a sacred status, and "self-fulfillment" has become one of the few moral absolutes. Such a psychology has had devastating consequences for all authentic spirituality, especially with certain religious communities.

Gradually there has developed a sophisticated and intelligent critique of this, mounted by psychologists themselves. In the process, however, some psychologists have found it necessary to point out that the problems lie not merely in the misapplication of secular science to a Christian context but in fundamental problems with the secular science itself.

William Kirk Kilpatrick, of Boston College, is a leading critic, and this book is one of the most important of its kind to appear. He traces the path by which, out of good intentions, classical psychological theory came to be accepted by many Christians as almost-self-evidently true, and the inevitable consequences this has had for the core of Christian faith, in terms of attitudes towards the self, the concept of sin and salvation, and many other things. In effect, in many parts of contemporary Christianity a creed based on psychology has been substituted for the genuine Gospel, even though some of the terminology remains the same.

Kilpatrick is particularly good in showing how, once certain assumptions of modern psychology are accepted, it is difficult even to make sense out of classical Christian ideas, so that the latter are systematically and relentlessly reinterpreted.

But the book is not merely a negative critique of ideas whose fallaciousness should be evident to any reasonably well-informed Christian. The author also shows how, in the end, the Christian vision of human nature and human love is more profound and spacious than anything the secular world can offer.

— James Hitchcock
Saint Louis University

Sr. Joyce Ridick, S.S.C., Ph.D. *Treasures in Earthen Vessels: the Vows*, Staten Island, N.Y., Alba House, 1984, (166 pp. \$9.95)

Not many books really fulfill the promises on their book covers. This one does.

"It is a profound treatment of the vows that synthesizes the best insights from contemporary philosophy, psychology and theology as

they relate to the consecrated life. The treatment is wholistic and highlights the manner in which body, emotions, mind and soul are united in the pursuit of a healthy, honest holiness. The work is positive in tone but exposes the obstacles and rationalizations that impede both individual growth and the development of a vigorous, loving community."

Each of the counsels is introduced, defined and analyzed on the three levels of our psychic life: psycho-physiological, psycho-social, and spiritual-rational. Then each is raised to the grace level in a profound and moving manner. Uses and abuses of each counsel are given and also criteria for evaluating one's living out of each vow. Scriptural texts and Vatican II documents are given and a bibliography of over 50 references for each vow — over 100 for obedience.

Formation directors and priests who give courses or retreats to Religious will find this an invaluable book. No matter how well you thought you understood the vows, this book will give profound insights. It should certainly be on the Bishops' *must reading* list in their present study of Religious Life.

A book like this ought to have a complete and detailed index. Unfortunately, this one has none. However, the table of contents helps somewhat to overcome this lack.

It is interesting — and significant — that poverty gets a 20-page treatment, chastity 50 pages, and obedience 65. Associated virtues and means to grow in the counsel are given with chastity and obedience. Loevinger's levels of ego development and Kohlberg's levels of moral development are presented and critiqued in the section on obedience. As the cover says, "This book does not avoid issues or deal lightly with them. It challenges the reader to wrestle with the realities of religious life and to experience fully a life of responsible love of God and service to neighbor." It is not light reading.

But it is not without a sense of humor either. For example, among the abuses of chastity Sister Joyce lists *body-worship*:

"There are those who worship the body 'curing it to death'! They exercise it to the point of exhaustion; take pills to the point of becoming internalized drug stores; live on the scale for fear that half an ounce gain might appear..." "The other extreme can also creep in: a sister or priest cares nothing about her or his body. She or he eats until her femininity or his masculinity is unrecognizable." (p. 61).

After the misguided push for "self-fulfillment" in religious communities (late '60s and early '70s), it is good to read here, "Self-actualization is not our goal; self-transcendence is." (p. 61). And "Self-fulfillment is

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a dead-end. Only self-transcendence can allow us to find 'Him whom our heart seeks' in all situations." (p. 69).

Sister Joyce Ridick received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1972 and has worked for 14 years with Luigi Rulla, S.J., and Franco Imoda, S.J., researching Religious Life. The results of their work merited the "International Prize for the Scientific Study of Religion" in Brussels. Sister Joyce is a professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Gregorian University in Rome.

This is much more than just another book on the vows. Again the book's blurb is accurate: "For those looking for answers to their own difficulties with living the vows joyously or who are concerned about the immaturity and problems they see in their communities, this book will prove to be an excellent guide for sorting out and clarifying complex issues." For those who love their vowed life, this book will be a joy and a grace.

— Sister Bernadette Counihan, O.S.F

Leonard F. Badia *Basic Catholic Beliefs for Today*, Staten Island, N.J., Alba House, 1984, (170 pp. \$7.95)

Consisting of nine chapters, each designed to explain an article of the Creed, the book by its very subtitle, "The Creed Explained" claims the status of a catechism. Especially handy are the scriptural, patristic and conciliar texts cited for each of the articles. Despite its method, however, the work suffers from many of the maladies endemic to a good number of modern catechisms: omissions, default, reductionism in scriptural exegesis, and frequent forays into theological speculations some of dubious quality—all of which raises serious questions regarding its catechetical purpose.

Although each chapter concludes with pertinent patristic texts and magisterial pronouncements, these follow upon an exegetical treatment of the scriptural evidence that oftentimes is so reductionist as to lead to the overwhelming inference that the continuity between the dogma and its alleged scriptural roots is quite tenuous at best; at worse, that the dogma represents a construct of the Church's faith. Concerning the scriptural evidence for the divinity of Christ, the author states: "If the Synoptics were all we had to go on, the natural conclusion would be that Jesus was a human being selected to be God's agent, who was raised to a semi-divine status after death." (p. 38). Such a claim dismisses wholesale the virtual claims to divinity contained in Christ's treatment of the Old Law (Mt. 5 and 19), most of the mira-

cle accounts, His role in the final judgment (Mt. 25), the forgiveness of sins (Mt. 9 and Mk. 2), Peter's profession of faith (Mt. 16; 13-30), or the reaction of Caiphas at Jesus' testimony before the Sanhedrin (Mt. 26:65), etc.

The same reductionist tendency is evident in the author's answer to his own question: "What do the Gospels tell us about the life of Jesus? We can glean the following. Jesus was a descendent of King David. His mother was Mary, the wife of Joseph. He was born, according to Mt. 2:1 and Lk. 1:5 before the death of King Herod in 4 B.C...." As the author goes on (p. 35) the reader is immediately struck by his glaring omission of what the Gospels tell us most importantly about Jesus, namely, that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Lk. 1, Mt.1).

In its treatment of Baptism, after providing Jewish and Essene parallels of baptizing proselytes, the book subjects the scriptural evidence for Christian baptism to the same reductionist scalpel. Concerning Mt. 28:19 and Mk. 16:16 the author writes: "It is the common consent of scholars that these passages reflect the faith of the early Church rather than what Jesus actually said." (p. 145). Of Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus concerning the necessity of being "born again," the author states: "This most likely reflects the sacramental teaching of John's community at the time this Gospel was written. To varying degrees, the Gospels read their contemporary concerns into their accounts of Jesus." (p. 145). When, then, the author asserts that "the apostles baptized after Jesus' Resurrection," one wonders by whose authority or example? The inference is made that the practice is derivative of Pauline theology (p. 148). Absent in the author's treatment of Baptism are some of the sacrament's most important effects (in addition to the already-mentioned effect of incorporation into the Church): the cleansing of Original Sin, the infusion of Sanctifying Grace and with it, the Theological Virtues, the imparting of the sacramental Character (cf. D 792, 852, 862).

The chapter on the Church is particularly unclear. At the outset a pall of doubt is cast upon the authenticity of Mt. 16:18, 18:17 by the author's claim: "It must be remembered that the Gospels are products of the Church and that each of them to some degree projects the concerns and beliefs of the time it was written into its account of Jesus. The heart of the Jesus' message concerned the Kingdom of Heaven." (p. 124). From this the book goes on to draw some rather murky conclusions: "It (the Church of Christ) is manifest in the Catholic Church, of course, but it is not limited to this one group. God's grace, imparted by the Holy Spirit, touches non-Catholic Christians, non-Christians, even atheists." (p. 127). Earlier, in

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speaking of the possibility of salvation outside the Catholic Church the author goes so far as to claim of non-Christian religions, that "grace exists in these groups." (p. 70).

The treatment is grossly inadequate. For one thing, nowhere does the author show how the Church of Christ is "manifest" in the Catholic Church in a manner not evident in others. The Vatican Council II in *Lumen Gentium* 8 teaches that the Church Christ founded SUBSISTS (not merely is manifest) in the Catholic Church and that whatever elements of sanctification and truth are present outside the Catholic Church, these draw their efficacy and their binding force from their source, namely the Church which Christ founded. Neither *Lumen Gentium* nor *Nostra Aetate* but rather that grace (issuing from the Church) can so move even non-Christian persons who, through invincible ignorance, do not know Christ, nonetheless, strive to conform their actions to the Divine Will through the light of conscience. (L.G. 16).

The section on infallibility is particularly misleading (pp. 137-139). While providing an explanation of papal infallibility, the author omits reference to infallibility by way of the Ordinary Magisterium (D 1712; L.G. 25). Concerning non-infallible teaching, the author claims: "Noninfallible teaching must be taken seriously, but it is possible to dissent from these and still remain within the Church." (p. 139). Here as elsewhere, the book reflects an ecclesiology quite at odds with that of the Second Vatican Council, for nowhere in its documents is there mention of the possibility of such dissent. On the contrary, *Lumen Gentium* 25 speaks of a religious assent of mind and will for all authentic, non-infallible teaching.

The book's treatment of the Eucharist is seriously wanting. Nowhere is there mention of transubstantiation, nor the force of its meaning. Instead, it reveals the proverbial nominalist tendency when it claims that the differences regarding Christ's presence among Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans and most Anglicans, is a matter of "terminology." (p. 53).

For these and sundry other reasons, *Basic Catholic Beliefs for Today* cannot be recommended as a catechetical tool for presenting and explaining the Catholic Faith.

— Fr. Anthony J. Mastroeni S.T.D.
St. Ignatius Institute, U.S.F.

Sabourin, Leopold S.J. *Christology: Basic Texts in Focus* November 1984, Alba House, Staten Island, N.Y. (259 pp., \$9.95)

The author's purpose in writing this text is that it might serve as a textbook in Christology for college

Christologies in the New Testament, that they developed over a number of years, and that it is possible through historical and textual criticism to distinguish what Christological doctrine belonged to the earliest Palestinian situation from what appeared later and elsewhere on the Hellenistic level. By the author's own admission, the work is more of an outline than an exhaustive treatment of the subject. The material is analytically rather than synthetically treated; that is, instead of synthesizing the N.T. data for the various Christological titles, the author lets the texts speak for themselves by analyzing the Christological doctrine contained therein. And so the various chapters treat the Christologies of "Q", Mark, Luke, Matthew, Paul, the early hymns of praise to Christ, Hebrews, 1st Peter, the Pastorals, the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Letters, the Apocalypse, and ending in Part II with later Christological developments in the Fathers, the Chalcedon definition, and concluding with a brief critique of the findings of such modern authors as: Schoonenberg, Schillebeeck, Gutierrez, Teilhard de Chardin, et al.

The book is especially helpful for instructional purposes in that it handily outlines and summarizes the various scholarly debates concerning the sources and the meaning for the various Christologies contained in the New Testament. In that regard the lengthy explanatory footnotes as well as the extensive bibliography could be especially helpful for those wishing to plumb the depths further.

Although not explicitly treated, nonetheless implicit throughout the author's method and plan of presentation is the premise of a later dating of the New Testament texts, which alone can account for the alleged layers of strata of tradition in the development of the various Christologies therein. The later dating of the texts allows for the faith of the early community to distill long enough to transform the memories, to idealize the event and to embellish the words of Christ. Although Sabourin goes to great lengths to preserve something of the historical substrata of some of the N.T. texts, all the while avoiding some of the more gratuitous assumptions of an extreme form-critical hypothesis which would reduce much if not most of the Christology of the New Testament to a series of symbolic texts on which the early Christians retrojected their own spiritual life; nonetheless, one rightly wonders how even the caution and sober scholarship of a Sabourin would fare in the light of more recent findings concerning an earlier dating of the New Testament texts, as found in the work of: T. Robinson, Gerard Soulagés, Claude Tresmontant, Jean Carmignac, Rainer Riesner, Adrian Delclaux, Jean-Paul Thomas, Rene Laurentin, John Gerhard, et al. If these theories be true, Scripture studies are in for quite a shaking, and the confidence hitherto

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placed in the form-critical method, which in some instances replaced the very certitude of faith, may indeed be cracking.

— Fr. Anthony J. Mastroeni S.T.D.

Dietrich von Hildebrand. Foreword by Archbishop John J. O'Connor. *Marriage: the Mystery of Faithful Love* Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Institute Press, 1984 (pp. xxv + 70. \$5.95 paper)

Not all philosophers or theologians speak easily about things close to the heart, but Dietrich von Hildebrand's little book, just re-published by an enterprising new press, tells the truth about marriage in a simple and attractive way.

It is just the sort of book to recommend to Catholic parents who foresee discussing with their teenagers the advantages of sacramental marriage over natural marriage and want a little help. It is just the sort of book to meditate on to gain some light about unhappy and problem-ridden marriages, for he offers a vision of how even the sufferings of an unhappy marriage can be considered a special "call" from God. And it is just the sort of book for those concerned with the routine of married life, to prevent a husband or wife from becoming too absorbed in business affairs or household duties.

The leaven of the volume is Hildebrand's beautiful theology of the purpose and meaning of marriage. While its "purpose" is procreation and the self-giving love that generates new sons and daughters for the Church, its "meaning" is to be a union of love, the intimate self-giving communion of conjugal love and perpetual commitment. As a realist, von Hildebrand knows that it is the imperfections of human nature, and not any claims to perfection already achieved, that are the basis of human marriage. The spouses need one another's help in the never-ending task of becoming perfect in Christ.

Rev. Anthony Mastroeni *A Moral Evaluation of Surgical Sex-Reassignment*, (Doctor dissertation, Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome, 1981) 217 pp.

Fr. Mastroeni presents a thorough-going Thomistic critique of the justifications offered for an ever more frequent medical procedure, the surgical alteration of a person's somatic sexual identity. Besides contributing a valuable study on the question at hand, Mastroeni also exposes another fallacious use of "the principle of totality" by proportionalists and

consequentialists in ethics.

After a detailed study of the physical and psychological problems of "intersexuality" and the state of the question as regards medicine and psychiatry, Mastroeni reviews the general ethical principles relevant to questions of hormone and surgical therapy, especially the principles of stewardship and totality. The question at issue is whether and when the mutilation of the body can be permitted, as in the case of the amputation of a gangrenous limb, for massive mutilation and direct sterilization of perfectly healthy generative organs is an indispensable aspect of sex-change surgery. Mastroeni argues that the principle of totality (concern for the whole person) cannot be used to justify proposals to sterilize and mutilate an individual's sexual organs, for an individual's direct rights over these powers is limited to their use and non-use and extend no further than that. He also urged that medicine should not be diverted from its principal task, healing, by concern with relieving the discomfort of those who want their bodies to conform to their psyches.

Chapter Three is an extensive report and evaluation of arguments in favor of transsexual surgery. The proportionalist strategies of Charles Curran, Anthony Kosnik, John Dedek et al, are reviewed, but what comes across most strongly is the rhetorical perversion of the principle of totality by those supporting transsexual therapies. Unlike true hermaphroditism, where the physical disorder consists in an insufficient development of a person's generative organs and where some surgery can be done in favor of the true or predominant sex to correct an anomalous bodily condition, transsexual surgery invariably arises from an obsessive desire to approximate the anatomical structure of the opposite sex.

The argumentation of those promoting sex-change surgery relies on an "extension" of the notion of totality, viz. reasoning that certain bodily parts may be destroyed to benefit "the whole person." But Mastroeni demonstrates that this extension makes a false dichotomy between soma and psyche, between the bodily and spiritual aspects of the human person. His entire fourth chapter rebuts this fallacy with a closely reasoned argument for taking the human person as a substantial unity of body informed by a rational soul, along traditional Aristotelian & Thomistic lines.

The extended notion of totality proposed by the proportionalists introduces a gap between psyche and soma sufficient to justify mutilating the body so as to benefit the more important psyche and thus "the totality." But scrutiny of the understanding of "person" employed here shows the falsity in both the anthropology and the ethics. The anthropology is intrinsically dualist and treats the human body as but a

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poor relation in comparison to consciousness. The ethics employed ignores that what is good for the soul can never admit of the direct destruction of the body. Further, it tolerates the grave immoralities involved in such assaults on the human body for reasons of "gender dissatisfaction," that is, the accommodation of delusions in self-perception.

Theological argument is also important to Mastroeni's analysis. He finds his philosophical conclusions to conform to Scripture and Church-Tradition. Sexual identity is never seen as incidental or arbitrary, let alone something that can be changed at will, but constitutive of the person, both body and soul. It is something willed and given by God through creation and affects the person in all his or her relationships — with God, with one's fellow men and with creation. Hence transsexual therapy manifests a claim to dominion and ownership of the body which is reserved to the Creator alone. Its grave immorality comes from its deliberate intention to disorder God's creation and enslave a man or woman made by God in a body artificially constructed to appear of the opposite sex, thus deepening the psychic alienation of a disordered desire.

Christopher Dawson. Introduction by John J. Mulloy. *Christianity and the New Age* Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, N.H., 1985 (113 pp. \$10.95 hardback, \$7.95 paper)

We have grown accustomed to vacillate about the merits of humanism. While we admire Renaissance humanism as the fountainhead of the noblest aesthetics and ethical ideals of civilized man, we castigate secular humanism as the civil religion which attacks the very traditions which have ennobled the human spirit. Although these opposite end-points on the time-line of humanism do deserve different judgments, we must also inquire whether the degeneration was inevitable.

Christopher Dawson's essay of 1931, now again available as one of Sophia Press's first publications, is provocative still for claiming that humanism suffers from certain internal contradictions to which it has finally succumbed. Utilizing the thesis he elaborated so masterfully in *Progress and Religion* and *Religion and Culture*, that it is religion which creates and transforms culture, and not vice versa, Dawson argues here that the real vitality of Renaissance humanism was Christianity.

What distinguishes Dawson from most serious inquirers into the relations between religion and culture is his success at detecting what nourished what. The enormous effort required to rediscover the bridges that connect cultures and their religions

seems to leave many anthropologists and sociologists unable to see which way the traffic crossed. The bridge may well be busy both ways in a culture already flourishing, but at the time of a new settlement the purpose of the bridge is to send new energy toward the fertile fields, using what is best in the new fields but transforming them beyond anything seen in them before.

Dawson's claim then is that the humanism so crucial to the development of western culture was a humanism transformed by Christianity. As humanism became increasingly secular and eliminated or restricted the social influence of Christianity, it cut away its own roots and became self-defeating.

A crucial element in Dawson's analysis is his grasp of religious experience. He finds that there are two fundamental needs of the soul at all stages of culture: "God, the supernatural, the transcendent (and)... deliverance, salvation, eternal life... Both these two elements are represented in some form or other in any given religion" (p. 22). So long as humanism respects these needs, it flourishes as a vehicle for the progress of cultures, but it will fail to achieve its own ends when it gives them up.

Yet not all religions can use humanism equally well. Christianity in particular transformed those tendencies in humanism which would otherwise suffocate it by proclaiming true human fulfillment to reside in Jesus, God Incarnate. Christian humanism thereby achieved a success not possible had humanism allowed man to wallow in the exaltation of humanity itself, either in a Nietzschean glorification of the strong individuals or in the messianic collectivism of Karl Marx. The oriental world-religions, by contrast, set the Transcendent over against the world of human experience as "reality against appearance." In a culture dominated by the Oriental religions humanism would be smothered and ignored, given the relative unimportance of humanity. But in a culture deprived of the theocentric ordering of humanism which religion provides, humanism becomes humiliating, as Dawson explains with regard to the modern predicament:

We have the paradox that at the beginning of the Renaissance, when the conquest of nature and the creation of modern science are still unrealized, man appears in godlike freedom with a sense of unbounded power and greatness; while at the end of the 19th century, when nature has been conquered and there seems to be no limits to the powers of science, man is once more conscious of his misery and weakness as the slave of material circumstances and physical appetite and death... Man is stripped of his glory and freedom and left as a naked

Cont'd p. 23

Philosophy and Seminaries

A Newsletter Prepared by the American Catholic Philosophical Association's Committee on Philosophy and Priestly Formation.

Editorial

Excellence in the education of priests is the concern of the whole Church.

Priests today need more depth in the possession of their faith and their Christian philosophy of life than ever before. Vatican II forcefully reminds us: "The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom, and needs to be... Our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages" (GS 15).

The philosophy that penetrates our culture today is far from being fully Christian. Everywhere legitimate efforts to help faith speak more effectively to the modern world are threatened by a debilitating relativism. The bracing moral teachings of faith are misunderstood as legalism. Because many cannot distinguish radically different things — radically conservative traditionalism from a realism that grasps enduring truths yet is open to growth, or that living realism from a relativistic modernism — many are tempted to adopt one extreme position as a defense against the other. Since the time of the Fathers, Christian philosophy has been part of pastoral education. The Second Vatican council spoke forcefully that, since more wisdom is needed in our age, Christian philosophy too needs to be more effectively taught in our seminaries (OT 14).

Today many feel that our seminaries need the critical support of the whole Church, to encourage them to provide the excellent education that the present documents of the Church call for.

The American Catholic Philosophical Association set up a Committee on "Philosophy and Priestly Formation" to support quality education in our seminaries. Members of the committee are: Dr. Mark Griesbach (Marquette), Fr. Francis Lescoe (Holy Apostles Seminary), Fr. Kevin Horrigan (Cardinal Glennon College), Fr. Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap. (St. John's University), and Fr. Stephen Minkiel, C.M. (Gannon University).

Open meetings have been held to encourage excellence in priestly education at meetings held in conjunction with the ACPA since 1982. The philosophical component of a quality seminary education (in accord with Church documents) has been stressed; but all elements of an education of the sort needed to meet the challenges of our time have been the concern of these efforts. The next such meeting will be held at the ACPA meeting in Baltimore, April 4-6, 1986.

This Newsletter was prepared by Fr. Minkiel (assisted by Fr. Lawler). We are grateful to Msgr. George Kelly for inserting this first communication on "Philosophy and Seminaries" in the *FCS Newsletter*. But we feel that we need a somewhat fuller newsletter, to be published perhaps once or twice a year.

We would like to ask those interested in our objectives, and in such a Newsletter, to contact Rev. Stephen Minkiel, C.M., Box 265, Gannon University, Erie, Pa. 16541. He can also be reached by phone, evenings, 814-871-7707. Expression of interest and contributions to make a continuing Newsletter possible would be appreciated.

Is Christian Philosophy Important for Priests Today?

- Pope John Paul II certainly thinks so. See, for example, the booklet (*Two Lectures on St. Thomas Aquinas* (eds., Donald A. Gallagher and Ralph J. Massiello, 1985); available from the Jacques and Raissa Maritain Institute, Niagara University, Niagara Falls, N.Y.
- Vatican II thought so. (See: Decree on Priestly Formation, # 15).
- All the recent Church Documents on Priestly Formation since Vatican II have insisted that it is.
- United States Bishops, theologians, college seminary leaders acknowledge both that philosophical education must be excellent in our times, and that it is not now satisfactory in our seminaries. (See: "Survey" below.)

Survey: *Philosophical Education in Seminaries*

In 1979 one of a series of *Workshops* on "Philosophy and Priestly Formation" was held at Catholic University of America. In preparation for this, questionnaires were sent (by Fr. Stephen Minkiel) to Catholic theologates and college seminaries, and to Catholic bishops. We list here some of the outcomes of this survey, which, unfortunately, were not widely publicized:

• Not only was there general agreement that a good program in philosophy is needed for seminarians; but even to the question: "Is an excellent program in philosophy important also for students who begin study for the priesthood at a somewhat later age?" The answer was a *unanimous* yes.

• Theology schools, asked: "Do you believe that the great majority of students in theology that you have had in recent years have had adequate preparation in philosophy," the response was: 74% no, 26% yes. Fully 85% of bishops responding to a simi-

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lar question judged that seminary theologians had not received adequate preparation in philosophy.

- 87% of those responding agreed with the following: "A major purpose of Christian philosophy is to liberate students from philosophical prejudices and errors that permeate secular culture and can prevent intelligent people from whole-hearted acceptance of the faith." But 13% did not think so.

- 70% agreed that "Students who have not had an adequate philosophical background tend to avoid the more difficult courses (in theology) which could take them penetratingly into the meaning of the faith." About 30% disagreed.

- Virtually all agreed with these statements: "A good grasp of theology is essential in grasping the work of important contemporary theologians." "Popular cultures tend to have implicit philosophical presuppositions. An intelligent grasp of these is necessary for evangelization, so that a suitable study of philosophy is valuable for the priest as a teacher." "The major problems that tend to keep people from faith today commonly have philosophical roots."

Surprisingly, almost all those responding agreed that we should not be willing to accept as priesthood candidates those with little aptitude for or interest in Christian philosophy, even though the scarcity of vocations remains. (This seemed to Fr. Minkiel a bracing and courageous defense of the importance of educating priests well.)

- College seminary leaders were asked how much time should be devoted to the study of philosophy. Only 6% chose this response: 6 to 12 credits (i.e., the time typical in Catholic colleges for students preparing for other kinds of careers). — Surprisingly, only 16% chose the "eighteen hours" standard (the *minimum time* required by the American *Program for Priestly Formation*.) — Now that *Program* also speaks of another standard, the "two years" basically devoted to philosophy, that the Roman documents call for. 29% preferred to take that "two years" as a minimum. — But the greatest number (57%) chose a response not expressed in terms of hours or years: "The amount of time required to provide a well-structured program really able to meet the goals stated for seminary philosophy." (This response should be read in the light of the other conclusion noted above: that seminarians were not currently getting an adequate philosophical education.)

Hence: there is a broad agreement, when the questions are seriously faced: we need to improve the seminary program in Christian philosophy. But we are not doing that!

(For further information on this survey, contact: Rev. Stephen Minkiel, at the address given above.)

Professor Jude P. Dougherty, Dean of the School of Philosophy at Catholic University, writes:

"If the Church is to be a beacon and not a weathervane, it will have to have within its ranks men of learning and culture who know their traditions and who can defend themselves from challenges from without...

"Those among the Fathers whom we honor most possessed the best secular education of their day. They were abler to develop the teachings of Christ and of His Church precisely because they possessed the appropriate tools. Logical and rhetorical skills were of obvious help. But more important was the kind of learning that enabled them to make distinctions and draw implications. That kind of learning today is normally associated with classical philosophy. In the act of codifying faith and defending it against heresy it was necessary to borrow from the Greek and Latin. Terms, such as "nature," "substance," "person," "habit," "will," "intellect," and "power" entered the vocabulary of Western theology.

"When one does not possess a classical education, one is a prisoner of one's time... By a law of human nature, the now-directed person is incapable of evaluating or appreciating even the now." ("Conceptions of Priesthood and the Difference They Make," in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Oct. 1983.)

Rev. William A. Wallace, O.P., points out why an excellent education in Christian philosophy is of profoundly practical importance:

"The tendency of the present day is toward a type of fideism which gives up on the claims of reason, which regards all systems of thought as of equal (and dubious) value, and so would depreciate the study of philosophy from the start. Many see the task of the philosopher as simply one of providing a few terms and distinctions, or insights, or alternative formulations of problems, from which theologians can pick and choose as they attempt to develop their own interpretations of the body of revelation... Let me simply observe that it takes very little time to generate a sceptical attitude in students; it takes considerably longer to develop within them a commitment to knowledge and truth."

("The Philosophical Formation of Dominicans," in *Philosophy in Priestly Formation*, pp. 111 ff.).

Notes from recent articles on this subject:

Rev. Robert Sokolowski (Catholic University of America) writes:

"... My central claim is that philosophy serves the

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faith in two ways: by preserving and emphasizing the integrity of what is natural and mundane when the context of creation is introduced, and by affirming and exploring the meaningfulness of creation and of God as Creator. It would be an understatement to say that creation is not commonly accepted in the intellectual world we now live in. And for Christians who are in a position in which they must think about their faith, it is of extremely great importance to be informed and educated on the Catholic philosophical-theological tradition. If such persons are not properly formed intellectually, there is a danger that they may lose the sense of God as transcendent to the world, and this will have a great influence on how they understand prayer, Christian action, the sacraments, and the church.

(While the study of psychology and sociology is certainly good, witnesses to faith need a personal grasp of a Christian philosophy that guards the trans-

endent, that can overcome the relativistic philosophies commonly immanent in popular ways these subjects are taught. Such a personal grasp of the Christian vision of truth is not casually obtained in a world full of relativism. Seminarians deeply immersed in social sciences, and largely ignorant of Christian philosophy, are hurt.) "As they are now practiced, the social sciences — sociology and psychology in particular — are almost inevitably relativistic... The Christian understanding of God and prayer, of the sacraments and the Church, and of the theological virtues, must be distinctly appreciated and not confused with non-Christian religious experiences and structures. The place of philosophy in such a Christian understanding is strategic and necessary, and an integral part of the Christian tradition." (In "Philosophy in the Service of Faith," in R. Lawler, ed., *Philosophy in Priestly Formation*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic U., 1980, pp. 57-60).

Cardinal O'Connor on Catholic Doctrine

Orthodoxy is neither liberal nor conservative, right wing or left wing. These, indeed, are political labels unworthy of a sound ecclesial movement. Orthodoxy is orthodoxy. It is neither archaic nor static. It is dynamic, as truth is dynamic. It needs no defenses, any more than truth needs defense. It needs no apology, any more than does truth. It must be taught as truth itself, shouted from the housetops. It is not to be whispered behind barriers, fearful of attack, or cowed by ridicule. It is the teaching of the fathers of our faith and the martyrs, of popes and councils and the magisterium. It is our sacred tradition, it is our glory. God's people have an absolute right, in justice, to the truth of such teachings and a critical need to hear it taught—gently and charitably, but firmly, clearly and courageously.

For there has been emerging in recent years a concept which suggests, in essence, that there is not in reality one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church, but that there are at least two Churches: the hierarchical Church, on the one hand, or the "institutional" Church, and on the other hand, the Church of the individual conscience, the Church of the People, or "Popular Church."

What has given rise to this misinterpretation of the nature of the Church, this error in ecclesiology? Many factors could be cited; time permits mention of only one—the confusion generated by unorthodox interpretations of the Second Vatican Council's position on pluralism (a position upheld and further elucidated by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II).

Some theologians speak of pluralism of cohesion and pluralism of division, others of complementary and contradictory pluralism, others of the pluralism of concord and the pluralism of dissent. One might simply use the terms: sound and unsound pluralism. Pope Paul VI makes and explains the distinctions, recognizes the legitimacy of the one and clearly rejects the other in *Paterna cum Benevolentia* (8 Dec., 1974).

Books Received Cont'd

human animal shivering in an inhuman universe. (pp. 9-10).

This new Dawson volume is an important companion to the excellent studies of secular humanism by James Hitchcock and Jim Likoudis. For it exposes just what the continuous attractions of humanistic thought have been, even to minds bent on the rationalism of the Enlightenment or to the current enemies of religion. At the same time it suggests how to prune and fertilize budding growths, that the discipline of religion may produce good fruit in the Master's garden, and not the dissipation of wild, sour orchards.

Friends of the Fellowship

Archbishop William Borders
Archbishop James J. Byrne

Bishop Anthony G. Bosco
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• Mr. Chancey Stillman, well-known friend of Catholic causes, and a founding member of several important U.S. Catholic institutions is now enrolled as a special friend of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. He was involved in the work of our 1985 Convention and will continue to be of assistance as we plan

the 1986 convention. We wish to pay tribute to him and to the many hundred others who in the past ten years have encouraged and supported those scholars of the U.S. Church who are committed to the Magisterium of Pope and Bishops.

The Fellowship will sponsor a meeting in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, March 15, 1986 to review *The Effects of the Extraordinary Synod*. Fr. Kenneth Baker, S.J., who will attend the Rome sessions, will be the speaker. More information later. The Executive Board will meet on that occasion.

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1986 Fellowship Convention

Theme: The Spiritual Life of Catholics

Dates: Friday, Saturday, Sunday - September 26, 27, 28th

Place: New York City, Hotel Roosevelt, 46th Street and Madison Avenue (four blocks from St. Patrick's Cathedral)

Because this is the first convention in the midtown of New York, we wish to gain some idea of those who might be interested well in advance. The convention becomes less expensive depending on its size. We also wish to give preference to Fellowship members from outside New York, rather than to non-member walk-ins.

The tentative list of speakers will include Cardi-

nal Edouard Gagnon of Rome and Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York, celebrant and homilist. Further information will be available in the March *Newsletter* and by mail.

Item of Interest

• *Nuestro Tiempo* is a current monthly magazine having the biggest circulation among university magazines in Spain. It was founded in 1954 by Professor Antonio Fontán, and presently is published under the sponsorship of the School of Journalism of the University of Navarre in Pamplona, Spain. Anyone interested in more information about this magazine may write to Juan Antonio Giner, Editor-in-Chief.