

## **Moral Themes**

*from editorial articles in Faith Magazine by Edward Holloway*

page:

2. Conscience and Natural Law (Jan/Feb 1991, vol. 23, no.1)
17. Situation Ethics: Do we have a nature? (Jul/Aug 1991, vol.23, no.3)
31. Looking at the Problem of Evil (May/Jun 1989, vol.21, no.3)
44. Is it Possible to Sin Mortally? (Jul/Aug 1982, vol.14, no.2)
55. Some Identities of Love (Jan/Feb 1985, vol.17, no.1)
70. Premarital Sex: Crisis the Church Must Face (Jan/Feb 1982, vol.14, no.1)
83. The Covenant of Christian Marriage (Sep/Oct 1979, vol.11, no.5)
92. The "Meanings" of Marriage (Nov/Dec 1989, vol.21, no.6)
157. At the Heart of Community (Jul/Aug 1985, vol.17, no.4)
120. Money, Meaning and Morality (Jan/Feb 1988, vol.20, no.1)
132. Reflections on The Great God Mammon (Jul/Aug 1990, 22.4)
157. Fact and philosophy in Liberation Theology (Nov/Dec 1984, vol.16, no.6)

## CONSCIENCE AND THE NATURAL LAW

It is impossible to treat of conscience without coming at once into the domain of 'the natural law'. Yet this expression is straightaway a great turn off and many read no further when mention is made of it. This is not because of modern controversies in faith and morals which impinge upon the 'natural law', it is because the treatment of the subject, the very concept itself is so often presented as appallingly dry, and hopelessly abstract. One will try to avoid that is no reason why the subject of conscience in relation to the abstract sounding 'natural law' should be a turn off. Scholastic manuals, whether ancient or modern, do tend to be but little related to the supreme thing which the intelligent Catholic, and Catholic student, wants to know about, - the *living root* of conscience, in its relationship to the living and loving God. St. Augustine is excellent on the natural law, because whether you agree with him or not, he writes in all topics, from the real - the existential, the approach from real life. He does tend to be very diffuse. St. Thomas Aquinas, although he writes in the essentialist, rather dry shorthand of the medieval schoolmen, is magnificent on the whole theme of the natural law.<sup>1</sup>

### **Law Of Life And Being**

Conscience is a judgment, even when it is a vague, implicit judgment—a confused feeling of 'not being quite happy about all this'. It is a judgment about right and wrong, good and evil, perfect and imperfect, and it is not abstract at all. It goes to the root of our own being, and into the depths of our relationship in life, and in prayer, to God. In the higher degrees of application, it may be a judgment about God loved with more perfect or less perfect communion—nothing concerning 'sin' at all. This inner judgment which brings happiness or unease may be about the 'inspirations' of God i.e. deeper insights into truth or charity carried out or refused in our day to day spiritual life. Whether the judgment is about basic and binding good and true or about the loyalty to God of perfect friendship, *conscience* is always the recognition of a law of life and being. From the ten commandments level of 'must' to the highest level of 'could' in the

generous saint, this judgment at once intellectual and emotional rises through grace into communion with the Eternal Law and the Persons who are the lawgiver. For the Eternal Law is spoken not in code, but in the being of Him who said “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me*” (Jn 14:6); or again: “*I am the Light of the world, he who follows me walks not in darkness but has the Light of life*” (Jn 8:12). This light of the spiritual creature is at once transcendent and outside its being, and again through grace and love immanent to its being. It is then both the law of the soul, and the ‘draw’ upon man (cf. Jn 6:44), both of which are implicit in the recognition that is ‘conscience’.

### **The Spirit that fills the Earth**

Theologians in their manuals usually address the natural law starting from the creation of mankind, and so to that recognition of God’s law in the powers of the spirit which we call the voice of conscience. This is a pity, and because of it they miss a lot of points. In a recent article<sup>2</sup> one agreed with the Archbishop of York, albeit with a touch of irony, that we needed to ponder more seriously the relations of biology and theology in human nature. Seriously, we do. Natural law begins with what I have so often called ‘*The Unity-Law of Control and Direction*’. This is the mutual ministry of one being upon another which holds in balance the equation of creation. From the beginning, in its first explosion, matter-energy is built upon a *natural law* of action and reaction to development and fulfilment. Through it comes the overall ascent of being in Evolution itself.

This Law prompts and mutates to higher forms of being, and ultimately to life, and the body of man. It is quintessentially the Law of the good and the true. It is only through this Law that all natures are framed, and they all seek their life and fulfilment in due season from God. Where there is *due season* there is the law of Nature, i.e. the natural law. This is the law by which natures below man are framed, by which they minister and are ministered to within Nature. These are the harmonics of what Augustine and Aquinas called ‘the Universal Law’, and ‘the *providence* of God’. These

older masters do glimpse the majesty of that Unity-Law which holds all things in balance under the Law of the good and the true until it climaxes in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. They do not develop it. Today we could do better on a larger canvas than theirs. A lovely line in the book of Wisdom aptly chosen for the entrance antiphon of Pentecost Sunday sums up what we are seeking to say: *“The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole earth, and that (orb) which contains all things has knowledge of his voice”* (Wis 1:7).

### **In Him we live and are and have our being**

What the ancients called God’s *providence* was the mediation to matter, and in the material order, of the natural law. It is the seeking for one’s proper good and true, in the harmony of wise order, from the roots of one’s being. It is also the *finding* of this harmonic law of creation in the natural environment within which *one lives and moves and has one’s being*. For the merely material (and *pace* Rahner, material life cannot ‘transcend itself’ directly into the spiritual) it is deterministic, environmental law. Life below man is not reasoning, but it is reasonably ruled. Therefore if man was created by a process of evolution according to the body, then all through long ages of the ascent of the brain, Nature in him had sought its good and true, its natural law, its times and its seasons in innocence and due obedience. When the spirit was created into the final mutation within the order of the universe, (and the brain needed the spirit to be intelligible even as brain), man already had knowledge of the natural law.

Nature in man brought a good inheritance to the soul. When man is made, it is no longer true that it is the natural law immanent within the environment of matter in which man *lives and moves and has his being*. That law of determinism passes now under the control of the soul, which is like a personal god within man, although that ‘god’ can, as free, disobey the eternal God. It is not exactly true that man overpasses the natural law within matter. That law is synthesized in him with the law of the spirit, just as man’s being is matter and spirit in synthesis. The spirit needs its own law of life and being, which is the thrilling meaning of St. Paul to the Athenians when he says of God: *“in Him we live, and move, and have our being”* (Acts 17:28). God himself is the

Environmental Law of life and fulfilment for man. Immediately we begin to see from afar how the natural law—the basic law of man’s nature and his good and true in any order—is about to pass into the order of grace and divinization, and culminate through priest, prophet and Old Covenant, into the Covenant of the communion of spirit and of flesh with the Being of God Incarnate. This is the climax of the law of life and being which was spawned in the first flash of creation.

### **Conscience A Positive Judgment**

Man, through his spiritual soul—the principle in us all of reflective knowledge and free will—has direct knowledge of good and of evil. He knows without demonstration that ‘good must be sought and evil be avoided’. This is the root of conscience. All know this, because we are made substantially and essentially to the image of God. In God ‘being’, ‘good’ and ‘true’ are convertible terms, because supreme spiritual reality cannot be thought of or defined except as the all-wise, the all-good, and the all-perfect. Wisdom and truth and good define the very concept of God and the actual reality of God. The soul is simple in its nature, so within us—in the synthesis of matter and spirit which is man—the recognition of good and evil and the power to judge of good and evil are of the simple nature of the soul. This is the root of conscience in us all. God is the just judge, and the judge of all that exists, simply because in Him the true, the good, and his reality itself are all one thing, one living, non-abstract perfection of being: *Actus Purus*, i.e. ‘Being God’.

Conscience in our own being is also a judgment proceeding from the simple root of the spirit, because just as God cannot be conceived except as defined through the good and the true, so also no being created to God’s substantial likeness can exist without the ‘habit’, or inner capacity, to know the true and the good, and to distinguish good from evil. That is why God judges us, and we live in holy—that is filial—fear of his judgments. That is why, willing and unwilling, we judge ourselves; and with prudence, and not to passing of sentence, we judge others. We have power to judge, because we have power to discern.

### **Natural Law as Ministry of Well Being**

Pleasure and pain are simple judgments of the animal organism concerning a good to be sought or an evil to be fled from. What is physical in man concurs with the judgment of the soul concerning good and evil. So when conscience ‘gnaws’ us, we sense a response jointly in body and in soul to evil done, to the lie lived. But as earlier said, the body through its history and pedigree has had knowledge of the natural law. Of its own nature the flesh cooperates with the spirit in the judgment of conscience. The natural law as it applies to the body of man teaches us that all organs must work together perfectly for the good of the whole. If there is excess or defect in any operation or secretion, there is disease.

The same principle applies to the power of the spirit to judge *the due proportion*, the ‘organic’ relationship so to speak, of pleasure to function, and to overall meaning in the right and wrong of life. Thus by our very spiritual nature we can and must judge that eating for its own sake, alcohol in excess, the pleasures of sense, including the sexual unrelated to meaning and ministry, are ‘wrong’ because the whole point of natural law is that it is the law of the wise, proportionate and fulfilling in every order of being. What is true of the internal workings of the human body upon itself is true of the proportion, the ‘providence’ which governs our seeking or acceptance, of pleasures in relation to the meaning and ministry which nature itself has placed upon them. In all aspects and relationships, the natural law is the recognition of that law of life and being by which our reality is constituted in its integrity and in the governance of its fulfilment.

### **Sin As Disaster Natural And Supernatural**

Sin, the power to rebel against a law of life upon which one is made, and over which one is *not* the master, destroys the harmony of man’s nature, both unto God and unto the balance and due proportion of his own psyche or psychological make-up. The basis of sin is self-adoration. Thus every power of the spirit, especially of the intellect is bent to self-righteousness, self-assertion, self-opinion. Alas, we have no self-righteousness, the measure of our righteousness is the Eternal Word—the Logos, the Mind of God. The

root of sin as arrogance, making self-adoration our natural end and law, is indicated with precision in Genesis in the temptation of Adam and Eve: *“you will not die, the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you will be like gods, knowing good and evil”* (Gen 3:5). In other words, you are able to do as you like, accountable to yourselves alone. God is accountable to himself alone. God is self-adoration, because God is the ontological measure of all good, of all laws of natural fulfilment. God is *the Law*, by definition of his reality; we are not, nor any angel, nor anything created whatever.

The presence and power of the soul is godlike to the flesh within man’s being. The effect of the very first sin is to bring an imposed ‘law of disobedience’ into the flesh and the psyche of man. We cannot treat of it now, but St. Paul touches profoundly upon it in the letter to the Romans, and St. Augustine treats magnificently of it especially in his works against the Pelagians. The Church, unlike a certain modern theologian, did not find in Augustine “a flawed genius”, but one who expounded clearly and in detail, what was her doctrine of original sin. Augustine expounded, and Aquinas accepted without demur, the effects of concupiscence which follow the loss of original gracious communion with God: addiction to passion for its own sake, the jangling disarray of all our pleasure principles, of which we are sadly aware. Original sin itself is not concupiscence as disobedience to wisdom. Original sin is the interior wound, the existence of a principle of intrinsic disobedience of nature to God, by which we lose the immanent justification of grace, and even when redeemed, are unable to ascend in holiness to God in a straight line.

### **Natural law and Positive Divine Law**

The natural law is too often regarded as a dry discussion as to whether we have a natural power to recognise a code of right and wrong and to be obliged by it. So the discussion revolves around our power to know that physical pleasures, riches, spiritual and intellectual gifts etc., are not the most important and final purposes of life. It is applied especially to the argument concerning whether reason and conscience can judge that it is sinful to frustrate the end-purpose of the sexual act, whether apart from

sin, mankind would inevitably know that divorce was wrong, fornication was wrong, and so forth. These things do in fact fall under the competence of the natural law, and our answer would have to be the perennial answer of the great theologians and the magisterium of the Church.

Conscience is a judgment of conformity to God's law, whether this be concerning the basic use and proportion of our being, and its pleasures of flesh and spirit, or whether it concerns the measure of the justice and charity we owe to God and our neighbour. The effect of sin is to confuse and coarsen the judgment of the spirit, but sin can never destroy its basic capability. Social pressure, social evil, (and guilt in society is *not* original sin, either as fact, or as inheritance) passion and the example of others, all these can deeply wound the judgment of conscience. It is imperative for us fallen men that God should reveal, and in revealing underline the perspective of conscience. It is like putting correct lenses to very disordered eyes. St. Augustine is precise upon this: "*so that men could not claim that the law was uncertain, God wrote on the Tablets of the Law what men would not read in their hearts. Assuredly these commandments were written there, but men did not want to read them there. So God thrust them under their very eyes, that they might be constrained to see them also in their consciences. At the voice of God moving in upon them from without, men as it were fled to their inner being, finding the same testimony*".<sup>3</sup>

### **God's Law And God's Life**

We must now leave this basic understanding of the root of conscience arising from those powers of intellect and will which integrate the very substance of angel or of man. We leave any suggestion of the law of conscience as "thou shalt not" to concentrate upon the relationship of the law of right and wrong to the communion of grace we have with the living God. It is to be observed that the most basic of the 'Laws of Nature' promulgated by Moses did not rest upon a bond of negativity. They all descend from "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and with all thy strength*" (Deut 6:5); to which Jesus added "*and thy neighbour as thyself for God's*

sake”, proclaiming that on *“these two there does depend the whole of the Law, and the prophets as well”* (Mt 22:40).

Natural law has another and more delightful aspect. It is the positive law of life and being by which we integrate the powers of our soul, power to know and power to love, into beauty and integrity of being. Thus we reach up to God, the fulfilment of our pilgrim journey. The judgment which is conscience is not an abstract power, nor do we exist in a static condition. We are not created finished, ready-made, we are infants in spirit as well as in the flesh. A baby cries for milk at birth, so we cry to God for our “natural milk without guile” (1Pet 2:2). The milk of God is our breast-feed; and in continuity with this, the Body of Christ is given as our daily Bread. We live within Him, and He lives in us. We were once the ‘wild vine’, now we are engrafted onto the root which is Christ.

‘Grace builds on nature’, to exceed its bounds but not to change nature. To be “co-sharers of the divine nature” exceeds all dues of nature, but by very nature we are made to the image of God’s nature. The Law of Life and Being who is God, is given to us as the Way, Truth, and Life-law of our created nature. We are seekers, not only from birth, but from the moment of animation of our parental seed. What we call the ‘Divine Law’ is the continuation of God’s nourishing of those powers which constitute our souls as spiritual. The Divine Law comes with the touch of God, giving us grace to grow in the likeness, the goodness and the joy of Our Father who is in heaven.

With good reason St. Paul (following the usage of the Old Testament), calls the disciples of Christ “the saints”. Our one and common vocation is to *“be holy, for I am Holy, says the Lord”* (Lev 19: 1-4). The animal lives entirely within the law and the material order of good which is around it. In this it lives and moves and has its being. As children, our bodies lived by mother’s milk and the bread which was the sweat of our father’s brow. In this we live, and move and have our being. As persons - as body and soul, living communions of matter and spirit - the energy who is God is immanent within us and is the principle of our immortal life.

The touch of the Divine prompts in us life and being. Thus we grow in stature of being. We call it 'the state of grace'. God is our Father, so we ask him for bread as we were taught to do. He gives us the "Bread come down from heaven", the Bread of Life. Therefore in God's own Self, *we live and move and have our being*. Note the parallelisms in the use of this phrase. They follow what St. Thomas calls the analogy, or intrinsic degrees of being. They are all participations, far or near, in the Divine Law, the Law of the Good, by which everything created is constituted in wisdom and seeks its good in due proportion of wisdom.

### **Conscience not Autonomous**

There is, then, no autonomy for the intellect of man over and against the wisdom that measures the Intellect of God. There is no autonomy for man as a law unto himself, against the Divine Law through which we are made. There is no autonomy for human conscience which can say "I must obey my conscience" against the truth revealed by God in Jesus Christ. The perceptions of our intellect, and the judgments of our will are directly related to the wisdom of God and to the good of our nature and our persons revealed by God in Jesus Christ—that is in Himself. If conscience were autonomous, we would be our own end and self-sufficiency.

The quotation from St. Augustine given earlier applies exactly here. The Divine Law is not alien to the honest law of our own being and perception. We are made for truth, and in the embracing of the truth as wisdom, we find our good and our joy. The effect of Divine Law is to clarify and develop that law of life and being - of integrity - in our person, which we discover, if we are honest, at the root of our being. The demand for autonomy, "I will make up my *own* mind", despite God revealing his and our law of life and being, is the very arrogance at the heart of the description of the first sin and the occasion of the fall of mankind. Ignorance may excuse, passion may paralyze, but arrogance is the sin of Satan, and in its most final rebellion, it is the sin against the Holy Spirit of God.

## **The Mind of Christ in the Mind of Peter**

It would be out of order towards the end of this article to embark upon the sexual controversies and agonies of this age. The subject is vaster than vast. The foundation must first be laid, our hope has been to clarify a little the Law of Nature, and the Divine Law of grace which builds on nature, as more than *thou shalt not*. Its root is *thou shalt*, the seeking for that wisdom, truth and good which integrates us into the life of God. Thus we become “co-sharers of the divine nature”.

However one reference in current discussion is made here: there can be no exceptions in the internal forum of conscience and confession, nor in the external forum of theological opinion, to any precept of natural or Divine Law. *Epikeia* does not apply here. This concept, which is Greek for clemency or indulgence, covers only cases which ‘the lawgiver would not have wished to include under his statute’. It does not apply to Divine Law. The Old Testament concession of divorce, given by Moses, was a derogation from the truth of man’s being, occasioned by the coarseness of sin. Christ said so and revoked the concession. In the New Covenant in Christ, there is no derogation tolerated from the truth which defined human nature “in the beginning”.

This writer has been reproved by some traditionalist theologians in the past for saying that perhaps an exception can be made not from the law, but from the right to the natural use of marriage where a man refuses his duty in responsible parenthood and will not cooperate in any form of natural birth-control. Where such a man threatens a woman with the break up of the family if there is another child, imposing intolerable fear and grief, may she not equate him with a rapist and use barrier methods of contraception? She could not use pills, since these, and the various injections, seem to be abortifacients. I have said that I would think she can, and have given such advice.

If those who do so are not right about this, it is the duty of the Holy See, which is well aware of the opinion and the query of lawfulness behind it, to give answer if we are wrong. It is impossible nowadays to say ‘consult reliable authors’, who are such? In a matter so perplexed we need, if in error, the grace of Peter to help us teach the mind of Christ. There are no excuses directly from Divine and Natural law, nor can there be

appeal to ‘conflicting ends or purposes’ within such law. God did not make us divided against our nature. There may be a case for denying to an aggressor against the justice and charity of Christian love the results of a moral aggression. There will never be a right to murder the life once conceived in the womb.

### **The Divinity of Christ in the Magisterium**

The Magisterium of the Church—her solemn teaching—is the extension on earth of the Divinity of Christ, and one authority with it. She declares the conscience of Christ, and there is no human autonomy of conscience against the conscience revealed in Christ, whether as Son of God or Son of Man. There is no real Divinity in Christ unless there is continuance through history of the word of The Word. Without this there is no validity in *“he that hears you hears Me”* (Lk 10:16). The structures of Catholic Christianity whether from Rome or from Eastern Orthodoxy require such an identification. The rebellion four hundred years ago against the authority and inerrancy of Pope and Councils was in fact a rebellion against the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, immanent within the life of the Church, by which the Spirit leads us into *“all truth, receiving of the things that are mine, and revealing them to you”* (Jn 16:12-16).

At the Reformation the essential role of the Spirit was replaced by the role of ‘the Book’. Now that the critics have demolished the authority of the Book, such Christianity is found to be stripped of living Divinity and any final authority. Cardinal Newman put it so well in his *Difficulties of Anglicans*: without *divine* authority there is no way the Church can withstand the independent, self-assertive and arrogant mind of man for *“there is a constant rising of the human mind against the authority of the Church, and that in proportion as each individual is removed from perfection”*<sup>4</sup>. Newman has a profound grasp of the consequences of original sin as a lesion of nature, and placed the heart of concupiscence where it should be located, in *the pride of life*, and the wilfulness of human opinion. The work of redemption cannot continue on earth, unless within the Church - whether for discipleship or for crucifixion by men - there still teaches the *certain* word of the Eternal Word.

### **Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Structure of the Church**

We can conclude with a more delightful aspect of the Divine Law. Remember how it ascends through the orders of being according to their degree of creation. The natural law in matter below man and in living things below man is the law by which their very being is structured and by which they seek their good and true, their times and seasons from that natural law which other being, i.e., the environment around which ministers to them. This same law of wisdom and good—ministering the knowledge of good to be sought, evil to be avoided—is recognised by very nature through the powers of our spiritual soul. It proceeds further; recognising the intrinsic *dignity* of human function, the relationship between pleasure and ministry in all the powers of life - physical and spiritual. This recognition by judgment—by ‘conscience’—perceives also the order of justice and charity between man and man. There is no cry that rises more often or more spontaneously from a playground of young children at play than: “not fair, not fair”!

The positive revelation of God underlines and clarifies the jurisdiction of this Law of life and being. Jesus Christ is its final word, for the Law in Him is synonymous with Divine love and perfection, and as Son of Man, King of all creation, He is the fount of its promulgation. The Church of Christ—the People of God—declares this word of the Word until the end of time. To guarantee its truth and inerrancy through the apostles to the end of time, is the personal work and particular ministry in creation of the Holy Spirit of God. We insist on the positive aspect of such ‘Law’. It is the conformation of our being to the Being of God: the communion in joy, love and humble obedience of our minds and hearts to God, through Jesus Christ - Son of God, and Son (i.e. Prince) of Man.

### **Perfection: The Summit of all God’s Law**

There is yet a higher manifestation of this Law of life, which is the working of wisdom, good and truth, and which transcends the boundaries of ‘must’, and enters the communion with Christ of the soul in the order of ‘I could’. This is the order in which we recognise the good of God according to perfection, sheer free will, without question of sin. In this degree of the ‘Law’ of God we join ourselves to Jesus Christ as friends,

brothers and sisters, and respond to the good that I could do, the love I could show, the brotherly or sisterly mercy I have within my power. This highest and most delightful order of the Divine Law—the Law which teaches *“be holy for I, the Lord your God, am Holy”*—may call us to give our whole lives, and all our powers to the ministry to our brothers and sisters in the priesthood, for instance, or in the Religious Life.

This recognition of what I *could* do transcends the good that I *must*, do, but remains within the decree of the Eternal Law. We should remember how it was promulgated: *“You shall love the Lord your God with your whole soul, with your whole mind, and with your whole strength. And, the second is like unto it: you shall love your neighbour, as you love yourself”*. We love ourselves the most and truly as we grow in the knowledge of God, the love of God, and the conformation of our whole person to the wisdom and will of God. This brings inner happiness, but also clarity and insight of soul. As we deepen, we see how we could love our brothers and sisters in this same love of God, which is our joy.

This *‘synderesis’*, this habitual recognition of the order of God’s good and God’s will—going far beyond the order of the necessary—prompts us to many a work, relationship, humility, and bestowal of time, energy and money on the spiritual growth in beauty and health of soul of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. This way of perfection follows directly the path of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. While He did not have to and had no constraint upon Him, He gave his life as a redemption for many, - for brothers and sisters, the grateful and the ungrateful. In the gift of the Eucharist and on the Cross, Jesus Christ reveals to us the apex of the Divine Law. This was and is the total love of the Father, and the total love *“eis to telos”* (*“unto the uttermost”*) of the *“men You gave Me”* (John 13:1). It is also the climax of the judgment concerning good and evil which is *‘conscience’*: all that I must, and all whatsoever that I can.

*"I call with my whole heart;  
Answer me, Lord  
I will keep Your statutes.  
I call to you; O save me  
That / may heed your instruction.*

*Hear me, as your love is unchanging,  
And give me life O Lord, by your decree.  
My persecutors in their malice are close behind me.  
They are far from your law.*

*Yes thou art near me Lord,  
And all your commandments are true.  
I have long known from your Law,  
That you have given it eternal foundations".  
(Ps 119(118):145-152)*

## **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine cf. *De Trinitate* Lib. 12. ss 12 & 13; *De Libero Arbit.* Lib. 2.cap. 10; *Contra Faustum* Lib 22. cap 16& 27; *De Peccat. Merit et Remiss:* cap 9; *Contra Julianum* cap 3; *De Natura et de Gratia* cap 50-57; *De Genesi ad Litteram* Lib. 10. cap. 18-20 inc.

St. Thomas Aquinas On Natural Law and Divine Law Cf. *Summa Theologiae* 1.2 arts 19 & 90-96; *Summa Contra Gentiles* bk 1.3.140 et seq.

On Conscience cf. *Summa* 1.2. art 58, & 2.2. art 45; 1.79 art 12; *De Veritate* q. 16 arts 1 & 4; q. 17 arts 1,3 & 4.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial in *Faith* Sept/Oct 1990 vol no

<sup>3</sup> Augustine *Ennarr. in. Ps.57* n.1

<sup>4</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Difficulties of Anglicans* p.331

## **APPENDIX**

*On Natural Law and the Divine Law:*

Summa: 1.2 arts 90-96 inc. also Summa: 1.2. art 19. Contra Gentiles. bk. 1.3. l40et seq.

*Conscience:*

many references but see Summa: 1.2. art 58, & 2.2. art 45. De Veritate: q. 16. arts 1-4 inc. De Veritate: ql<sup>7</sup>. 1,3,4.

*Svnderesis:*

The habit of mind by which the personality is inclined by love of God to recognise the law of God in practical life: Summa: I. 79. art 12.

*Divine & Eternal Law : St. Augustine.*

De Trinitate: Lib. 12. secs 12 & 13. De Libero Arbit.Lib. 2. cap. 10 Contra Faustum: lib 22. cap 16 & 27.

DePeccat. merit et remiss: cap 9.

Contra Julianum: cap 3.

De natura ci de gratia: cap 50-57.

De Genesi ad Litteram:Lib. 10. cap. 18-20 inc.

*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique:* Article on Conscience is abstract and limited in scope. Article on Natural Law, Divine Law, and Positive Law is excellent. Aquinas goes best to the root of conscience as - love of the law of God, because **it** reflects the personality of God and the fulfilment of Man in God. Add modern authors according to taste!

## SITUATION ETHICS: DO WE HAVE A NATURE?

The title could have been framed to ask whether there is a right and a wrong for human nature, i.e. for “everyman”. We could have asked whether the Church can define a specific moral norm that binds the conscience of every man or woman everywhere, throughout all history? That is what the argument actually is about. Such questions may surprise some of our lay readers: an amazing number do not yet know that there is spiritual and intellectual war to the death in the Church. The question inferred in the title will not surprise all young men in seminaries, nor any of them in the more prestigious teaching universities of the Church, which obviously include the Roman universities. It is well known that some sort of encyclical or other document concerning the certainty of the past and present solemn moral rulings of the Church is adumbrated. There have been anticipatory growlings and rumblings in the liberal’ Catholic press~ the usual hints of theologians in organised revolt, mass signatures and soon. Ever since the end of the last Council. when the new ‘Modernism’ began to sweep into power in the intellectual and teaching centres of the Church, there has been growing a doctrine which denies to the Church the very possibility of defining specific moral norms that bind the human conscience absolutely and all the time. Some writers, more honest than most, state succinctly that the Church *mana*~ (they make it uncertain) have the power to define articles of faith as belief, but not the intrinsic wrongness of a moral act in all human situations and circumstances.

### **A Factor of Cost**

In the language of the market economy there is a ‘bottom line’ here. The argument is through philosophies and theories, but the bottom line is the factor of cost. Behind the assault of Situation Ethics on the power of the Church to define what is moral, is the cost of chastity in all its aspects. The row cannot be and is not limited simply to the moral norms of sex, marriage, abortion, the admission of the divorcee to Holy Communion, in vitro fertilisation etc. But, it is here that the pain comes. We are seeing a sort of Freudian led revolt against any limitation of the Pleasure Principle. We called the new system of moral evaluation “Situation Ethics”. It is the

general description, but an older name. In the battle of the Reviews it will appear nowadays as either *Proportionalism* or as *Consequentialism* according to whether it is regarded from its initial principle, or its end in view. The names make no difference. One would place Bernard Haring among the older and better-known proponents. especially in the area of sexual ethics, although there are deeper and more radical writers. It is often easy to see what the deviant human heart is after. We can recognise 'strategic thinking' with a cynical smile. It is not enough so to see and dismiss. A false philosophy is the root from which the denial of God's truth will always grow again. Theological errors depend on the philosophical. They both serve the arrogance of the mind of fallen man. and the desires of fallen man. They add also to the agonies of the human heart which is good. but confused. and under pressure to succumb.

### **Proportionalism And/Or Consequentialism**

So what first is Proportionalism in modern ethics, as this perspective challenges the traditional morality and moral norms of the Catholic Church? A first, less important aspect is the replacement of the principle in moral theology of "double effect" in the solving of perplexed. difficult cases of right and wrong with Proportionalism. In the old system moral acts which had consequences. were also ends in themselves, right or wrong in themselves. The act had a value. Adultery for instance was always wrong. The act had a nature and a definition, and natures could not be changed. You could never do the intrinsically wrong in order to attain a good end, or consequence. The evil was always evil. In the new scheme, an act like fornication, adultery, or whatever does not have a value or nature in itself ... not if it is intended as a means to an end, as part of a whole. It becomes an act-as-means, and is said to be pre-moral. It is defined by the ultimate consequences foreseen, hence Consequentialism. It is good or bad in proportion to that ultimate dynamic end in view, hence Proportionalism. In this scheme, to the question: may I use artificial contraception to avoid risk to my marriage, the answer will always be "of course". What then about the Popes who have said "not for any reason whatsoever"? The answer: they exceeded their powers, and the powers inherent in the Church. Ethics, when the chips are down, are personal, dynamic decisions. The Church can give wise guiding rules, a bit like nanny. We all know what happens to the wise finger wagging of nanny.

We had to use judgements of proportion also in the traditional ethical systems of the Church. But not in the modern sense. Clergy trained long before the Council know some of the old, stereotyped heart-break cases: there is a heavily defended fort and I need to obliterate it. It is however crammed with refugees, non-combatants, and they have a right to live. Can I bomb the fort to obliteration? The older moralists said “yes”, it is a military target. You do not have to kill hundreds of your infantry. There is a double effect, one intended, the other incidental and unfortunate. The military target has the *nature* of a fort. The civilians ought not to be there. Your act is morally lawful in its first, motivated intention. Nevertheless, you had to have a proportionate reason for wreaking such slaughter. If the fort was not militarised, was by-passable with reasonable ease, was “expendable”, you had to think of the civilians and forego your theoretical rights. There was amoral estimate. With hindsight, always the clearest of sight, many ask whether during the Second World War the Americans had such a proportionate reason to destroy the old monastery upon Monte Cassino. Be that as it may, they could appeal to the principle of natures and of rights. However, *Proportionalism* does not mean that sort of judgement. It means that an act which we used to teach as always wrong of its very nature is never wrong simply of its very nature. It has to be judged in relation and *proportion* to a good one foresees or hopes to achieve. All moral acts are intrinsically relative.

### **Civilisation Of Subjectivism**

It will be clear that the “new system” is pure Subjectivism<sup>2</sup>. Its proponents deny this, but there is just no ground course laid for an *absolute* moral evil. Nobody can possibly foresee, or be certain about, the “good” consequences of actions which, as the Church has always judged them, are wrong of their nature. To do the bad, that good may come of it, is the same as to say that might will always bring in the right. The convenience of this Proportionalism to difficulties in chastity, to “annulment”, to the admission to Holy Communion of the divorced and remarried is obvious. It can be invoked when a couple and their counsellor agree that the Church judges such cases with “rigid legalism”, with “sheer tutorism” etc., etc., (see Bernard Haring, quoted in FAITH May/June 1991, from *Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed). Some interesting moral possibilities arise. For instance, my physically ungifted, but kind and sweet secretary

loves me frantically, but alas, nobody has ever loved her - always a wall-flower, always cold-kissed goodbye! May I make therapeutic love to her, to stave off an impending breakdown, and reassure her of her personal worth? It will be very noble of me. I could do much better for myself. Your Proportionalist will nod assent, in this "grave" case. Most would nod assent even if it were not so very noble of me, as long as the consequence sought was "true". According to the traditional, and still holding morality of the Church, there is no good, therapeutic fornication. The same applies to pre-marital sexual union. According to one source, nobody has yet proposed a justifying occasion for bestiality ... but courage surely, these are early days yet! A very pure culture of Proportionalism, or Consequentialism, permissiveness based on the subjection of acts to a claimed good end in view, can be culled from the Archbishop of York's address to the House of Lords, during the debate on the Embryo Bill, to which response was made in FAITH (Sept/Oct. 1990). Dr. Habgood's presentation of the impossibility of formulating any absolute morality concerning man, or rights deriving from *the nature* of the foetus swayed the debate in the House of Commons as well as the House of Lords.

### **Confessional Becomes Unsafe**

Situation Ethics we have defined thus far in contra-distinction to the traditional principle of the double effect following from a human act—one effect intended, the other not, but causing loss or evil all the same. In casuistry from the double effect, one accepted that acts had a "nature", they could be defined as good or bad in themselves before they were judged in the light of their consequences. Fornication would be an obvious case. Where two effects followed from an act justifiable in itself, in the circumstances, there had to be found principles of priority in justifying what was done. In the new Situation Ethics, one must repeat, an act, again let us say pre-marital intercourse, is not good or bad in itself, only in relationship to the consequence said to be further intended. Graduate students inform me that from questions put in class, the answer to whether you could agree to fornication, or even to sodomy, to save a city could be: yes, it is for a great consequential good. The "sin" even as freely consented and fully enjoyed would be "excused". It had a proportionate cause. The same teacher, asked by way of a trick question, whether *the seal of the Confessional* was always absolute for any cause, replied that it was. He

was reminded that this was only a “specific moral norm established by the Church”. It does not appear in the Bible or in revelation. While said to be dependent on “divine law”, we have only the Church’s say-so, relatively late in ecclesiastical history and canon law to rely on. It cannot be, on Proportionalist teaching, an *absolute* moral norm. He could not answer.

### **Subjectivism And Sin As Self-Adoration**

There are two factors at the root of this modern subjectivism in faith and morals. One belongs to the intellect: whether man has a *nature*, a definition of his being with rights and wrongs which do not evolve nor change intrinsically nor are subject to adaptation with different historical situations. The other factor is the nature of sin; especially sin in man already weak and fallen. It is the condition of sin and sinfulness which makes it so easy for us to accept a false philosophy and theology of human life, even though, from other angles, we presume the exact opposite in matters which do not run counter to the free indulgence of our “pleasure principles”. In theological language, we evince sheer contradiction in our principles of living, when swayed by the concupiscence of the mind, or of the flesh. or of both together. So where is the essence of sin? One would not place it in some dread of death as a ‘loss of being’<sup>4</sup>, a clinging to the goods of the flesh and the world in some sort of self-defence against human mortality. The root of sin must be the same in angels and in men. One has made the point before, angels do not possess genitals. (*Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, p.4<sup>22</sup>) they do not have our sort of pleasure principles. They do not have to fear death either. But they do, or rather they did, sin. The root of sin one suggests is *self-adoration*.

We begin now to get to the heart of the matter. If the life of man is ordained to fulfilment in God, God as a reality, God as other than one’s own personal being, then through binoculars of the mind, we see the concept of a “nature” in the distance before us. Our good, our wisdom, our proper “true”, is going to be defined, and set by One outside of ourselves. We are not a law unto ourselves. In this glimpse from afar we have yet to demonstrate that God himself is a “nature”, an objective, personal reality, with an invariant definition of His being in terms of the good and the true. Nevertheless, we can see it coming. The ultimate choice for us is between God as objective and personal and cosmic Pantheism. The perspective of sin as *self-adoration*

demands consideration. It is the perspective of the temptation of Christ, presented in the Gospels. The adoration of Satan as “God” is suggested basically through self-adoration in this man, in Christ as “this prophet”. The rejection of *self-adoration* with denial of dependence upon God is explicit in the answers of Christ: a) Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God: b) Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test: c) Begone Satan—it is written the Lord thy God shalt thou adore. Him only shalt thou serve! (Matt. 4: 9-10). The final dismissal of Satan’s temptation is only the climax of one same process. Self-adoration is the recognition, and then the rejection of due relationship to God as source of our life and its law, our final end, our good and our true. In that rejection every power, every energy of spirit and flesh is turned to the maximization of my own fulfilment, own way, own will, own pleasure. It is achieved by ME. through ME and with ME<sup>5</sup>

### **Nominalism As Philosophy Of Self-Adoration**

Few, thank God, follow this principle all the way to its ultimate limit. To do so is to end in Satanism, as Christ would have done, if by the impossible, he had listened to Satan. Self-adoration dries up all relationship of justice or charity to God or to the neighbour. It is the path to damnation simply because it denies the whole nature (for there is such a reality) of God himself, and all creation that derives from God. Most of us vacillate uneasily between worship of God and conformity to his law for our life, and worship of self and selfishness. Therefore, in contrition we pray “Oh God, be merciful to me a *sinner*” (Luke 18:13). We are created into an order of charity, not of debt or of necessity, and invited to share the very Being of God, in joy beyond all created conceiving. We are free, we cannot be constrained, yet made by love and called through love. There is only one end and fulfilment for us—to grow by grace, to be able to lay hold upon the all perfect, the all holy, the all beautiful, to whose likeness we have been made.

We are not free to decide what shall be our meaning or our happiness. We are free only to decide whether we will accept the “draw” of the Father, through the Son, in the love who is the Holy Spirit. The clay of our human being cannot say to its potter “why didst Thou make me thus?” (Romans 9:20). We are not self-defined, we did not make ourselves. We are not masters

of our own destiny. Only God can be “self-adoration” because only God is the measure of his own truth, good, and fulfilment.

### **Analogy Between Self-Adoration And Nominalism**

In this discussion of Situation Ethics one could have started from the principles of philosophy which energize theologians who neither accept any constant, objective norm of human morals, nor allow that the Church has power to define any specific moral norm. It would be the more logical approach. The reason logical order has not been followed is that the perspective of “sin” as self-adoration, a narrowing of one’s whole being inwards upon me ‘, throws some *existential* light on the errors of philosophical and theological principle at the base of the rejection both of the Church’s traditional moral principles, amid of her power to define moral doctrine. It is a rejection which, step by inevitable step, ends with total uncertainty (as with Heidegger or Sartre) whether God as Person exists at all. It certainly ends in the purely *nominal* acceptance of the Divinity of Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the *Person* of God. In this writer’s opinion, though some consider such a judgement to be too harsh, this is precisely where the theology of Karl Rahner did in fact land him, whatever tortuous convolutions of thought he distinguished to avoid it. To return to “self-adoration”:it centres all reality, all things, all relationships on ME, amid my “fulfilment”. All relationships of obligation or duty; of family, society, the neighbour, and the Church, shade from the organic and the necessary bond into the dependent, incidental and purely circumstantial.

The perspective is given names like “existential dynamic personalism”<sup>5</sup>, the vision of the nature of man as not static, but dynamic, will-driven, nature “transcending itself’ across evolution, but also in the day by day choices of life. It later develops into pure, sophisticated Egoism. It is the worship of “me” from the judgement criterion of “me”. As the perspective deepens in society, explicitly in the minds of a very few, but implicitly in the social ethos it creates, the more men “enjoy”, use, and abuse other people and things. All painful obligation is repudiated, “it is too much to ask”. The philosophic principle behind Situation Ethics, and “sin” as self-adoration, we kept to the last, because it has a name—Nominalism. Nominalism has been the thought system that first cracked and then destroyed the Christian basis of Western

civilisation. It is the Philosophy of Religion which produced the Reformation and its theology. It is the philosophy of Western Capitalism, of the pure unrestrained profit motive and rule of “market forces”. It manifests itself in ways and outlooks in ordinary life which the man and woman in the street would never dream of linking with “philosophy”

### **Social Nature Of Man Made Incidental**

The system admits of no *necessary* organic links between things which define, and interrelate their very being at its roots. It denies the idea of “cause” as that which makes being *flow into* one’s reality from outside, amid *in-flows* very being into others from ourselves. It says we know only appearances and successions of phenomena. We live by expectancies, not by causal relations (which often involve basic obligations of “nature” ). It denies the idea of any “mutual ministry” of beings one to another, by which their very basic nature is defined. It is in contradiction to the core principle of the Christian Faith. and above all to its sacramental system. In a sacramental system we are all understood, from our roots, as membered one to another, and to Christ, and brought to the Father in the Holy’ Spirit.

The very idea of Faith by *the private* interpretation of the Bible alone, is Nominalist in nature. The social as such is only secondary to the reality of man. The name comes originally from the denial that we know by general or universal ideas and concepts. which as “universal”, going out to others, inter-define and relate the very *being* of things. Realities they said, were known only as singulars. individuals. We gave them “names” (Nominalism) and labels, but we could know only successions of phenomena, the appearances of things. Any inner reality or core, if it existed at all, was beyond the power to know intelligibly of a mind that started with sensations and could not penetrate beyond physical appearances, from the slavery of this “soul” (if we have one) to interpreting only from the data of science.

### **Examples From Real Life**

It is sad, but one cannot turn this article into a full blown philosophic lecture. If the foregoing begins to seem abstract and a little boring to ponder, take now some examples of Nominalism as ME-ism, as lived by people too un-bright to understand philosophy as such. The

recent furore in the media over “virginal conceptions” are such a case. A woman who wants no relationship with a male, and may possibly even be a virgin, demands to have a child by sperm-bank. English Law concurs it’s her “right”. This reduces a man to the level of a bull servicing a sperm bank. It denies and empties out family life and the total, integrated meaning of sexual love. It is ME-ism. In philosophy, it is Nominalism. The individual is not bound by any laws or organic limits of nature. I decide. I make “contracts’ with the outside world. I am not *by nature* contracted in to the outside world, not even by God himself. The same applies to the whole order of sex as pleasure, sex divorced from intrinsic, natural law relationship to life. It covers the pure individualism that allows masturbation, artificial contraception. pre-marital sex, fornication or adultery in “special” cases, abortion, genetic amid other manipulations of human foetuses etc. etc. Even in marriage, a man has no right to insist on the birth of *his* child, to the woman he married as “two in one flesh”. The “woman” has the right to decide on what she does with her body etc etc. Of course she does not. It is a lie against mutual natural rights. The lie is given by the very bodies of male and female, which are *not intelligible* except in terms of a “nature”. an intrinsic, natural inter-relationship, rights that bind both sides, and integrate a pattern of being in body and in soul.

One has to make the point that the non-Catholic Churches have totally given in on all these points. Only the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church holds out. These Ecclesial Communions started out in Nominalism and have collapsed into lawlessness through Nominalism. Let nobody say that philosophy has no relationship to real life. People live by it. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales may be a little tiring at times when he speaks from the height of Mount Olympus. He is often right. His critique of modern architecture is the critique of international bee-hive, high rise matchbox structure. It lacks inspiration, beauty, care, meaning. It says one thing—money, profit. pure function, the cheapest possible. It expresses belly-wise consumerism without pride of culture, pride of community, care of life and beauty. It also is Nominalism.

### **Answering The Philosophy Of Flux**

The attack on the concept of objective natures amid rights, objective good, and evil, has to be

answered especially on the level of the Nature of Man. It is here the Church is directly challenged. We are told that “nature” as St. Thomas Aquinas defined it, and the Church has always considered it, indeed in days long, long before Aquinas, is a static concept which has to be abandoned. Once it is abandoned mind you, then the very Councils of the Church, past, present and future have no certain objective meaning. Definitions are only inspirations upward. Man, they say, has no objective, final meaning or nature. He evolves, within his deepest being. As he develops higher civilisations and power over matter, he adapts to the new historical-relative situations. He changes his morals and his perspectives, and in so doing he changes or “transcends” his very nature. Karl Rahner amid Teilhard de Chardin are both false prophets of this major modern challenge to the Church. For both of them life, in the ascent of evolution “transcends itself” all the time, rising above nature to new relationships of nature. The process goes all the way from the amoeba, through the anthropoid, to the emergence of man. Man through history continues thus to “transcend” himself. There is no final, invariable definition of “Man”. Thus, there is no final, binding morality of Man. The Church is there to assist Man in his upward surge, to advise, point, and inspire. She does not have the power to say either to the individual, or to the community of mankind: “Thou shalt not”, with a categorical binding power. Categories are never final. Men make them.

The basis of human nature is this personal, individual dynamic “fundamental option” for God as ultimate fulfilment. I make my own decisions along that way. I “affirm God in all my choices. The orthodox teaching of the Church concerning mortal sin, makes it clear that you certainly don’t! The root of this philosophical and theological error is the confusion of matter amid spirit as one order of being and reality. It destroys man, destroys time Church. and ultimately destroys God. The whole philosophy and theology of FAITH is to provide an answer to a false philosophy of evolution, and provide the perspective of an absolute, definite, but at the same time *dynamic* nature in life below man, and in man himself. We say it can be done, it must be done, and it must be done in the way we propose. There is no alternative in the field.

### **Full Answers To Nominalism**

If human personality’ is matter and spirit in just one order and concept of thought, then they

argue, (those who deny' time Church's power to define a moral law) just as in nature below man different species and kinds have been evolving all the time, in a dynamic way, and changing the law of their "nature", so man is ascending and dynamic, always changing the laws of his nature. Nobody can pin us down. The first error of this perspective isto fail to notice that while species ascend and differ, they do in fact in Nature *always* have a definite life law, determined by their brain and its relationship to time Natural Law in the Environment around (see FAITH Jan/Feb 1991, '*Conscienceand the Natural Law*') however dynamic they may be said to be. Karl Rahner is typical of this type of philosophic confusion when he refers to matter in *Foundations* as "frozen spirit", which material things are not, and also disregards the subjection of being below man to deterministic specific law. Teilhard de Chardin does exactly the same.

We certainly do need to replace the old, static, Scholastic concept of 'nature' whether in matter, living things below man, or in man himself with one which is indeed more "dynamic", and able to hold "substance and accident" in the unity of one definition and concept. In this way we can justify our knowledge of things as being first of the singular individual entity. In a Thomism based on a Physics now hopelessly out of date, it is taught that our knowledge as intellectual is of the abstracted "form" only', and that the singular as individual is not fully knowable, being individuated by matter, and matter as such is not intelligible in itself. It is possible to offer an alternative to medieval, purely static and non-evolutionary perspectives which do not fit either the data, or the ethos of the modern world, and which here and now are playing into the hands of thinkers like Kant, who infer that we can only know the non-essentials, the "appearances" of things, not the inner core. the *noumenon*, the total intelligibility of the individual real thing.

### **The Pen Mightier Than The Sword**

Readers may be tempted to switch off, but it must be added that it is precisely purely philosophical ideas, those of Karl Rahner, Teilhard de Chardin, and Immanuel Kant which here and now are being urged upon students in the great university seminaries of the United States, and of Europe, to deny that the Church has the power to define specific moral doctrine. The suggestion that we cannot penetrate into the "unknowable" depth of the dynamic individual

consciousness is the actual principle used by a professor of international distinction to deny to the Church the power to define that even a sin like bestiality is always and intrinsically evil. He did not say it *could* be right in some circumstances. He used the Kantian principle to deny that the Church had the power to define its “nature” as intrinsically and always evil. The demonstration that man has a spiritual soul, which cannot be of one same order with matter, will prove that man has indeed an immortal and unchanging principle of being, and that God can, must, and does give to mankind a moral law of the way, truth, and life which is true and invariant for all history. The manner in which this does work out for us in our personal spiritual lives is touched upon in the FAITH issue quoted earlier, ‘*Conscience and the Natural Law*’. The very existence of the Church, the happiness and holiness of men and women, the permanence and dignity of family life, the moral law, the beauty and meaning of chastity and celibacy under vow, depends on our recognition NOW of the roots of the philosophy and theology of decadence. The Church must act to define, not endlessly consult and procrastinate. The thing is not going to slink away after dark.

### **Descent Into Hell**

It is pointless to fail to act for fear of schism in the Church. The schism exists and is getting much worse. Loyalty to Christ demands specific action before another generation of the people is lost, and the chastity of more young priests fails from inner doubts raised by the philosophy and theology taught them, or whispered in private rooms in the degree giving schools of the Church by “men who are in good standing”. As this article is written one notices an inset in *The Times of London*, (Tues. May 7th. New York Notebook):

*“God fearing citizens are turning to a 200 page report by a committee of the Presbyterian Church. The shades of Calvin and Knox must be pale with disbelief over this recipe for reversing the traditional attitude to sexuality which will be put to the General Assembly next month ... the task force of ministers proposes reversing most of the old sexual ‘Thou Shalt Not’ and condoning sex between the unmarried, including gay men, lesbians, and old age pensioners (sic!). Sex, the report says, should be considered acceptable between responsible teenagers’ ...*

*endorsing fornication and homosexuality. The report called 'Keeping Body and Soul Together' argues that it is time for Christians to accept that sexual gratification is a human need that should not be burdened by a sense of sin. This fundamental debate within the Church should not be focused in a limited way on rules of who sleeps with whom, it says.*

All this has a philosophy, it is called *Nominalism*. It is closely related to sin as self-adoration. It broke the unity of Christianity four hundred years ago. It ends in total Agnosticism, the dry rot of the human spirit. It is dishonesty to talk about *ecumenism* until the See of Rome acts against it within its own community and people. We have the means necessary to vindicate anew the beauty and true nobility of Man, in and through the face of Jesus Christ. We must do it now.

*"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you: abide in my love: if you keep my commandments, You will abide in my love, just as I have kept the' Father's Commandments. and I abide in his love. These things have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and you may that your joy may be full."* (John15:10-11).

## NOTES

1. An interesting article by B. Kiely S.J. "The impracticality of Proportionalism" is to be found in the *Gregorianum*, vol. 66 (1985) pp 655 ~686. He gives also a list of "committed" writers against traditional Catholic moral theology headed by Charles Curran and Richard A. McCormick, a list of those who are for traditional norms, and an equally useful list of those who revolve between both sides.
2. B. Kiely, "Subjectivism and the Assessment of Outcomes", from op. cit. above, from p616.
3. *Gregorianum*, no. 71.4 (1990). pp. 713 - 742. In an excellent but difficult article, "The Metaphysical Conundrums at the Room of Moral Disagreement" by John M. McDermott S.J., the author refers in passing to comments by A. Kosnik in "Human Sexuality" (New York, Paulist, 1977).
4. B. Kiely considers that E. Becker in "Escape from Evil" (1975) and also in "The Denial of Death" (1973) (both Collier McMillan, London) argues this position "with force" for "human" evil. One suggests it won't do. The root of sin must be the same in all spiritual natures,
5. My own application of points made by John McDermott, concerning difficulties found for Mark Pontifex and Maritain in their analysis of evil on St. Thomas definition of evil as "the absence of a due good". I would entirely agree; even as a student I could never accept this as an adequate definition of evil. It springs from the too static, totally invariant Thomist concept of "nature". Evil is indeed an absence of due good, but also and mostly, it is the *dynamic* organisation of the powers of one's

being against the whole dynamic plan of God in creation, in oneself, and unto other people. Evil thus is an active, dynamic, wrecking force. It is possible to define nature "dynamically" fully, within an objective concept of nature, it would have come sooner had the Scholastics had the concept of creation by evolution.

6. Terms found in Rahner passim. One could quote "Natur und Gnade" (Einsiedeln. 196(11 or *Foundations* pp 31 - 35, 71 - 79. This is not to imply that such descriptions and perspectives are wrong in themselves, but they seem, to me, to occur in a context of constant ambiguity and obscure intelligibility. The obscurity is due, one suggests, to failure to formulate clearly what is meant, and failure to project a perspective coherent in itself.
7. McDermott op. cit. footnote critique of G. Hughes S.J. "Infallibility in Morals" (Heythrop 978). and I. Schuster S.J. "Ethos and Kirchliches Lehramt (Frankfurt. Knecht 1984) regarding Nominalism in Morals and its impact upon doctrinal definition and certainty.

## LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

It is said that the only real and intelligent objection to belief in the existence of God is the problem of evil. Many will be inclined to agree. Certainly any discussion of the goodness of God and the power of God among younger teenagers will eventually drift to the demand, "if there is a God, why does He let it all happen?" If, on the plane of moral evil rather than physical or 'natural' evil, one replies that with real freedom of the will and the real power of personal sanctifying grace to sweeten and transform our personalities if we will allow Him ... the rejoinder comes, "well, yes, but if He is *almighty* why does He not stop me from sinning and going to hell?" One has heard of a certain seminary professor who teaches his students that "God cannot be called *almighty* because of the problem posed by evil, but *unsurpassable*, yes, certainly". I hope the good God feels flattered at being so put at the top of the class, even if not quite in a class of His own. One is not surprised to learn that the same honest man is unsure of any real distinction between matter and spirit, or between God and his creation. It would follow.

### **God cannot square the circle**

In a mere article we will ponder what perhaps we may understand and *can* answer concerning the problem of evil, without losing pages on what we *cannot*. We will do better to keep to the old categories of *almighty* God and *eternal* God, because as God is utterly and totally *Being*, "pure act", and the transcendental source of all dependent reality, these ancient categories of natural theology are going to be true. Failure to penetrate "mystery" is not due to incompetence in God's being, but in ours. One remembers back to youthful days at St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst during the last war, and to a theologian of some distinction (Fr. Bernard Leeming, S.J.) remarking: "I think the solution of the ultimate problem of moral evil, Fathers, the allowing of the damnation of the spiritual creature, is insoluble to the finite mind. We can only point to the enormous evidence for a Good God, and the complete coherence of the order of his providence for our good. In that, as in the Sacred Heart, we can take our confident refuge".

Fr. Bernard may have been right about the ultimate impenetrability of the mystery of grace and salvation. If he is right (and of this one is less than sure) then the mystery resides in the nature of God and the majesty of God, which even in the order of grace we cannot fully penetrate. We have to avoid the neat Calvinist solution of arbitrary predestination, so very logical to the finite mind. We have also to worry that Catholic schools of thought which teach that “God can always and efficaciously will the salvation of the most deliberate sinner, but of course “according to the modality of free will”, may not be saying the same thing as Calvin. In all the aspects of our post-scholastic but pre-conciliar theology, we need to be careful about admitting cheerfully the infinitely more perfect worlds and orders that *God could have* created, but didn’t. We may be saying that God can always make an infinite number of ever more perfect circles—and of course keep them square. We do not know whether some of the postulates theologians make arbitrarily in the name of the omnipotence of God are simply incompatible with the order of the divine wisdom.

### **God and “Necessity”**

At the root of the so-called “problem of evil” is one great, *necessary* lack of determination on which this writer at least suspects all else hinges. It is that God cannot will us, or our being, or our finality (which is the same thing as our fulfillment) with an intrinsic, metaphysical necessity. God cannot will the angel, either, with an intrinsic necessity. God can only will Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with a necessity which is absolute, because God alone in his own essence is the unique and only Reality which is “necessary”. If God shall decree to know, will, and want anything other than Himself—the spiritual creature made to His, to God’s own spiritual image and substantial likeness—then that creating and the communion of that calling unto God must be an offer, a gift, in God; and in the creature, a desiring in the order of the intrinsically unconstrained. Matter is constrained and predetermined of its nature. It has no one lasting “ego” and fulfillment as men and angels have. It cannot commune with God, even as it cannot offend Him. The spiritual creature, angel or man, shares as spiritual in God’s own self-recognition, self-love, and in that self-determination which we call “freedom”. Its fulfillment will lie in its cooperation with God, as God seeks it and desires its love. There will be God’s one

truth, not any truth, God's one order of goodness, not anything the creature likes. The creature is not its own happiness, it will discover its happiness only in God, in a recognition that is free, from the fundamentals of its being. It will not find God without the seeking and prompting of God; yet its own response is known as "free" from the root of its dignity as spiritual. The spiritual creation does not *have* to obey from very nature and definition as matter does. It can adore and will itself to its own destruction. Yet, come to think of it, do we have any evidence, from the pages of the Gospels, that in any confrontation with Christ, the "unclean spirit" ever asked for its own annihilation?

### **Creation as Community**

If God creates within an order, a ministry of being, then spiritual creatures must be expected to act upon one another in a community of knowledge, love, and influence. This presumption must apply to the angels as well, but upon that order of being we will not linger as so little known to us in detail. The proposition certainly applies to human kind—from the first dependency of our being conceived, to the last grace ministered to us at the hand of another in Christ's name, the last prayer whispered in our ear by loved ones as we die. Thus, we are at all times, a society of friends gathered around the Person of God. If we are capable of refusing the relationship which defines our "righteousness" within the very being of God, it is inconceivable that our life-ministry upon others should always be for good and never for evil! The alternative is to say that to be "good" God must always create an order in which it was morally, if not metaphysically, impossible to reject Him at all. Such a concept is opaque, for it does not cohere with any exercise of "freedom" as we know it on earth, nor with that inner sense of joy in obedience to God as "loved Person" which we sense when we obey the voice of conscience. It does not fit in with that sense of saying "no", with "darkness all surround", which we experience in the deliberate refusal of God's known will.

There is one point of difficulty to which to confess in this matter of the "freedom to sin" of the created spirit—the "special privileges" of Our Lady. In an earlier meditation for the Immaculate Conception (FAITH Vol. 14. No. 6 1982) one suggested that her immunity from Original Sin was not really a special privilege in any event, because if Christ is predestined as the

meaning and climax of all creation, then Mary as willed before Eve was not intrinsically liable to Original Sin, but only extrinsically by physical descent in time. Likewise, while God cannot will anything by an intrinsic necessity except Himself, the role of Mary in God's plan is as close to a work within the Divinity as is conceivable for any creature, touching as it does the union of natures in the Person of Christ. The love with which Mary is loved by God *for Himself* in his divine ordinance is the nearest thing one can get to a grace which, in the subject receiving it, makes deliberate sin, mortal or venial, "metaphysically" impossible, and actually morally inconceivable from its sheer degree of communion with the Being of God. A degree, that is, which makes all else unlovable and undesirable which is opposed to the beauty of God. If there is an order of dependence in being, all of it the utter gift of God, there is no possible intrinsic reason why we should all expect or require of God the status and privileges of Mary. There is no point in being jealous of the Blessed Virgin: of all of us it is true "what hast thou which thou hast not freely received, and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou had'st not received it?" (I. Cot. 4:7).

### **The Mass: God's Holy Communion with all Creation**

When we talk of it being in the power of God to create a spiritual order in which no creature would ever truly and freely sin, we really do not know whether we are talking about an order which is possible at all, or again, an order in which all the other characteristics which bind together our ministry of love, service, action, and communion would be really and freely manifested to the glory of God. If God decrees to create an order and communion, a "society of friends" between Himself, and mutually to one another, what we must require of God is that the order so created shall mirror to the fullest degree we can conceive, and beyond the fullest we can conceive, all the attributes of God, including most essentially the mercy, comprehension, understanding and forgiveness in love, of God. Such an order we do know and experience in the Incarnation of the transcendent God, and the redemption of mankind, in the *whole* gamut of His work. Sometimes we forget that the redemption is a *work* done and still doing in the Person of Jesus, God and man. As a work it is manifest in Christ's resurrection, teaching us that our fallen flesh is membered to a victorious personality and a glorious and

immortal body. Whatever, through the pressure of sin, evil communion from others, pain, and ignorance cannot be repaired or even healed a little in this time, is still covered by that living, personal, continuing redemption which consummates beyond the grave what could not be operated here.

Of this, through time, but into eternity, the Mass, in which not a man but Jesus, re-presents Himself among his people, as One ever offered and ever offering, is the most moving of signs. One thinks of it every time one raises the consecrated Host to the people. Then, borne to the hands of God, by the angel who ministers the gifts of men to the Father (Eucharistic Prayer I) He who is our peace with God is given back to us as the pledge of peace, and our peace with each other. Then, in Him and of Him we eat the Bread of Life at the common table of Our Father, and grow in wisdom, age and grace personally and as a People before God and men. Of such an order of creation, dignified in the first moments of its spawning by the decree of the Incarnation, redeemed not by one act, but by the living communing of the same Son of God and of man—I am not willing to say that God could have done more ... God could have done better. What we can see is that all good, even to our personal reception into the bosom of God at the moment of our death, is a work and a communing. From the moment of the “Big Bang” through to the intercession for us of Christ and his saints, we are in the presence of one continuous ministry, in which we create or destroy in the order of being, of reality, for ourselves, and upon our brothers and sisters.

### **Rupture of Unity-Law of Creation**

Christians, including Catholics, have forgotten the doctrine of *Original Sin*. Within that doctrine, intelligently and coherently understood, is the actual answer to the problem of evil within the order of creation, and within the actual order of our lives as a ministry one to another as God has constituted that universal relationship. That order includes, or better, is founded upon the Incarnation of The Word as the source and life-principle of the angelic order and of the life of our own order as Son of God and Son of Man. (Colossians 1:16-17). Hence the reluctance to speculate about an infinity of better orders of being which God could have made but did not. There is no conceivable crowning of the universe that betters the making and fulfilling of Angels

and of Men in Christ The Sacrament of All Creation. The order within which such a Gift is decreed must be supremely worthy of the unique majesty of the Gift.

Concerning man's life and order, the doctrine of original holiness teaches that all human life and being is a communion and a ministry of one upon another. Before the advent of man, this community of *the inflowing of being by one thing to another*, (which is the best definition of causality) was true of that 'community' which is the entire material cosmos. In the theology which inspires FAITH, it is often called "the Unity-Law of Control and Direction". Yet, this law of ascent in one ministry of development, truth, and goodness is manifest in matter only as the foil which sets off greater jewels embedded. The first jewel is the nature of man and his creation in original holiness. In man this Unity-Law continues unbroken in a higher, *but now free and spiritual* order for the perfecting of the sons and daughters of God. A jewel beyond compare crowns the making of man: the Incarnation of God as the Christ, the Holy One who is the summit of the Unity-Law in person, in the continuity of one unbroken, coherent economy of creation. The Incarnation of God in Christ is not simply an event but also an activity: the summit of the creative Law through which God makes all things, maintains all things, and brings all things in balance to their perfection. We human beings are always too a living and a *causal* part of that one "creation in community", for better or worse, for good or for degradation. (See Col.1: 16-26. Eph. 4:1-13. Hebrews 2:7-16).

### **Every aspect of human life damaged**

Original Sin, then, that overlooked but vital doctrine of the reality of our state, and the introduction into the material universe for the first time of "the problem of evil", teaches the rupturing of that living, *holy communion* of good, by which from the first pair, men were to minister life and fulfillment to one another through Christ. It is not some abstract order of good which is ruptured. These free and spiritual creatures themselves are appallingly wounded in the depths of their beings. They cannot, and even within God's order of redemption, they do not respond to God with the fullness and fairness of beauty and good as they should. The good we minister is never perfect. And in many, the ministry of their lives as a work and impact upon others is a ministry of evil, of destruction of peace and order. In the economy of God in which

we actually live, this is the whole answer to “the problem of evil”. Every institution of human society is wounded and lessened by the disharmony and greeds of sin, that “law within my members” that contradicts the Unity-Law, “the law of God”—a Law which being of life, and working only to the fulfillment of life, “delights me according to my inward man” (Rom. 7:22-24). At the time of a certain British air disaster caused by the wickedness of men, we heard a lot about God’s permission of this sort of thing destroying people’s faith in his existence at all! One understands the grief and the disorientation of loss, the numbing pain of horrible, unexpected sorrow. But yet, in itself, how small, and unconsciously selfish the complaint. We seek that the providence of God should always work to spare our little local utopia of happiness, when the burdens and *the same causality* which caused the evil, fell upon the only-begotten Son of God’s delight, who was not spared, but tasted death for all, and gave Himself, rising again, as the certainty of our renewal and lasting joy (Col. 1:24).

### **Genesis more than a mythology**

What about the earthquakes, the famines, and the unmentionable things done by men to each other “in the name of God” from the dawn of history? What of all the wars, horrors, cruelties beyond conceiving, the degradations and exploitations, and corruption of society, and the corruption of love and marriage, and the ministry of sexual love? No power in human nature has been so deformed and distorted by the consequences of Original Sin as the sexual power and its pleasure within human nature. No one can measure the known and unknown tragedies that have grown out of its defilement in our stock, nor the repercussions upon the human community at large from all the trauma so caused.

To this writer it is not an accident, nor a reflection of “mythology”, but sheer divine inspiration that the first chapters of Genesis portray the difference between man in original justice—the orientation of the Unity-Law to truth and good—and the first consequence of sin, by the contrast between “and they were naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”, and “they perceived that they were naked, and made for themselves coverings of fig leaves”. There are many greeds and lusts of the flesh created by the power of the “free” soul upon the “unfree” flesh of mankind. The sexual one however is fundamental, the most basic, and in all its

consequences over history, probably the worst. Certainly the contrast in Genesis is a simple and supreme symbol of that which works man's part of "The Mystery of Iniquity"(2. Thess. 2:7.) and of the so-called problem of evil.

### **An ecological impact from sin?**

We make now another point which follows on from the real, the *actual* impact upon the creation, of the sin of man and the rejection of God and his Christ. The effects of sin in man will directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, affect the order of the very laws of Nature and what we now call the "ecological balance" of Nature. It stands to reason this way: before the Fall all material and deterministic creations were membered one to another in a great economy or "equation" of causality for truth and for good. Man inherited that "good" order, and in him, in one continuity, the Law was swept up in God and his Christ into the order of the divine life—to be co-sharers of the divine nature of God. Man is part of that very order of Nature and the material creation he now crowns. He is physically and organically a part of the Law and its mechanism as it operates now towards the summit of its meaning, in what St. Paul speaking in much the same context calls "these, the last days" (1Cor. 10:11.)—days when the Lord of History consummates through his own activity the Unity-Law He poised in the first flash of its genesis.

There is nothing we do, conceive, or plan, nothing we desire within our very being, which does not produce its own material "wave" or impact upon the environment around, even as the same influence linked to the soul impacts and influences our brethren for good or for evil. In either order, if the "wave" of our being is anarchic, incompatible in its own self with the pulse and frequency, so to speak, of God's Unity-Law, his providence for good, then that impact is part of the principle and problem of evil—an influence for disintegration. We know now on how fine a balance the world and the universe that supports it is poised. We have become aware of ecological damage, the disintegration caused in an obvious manner by human folly, human greed, and human heedlessness. We are that sort of people, most of us unconsciously heedless and greedy, quite apart from deliberate wickedness. We would have been wiser, humbler, "cleaner" in every sense of clean, if as a race, cleaving to God in grace, we had grown in

holiness from the beginning. Holiness is the theological perspective of that which is *whole*, has the integrity of its nature and its working, ministering in beauty the Unity-Law of God.

### **Sin as a natural curse**

It is to be anticipated that without sin, disparate nationalisms and contradictory religions, selfish grabbing of the resources of the earth would have given way to a world order in which the world was worked as one commonwealth for the life of mankind. As men multiplied and their artefacts interacted with the environment of the planet—just as their minds and bodies interact—there would be changes, “greenhouse effects” maybe. With their bodies, souls, and artefacts ordered within a much more beautiful and wise economy of life, we can anticipate that such an effect would profitably and wholesomely have increased the resources of the world for the numbers of mankind. It is *science* itself today which is taking the “mythological” out of the first three chapters of Genesis. For the Earth is a garden, and man is set to tend and cultivate it fruitfully. Everything we do and are is part of that impact for good or for desolation. We have to take much more literally the “mythological” curse on the earth because of sin: *“cursed be the earth in thy work, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return to the dust, from which thou wast taken”*. (Gen. 3:18-19). The curse is not arbitrary, we suggest, just the result of “natural” law. Man is part of the causal order of nature on his planet. Everything we do affects the brother or sister in soul and body: everything we do as a “mixed” entity of matter and spirit affects also other material being around in its own order. God made the harmony of nature equational from the beginning, and we are the master-value of the equation.

Already the exigencies of space are squeezing harshly the development of an idea, so points have now to be summarized. If from the natural “radiation” of body, soul, and both as “personality”, sin in us is a principle of dissolution even in the material environment, then grace likewise, especially the grace of Christ the summit of God’s Unity-Law in creation, is also a principle of life, restoration, and healing. We do not know how far the ramifications and interaction of this principle may go. We do know that the redemptive work of Christ was made an agony of stress and rejection, because God in Christ is the supreme Environment in whom

we “live and move and have our being” (Acts. 17:28). The rejection, agony, and crucifixion of God made man is the supreme manifestation of the resistance to God which is the very “problem of evil” itself. The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, if it may not pass, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matt. 26:30) does not seem to me to be merely “human” grief. I suspect it is the manifestation that God himself, the “Father” cannot change the order established upon man’s freewill, and the consequences, including the manner of our redemption, which must follow. Jesus, in all that He is, was then, *and is now as living and acting*, more than just the summit of God’s gift to us. He was and is the peak of God’s whole Law of creation and of governance for the universe itself. Through grace and through nature, (for God has made them one economy and one identity in the humanity of Christ) Christ, whether passible on earth, or impassible but living in His Church, His Sacraments, and His People, is an “ecological” influence if you like, which reaches, especially through us men, into every aspect of creation.

### **My Peace I leave with you**

We do right therefore to thank God, and especially to thank *Jesus*, for all the good we have; all the blessings, all the security and family joy, for the friendships, for the good health ... for all that goes well. It comes from Him and is maintained in so many complex ways by Him and through Him. Yet the consequences of sin also remain, are very active, and in our affluent, arrogant, and sensual days much on the increase. The consequences of this disintegrating power can hit us at any time. Jesus did not promise “his friends” immunity, quite the opposite: “if they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they have listened to My word, they will accept yours also (John 15:20). But there is a vast array of texts to make the point! We have to take up our cross every day and walk behind Him. He is the source and creator of our joy in every happiness we have. Those who love Him, holy parents, good and dear friends, faithful and loving wife or husband, children that are a joy, and over all the Eucharist and the Church, and priests who are spiritual and true—all of this spiritual “ecology” may give us years and years of almost unbroken happiness. It is not guaranteed, it cannot be guaranteed. The power of sin can, and may break in on us, as Judas broke in on the “happy band” of the Eleven.

He who is the giver of the joy when all goes well is also the giver of strength and consolation when we drink of the chalice that He had to drink. We will all find it so, we do find it so. One speaks not from “faith” but from experience. In unclouded joy and in sheer sorrow, there remains always, as an experience, the presence and support of Christ, communally in the Church, *personally* in the individual life. “My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, do I give to you”. (John 14:27).

To continue to summarize: as priests we need to explain to the “little ones” of God that God has *not* “done this to me” nor “sent this to me” in any direct, personal sense at all. Nor is it true to say of some great loss or horror, say the rape of a child, “we have to accept the will of God” except in the same sense, and with the same solidarity, as Christ accepted the bitter chalice *sin* had brewed for him. The roots of the wheat and the darnel are inextricably interwoven until the harvest. But “an enemy has done this,” not the work or will of God.

### **An Angel on your shoulder?**

If God were to try to “stop me sinning” how many thoughts, impulses, initiatives, which seem to us good, innocent, harmless pleasures etc, would have to be forbidden in their first movements by a “good angel” who would know the ultimate consequences. We would, the vast, vast majority of us, soon wish him to “get off my shoulder!” God can only influence us totally when completely, in all that we have and are, we are attuned, in a manner which actually is deeply contemplative, to the wisdom and will of the Trinity who dwells within us. As I understand it, this is the highest degree of inner communion with God in the “unitive way” as St. John of the Cross describes it. We do not know how many natural disasters *may* be due to the sin of man, perhaps cumulatively over centuries. We cannot be sure that The Flood had no relationship to all flesh around that area having “corrupted its way”. We can be a lot less sure that there is no direct relationship between AIDS, natural law, and the homosexual devastation which is Los Angeles. Come to that, one has never read or heard that our other sexual diseases are a problem for animals, in their natural environment. The very protection of mankind from natural disasters that were inevitable from the contingent, limited perfection of the planet Earth as a habitat, *might well* have been mediated to human communities by great prophetic souls, even

as Christ prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem as a consequence of his rejection, and because “in the day of your visitation, you did not know the things that were to your peace”. Certainly many of the saints helped individuals, both by warnings of danger, and by encouragement, in a prophetic manner, to respond more perfectly to God. The saints were great healers.

Physical healing was not, and is not now, the primary work of Christ to the world. We all have to wane and die. Yet in the Gospels healing is a great sign of the power of God in Christ. Healing, not only physical, but “pardon and peace” brought to the brethren in the radiation and peace of beautiful personality, has always been the mark of the saint in the life of the Church. Truly holy mothers and fathers bring this radiation to the formation of the minds and hearts of their children. For the priest or the nun, and here one admits to speak from knowledge, the first great joy of life, as we get older, is the humble joy of the love of God as an experience. The second is like to this: the sheer happiness of seeing in the lives and personalities of good men and women, especially the younger ones, a deepening beauty, closeness to God, willing and prayerful service, and not infrequently the giving of their own whole lives as a total vocation to God in the closer, apostolic service of religion.

There is a parallel here of course between Christ’s own answer concerning the “two great commandments of the law” and their interdependence. It is God who gives the gift and the power and the grace always. But He needs flesh and blood as the channel of His own flesh, now ascended. The beauty of human holiness, the radiance of nobility in men and women, needs to be ministered. It needs the “disciple”. This alone, once realised, should prompt many and generous vocations. The personal loves and joys that grow out of this life of “vocation” last till the end. It is the fulfillment of Christ’s own promise that those who apparently give up all to follow Him receive back in love from *persons* “one hundredfold”, even in this present time (Mark 10:30).

### **One Communion for Blessing or Curse**

What we often call *The Unity-Law of Control and Direction* is more than the unity of the ascent of material being through an evolution ordered from God back to God. It is also a ministry of life and well-being of thing unto thing. It passes into the creation of man, when matter of its own

law and formula, at its unique peak, requires the soul as co-principle of being, and a new creation—spiritual and material in synthesis—now lives in direct communion with God as its law of life and being. The Law still a continuity and one economy in a higher order of being, is still *a mutual ministry* of man to the Earth he inherits and men to each other with God. The “Law”, the one communion of ministry and finality, consummates in Jesus Christ. His is the work to redeem the damage, the disintegration, the blighting of the beautiful work of God.

For evil has its own ministry, individual and social, even to this day. This is the Mystery of Iniquity, which at the end of time will greatly abound, and of its very nature, call forth the Second Coming of Christ (Dan. 7:26; Apoc. 20:7-9). Christ’s own work, guaranteed by his resurrection from sin-inflicted death, is to redeem and sweeten, to gather “a little flock”, but through few to leaven many and to redeem fully in the condition of purgation what cannot be made beautiful here. It is part of Christ’s work in the Eucharist, and why that Sacrifice is efficacious for the living *and for the dead*. It is a work of *ministry*, of the making of people, not just the institution of the Church and her Sacraments. It is always a personal work, and in this, *The Mystery of the Kingdom* we are called to share. To think this way, and realise *the intercommunion of creation* at all levels, and in all three orders, helps us, one suggests, to understand better the problem of evil—its inevitability—and our personal identification with Christ. There must be much more to develop, yet more to ponder, but it is unlikely to be the stint in the garden of the world and the Church of this writer. He is very grateful for all the prayers and love that supported him in his recent grave illness. However, the prognosis for severe myocardial disease is not generous. The Lord has most sweetly and gratuitously given notice of termination of lease upon “this our earthly tent” (see St. Paul, 2 Cor. 5:1). It is time—as so often when camping—to brush out, fold, roll, and wait at the roadside for pick-up. The task is passed to the young.

## IS IT POSSIBLE TO SIN MORTALLY?

Not for the first time, this offering comes at the behest of good young Catholics at university, where they come into contact for the first time, in a real intellectual sense, with a bland, terribly civilised dismissal of the solemn pastoral teaching of the Church concerning sin. They react with surprise and some of them with horror (horror proceeds from humility and sincerity). They may find it hard enough as it is to live worthily and chastely in their personal relationships. They know that if they held these opinions to be true, they would not be bothering to try hard any more. Moreover, should any of them be thinking of the priesthood or the religious life that would be the end the matter. They would not be willing to reach out for the more perfect life. There would be a basic agnosticism deep in their souls. There is no doubt that countless potential vocations are frosted in the bud by this still, chill, civilised ice of spiritual error.

### **The Knowledge of Evil**

This writer met the same position concerning sin over thirty years ago from a distinguished continental theologian who taught him for a while. He did not believe that any human being could commit true mortal sin. Men were too frail and too contingent, just *too stupid* to be able to take in such a sanction when they sinned. Like naughty children playing with matches they knew it was wrong and forbidden, they took the pleasure gleefully without being able to comprehend the conflagration that might follow. The case was put to him of the angels, and Christ's own assurance concerning both the beatitude of some of them and damnation of the 'wicked angels'. He conceded grudgingly that they were pure spirits of course, much higher in intellectual status than ourselves, perhaps they were capable of such a knowledge of evil and of consent to it. There was still a problem though, because even they were finite intelligences. There was a further problem because an eternal condemnation seemed opposed to the infinite mercy and goodness God. These are good points, and they do require an answer. After the Second Vatican Council and the storming of the Curial Bastille by similar Wagnerian types, my former teacher blossomed out. I read him in Time Magazine ditching Original Sin. Later, he ditched all the angels, good or bad, denied the spirituality of the soul, and became very uncertain of any real distinction between God and His Creation.

The more moderate and damaging, the more, 'Semi-Arian' variant of this position goes this way: First, there is Original Sin, but what actually is we won't bother about. At the least; and probably at the most, it is the natural imperfection of our limited, animal natures. It is the quite natural tendency to seek pleasure, power, money or anything else delightful where we find it. In our loving too, the pleasurable as warm, joyous, and animal can conflict with duty, truth, and a nobler, purer more spiritual love. We find ourselves self-divided, and we 'make mistakes'. Nowadays observe we do not admit to sins of wilful lust or wanton sensuality, we 'make mistakes'. It is a much more reassuring approach and it keeps nobody out of anybody else's bed, at university or anywhere else. That is what my good friends were thinking of when they reacted with concern and horror.

It is true that most of us do make real mistakes, and God is merciful. It is true that we sin from disobedient weakness and pleasure lust and regret it almost at once. This can be a sign that we did not totally choose the creature perversely against God's truth and God's love. Our consent was, we hope and pray, but partial. It is also true that we can sin, even in pleasurable things, weakly and wantonly, arrogantly and deliberately. Whether we lose all union and communion of grace and life with God or not, in say, one single act, it remains true that this is a situation of grievous danger and of real possibility of that complete loss of divine charity which is the essence of damnation. True mortal is not a penny in the slot affair, but the dignity, power, and status of any man or woman's personality and ability to choose God or reject Him must not be underrated.

### **The Categories of Sin**

The new approach to sin goes like this. There is, after Original Sin, venial sin. We are speaking in the old, traditional categories. We could leave it unchanged, but it is better to leave this more trivial dust of the path of life to the term imperfection, human imperfection. We want venial sin to cover the old categories of mortal sin, because we will state that all 'normal' sin is venial sin. It is intrinsically forgivable. In fact, from the denial of the true nature of Original Sin as a loss of an intrinsic holiness, power, and spiritual life given to man, the new theology of sin accepts the wound in man of concupiscence, ignorance, and weak will, as our natural and proper state of existence. It follows that our sins are inevitable. We can and must strive for a higher holiness, but the constant falls are inevitable mistakes, and not ever damnable. God should not have made us that way. They ignore you if you say He

didn't, and they usually have no understanding of substantial holiness and growth in goodness in the intrinsic likeness of Christ.

Most of them, like Mr. Hubert Richards in *The Sower* years ago, seem to regard the committal of sin, even in Jesus Christ, as natural to being human. The new distinction made is of sin that is 'grievous' or 'grave sin'; the word 'mortal' is avoided. Even grave sin is just a very bad, very sad venial sin. There is no 'death of the soul' through the usual older categories of *mortal* sin, especially in the sins which carry pleasure, for pleasure is natural and good, and even when immoderate or forbidden is very, very forgivable sin. The new approach is to speak of immaturity, not of sin, in the sins of the flesh. There is but one mortal sin truly and properly such, and you have to be something of a hero to reach out so far and commit it. Indeed, like my former professor, there are some who say one cannot commit it. That one mortal sin is the radical and fundamental rejection of God. This alone is the 'sin against the Holy Spirit'. You have, they say—besides a very perfectible nature that shows by its immaturity how much it needs perfecting and maturity—a fundamental life option for good or for evil. Salvation lies in the orientation of your fundamental option to God. Damnation lies in the withdrawal of that fundamental option from God. The true mortal sin is the explicit, God-detesting, withdrawal of your basic allegiance of being from God.

The error in their position, which otherwise has elements of development of doctrine, is that they do not conceive this fundamental option, this basic allegiance to God as worked out in and through *all* your actions in life, in goodness, and in obedience to God. The doctrine of the fundamental option can be a lawful insight into that inner clinging to God by the skin of one's teeth, which keeps alive a flicker of sanctifying grace within souls that otherwise seem to be sinning gravely and often with full consent. It is only God who can plumb this depth in any man, and who knows the answer in the individual case. We can say that while in the Gospels and the Pastoral Letters of the New Testament, and in early Christian writings, sin and the judgment of God on sin was pressed more trenchantly than now, at all times Christ and His first apostles forbade totally the passing of human sentence on the individual case. The psychological investigation of the 'fundamental option' in a man may give us reason to hope more and more that God spreads the mantle of His pardon over many who look inexcusable. He alone knows also the crucifixion of sensitive human spirits, from their cradle to the grave, by all the circumstances through which they were born and in

which they have to live. What the fundamental option may not do is to replace the doctrine of interior, personal, and intrinsic grace. What it may not do is to deny that when we opt for God we opt for life which is total, integrated, and which covers all our deeds, thoughts, and actions towards God and our neighbour.

We may not use the doctrine of the fundamental option to opt out of the Ten Commandments, especially those which have to do with physical and sexual pleasure. The option is exercised in a living through Him, with Him, and in Him, in respect of Jesus Christ, who is God and the object of the option. He Himself objectified the 'option' quite simply: "If you love Me, *keep* my commandments". St. Paul reminded the lovable but sensual Corinthians that sins of uncleanness were sins against the Body of Christ of which we are members, sins also of sacrilege against the Holy Spirit, whose temple we are. He inferred most clearly that all who deliberately *withdrew* from God and His Christ to commit sins, put themselves on a path alien to entry into Life which is Salvation.

### **New Legalism About Sin**

As far as I know, the theologians of the new doctrine concerning sin and self-damnation (all damnation is actually *self-damnation*) have not yet noticed that they have reinstated the original and unadorned doctrine of Luther concerning justification, and the legalism concerning Salvation that lies behind it. In effect, they also say with Luther: *pecca, pecca fortiter, crede fortius*, which is: sin, sin grossly, but repent the more totally. For Luther, fallen man was a totally corrupt thing, incapable of any intrinsic holiness. There could be degrees in sin and in your consent to sin, but what matter? You were a corrupt tree anyhow, and incapable of fair fruit. You put on the Lord like a shroud when you "clothe yourself with Christ" (Rom. 13:14), because the merits of Christ are imputed to you, but they do not change your radical corruption.

In the new theology of sin—since the very genuine fall of human nature and its *intrinsic wounding* is turned into a principle of limited natural good—the corruption of sin, especially sin of the flesh, is natural. It is the consequence of a process of evolution of being, which itself is a product of only partly directed chance. To err is human, and to err morally in the will, even deliberately, is human and natural. The difference of conclusion is that Luther, starting from erroneous concept of Original Sin, said therefore all men are intrinsically corrupt, and justice or holiness is a legal imputation from the Satisfaction of Christ.

The new theology says: "No; the corruption is the natural condition, the imperfection of man, so the sin is inevitable. There is no mortal sin. There is one legal holiness, and one process of Salvation, and that is imputed from your fundamental option, or *evolutionary leaning* towards God." In the new theology of sin, it is presumed that there is no intrinsic connection between the daily living, its virtues and its deliberate sins, and the exercise of your fundamental option or fundamental orientation to God. You can at once sin grossly and deliberately and at the same affirm the more heartily your basic allegiance to God. There is the heart of the error. You can enter into Salvation by doing the works of the Devil and shouting 'three cheers for God'. And that you cannot do! It was God Himself, Jesus the Christ, who said firmly that "Not everyone who says to Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom God. But he who does the will of my Father heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom Heaven" (Matt. 7.21).

In the new theology about sin, there is in effect a new legalism. It is presumed that there is a fundamental salvific grace which lies in the turning of the fundamental orientation God, while there is or there can be fundamental, deliberate choice of sin in every other respect of human life and living. On this view of sin and salvation, increase of holiness is merely *incidental* to human salvation (the older thinkers would have said *accidental*) while this fundamental option is the only *substantial* grace of holiness. To grow, with the saints, in the intrinsic holiness of God through the life of grace, a life which does not admit of distinction of substance or accident, but only of more or less, is alien to this new theology. In effect, they withdraw the sins of pride and pleasure from the substantial conformation of a man woman to the image of Christ. Theirs is therefore a legal holiness, a guaranteed entry into the Kingdom of God, to which all else is incidental and minor.

The impact on the striving for holiness of life is deadly, because it withdraws strength of motive from men, and tells them that they are incapable of true sin whenever they are deeply tempted to sin. It means: "Never mind, you should not do it of course, but you may learn something from it. And it is a new experience. It may be fulfilling. Go to bed with him or her. If you find it was wrong ...Oh well, God will forgive. This is not *real* sin". In fact, one will hardly ever find a theologian who teaches this attitude to sin who does not at the same time detract from the true and solemn doctrine of the Church concerning sin. Such people will teach that, for instance, masturbation is never a sin, only an 'immaturity', the seeking of

a more fulfilling and complementary love. Premarital sex is not always a sin, and certainly not among those engaged or deeply committed and on the verge of engagement. Adultery can be condoned in many 'despairing' unions. Abortion is not always condemnable. Contraception by drugs or pills or other means that close the opening to life of the sexual act is right, necessary in this age, and fully acceptable. The Church has been mealy mouthed and narrow minded about sexual pleasure for two thousand years of her history. (Dr. Dominican says as much quite explicitly).

It is not an accident that a dismissive attitude to physical sin almost always goes with the new doctrine concerning sin. Both have one and the same origin: the pride and arrogance of self-worship; the Humanism that arrogates the truth and goodness of the Divine to the Human; the pride which does not accept the *natural* obedience to God and His truth, and a *natural* conformity to that total Goodness revealed by Christ which is the law of human life, grace, and salvation. We cannot attain to that holiness without the divine life of grace, without the *supernatural* order that defines God in His very being, but, this relationship of man to God can be called 'natural' as it is the necessary, right, and proper direction of our nature, and the only source for us of life abundant, growth in goodness and that *integrated holiness* which is the life of Salvation and entry into the Kingdom of God. There is no fundamental option towards God which closes against His will and teaching, and the full perfectibility of human life, and the obligation for that striving in the name the Kingdom. It was Christ Himself who said that He had not come to dissolve the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them, and that the Scribe who dissolved one of the least of the counsels of God would be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

### **Pastoral Witness of the Church**

To the young and to the student one would say, bear in mind that the solemn doctrine of the Church preached as binding unto salvation to the ordinary people of God through all the ages is *infallible* doctrine. Christ does not despise the poor. He exulted that the Father had seen fit to reveal the 'Mysteries of the Kingdom to the little ones, and—through their own pride—had blinded the learned and the sophisticated. That which, concerning sin, has been the basic Catechesis of the Church to her people and her young, in her schools and in the Liturgy of the Word of the Holy Eucharist, is irreversible doctrine. And the doctrine of the Church in this matter has been, and is, that the traditional 'mortal sins', including those of

the flesh can, even in one act, bring in a state of loss of saving grace within the spirit, and when indulged as a way of life and outlook can much more dangerously induce the 'death' to God of the soul. We hope and presume that one single act of gravely wrong carnal sin, especially against the grain of a way of life and effort, is not readily intelligible as truly and formally mortal sin as imputed by God. Nevertheless, it is a possibility. We can have the dignity of knowing fully, willing freely, and then disobeying fully for pride or for pleasure, and such a self-withdrawal from God is always a dangerous act inducing a dangerous state.

There are the traditional signs—written in the manuals of theology hundreds of years ago—of a consent that was not full and interior; a revulsion immediately afterwards, a sense of shame and misery, deep sorrow of spirit, unease, fear, guilt, and sheer unhappiness of heart. Thank God for it if we have found it so. At the same time, when, in the ordinary common-sense understanding of balanced and prudent people, we have to say that we knew, we understood, and we freely willed what we did in matters traditionally and solemnly taught by the Church from apostolic times as grave sin, *mortal* sin, let us not excuse ourselves. Let God do the excusing, and you and I be content to thank Him for His gracious mercies, which do indeed transcend anything we can think or understand. We must not and we may not argue: "It was quite deliberate, of course, but I did feel pretty sick about it afterwards, so I don't need to confess it, because it could not have been a real mortal sin." You confess what you freely did in the ordinary understanding of guilty knowledge. Had you come off your motorbike at seventy miles an hour into a brick wall immediately afterwards, perhaps you would have found yourself very much in the state of purgatory, but through all the pain of re-education and purification—the real 'Dark Night of the Soul'—yet dimly loving God and knowing the 'draw' of God loving you. But that would be His secret and His mercy, not yours to presume. It is so much better and certain to thank God for His mercies than to rely on one's own imagined justice.

### **Communion with God**

The life of grace is an organic, integral, centred thing. It is union and communion with God, and on earth the Eucharist is its highest manifestation and source of power. The whole wisdom and truth of God revealed in Christ must be lived. The whole life of the Vine must be in the branches. It is not enough to give God a vague, patronising nod and go one's own way. In the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, Our Lord—when asked why He

manifested Himself to the disciples but not to the world—made it clear: simply because, "if anyone *loves Me* he will keep my word and My Father will love him and we will come to him and take up our home within him ... He that loves Me not does not keep My word". There is the heart of the matter: the keeping of the word is living the same sort of life as Jesus, in love of brethren, and in love of God's Holiness, which includes "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God". Holiness is intrinsic and substantial, as much in the keeping of difficult commandments as in the basic raising he mind and heart to God. In the wonky new theology of sin, we are made similar to the Mayor of Lourdes in Franz Werfel's *Song of Bernadette*. He was a lover of life, wine and women. He would have much preferred a Spa to bring the railroad to Tarbes and Lourdes than a wretched shrine. But, all the same, grab your lighted candle, step boldly out in front of crowd, and with perhaps your 'lights of love' sniggering at you from the windows along way, intone "*Nous voulons Dieu*" ("we want the dear Lord God ") ... and all systems working; all fundamental options go; God rules, OK! Holiness is not a legal imputation and Salvation at its least is the lowest degree of intrinsic holiness, which involves a deep, implicit sorrow for all the other sins.

Which brings us to the question of God damning spiritual persons for all eternity. How is it conceivable? God does not damn. A man or woman rejects God in mind, heart, or life. As we reject God we grow colder, harder, more hostile. What began as impulsive weakness can grow into alienation. On earth, such an alienation of coolness may grow with the months and years into a studied alienation and malevolence. Those of us who have lived a longish time have seen it in marriage and in other human relationships. We do not presume judge the person, *the guilt*, but we may presume judge actions, states of mind, and the terrible change of a personality. Because holiness of life is a personal relationship towards God of truth, love, and obedience, any deliberate alienation from God in life and works is a very dangerous state. If it is persisted in—whatever the motive cause of its beginning—it must and will change our personality, induce a distaste for God, and lessen the very power of recuperation itself.

From the root of our being there is an obligation to know and God and follow His 'Way' in our living according to such light as we have. Where we fail (and to disobey the clear teaching of God Incarnate in the name of our 'insights' is to know failure but refuse to admit it) there remains in the failure an obligation to ask pardon , to love God again in regret and join ourselves to Him in a more humble communion that we may do better. Just

as we do not have to appreciate God as He is in His own Being to enter by degrees into Life Eternal, so we do not have to comprehend the meaning of damnation as God knows it in His divine being to be capable of it. We need only fully, deeply, proudly resist and resist and resist until we have broken with Him the very basic link of love, truth, and docility to His relationship to us as Lord over our life. As we abandon God, effectively we despise Him, even hate Him in the root of our spirit. We have such a power. It is part of the enormous majesty of being made in the image of God. The point must be stressed that all grave sin—the sin which is objectively 'mortal' in the Church's authentic tradition—does change and harden and warp the human personality. Inwardly, we can look on God and dislike Him.

### **Christ: The Disclosure of God**

We argued in the last number of FAITH<sup>1</sup>, that Christ is God's disclosure of Himself. Yet men looked on all that truth, sincere goodness, beauty of personality, signs and works, and some hated Him. Among those who listened there were degrees of love and generosity. Read the Parable of The Sower and meditate on what happened to the seed. Apply it to the response of men today and in every age to come. If Christ were Incarnate today He would go to the same fate as before. Every sin, every impudent blasphemy, may be repented of in the sight of total holiness and beauty, together with the evidence of great works—even the raising of the dead—to support the witness of God. To hate God even in that witness and beauty is to sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin that admits of no degrees of guilt as other sin does, and if persisted in it is the very passing of damnation upon oneself. Yet any state of complete refusal of God and of His Life-Law for us, passing across the grave in the state of the soul, must be a refusal at the end of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

The whole teaching of the Church has always been that loss of spiritual life can occur through any form of deliberate, grave rejection of God. The text concerning the sin against the Holy Spirit is not to be interpreted as of some one particular type of alienation, compared with which no other sin is mortal in the traditional sense of the word. God does not 'send' spiritual beings—either men or angels—into a state of damnation 'for ever and ever' in which they are viewed as in some way yearning with a sense of mourning to escape but cannot. Forget what some of the missionaries of an older generation may have

<sup>1</sup> See Volume3: Theological Themes, article 6.

enthusiastically preached. If fallen angels or lost men could yearn with regret for the pardon of God, they would have brought purgatory into hell, for they would be loving God again in the root of their being.

Men and fallen angels (and the latter from their totally spiritual being must go one way or the other with immediacy of knowledge and will) fix themselves by an ontological change of personality into a constant present of rejection of God. Eternity, in that sense of the word, is simply a constant present that never fades. In that relationship, God who made them still loves them and is still rejected. God can have no motive for their annihilation. His motives are perfect in their beginnings, and His desire for them remains. Nor have we any reason to think that the finally lost would desire to lose existence if they could obtain it. On the other hand, it is foolish for us to worry about the mercy of God, especially those of us who as we grow older, grow more merciful and more anxious to excuse and save all men, ourselves included! Any mercy we have, any charity we have is but the overflow of His divine love who prompts our thoughts of mercy and forgiveness from the ocean of His own. There are none damned who we would have saved, there may be some saved we could not have thought it possible to save. Our mercy and desire will never equal Christ's.

### **Postscript**

No personal experience is ever a valid argument to another person, but in these charismatic times there are people who find such witness helpful. If you have every had an experience of an evil spirit, you cannot doubt the fact of damnation nor its basic nature. One must make such claim. It is a claim to a unique experience that one hopes will never come again, because of the dread and horror that accompanied it. But even though a child of eleven years or so, the writer remembers still now the presence of a personal IT; nothing visible, but a localised thing of sheer concentrated power and sheer malevolent evil, and the obscene noise that filled the room. One can remember even in that instant of fear, the boyhood thought—never far from guns and battles rushing through the mind— "Gosh! Not all the tanks in the world could do anything to this!" Then the sudden thought: "My rosary!"; and the immediate, total evaporation of the presence the Thing.

What remains in the mind is the centred power and the utter malevolence of the will. Malevolence like that can only proceed from any being if something is being still hated and still resisted. In this one knows that the damned—and one prays there be very few of them

among spirits compounded with matter, because we *are* very, very stupid—cannot be forgiven because they are incapable of love, and will not respond to God's love. They have—by what went before—fossilised their nature and its faculties in a love of themselves which now totally denies the relationship to God and His good as the basis of their fulfilment. For our own part, better to pray: "Oh God be merciful to me, a sinner", than to indulge the New Pharisaism, thanking God that we are not like the rest of men— ignorant peasants, lacking in Gnosis—but that we rejoice in our insights and rest on our fundamental option.

It is written: "If you love Me, keep my commandments"; all my commandments. Sickness of heart, shame, confusion, a sense of misery and failure, these, if borne with a humble heart and not in proud despair, are the soul's own beautiful act of contrition and expiation. Not only a natural expiation, but they belong to divine grace which prompts them within us. Certainly, we strive for the perfect love which casts out fear, but most of us are very imperfect, and a little filial fear is very good for us. We only fear because in the root of our being we love God and do not wish to lose Him, even if here and now we are tempted to be disloyal and mean to Him. Such a fear is not servile.

## SOME IDENTITIES OF LOVE

“In Him” says St Paul, “we live, and move, and are, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). In that case, the love of God should begin in the womb. The powers of the soul transcend the material order. In one communion with the body we are made to know God and to love Him. Yet, if in the saint and mystic the laying hold upon God, a communion of beatitude, draws the flesh through the spirit into the order of the Divine, so should it be in the beginning. It is the soul which is the rocket-thrust in man—“it is the spirit that quickens” of itself the flesh made for that spirit would profit nothing (John 6:64). So we ask — faith, hope, and charity infused into the infant soul and body at baptism—are these fruits of the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity received only passively in the infant son or daughter of God? One thinks not. Watch life being born upon a farm and you will see that from the first seconds out of the maternal womb that new born life is eagerly seeking for the paps.

Does man, in the womb but animated by the soul, seek less vitally its “natural milk without guile” (1 Peter 2:2)? In creating the spirit into the living seed of matter in man, God is also in that act seeking, loving and saving in Redemption the men He loved in the face of Christ. Say too — the men He loved in the face of Adam who prefigures Christ: the men He loved in the Person of The Word, before ever the world was made: the men He loved in Christ in the founding of the universe, when its laws were aligned upon the Christ, in the Advent season of its creating. So when “man” is made, and He made them male and female. God is there first, pre-empting our seeking. for He made us in an act of seeking. The created spirit therefore is made to seek, to yearn, and to find. It ‘seeks the paps’ in the first moment of man. It seeks through *all* its powers, and surely therefore it is a *catechumen* through that seeking — in faith, and in hope, and in godly charity. The soul seeks God even in office of its ‘formation’ in the building of the body. Implicitly it seeks Christ, in building up the likeness of the Son in its mortal flesh, for “we are bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh” (Eph. 5:20).

### **Our Identity in Christ**

This must give us hope for the infant that dies without baptism: in the womb, out of the womb,

or torn from the womb. In a true sense life in the womb is a catechumenate towards Christ, then a baptism of desire is already there. Therefore we may dare to hope, unless the Church with magisterial mind should sadly nod dissent. Such a grace of the dawn-line upon the morning of young life might be enough to gather all mankind into the fullness of Christ might be enough at least when all things are restored; when not only the spirit, but all flesh conceived of woman shall rise at the summons to take its place as a member of the fuller Body of Christ the Son of Man. We dare to hope, because what we invoke in this proposition is not some extraneous, purely gratuitous principle of theology (and it was these that Pius XII criticised in the matter of the development of the theology of Limbo and the fate of the unbaptised infant) but that communion between the created spirit and the Holy Spirit upon which the accepted principle of baptism of desire *in voto*, in desire of Christ's sacrament of baptism, is admitted in the theology of the Church.

In this order of unfolding, baptism at the font would be the sun fully risen. Baptism of desire among the living born out of the womb would be the first light that bespeaks a sun to rise. What we would invoke for life conceived with the soul within the womb would be that first finger of greyest grey along the dawn-line, before even the sharpest eye is sure that night is lifting. Wherever there is light, whatever its degree, it is all the work of the One Sun, and the glory of the midday is its consummation in one principle of rising. It would also be true, if this theology of God's seeking for man, and man's seeking for God were true, that it is inaccurate to say that, in the new born babe brought for baptism, *The Church*, together with the parents who bring the child, supplies the will and intention of the infant. The Church and the parents (and the parents are part of 'the Church') supply the words, works, and sacramental forms, but only *interpret* the will of the newborn infant. For the will is there, prompted by nature within an order of redemptive grace, and it may be presumed, unless it is consciously and deliberately revoked by true mortal sin in later life. It would also follow that the infused virtues of faith, hope and charity will be actively given, and actively— not passively received. These virtues will be actively received in the sense that the first division of the seed of life at conception is active, and the first step of an unbroken development to mature adult life. In the case of the baptised infant, this growth will be specifically through the years of infancy towards the Table of the

Eucharist, and the Confirmation in the Holy Spirit of the seal of likeness to God in Christ, already given in its baptism. We have here, in the consideration of the meaning of man, from the womb to the Font, the forgiveness of Original Sin, the restoration of sonship and daughterhood, and the membering into the Church, through the Body of Christ the first great identity of love. For this answers the query of the Psalmist when he says “What is Man, that Thou art mindful of him? The Son of Man, that Thou dost Visit him?” (Ps. 8:5).

### **The Cradling of Love**

“The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole earth” sings the Office and Mass of Pentecost “and the Orb which holds all things. has knowledge of His voice . It must have knowledge of the voice of The Spirit The law of Good, by which all things seek their times, seasons, and fulfilments in an order of natural obedience and mutual ministry one upon another, is only an aspect of that Unity-Law of truth and good within which God has founded the created order. Jesus Christ is the culmination and climax, in the flesh, of that same law. He it is who holds all things together in Unity.

It follows that every good ministry of truth and love within which human life is cradled, will bring the very centre of that infant spirit into a communion with God. This first cradling in love, and its further communion in peace, unto God, will be ministered in the womb, - in the moods, emotions, and spiritual affection of the mother. Here is a basic ministry the male does not possess. This ministry will continue in the home in the cradling love of mother and of father. “When you love your child dear,” the greatest of my teachers once said to me in my teens, “it is impossible to separate out your natural joy and the joy you have in God’s grace: when you smile at your baby, and your child smiles back, all the joy of God, and all the joy of nature are taken up in one experience”. It will require that the parent soul that shines through the face, has first taken up to God, and given back to Him in one gift, all that is of nature and all that is of grace. We pray as much in the Mass, *may He make us an everlasting gift to You* (Euch. Prayer 3). We think that through the loving, and the cradling smile of parent to child and child back to parent, there is worked a ministry of the prompting of the love of God, as an interior spiritual happiness within the infant man, long before that boy or girl can reason and speak. This

prompting belongs as much to the ministry of marriage, as does parental prompting of speech and intelligence. God indwells that little tabernacle of flesh, through faith, hope, and charity given at the font. The prompting of a love which is a trusting communion of joy with all that is true, good, and caring in mother and father, must terminate at the apex of the young spirit, in a basic communion with the love of the God who indwells by grace. "See that you despise not one of these little ones that believe in Me for their angels do always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Luke 18:10). Through the travail of pregnancy and birth, through the washing and the wailing this prompting of a communion to God, in the love and tenderness between parent and child, should be a supreme consolation to every good Christian father and mother.

The child as it grows may say "no" to God. It is free to choose, and even the most holy of parents may know this sorrow without any blame on their part. Yet, every priest knows it as a fact of his pastoral life, decade after decade, that deep and holy parents bring to the Church and all its prayerful works, children who shine with the happiness and radiance of God's sunshine of grace. They may grow to resist down the years: the thorns and thistles, the riches, cares, and sensualities of life may choke the promise of harvest. Yet, despite that 'original sin' which in its pride and drives is an intrinsic lesion in human nature, man's nature is wounded, not corrupted. The growing plant of childhood life leans to its sunshine, and to be planted in the communion of a parental love itself derived from loving God, is to be planted against the 'south wall' of the sunshine of God's grace. They will grow faster and stronger, and set secure roots earlier. It is amazing, and prompts within a priest a deep respect for children, to see how greatly, in so far as from outward signs we can judge these things, children can differ in generous response to God, even from the age of six and seven years. Should a priest, recognising in them a generous response to God and things to be done because God wants **it**, love them in return, just sheerly love them, they will respond with a total love, totally given back. It must be significant, that when they are loved with a love that desires their fuller formation in God, that they recognise the distinctive quality of that loving (though they could not name it) its meaning and goodwill.

The love of God therefore, answers to the love of God, as deep to deep. If the "Orb of the earth" in its harmony and laws, "has knowledge of the voice of the Spirit" so also does the mind

and heart of man have knowledge of the voice of the inner dwelling Spirit, and know it in another. Cardinal Newman, as always the deepest of men was quite right in choosing as his motto: *Cor ad Cor loquitur*, “hearts speak to heart”. It is so, in the recognitions and the loves of men. Sadly some parents are jealous of this love given to a good priest or a good nun, jealous of a child’s love that instinctively recognises the spiritual teaching authority, resident in that love from the Religious as missionary for Jesus Christ They are sadly fearful not of some imagined sexual element in the loving but lest a vocation be prompted that they do not wish to foster or see grow.

### **Love Learns to Teach**

He who recognizes the sheer depth of decision a child can make, can never treat boy or girl as one of a herd, can never bully, regiment, patronize or ignore the child as a person. From the age of ten or eleven some of them can receive deep consolations and spiritual experience of grace. Through all the turmoil of adolescence, a childhood decision for God may persevere. I know a man rather more than the “fourteen years ago” of St Paul. (2 Cor. 12:2) who can remember vividly the time, place, and weather — and also the time on the face of the Town Hall clock, when he decided at the age of eleven, at the back of the garden, one day in May, to follow mummy’s unspoken example, and get up for the early morning Mass: running all the way there and after the way back, because fasting was from midnight then, and school began at nine o’clock. Of course, he never wanted to kneel with mum, but if not serving, to be alone, do his own thing.

Parents and priests, we often fail by being possessive. We have had the honour to introduce them to the love of God, but that is not a ticket to the party. They may not wish to be bound more closely to our person in the communion of natural comradeship. A priest may be tempted to say when he knows he will not be around in a parish long enough to steer a deep child through adolescence “What is the use: it will all be lost in five years time, when he (she) really needs me. It must be confessed that the growing practice among some younger bishops of treating clergy moves as a merry-go-round — parish priests every seven years, curates every four — does guarantee loss of vocations and of any spiritual formation of youth. It takes five to

seven years to make any impact upon the formation of the people of a parish and on their children. Nevertheless, it is one who sows, another who reaps. and in this matter God must be trusted, His work done as *every* occasion offers, and the Cross be endured. It is amazing to hear parents say that they cannot teach children their prayers in infant years, or train them for First Confession and Holy Communion. Surely, any love that cares can teach, or find a way to learn to teach. Yet God must first be loved with a personal caring love, or the love towards the child is too shallow to be a teaching love. Here lies another identity of love, in the ministry of married love of couples to each other, and to their children. The love of God, faithful in assent of belief, in practice, and conformity of mind and heart to Christ through the sacramental life of the Church, enriches the quality of love spouses have to each other, and exercises as a living impact upon their children. As has been said before. children are most wonderfully sensitive to the spiritual *quality* of the love adults give them.

The priest also shares this ministry of love, by title of his pastoral commission. The man who cannot take joy in children and is unable to prompt their affection, has lost his way in his spiritual life. It may be simply that he is too much of a 'Martha', busied about much organising. rushing hither and thither, conferences, oceans of words galore ... and no contemplative listening to the Master, in sweetness with Mary. It can also be that his personal joy is sought too much in a subtle careerism, projecting, building, doing things and arranging events. Sometimes care for money and pleasure has overgrown grass roots loving in his heart. Let him look also to his chastity nowadays, when many younger men are taught to despise or resent their vow. Chastity should make the heart bigger, to love more widely and more safely. It is certain that the unchaste heart cannot form the trusting young, either in their certainty of truth, or in the quality of their loving. Neither for that matter, can the unchaste parent

The primacy of sensuality, which drives more and more couples into boredom, infidelity, and then divorce, destroys all power in father or mother to form a child in the vision of love, and its law of truth and good. Neither the heart, symbol of affectionate tenderness, nor the genitals seat of erotic desire, are the primary sources of love. That source is in the soul, seat of loving of the noble and the delightful in true good. It is this love which holds all other ingredients in complex human loving in rightful order, and peace in God. From that peace. the soul can teach.

## Love in Friendship

We will be saying that all identities of love are found in Christ or centred in our personal vocations for Christ. The old proverb says that “birds of a feather, flock together”. It is the truth of this saying in the matter of the quality of a loving, that makes one think that all love of God in the human spirit is *contemplative in order*, no matter how dim that contemplative communion with God may be. This would certainly make sense of the progress of the pilgrim soul from birth to the fullness of the beatific vision: one principle of pilgrimage. ending in transformation. When youth, including older children, form their deepest friendships, they are usually unable to say what it is that makes them love some other with a richer quality of inner affection. They will just say “he/she is so nice”. Yet the observer outside can see that truly beautiful people are loving other beautiful people, and the communion transcends the boundaries of excellence in sport, and daring-do at school. In this perception we learn the difference between acquaintanceship and love. As youngsters grow, their friendships become more consciously geared to nobility of character and righteousness in living. They may be bright enough in early teens to say “we speak the same language”. They mean the language of mind and heart and will. Sometimes, between boy and girl that loving may be pulled aside somewhat to passionate sins.

Yet, one has never known a case in which the lapse was not known and recognised in conscience as selfishness and sin, and regretted the more deeply, because the basic love was true. This becomes a sign that God was loved, even when through urge of pleasure He was denied, and that the love of friendship lived in Him was indeed a communion, though imperfect, of a mutual love linked through the mutual love of God. Thus God can be loved, even though betrayed. St Peter knew the experience with bitter tears, simply because he loved Jesus. So also in the personal conscience Jesus can look upon us, and the look of a communion betrayed. be a sword of sorrow and repentance.

Is there a distinction between *friendship* and *love*? Not upon this writer’s philosophy, though some would defend it. There can be the most commercial of friendships. mere acquaintanceship, and comradeship in crime. Any relationship, however superficial, which is good in itself from nature or from grace, I would call friendship, and admit to a lowly degree of love. There

can be friendships between men and men, men and women, women and women, that transcend the love of marriage and lead on to mutual works mighty in mercy, preaching, healing and service. The love that binds deep souls in the monastic life, the love that binds sisters in convent life — yes. and the bond which binds priest to priest in sacerdotal life should partake this deep joy of companionship in God. David did not exaggerate for grief when he claimed to love Jonathan with “a love beyond the love of women”. “Love me, love my friend” is not a rule we can insist upon in all human affairs, but it does work in the communion of saints, even those upon this earth! If God is loved profoundly, this communion in God draws two souls, and more than two together in a common joy in God and each other, shared and rejoiced in. It is such a silly mistake to think that deep fulfilling love must involve the sexual communion of bodies and its natural pleasure.

It is not unnatural for men to be joined in monasteries, women in convents, priests in the brotherhood of a special joy in the apostolate of Christ. Once you forget that human personality is fulfilled in all ways of life, only through the soul, even as everything in Christ was fulfilled through the *Divine* personality in Him, then you lose the delight of travelling like some space-Lord through vast infinities and many galaxies of human love. You begin at once to demand erotic joy in all loving, in all communion of life and being. You divorce it from any necessary relationship to the creation of life, in which it has its right and proper bodily joy, and before long you cannot love even a trusting child without defiling innocence with addictive lust. One did not say wanton lust, but addictive lust, for there is nothing so sad to see, so utterly incurable, and yet so moving to compassion as the spirit caught in the mesh of total addiction. The priest sees it in drink, at times in young drug addicts, and also in the total sex addict. Any pleasure of the body which is made an end in itself, comes to dominate and take over the psyche, and destroys the very nature of man.

### **Love is Chaste and Peaceful**

There are many identities of love, many degrees of freedom in love, including within a prudent balance the affection of tenderness, but they do not give any right to sexual erotic communion. This right exists only within the sacrament and covenant of marriage. Since all peace and joy in

loving must be within God's own order of truth, it follows and is a fact that erotic love which is not within that order given by God in which it is controlled by the other and spiritual blessings of love, is never taken without a certain disquiet. a certain lack of peace. One was present on a certain occasion in which marriage was being discussed in a conference of priests. A certain young priest, a convert to Catholicism actually, remarked that the state of *celibacy* was a state commanded under pain of grave sin, upon *all* unmarried men and women. The use of sex outside the sacrament was, from the Church's solemn doctrine a grave sin! Many of the clergy present looked startled, and even a bishop present (but it may have been my cynical mind only) looked surprised. Yet it is true, abstinence from sexual intercourse is enjoined by the law of God upon *all* the unmarried.

There can be, and are states of human fulfilment even in the lay condition which do not require marriage, or may even at least wisely, rule it out for the individual. Somewhere in *Catholicism; A New Synthesis* one has made the point that the Angels of God manage to be happy, although they do lack genitals. The priest of course does *not* take a vow of celibacy. but a vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, which is a deeper thing. Celibacy is simply the state of perfect purity in the unmarried man, as virginity in the unmarried girl. This is not a negativity. but the affirmation of the perfect sincerity and wholeness of love in the human person, out of the sacrament of marriage. This is the identity, found also in Christ the Man, of true human love and its order of fulfilment, outside the relationship of marriage. Marriage is an option in human fulfilment, so therefore sex, in that specific sense, is only an option in human fulfilment. One of the deepest signs of decadence in the Catholic Church, much accelerated by loss of certainty in doctrine, and certainty in loving, has been the decline of contemplative Monasticism. The contemplative monk or nun has always been in all civilisations, the mark of the highest and noblest religion. It is the glory of Buddhism, and in its present poverty, the mark of Cain upon the brow of current spirituality in Catholicism.

### **Two in One Flesh**

If God did create the body of man through a process of evolution, a consequence follows that could educate some theologians, and some psychologists, nominally Catholic, whose pro-

clamations ruin the lives and loves of the young. The animal cycle of sexual intercourse is ruled by times, seasons and fittingness for life. Sexual delight, even in those that mate for life, is not an end in itself. That 'end in itself in higher life. is better defined as the belonging in tenderness and care, for the provision of the office of life. of male and female towards each other. Those who have studied the familial life of the gorilla in the wild. have remarked on the unity. and mutual tenderness of these family groups. and on the 'low sexual drive' manifested by the males. So different from mankind! Presumably this order of merely animal nature, an order of loving so much below the order of mankind, would have been taken up with recognition into the order of the free-thinking spirit in Man's creation. It would have been recognised, the relationship of coition and its pleasure to the creation of life. in *wisdom*, as the meaning of God and the intention of God. in the creating of human kind. Sexual delight is not an end in itself. in order that the "unitive" function of human loving may be had at all times and in all circumstances of life together.

It never occurs to theologians and psychiatrists of this ilk that given the concentrated nature of erotic pleasure, and its ever present availability even to the poorest of the poor, together with its natural goodness and essential place in the plan of God, that sin in man would be very likely to seize upon this pleasure above all others, regardless of function. It would overdevelop its proportion within human nature from a pleasure ruled by wisdom for the creation of life within a unitive love, into an obsessive and addictive desire for its own sake. To look at things this way would make reasonable sense of the Church's teaching concerning concupiscence, i.e. disordered desire (not exclusively sexual) within the nature of man, as a consequence of 'the fall' in his nature. It would make sense also of the doctrine of that original grace of holiness, by which the powers of the body and its pleasures, and the powers of the spirit too, were controlled in peace, by a harmony of identity between the intention and will of God, and the intention and will of man, through the spiritual soul.

It would make perfect sense of the teaching of the Church from the beginning of her era (though the Jewish rabbis taught it as well) that the *primary* meaning and purpose of the Covenant of matrimony, is the ministry of the creation of children and their education in the knowledge and love of God. The essence of that love by which a man leaves father and mother,

and cleaves to his wife, must be for their complementary ministry to life (Matt. 19:4). The understanding of 'male' cannot be given without the understanding of 'female' and vice-versa.

It is absurd to speak as if the unitive aspect of their loving in the act of going together could be thought of *according to the mind and wisdom of God* without the procreative potential inherent in their communion, and the openness to life contained in the emission of semen and its biological and theological meaning before God. If man ruled his person by the wisdom of God in grace, not by pills and the condom, he or she could, apart from the disorder of desire caused by the fall, love in an intimate tenderness and warmth, but yet in abstinence from coition when birth was not reasonably and spiritually to be desired. There would be no difficulty in foregoing that which, apart from its high office, is the most transient and physical of the pleasures of loving. That which was not according to the peace-giving wisdom of God would not have been, sin apart, desired. Without the unbalanced craving in man's nature, not-to-want would be to control naturally the arousing of the desire. The office of bodily desire in marriage is holy, but that desire as bodily seeking, should be one totality of a joy in each other between the spouses, which embraces spiritual happiness and a tenderness that endures always, with and without the actual union of bodies. It should be conjoined, that erotic desire, to one joy in the accepting of God's will in creation. Of its nature as open to children, it should be taken with willing acceptance of children. This is the original, and still the only perfect relationship of sexual coition within love.

Wisely and mercifully in our fallen order does Christ the Redeemer redeem also the urge of the body in marriage. Wedlock is not to be a snare to the damaged people of God. Therefore apart from desire for life, intercourse may be used in a love not unitive with perfection as God sees it, to express and fortify and refine a love that is ruled not by the mere satiating of desire, but by life long fidelity, spiritual care, and the spiritual rule of that holy office of the ministry of life, within which sex was created by God. This is very different from the 'affair' between man and woman. We said it was imperfect, because no love with coition that dreads new birth is perfect. Perfect love casts out fear. There is no way in which you can teach the meaning of sex to children without relating it intrinsically to the birth in love of children. This is its primary dignity. Any other way of teaching that divorces the unitive from the - leads, from the age of

thirteen, to free and easy sexual experimentation and to constant masturbation. This is so true from pastoral knowledge that one does not intend to argue about it.

Granted that the Church allows natural methods of family limitation is it not true that fear, of conception, sometimes sheer dread, always remains? Couples who have recourse to sterilization have admitted that for them coital pleasure is an end in itself. At once the dignity goes out of loving, and greed and infidelity rush in. This is a fact of modern experience. Would it not be better to recognise that peace, perfect peace, in loving is attained only when the spouses are one in mind and heart and joy with God, and His intentions in their mutual ministry? Should they not try, as did the early Christians, rather to lie in each others arms, in unitive tenderness, (not worrying too much about physical commotion, but not misusing each other either) and to give over the seeking for erotic pleasure, as a necessary part of all their married loving. Of itself the carnal is the least of the pleasures of marriage, though great and holy in its human office. One submits that so to find peace, and for the man as a Christ-figure to love in respect and concern his wife in her need, is a more perfect identity of married love, on both sides a more perfect image of the communion of Christ and the Church. Perfect peace is at the core of a perfect love.

### **Love in the Vows**

The identity of priestly love is not wholly the same as the identity of love in the Religious. brother or sister. They have so much in common that we speak as if they were one (for space allows no more) but meditate it rather from the pastoral life of the priest, for a man best speaks of what he himself knows by vocation. Let no young man be discouraged by the errors of dissenting theologians and psychologists, who are more sensual than they know, from taking the vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake. Our Lord allowed no detracting from the fullness of manhood in Himself, nor from the fullness of loving. He knew the most perfect joy in loving, and the most delightful and solemn tenderness, but virgin He was, virgin He lived, died, and rose again to Eternal Manhood. To the office of a priest, marriage has no meaning and no personal relevance. There are many, many others providing for the creation of life. God gives the life, the parents are no more than its ministers. God alone in any event gives the soul, by

which man lives eternally, not the parents. The office of priest as of active religious, is to form and foster, and to minister to the spiritual growth and beauty of that life. You will give up sex, but not love. You will miss a delight linked to a larger joy, but you will not lose that larger joy, the spiritual and the companionate in loving. In the people of God and in the teeming of their children, you will know and feel a much larger joy, a joy that is the more intense and total, because it cares only for Christ, not for money, examinations, power, prestige and place. You have to foster only the ultimate joys in mankind. Because of that you will know also a deeper grief of the sorrows of Christ, when men reject you because they reject Him. You are not called to a colourless life. The priest who complains he has 'nothing to do' is a lazy, worldly, fool of a man. He has, at least within a city, only to look out of a window and he will see more to do, to follow, and to pursue than twenty four hours in a day will allow.

The priest enters into lives and loves and human decisions with the unique power of Christ. By reason of office he says with Christ "but I say to you. See that you never muddy it towards the young with the lapse of lust, and Our Lord says in similar context, *"watch yourselves"*, (Luke 17:1-6) for this is a most intimate office and joy given you from Christ, and like parenthood, it carries a more repulsive burden of sin, if it is weakly abused. Something of the same ministry from office of dedication and right to form belongs also to those called "Sister" or "Brother" as well as "Father". The sacramental office of the priest, power over the Eucharist, power over the remission of sin, gives an even further likeness to the office of Christ, by which the priest penetrates most intimately into the most secret rooms of the soul. It does not go with the sharing in an office of equality, with body, bed, and board.

The forming of the sons and daughters of God does not go with the washing, clothing, feeding and caring for the sons and daughters of one's own body. It is weakness and desire that prompts this demand for a married priesthood. The perfect company of Christ is joy enough and compensation enough for all else given up, whether erotic delight or faithful, caring tenderness. There are degrees in all love of God. He who is called to share Christ's own is called to a fullness of joy and also of contemplative possession of God. in his ministry, which has to be experienced to be known. "The love of Jesus, what it is, none but His lovers know". It is true, according to one's order of ministry. There is none closer to the loving of Jesus Christ. than the

ministry of his Body and Blood, and all that this Table defines in a priest's Fatherhood.

Is it true that the vow of chastity makes the priest or the nun more perfect by very way of life? We may as well admit the Fathers of the Church have always said so. Married love is hard to live with utter perfection. with never any lusting in the loving. There will be a few who reach this high state, most will not and certainly do not. However high you aim, however pure your love, you are at the mercy of husband or wife in this matter. You must render the debt whether in the flesh, or in the cares and preoccupations of social life. It was Jesus Christ who advised and offered the more perfect way: to be a eunuch for the Kingdom of God's sake, and he (she) who can take it, let them take it (Matt 19:12). If you are going to buy God a gift, why not spend all you have and give Him the total gift of yourself, your love, and your life? One has no time to look it up, but somewhere in his Essays Lord Bacon (the one who is sometimes, heaven knows why, alleged to be also Shakespeare) has: "Methinks that celibacy does well become two classes of men: statesmen, for many a secret is lost upon the pillow between husband and wife, and also for clergymen. I see not how divine charity in a man. has water left to irrigate the wide field of a parish, if first it must fill so deep a well as holy matrimony." This is not word for word. but very close to the quotation and totally true.

May one add, though progressive souls will scream with protest, that women discuss often and very intimately with each other their mutual sex lives with their husbands. It is not going to help the office of a parish priest, nor his authority in the pulpit, nor his attraction in the confessional. Yet, the real reason for the vow of chastity in priest or in woman religious, is to be free with the fulness of Christ's freedom to enter, form and feed the lives of the brethren. It is a call to ministry in the likeness of Christ's own ministry of love on that total and highest level. The Lord is not mean, the Lord is the most generous of friends. Boy or girl, if you follow Him in the ministry of this spiritual Fatherhood or Motherhood, one can promise you the most fulfilling of joys, and with prudence the most fulfilling of friendships too. God does nothing like a banker. He is generous beyond measure, He will give to you a more intimate share of that joy in us which, as well as the sorrow, He experiences as Son of Man. Whatever the Church might allow through falling vocations, the priesthood lived under the vow of chastity, in the perfect likeness of Christ's own dynamic, virile, and most perfect love, that is the highest identity of

priestly love. And with this thought, we end our meditation upon some of the identities in God's loving and in ours.

## **PREMARITAL SEX: CRISIS THE CHURCH MUST FACE**

Parish priests are becoming alarmed and some of them very depressed at the attitudes to love and purity among their youth and among the engaged couples in their parishes. Living together is now an established pattern among the engaged. Almost all non-Catholic couples live together, sleep together, and save money together under the same roof for a year or more before the official wedding. Formal marriage can be delayed indefinitely and very many of these common law affairs disintegrate. Living together is also of course a common feature of our modern coeducational university residences, though without any question of long duration. It was a local lady magistrate, not the present crudely spoken writer, who referred to the modern university as “a high class academic brothel”. One would not, however, from the testimony of so many students, say she greatly exaggerated. In the matter of engaged couples, those who do not live under the same roof practically all take sexual intercourse at weekends for granted. Only a tiny minority make any effort, or see any virtue in leaving something in a relationship by which a lifelong love and commitment is consummated, to be hallowed under the blessing of God on the night of their wedding.

### **Scandal within the Parish**

Attitudes are only marginally different among Catholics. Three out of four of our own engaged couples are living together sexually at least from the time of their engagement. Most of them have taken sexual union for granted a long time before. This assessment is true of the South of England; things may be better in more closely knit, more devout and doctrinally more orthodox communities, especially working-class, in the north of the country. One writes this for the benefit of bishops and priests who always say the writer exaggerates. Personally I don't think there will be much difference at all. The priest about the parish will notice that the handful of youngsters he knows who strive sincerely to live in chastity before they marry, all come from the ‘traditionalist’ families in the parish. The word has nothing to do with liturgical preferences. It means families where the parents make a sincere effort to accept and live the faith and morals of the Church, as these have been constantly proclaimed by the Pope, against open dissent from theologians, bishops, priests and other laymen since the middle of the nineteen sixties. Among families accepted to be ‘advanced’ or ‘trendy’ there is little regular sacramental practice among the

children after the age of sixteen, no teenage chastity, and of course no prenuptial abstinence. Why should there be?

All we pastoral priests know the pair who live together for a couple of years, and decide to allow a baby. Then they come along to finalise the marriage, asking for a Nuptial Mass, and perhaps some help from members of the choir. The baby is still unbaptised, and getting a wee bit elderly as babies go. Well, I refuse the Nuptial Mass and the request to the choir. I will always refuse the Nuptial Mass where the scandal is general, widely commented knowledge. To grant it in cases like these, with perhaps present members of the parish Youth Group grinning at one or two of their erstwhile 'leaders' is sheer condonation in the eyes of the kids of this manner of living and loving. It brings the Church's liturgy and her very doctrine into disrepute, for the whole ethos of the Nuptial Mass, and its lovely blessing, presumes a status of sexual wholeness at least aspired to as a state, even if not actually a personal attainment. Of course, many of the brides who come down the aisle in white are much more discreet sinners. But there is a difference of impact between an ideal we did not manage to live, and the flaunting of broadminded concubinage, in which the house warming, with a general invitation to the youth of the parish, long preceded the bans

### **Crux of the matter**

We get little help from our bishops in the matter. Up and down the country there may have been a Pastoral Letter which has faced up to this challenge sweetly, lovingly, but with plain speech and firm doctrine of sex and of love. Myself, I have not noticed any through the pages of the Catholic press. There has been nothing at joint pastoral level. Pope John Paul, God bless him, always has the guts to face the matter when he talks to the youth of the nations on his Papal visitations, especially to the youth of the rich and decadent West. But, much more needs to be done. We need to get across a much more coherent expression of our doctrine and perhaps a lot of bishops and priests don't find it easy to be fully coherent in presenting the teaching of the Church. Certainly a lot of priests say just this very thing. God help bishops if they apply to their seminaries or academic institutes for help. As most of their advisers reject *Humanae Vitae* in their hearts, bishops can expect a lesson in delicate figure skating on thin ice!

That sort of sermon about 'relationships' - whether written or spoken - never inspired any youngster, or saved any warm and lovable personality from self-destruction by confused lust from the age of fifteen years onwards. The Church needs to be able to say much more coherently and

much more convincingly just why sexual intercourse must always, but always, in each and every act, remain open to new life. The crux of the matter is there. Answer that question with theological and philosophical coherence and you have a doctrine of sex in a state of love. Fail to answer it, by making sexual communion in its own right as joy, the natural fulfilment of married love, the natural fulfilment of love between man and woman, the essential physical accompaniment of joy of spirit, the necessary relaxation and release of the tensions of life, especially life together, etc. etc., and you can forbid nothing at all from early youthful masturbation to teenage sex, 'shacking up', homosexuality, and the marriage which is dissolved as soon as 'our love has died'. Those who deny the doctrine of *Humanae Vitae* cannot sustain any absolute morality of marriage, sexual life, or of the indissolubility of marriage. That is why, in curias all over the Western world, they have been granting 'nullities' by the thousand which are simply divorces in the eyes of God. And the people know what has been going on.

### **Purposes of Marriage**

The old expression which spoke of the 'primary' and the 'secondary' ends of marriage was clumsy, and it does need a replacement. All the same, the doctrine thus enshrined in the dry language of Canon Law was true. It expressed not only an essentialist, or doctrinal view of marriage, but indicated also a psychological, a real life manner of assessing sexual communion in the lives, the loving and the consciences of the people of God. The dropping of this term in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* without any theological substitute, or carefully explained context, has been a theological disaster. Not that there was any ambiguity whatever in the Encyclical concerning the constant and therefore infallible doctrine of the Church. The howl of rage and dissent that went up in so many quarters proved there was no doctrinal ambiguity. Yet, the presentation of a procreative element or purpose over against a unitive aspect or purpose, from which unitive aspect the procreative possibility could never be separated out, did lend ground to a fatal ambiguity of philosophy and of speculative theology.

The presentation of aspects without clear definition of primary and secondary, failed to make it clear whether, as God sees things, the unitive end is *defined through* the procreative purpose, or is the unitive purpose intrinsically *subordinated to* the procreative, *but not defined through* it of its own nature? Or, is the linking of the unitive to the procreational potential of the sexual act something *incidental*, i.e. something done by the positive will and wisdom of God, so that both purposes or elements - the procreative and the unitive - stand in reality in their own

right, (or formalities), but under a positive injunction that what God has joined together man shall not put asunder? For all practical purposes the non-Catholic Churches have gone on to a fourth position: the procreative and the unitive elements of the marital act are fully separable and not irrevocably joined together by God. They may be separated for a good reason, hence contraception is not a sin except when it becomes a sin of selfishness. It is not of itself a sin against the married state or holy sexual love.

The Church is full of theologians, orthodox men obedient to her solemn doctrine, who are teaching the second proposition, (while a number do in fact presume the third). The unitive function of sexual union is held to be subordinated intrinsically to the procreative function, however, in its own right it is defined as unitive, as an act creating love, fulfilling love and sustaining love without respect to the procreative meaning. This makes for an incoherent philosophy of love in the Church's doctrine of sex. Such theologians are constantly teaching the full, and spiritually quite perfect enjoyment of sex in its own right, as a common joy in spirit and in sense, without any intrinsic relationship to creation of life. Sexual union may be desired and enjoyed "simply for the natural pleasure the Creator attached to the act"<sup>1</sup> without any question of positive imperfection. Mgr. Orville Grieser, in what is otherwise an excellent article rebukes the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, Aquinas and the vast majority of leading theologians to the 20th century, for their churlish puritanism in suggesting that there is any imperfection in so seeking and using the pleasures of marriage. The sole requirement to be made is that only natural methods of birth control be used, so that the act is open to the possibility of new life.

### **What image of God?**

But, what sort of God have we made? Does He not care a jot for the happiness and lives of the spouses but only for His own creational plan regardless of misery? For these theologians wax lyrical in His name, outlining the joy and communion to be expected under His blessing from sexual intercourse with the careful, naturally produced exclusion of children, which the spouses in a given case may quite properly not want, and may indeed dread. Many even young couples can be in a situation where conception here and now may be a physical or a psychological disaster to one of them. Nevertheless the rule of God holds: no separation of the twin aspects of intercourse, although psychologically, according to these theologians, the two aspects may be quite separate existentially and in real life.

The climax of incoherence comes in the case we know well in every parish, where a woman in her early forties cannot now conceive without complications, such as severe blood pressure etc. The risk is so grave that certainly mother and baby will die if conception occurs and takes its course. Women in these cases will not trust any of the natural methods of birth control nor even the pill for that matter. They have recourse to sterilization. Their husbands, faced with a need to forgo natural intercourse for very long periods are also forbidden to use 'other means' than natural family planning. These men can quote every one of the excellent ends other than offspring or its possibility named by the theologians. They have often, in even the most holy and considerate of marriages, become as physically conditioned to their regular sexual union as they may be conditioned to their pipes or cigarettes. Why, in the name of mutual love and support, mutual comfort and so forth - quite apart from mutual fidelity - may they not be allowed to separate out the unitive purpose of sexual communion, which stands in the relationship itself as an act, from the procreative element which they have through the years loyally fulfilled and which would now mean the death of their wives? There is no coherent answer, given the emphasis and presumptions of these theologians.

### **The Pan-Sexual View**

The non-Catholic world has already decided that sex is for making love. You decide if you want the children. But if not, then sex is for loving between a man and a woman living in an intimate communion of life. I have put it this way to elegant and sophisticated young things in my own parishes, and have found most of them enthusiastic for this formulation. That is how nearly all the modern world lives. We are back in the world St. Paul knew, the world of classical Paganism. Great Pan, the Goat-God of desire, he is Lord. When you love, you feel sexual desire, and the more you love the more you yearn to consummate it and sate it. You may take it. Sex is a response to loving. Animals have to be ordered by times and seasons to mate and rear broods, but man is higher. When he loves he may join the erotic pleasure in one physical experience of sense joy to any other spiritual joy that may be present. He does not have to deny himself and separate parts out.

Sex is for loving. It is of course a happy arrangement that babies can come from this conjunction of purposes, but in an overpopulated world in which offspring are in any case hideously expensive as they grow up, you don't want too many of them. You prevent them by contraception, either natural or artificial, and a little regrettably by abortion too, as the final long-

stop when contraception has failed. For sex is not only about children, sex is just as much about personal fulfilment in love.

When this reasoning is followed through, you find that sexual intercourse cannot be logically or coherently limited to marriage. Sex is for loving, learning to be mature and sure of each other in loving. It cannot be limited to engagement or commitment, for who can assess all the many degrees and crises of love? Masturbation can be justified, because it is an aspiration to a more mature relationship with another of the opposite sex. Homosexuality too is justified, because between two deep and noble characters of the same sex there can be a most profound and spiritual love, a communion of 'David and Jonathan', which David himself says in holy writ is "surpassing the love of women" (2Sam 1:26). Since in mankind sexual libido is a reaction to love and loving, who dare forbid this form of 'fulfilment' to spirits rare and deep above the normal - and so on, and so on.

That is why teenagers seek and indulge sexual libido with impunity from their earliest teens, as you can see at any commercial disco. Even at a Catholic school - those known to me at least - they are never taught that masturbation is wrong, the matter is never mentioned. Neither are they ever taught that it is the Church's doctrine that it is sinful to deliberately seek or provoke erotic pleasure upon one's own body or that of one's boy friend or girl friend. So when they go to a party, all this is one of the natural pleasures of growing up.

### **Unitive Defined through the Procreative**

The Church's doctrine of human sexuality bears a different look if the unitive aspect of sexual union is not only subordinate to the procreative aspect, (as it must be if, for no reason at all, this purpose and possibility may be separated out) but if the unitive is defined through the familial, the procreative meaning. In that case God did not make sex for loving. He made sex for children in a permanent and holy state of loving, which is a different matter and a different doctrine from that of the modern world. Sexual union is certainly linked to love, but to love as it embraces all the powers spiritual and psychological of a couple, and harmonizes them into a natural state of love, in which a man and a woman share with God in the very creative love by which God Himself wills new life into being for time and for eternity.

In the human personality no pleasure of sense is an end in itself or for itself alone. Its indulgence is good if it is used to the measure of its function and purpose and not of its greed. We all exceed in the pleasures of eating and drinking, and it is most unlikely that the intense pleasure

of sexual union is going to be exempt from any imperfection, greed or tendency to make it something of an addiction by force of habit. But sexual union, as an act and a pleasure, must also be judged by its meaning and purpose in nature. According to nature it is most clear that family is its primary and obvious meaning, and that by the law of nature it cannot possibly be used without the 'risk' or possibility of conception. This is obvious enough nowadays through all the miseries and anxieties of contraception itself. It was much more obvious even as little as three generations ago, when men and women who were quite as advanced intellectually and culturally as we are, did not know the rhythms of the generative cycle and did not possess the techniques of reliable birth control, natural or contrived. The only means of controlling birth they possessed in those days was to control sexual intercourse through human dignity, wisdom, and grace.

They could grow in love - in marital love - whose grace is 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health' by sweet consideration, or they could abuse each other. Likewise, the man could put his wife in her grave, and often did. Control had to come from within the grace of the human person, not from techniques natural or artificial, nor from clever chemicals. And it is from the sheer personality of man that we can best judge of the basic intentions of God. We can argue that in the beginning - apart from the fall, its stresses and its confusions and its frailties - God did not intend that sexual communion should be used for loving without reference to its familial purpose. From the beginning of time there have been countless reasons why a man of deep heart should not ask sexual union of a wife who, for grave physical reasons and the well-being of children already born, should not run the risk of further conception.

If God had intended the physical act of sex to be, of its own nature and in its own right, the perfect accompaniment of love between man and woman in marriage at all seasons of life, then there ought to have been, and there would have been, a natural means by which the two aspects would have been separated out by nature itself. Otherwise there would be, as there are now, many occasions when the law of God requiring the generative act to be open to life would contradict equally important natural ends of the act. God would then appear to be something of a monster, not the all-wise. In passing, it is not accurate to present our present knowledge of 'nature's way of family planning' as God doing just this thing. We have discovered nature's cycle of rest and renewal, and nature's way of preparing for the next cycle of fertility. We may take advantage of it, with the Church's blessing, for infertility or for fertility, but if it were 'God's way of providing natural, and to be expected birth control,' then the good Lord should have given it by revelation a long time before we discovered it painfully and uncertainly so very recently.

## **Relevance of Doctrine of the Fall**

Far too many theologians teach sex and talk about sex without any reference at all to the doctrine and the fact of original sin and its consequence, the fall of human nature from its original perfection and attuning to the perfect will of God. As some of them do not believe the doctrine, this is understandable. Such people will never understand why there is so much stress, mystery and misery attached to human sexuality, as well as so much dignity and joy. Others think of original sin as merely 'an extrinsic lesion' in human nature, the loss of certain privileges which leave basic human nature just as it ('naturally' at least) ought to be. The doctrine of the Fathers, of Augustine and of Aquinas is again quite different. They teach an intrinsic lesion or wounding in human nature, a real and existential loss of natural good and ease in the things of God. Original sin has by its effects of disobedience to both the natural and the supernatural law of God, ruptured the natural orientation to God by which man ruled his passions of body and of spirit by peaceful wisdom.

And alas we have lost willing right reason in the grace of God and according to the valuations of God; to take the pleasures of the body with simple joy, and stop most willingly before the point is reached of greed or undue valuation is true innocence. The effect of sin - because it is an act of both disobedience and greed - has broken the perfect response of nature to its God and the law of God, a response which, before sin, all created nature has obeyed. The effect in man's nature is to make him coarse and lethargic in response to perfect good, disordered and tumultuous in his desiring, and addictive in his overdeveloped pleasure and power drives. This sheer fact of the human drama is wonderfully reported by St. Paul in the Letter to the Romans chapters 7 and 8.

This is the theological meaning of concupiscence as the physical penalty of the Fall in man, a penalty passed on by natural generation. There is nothing abstract about it, it is a living, very relevant fact. To the legacy of original sin we add constantly through life by our own deliberate sins and unresisted imperfections. Grace, given us again fully in Christ is a principle of partial healing, and it brings forth precious and beautiful fruits in even a wounded nature. But, we are not as God made us, nor, this writer would suggest, in the depths of our self-division as God could ever have made us. It ought to be said that 'concupiscence' does not mean sexual libido or lust, though in English it is mostly used that way. It means all disordered desire in human nature which is a damage and a deviation from the original perfection of man as God created him in grace with

a nature attuned to God without these self-divisions, in peace and in joy. While concupiscence in theology (1) does not mean just sexual craving, it certainly does include the concupiscence of man for this most intense and most sought after of the bodily pleasures, whether out of marriage or, all too often, within marriage itself.

### **Holiness in Courtship**

God did not make sex for loving. Sex is the specific pleasure of the organs of generation. It is linked to loving, but is not of itself an act of human love. Human love of itself is an experience of joy and fulfilment which has many degrees according to its depth and nearness to God. It is a joy, and it is an experience. In the body it also has a physical accompaniment: tenderness, and happiness in possession which calls forth the embrace and the caress. This may be enjoyed in any state of life. Such love will often prompt sexual desire and pleasure, not because this is natural in loving, but because it is the triggering effect of the Fall in man, and the constant ages long association of all human love with sexual pleasure. It may not be deliberately accepted or indulged by the will. Unless it will lead to sinful consent it can be separated out from the loving, and firmly set aside, without necessarily obliging one to desist from all tenderness. It is not part of the rights of love, not even between a man and a woman, a boy and a girl. It certainly may not be accepted and enjoyed as part of deep human love or friendship between man and man, woman and woman.

In loving there is a special warmth, and a quite delightful sense of complementary love and happiness between man and woman, especially when this is accepted as likely to lead on to a lifelong communion of love. This joy - at once spiritual and natural - of the soul and of the flesh is first in a mutual warmth, contentment and joy. The erotic desire is not directly part of it. Most certainly - in youth especially - it will trigger sexual desire. Again, this must be set aside and not accepted or sought. It can be, if love is without 'flap', and then tenderness with honesty and humility, and within reasonable limits, can also be indulged. The sexual libido may not be sought or consented to. Once again, this is not an act or a right of human loving. And young couples, including the engaged, do not have a right to it. It is not an act of their love. It is an act of love when it is a right and natural accompaniment, as a pleasure of the flesh, of the most noble act of the body as flesh - which is to minister to God in His own creative act of love for us.

In this act the soul joins with its own deep love and joy in the beloved, a love most deeply spiritual, for it is an office of life in mutual fulfilment, spiritual and physical. The body too shares, not simply in the pleasure of sexual union, but in the joy and tenderness of mutual fulfilment in life, in vocation, in peace and in joy. All this is within a lifelong commitment of love which, while it embraces every aspect and need of life in man and woman, spiritual and natural, is a joy and a vocation defined through this mutual ordering of their bodies as male and female, defined through a mutual work in which their own love and mutual commitment should accept children with a joy which is a reflection of the Lord's own desire for them and happiness in them for time and eternity.

It is the body that is taken up to the order of the spirit, and is conformed to its order and meaning. The flesh and the merely erotic as pleasure is not an end in itself, nor when it is so indulged does it support mutual fidelity. Since the sexual act consummates a sacrament of Christ between the baptised, it seems to this writer that it must be, materially speaking, a sacrilege to so use the body outside marriage. For sexual union is necessary for the perfect and irrevocable bond of the sacrament of matrimony. If this is true, we should teach it

### **The Lawful and the Perfect**

The teaching of the Church can be justified only upon the presumption that family is the original reason of God for the creation of sexuality, and that the use of sexual union as copulation to foster marital love and joy, to fulfil and mature personality etc., is not intrinsically necessary, and was not part of its original function except in its relationship to new life willed and gladly accepted. In that case sexual union is still not necessary as part of its most perfect function in loving, when family is rightly not desired and should not be attempted. Sex in itself is just a physical delight of the body. And its function in life, love and marriage, though complex and important, is very much overemphasized in this very carnal and hedonistic age. The spiritual joy of love and communion, and the physical joy of tenderness and caress are more important to the fostering of mutual love, and more likely to hold a marriage together.

We can all agree - and it is the wise rule and provision of the Church from the age of the Fathers, and not just now - that couples should not tempt themselves and each other beyond their spiritual powers by "*defrauding one another*", in the words of St. Paul (1. Cor 7:?). Even here, St. Paul does gently insinuate that continence, presumably when children are not desired, is in itself more perfect. To use the permitted means of natural family planning so that the act of sexual

union is always open to new life, is to behave in such a way that one may, by degrees, grow more loving, more considerate and more faithful in one's marriage. It is also subjectively the better way and the more perfect way for hot and passionate young spouses, especially when under constant temptation at work.

At the same time, the recognition of an element of imperfection and addiction in the need to have and to seek a sheerly bodily pleasure, which - in their present rightful desire to avoid more family - is only incidentally attached to their love, their tenderness and their belonging to each other 'till death do us part,' does come to many maturer couples and to not a few younger ones. I think they are right so to perceive; and that the early Christians and the Fathers of the Church, together with Augustine, Aquinas and the greatest thinkers of the Church until the 20th century, were right to think the same. In any case, until and unless a couple come to recognise that the use of sexual intercourse, except with some relationship to new life, is in fact an objective imperfection and in themselves personally a subjective imperfection, there is no point in pushing the matter. To do so would be unwise. But to those who do perceive and ask, the most perfect way should at least be taught. It also makes a perfect sense of the will of God and law of God.

God cannot change the law of his wisdom because of human sin or human imperfection of nature since the Fall. Through the prudent use of natural family planning, young couples who are loyal to the Church but far from heroic souls, can help each other up to God by a love which is genuine and faithful; a love which is unitive and linked to the three great blessings of marriage: the sacrament, the joy of family, and the joy of faithful, vocational, and complementary love till 'death do us part'. These have always been the reasons why the great saints through the ages justified and allowed holy Christian marriage in which perhaps for reasons of age no children could hope to be born. In the old indeed they did insist the more on an element of objective imperfection. In the young, perfection must come by slow degrees, and nobody is holy or humble who would run before he can walk. There can come a time when the call of God within the spirit encourages us to run in the ways of God rather than walk.

Not for any reason, however, can the love of couples, however young, be justified in their sexual intercourse if the basic and primary openness to life of their relationship is removed. This removes also basic obedience to the mind of God and the truth of God from the unitive love. Little by little if this occurs, sensual pleasure, even within the limits of marriage, is indulged more and more as an end in itself, as every pleasure must be when its use is withdrawn from conformity to the mind and will of God when He made its function and its pleasure. No love that leads away

from God is going to increase a godly and spiritual faithfulness in the spouses. General contraception has done nothing in the world of today to make love or marriage more happy, faithful, lasting and reverential. Without a reverential element in its use, sex becomes a great destroyer.

### **The Incoherence is in Man**

When a certain age is reached, or certain physical crises occur, if no natural means of avoiding conception is trusted or is acceptable, then in the name of a love, natural and proper to marriage - a love persisting 'in sickness or in health' in order to 'love and to cherish' - abstinence and the more perfect way must be accepted. If it is, the love will be found to be the more sweet and more intimate. God does not call us to mutilation but to perfection, and in some circumstances of life, either in action or in witness - as in times of persecution - we are brought face to face with the single meaning of His truth and His utter holiness, and there is no lesser way open to us. It is not God who is incoherent, it is poor human nature that is incoherent and never so much as when it is revealed in the basic imperfections that most of us take for granted. One look at the crucifix should tell us enough of what original sin and its effects did to human nature and the havoc it wreaked on the one Man who was utterly perfect. This writer finds that the doctrine of the Church is fully coherent to the young when explained through the teaching of the Fathers of the Church and the great saint theologians through the ages.

Once you begin to state reasons that in themselves are, actually, independent of the creation of life as a true and perfect reason for the use of sexual communion, then the young draw their own conclusion, that all means of contraception are equally justifiable and we can enjoy sex 'because we are in love'. Therefore the doctrine of the Church can be ignored with a grimace of disgust because it is incoherent and legalistic. Finally, whatever view committed Catholics - priests or laity - may take of the views of this writer, the Church, through Rome and her bishops, must face up to this crisis of love, especially in its premarital aspects. We must teach a doctrine of coherence and perfection. Otherwise we will live to see the total destruction of marriage and youthful chastity.

There will be very few recruits too to a call to celibacy, if the doctrine of sex is incoherent from one aspect and hedonistic from another. To show the majesty and the integrity of love, we must first justify obedience to the intellect and truth of God in the creation of male and female. Then indeed we can justify a sacrament of marriage restored in Christ, and the call of a yet nobler

and sweeter love, in purity but not in deprivation, in the likeness of Christ, the Priest, Prophet and King.

#### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Orville Griese in *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, January 1981

## THE COVENANT OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

All great love is union and communion. The love of God is a personal joy as invigorating to the inner man as youth and life abounding. It is a holy communion with that Love who grows not old. The love God bestows and which we sense reaches its fullness in the Holy Eucharist, and in this love it is God who does the wooing, God who takes the initiative. All deep friendship found down the years of life, especially when enkindled by a mutual love of God and joy in His service, forms an alliance, it is a sort of covenant between men because first a union with Christ.

Marriage is the love basic and natural, but of the divine order in Christianity, which binds men and women when they enter upon the office of sharing with God in the love which prompts God to create us. They are officers and stewards of this love of God: their love is a reflection of His own. Let it be holy, like His own. The union of God and man through the Incarnation of God in Christ constitutes the 'New Covenant', i.e. the creative, saving, and fulfilling work of God who makes men and who nourishes the flesh and the spirit to life everlasting. If marriage is a co-sharing with Christ in this work of creating men, and bringing them as 'People of God' into an eternal fulfilment, then marriage must be like Christ's own work. It must be an alliance, a covenant, a mutual office in which each needs the other. And it is so. The very mutual ordering and configuration of their bodies as men and as women speak *an office of nature: Christ has raised it to an office of the divine order* that is to say, to an office of salvation in the very being of God, to the taking up of the children of men into the divine sonship and daughterhood in Christ.

Marriage should be entered upon in this way. It is not merely a private joy, a personal fulfilment of spirit and body between two people, which has incidental spiritual duties and responsibilities. No, *the sort of love* which defines marriage is a love both personal, and cherishing, and faithful, but also a love which goes out with Christ to other people. In this case, to the offspring of the couple. Their love may not be selfish. It is unitive indeed, but unitive because it is creative, the office of nature obvious in their bodies, becomes an office and vocation also in their spirit. A selfish marriage is very likely to break up, and a marriage knit too narrowly by sexual enjoyment together is very likely to break up. There is no intrinsic reason

why this sort of love should make a couple want to live together, especially in an exclusive fidelity of the flesh, all the years of their lives! Only a love which in various ways, from the contemplative Order to Christian marriage ministers to Christ, has a lasting reason to remain in mutual communion.

### **Marriage as Covenant and Office**

The Incarnation of Christ among men is an Office and a Status: through this office the Son of God and Son of Man is the root and cause of our being and our salvation. This is the fundamental reason why the office of Christ constitutes the New Covenant between God and mankind. In fact as we know, it becomes also the office of a painful redemption. It becomes the New Covenant in my blood, but a Covenant it is. Again and again St. Paul teaches us that the creation of the universe and its very order of reality centres upon and hinges upon the Incarnation of God in Christ. He teaches it in many places, and nowhere more clearly than in his Letter to the Colossians (Col. 1:15 —20). The same apostle writing to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:21—33) teaches that marriage is a sacrament which images and shares in the union, the Covenant, between Christ and the Church. He says there is a certain intrinsic, inner likeness of reality between the office of Christ to the Church, and the office of Christian couples through the sacrament of matrimony. The man, says Paul, stands like Christ to his spouse: he prompts life within her womb, he is the determiner of life, and he nourishes cherishes, and protects her as Christ does the Church. The woman responds with life which is spiritual and not merely physical. She brings forth and nourishes a perfect work, her love is total faithful and pure.

The reason for this intrinsic analogy of being between the Covenant of Christ and the covenants of marriage is that the office of marriage is a co-sharing with God and with Christ in the work of creation. The love by which God desires us, and makes us through His Only-Begotten Son, is a love mediated through man and woman. Their own human love is a supernatural, that is to say a 'divine' love, a love which reflects the love of God in making us; and God's love for us calls us into the intimate possession of the divine being. It must follow then, that Christian Marriage is, strictly speaking, *an office in the Church and a specific ministry in the Church*: we do not teach it that way, and we ought to do so. To do so enormously

enhances the dignity of Christian marriage, and gives so much hope and joy to young couples. One knows this is true, from their reaction to such a presentation when preparing them for marriage. Marriage does not confer a character indeed, because it does not confer an unrepeatable relationship to the Being of God, or in the case of the priesthood of the altar, to the personal character of Christ the Priest. But it does confer an office and a ministry in the Church, in the same specific way as does the priesthood of the altar. The nature of this status and ministry is clear in the very fact that before the altar, exchanging their vows, the man and the woman, in the likeness of Christ and the Church, are the actual ministers of the sacrament itself. The priest who officiates only blesses the union, and makes sure of its validity before Christ and the Church. So, Christian Marriage is more than an office of nature. It is more than an office of personal fulfilment between individuals. It is a personal fulfilment which is an office and a ministry of creation and of bringing to perfection. This is the sort of love which makes marriage to be marriage. If the office of creation is excluded, then it is nothing more than a friendship of indefinite duration between two people, a friendship in which sexual union will be used, while the basic sweep of its meaning as spiritual fulfilment is denied and frustrated. No wonder this Humanist concept of marriage gives us marriages which do not last!

If marriage is looked at in the way we suggest, then it should be taught that way to teenagers. This indeed would be 'preparation for marriage'. Such a vision would and does, condition their boy-girl friendships with a new care for chastity, and for that office of the womb which it is sacrilege to violate outside of the office of grace with Christ. It gives to the girl also a new respect for a boy, and also a motive to help him so to love, that whether the friendship leads to marriage in their case or not, she does not tempt him but respects in her loving that office of determination to life, which is the meaning of his sexuality, even as it is the meaning of Christ's creative and saving relationship to us all. Because it is the physical basis of the very office of creation in nature and in the Church, all sex is holy. It cannot be presented as having fun in a relaxed and sybaritic manner. To do this, to teach this is to destroy the beauty of young love in boys and girls. It would be better for such people that a millstone were put about their necks and that they were drowned in the depth of the sea.

## **Relationship to the Eucharist**

There is a certain natural priesthood in the office of parents to their children, because they are the 'good shepherds' of their own little flock, indeed perhaps of their one beloved lamb! The new service of Baptism reminds parents that they are 'the first teachers of their children in the ways of the Faith' and exhorts them to be the best of all teachers. The final blessing of the child and its parents is given before the altar, to remind the parents that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit'. The parents are co-sharers with God in a work of creation which through Christ is of the divine and not merely of the natural and biological order. They are reminded too, in the exhortation which ends the same service of Christening, that the new birth of Baptism, the milk of God, leads on with growth of time to the bread of God. It leads to the Table of Holy Communion, to the child's first receiving of Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life, It leads also to the inner Chrismation of the soul of the child, as it grows in years, by the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. This is the sacrament both of adult, mature resistance to Satan and all his works, and also of witness and apostleship. In all of this work, the parents share intimately *and by vocation and office in the Church*.

There must also be, in Christian Marriage, an intrinsic relationship to the Holy Eucharist which is proper to the office of marriage and parenthood, both as spiritually unitive for the couple and life-giving for the child. It would seem that if the office of the Covenant of Marriage mirrors the Covenant of Christ and mankind, in the Church, that there must be a similar special relationship between Matrimony and The Eucharist. The Eucharist as sacrifice and sacrament is the source of life and grace for us all, but what one is saying is that the graces which are promised in marriage, the special graces of life and state, must one thinks be obtained in a unique and special way through the Eucharist in the case of Christian spouses. For Christ, having loved his own who were in the world, 'loved them unto the end', and the sign and focus of that especial love, and source of life and power, was the giving of the Holy Eucharist: the New Covenant in my Body, and in my Blood. If Christian marriage is a co-sharing with Christ in the basic office of that Covenant between Christ and the Church, which is sealed and centres in the Eucharist, then surely there is a right and a necessity for Christian spouses to turn to the Holy Eucharist, that the graces of state which their way of life requires, may be received in fullest

measure from the sacrament which is the centre of Christ's creative work for men. This would seem to mean that the grace of Matrimony is mediated in a special way through the Holy Eucharist, and does not stand without it. In the name of their office, and their vocation in the Church therefore, Catholic couples should view their attendance at Mass, and their liturgical assistance in the Mass, as a most sacred duty and need.

They should bring their children also to the Table of the Lord with the same sense of urgency and office. Here the Lord feeds their children in the noble virtues of the spirit, as they the parents are so careful to feed them with the bread of the body. Here they should bring their children to be educated in the word of the Word of God, with the same sense of necessity and duty as they are so anxious that they get the very best in the education and culture of this world and its making of money. They themselves should teach their children their first prayers, their basic catechism, their first knowledge and love of God. They should not leave it all to the Catholic school. It is no accident that the Real Presence of Christ, by very Being, in the tabernacle of the parish church is the living centre of the community gathered around it which we call 'the parish'.

Because of this, the church in which Christ is reserved as Sacrament becomes a room which belongs to, and is 'an extension' upon every home in the parish, whether large or humble, richer or poorer. This becomes a much richer thought and fact if the Holy Eucharist whether as offered or as received, is itself related in a special way to the state of marriage of Christian people, and through it they receive the very graces which their sacrament signifies and demands. They have but to come, come to the source to which their office and vocation in the Church points: come to Him who is the Living Seal of the New Covenant in His Body and His Blood. I think we could get many more devout laity to come to daily Mass if we so related the grace of their state of life to the grace and office in the Church of the Holy Eucharist itself. Marriage has become too ordinary and humdrum a state and status. Moreover, its love and its grace has declined into an obsession with that which, as an experience, is its least part, namely bodily pleasure. We must regain the recognition of marriage as first and foremost a spiritual love, and a spiritual vocation.

## **Till Death Do Us Part**

We have all at one time or another seen those TV programmes featuring sixth formers in which boys and girls, and significantly enough more militantly the girls, will state with obvious honesty that they *don't* intend to marry till death do us part, although if the love does go on lasting so much the better. Similarly they will say that they just don't see how you can live with *anybody* for ever and ever without getting frantically bored. The child from a broken home sees it otherwise, and the teenager from a broken home as well, unless of course by now they are set upon sexual experience rather than marriage, and can afford to talk glibly about 'knocking it off if it does not work out' etc.

As with everything in the Christian life, it is a case of 'without Me you can do nothing, but with God, all things are possible'. We can see why marriage must be a permanent state of committal and love. Among the baptised it is a direct sharing in the love by which God creates for time and eternity, and the consent to share this work with Christ is made at the altar. It is in fact the matrimonial consent, and that consent is not *ratum* i.e. ratified with finality until it is also *consumatum*, until the office which is inherent in their love, through their souls, and their bodies which are ordered to each other for this office, is effected through sexual union after the sacrament. From that time their bodies and their souls minister to Christ and with Him in a creative love, a love to which as members of His Body by Baptism, they are accepted of their own free will in a mutual work. This work as we have suggested must be an office in the Church, a vocation in Christ, and a ministry in the Church. Once their bodies and souls have been so given to Christ and accepted there is no going back. Christ's love does not change, and they have ratified and consummated an office delegated from Him, sharing in His own work of creation. The love which binds Christ to the Church is indissoluble, and the love which shares in that love of His must also be indissoluble. It springs from the relationship established in Baptism, which incorporates us into Christ as members of His Body, sharing His life and His work, according to our grace, gift, and offices. The love of Christian marriage shares in all things in this love of Christ, and in couples who live their lives together as one great prayer of union, supplication, contrition, and joy in Christ, that love will mellow and ripen down the years. Of course it cannot last for ever unless it is spiritual, and in the grace of Christ. If it is so, then it will

take up all things of body and of soul into that relationship with Christ, and it will not only last, it will increase, and increase towards sanctity. The same argument is true of the priest, and of the continuance of his sense of joy in his vocation. It can only increase if a man loves God humbly in joy and in sorrow, in sin and in virtue. If a man loses his faith and becomes even subconsciously a Rationalist, then he will be the most wretched of all creatures. Of course he will wither. The vow of priestly chastity sharpens the dilemma not only because it denies a man a secure all too human love, and with it sexual companionship, whereas given the possibility of marriage a man can 'drop back' into a comfortable state of being professionally holy, and drift along unnoticed among the tide of mankind.

The priest who takes a vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, is exposed much more nakedly to emptiness and frustration, for of its nature this state of perfection in living does not have surpassing joy and satisfaction except it be lived in God as He divinely is. But also in marriage: there is no guarantee of a lasting love and a love faithful and forgiving in pain, human faults, and human dereliction unless men and women be joined to Christ in a living prayer. If the Eucharist has a special relevance to the grace of marriage and its state, it must also have a relevance to the passion and cross of its betrayals and dereliction. Here too, the Christian spouse is called to come through the Cross to the Resurrection, to come through the Cross to a new challenge and a further vocation, not to deny the bond. Christ did not deny the bond, hut was faithful unto death, even to the death of the Cross. This also can be preached, but we have ~no time to develop the theme in this article.

### **In Summary**

When a young couple come to the foot of the altar there can come to the mind of a priest the words said to him long ago by the bishop, in the former service for the ordination of Sub-deacons: 'dearly beloved son, again and yet again I do adjure you, consider how great a burden of responsibility you take upon yourself this day'. Because before him he sees fifty years of life ahead, and all the drama and achievement, and all the sorrow and pain of human life, from springtime to the grave. He sees the hot and bothered years of young married life, and the forming of the mind and heart of children, through the atmosphere of their parents' personality

in the love of God. In the next age of marriage, he sees the young teenager, brimful of life, jealous of independence, responsive alike to high ideals and fierce squalls of temptation. He sees and senses to, his own role here, his ability perhaps to hold and help better than 'mum' and 'dad', his ability to give reasons as well as love, and a vision of the Faith which builds on the world of science, and school, and human culture.

He is given these kids by these parents to build on that rock of solid Christian faithfulness in loving, on that rock which is an office in the Church, made for his own office, fulfilled in his own love. He reminds them in his sermon that their greatest achievement will be the nurturing of children like themselves, their greatest reward will be that which their own parents have here and now, when they stand in the benches behind their own children at their weddings, children who will thank God above all other things for the gift of a good and truly Christian, mother and father. They will know then that all achievement is in persons only, not in houses, lawns, and investments; only in the love that is undying, the gift of the mind and heart of those who love. The only reward of life is that men and women think they have reason to love you, that through all your faults, the seed of God's image lives in you, and you are God help you, lovable, worthy to be loved. Life has no other reward, you take nothing else beyond the grave.

He may tell them that even in the years when they can but pray and agonize, like himself, for their children, they will still hold them as the best and most valued of counsellors, if they know how to love without possessiveness, and to grow up with their children treating them with a natural respect, with the recognition of their new adulthood, as they grow in the teens. He will tell them too, that the love which knows not divorce knows no end to its vocation down the years of life. Faithful to each other, forgiving in love, reverential of each other in body and in soul, they will know how to teach their children as young wives or husbands, the laws of Christian goodness, prudence, tolerance, and chastity in holy wedlock. They will not be rich when they die, for their hands, even in middle-age, will be going again and again deep in their pockets for money, mortgages, and many a help. As their summer lengthens into autumn, they will still be teaching both children and grandchildren the ways of God, for those ways shine in their faces and their works. They will learn to value the unity of their children's marriage more than their personal love of son or daughter. They will not take sides in quarrels, they will not

divide, they will learn to mind their own business. They will not line up behind their offspring in family rows like football supporters behind their own team. This selfish misdemeanour of in-laws has been the beginning of many a divorce.

Even in old age he will tell them that their work continues, their vocation undimmed. They will still be wanted by children's children as baby minders and sitters. Even so, when frail and more than a little tired, and wracked with rheumatic pain, they will be forming the minds of children's children in their first prayers, and in the simple love of God. They will rejoice with Jesus that when others are out in the company of the wise, brilliant, socially delightful etc., that to them is given the better part, to stay in the company of the Master, and to reveal Him to the little ones. And in that sunset of life they will know the further reward of hearing in the voices of their children, in those simple words 'mum' and 'dad' overtones of reverence and of a love spiritual which echoes the reverence in the title of 'Father' given to a priest. For this is the reward of faithful love a love which shared with Christ all the burden of creation, from conception to salvation, from the cradle to the grave. This then is Christian love, and so we should teach it, and allow ourselves to feel a little bit "*commosso*" whenever a good couple hold hands before us at the foot of the altar. Because all the drama of life is here, for better or for worse, and at the end there will be true of them a variant reading from the books of Wisdom: "Like the sunrise over the mountains of the Lord so is the majesty of a good wife in a well ordered home: Like the golden glow of the sanctuary lamp before the altar of God, so is the beauty of the face in a ripe old age". (Sirach. 26:16—17). For as the burdens and the duties last till death do us part, so also the glories and the beauty shine from time into eternity.

## THE “MEANINGS” OF MARRIAGE

### Have we fudged the traditional teaching?

There is a passage in the book of Jeremiah where the prophet tired of being always the odd man out, and he panicked. He said: “I said I will not make mention of Him any more, nor prophesy any more in his Name: but his word was in my heart as a burning fire, pent up in my bones, I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay it” (Jer 20:9). One feels similar to the prophet, though not so sure of being in the right, if the answer to the question in the title of this article is: “Yes, one thinks we have fudged the age old doctrine of the Church, and we are not going to get out of a mess in our development of the doctrine of marriage and married love, until we retrace our steps.” We need to hack a way out of the confusions born of the sixties and its polemics, and make a new appraisal. To say as much is more than to feel out on a limb. It is more like walking the plank. But the fire pent-up still burns, and in the end one is forced to say it. It does not matter if one is wrong, that has happened before. It would be worse to fear the judgments of men, and to risk letting down the good God.

### Have we lost our bearings?

You sense the problem at once as soon as you begin to discuss sexual communion with the young. You get nowhere if you begin from the wrongness of contraception as an infringement of “the total self-giving” of the sexual act. This leaves unclear what is the basic meaning of this “total self-giving”. They presume and will say this basic meaning is the communion of our love as an experience, in all of its dimensions. The main emphasis of this personal experience is personal and unitive to ourselves. It is a subjective purpose and experience. The procreational power of this act of communion is consequential, and in that sense secondary to our need to enjoy our loving as “two in one flesh”. To answer this presentation you tend to fall back naturally upon the distinction *we used to make* between the primary and the ‘accompanying ends’ of marriage and of the act of sexual communion<sup>1</sup>. In so doing the modern assumption of the unitive aspect of sexual intercourse as a personal, joy-giving bonding, primarily subjective and emotional, not objective and procreational in its meaning, is at least challenged. Yet one

hesitates to talk that way. If the participants to discussion are old enough to be well informed, they will answer that the Council, in *the Church in the Modern World*<sup>2</sup>, avoided that language, while Paul VI drops it manifestly in *Humanae Vitae*, - the encyclical which made all the trouble in the Church! The honest question arises whether the Church in fact *has* dropped her earlier teaching. Certainly she has done nothing, in various new formulations, to make the contrary clear in any coherent way<sup>3</sup>. Of course the affirmations of all the Popes, from 1930 onwards, of the immorality of direct contraception are all too clear. So we are forced to argue that this newly introduced polarity of the 'unitive' against the 'procreative' can only mean that the unitive is defined *through* the procreative, which involves a primacy of the procreational office of the act. There is no other way of making any intelligible sense at all of the solemn doctrine of the Church. This is the line taken in earlier articles in FAITH, and in the Faith Pamphlet *Christian Marriage, Covenant in Christ*<sup>4</sup>, which obtained strong approval from Cardinal Gagnon and the Pontifical Council for the Family. It seems to be much the same as the stand taken in a most interesting article in *The Thomist* (July 1988) fuller references to which will be found in the appendix to this article<sup>5</sup>.

### **Chaos of Teenage Loving**

The question arises whether under what the tabloid newspapers might call 'fierce and intensive cross examination' the 'new insights' claimed for the development of our appreciation of marriage, do not come full circle to exactly where we were before. Few of us would die in the breach for the formulation of the ends of marriage as set out all too tersely in the recently superseded Code of Canon Law<sup>6</sup>. This formulation however does not go back to the age of the dinosaurs, it is contemporary doctrine in the sense that it was framed in the same year as the present writer. It is however psychologically an inadequate presentation. in the Church of the modern world. The multi-dollar question is whether as the *orthodox* answer to the critics comes full circle the doctrine, - whatever the elegance -of the last Code of Canon Law remains the same'? As the encapsulation of the unbroken witness of the Church, and the obligations she has imposed in conscience in the name of Christ over two thousand years, one rather thinks it must come out the same!

The modern youngster has often started serious sexual intercourse (i.e. committed to one partner only) from the age of fifteen. At eighteen, few of either sex are virgins. There is little difference of theology or behaviour between those who went to Catholic schools and those who did not. Any difference between what they were taught at school concerning sex and love comes over as quite marginal. One thing alone has made a deep impression, and it has nothing to do with plain lust. Sexual intercourse they will say, is the highest and fullest expression of love between two people, and therefore if you love deeply and nobly you have a right to it. One does not pretend there is no greed, humbug or arrogance in most of these experiments; but there is far more confusion, and often a sweet love blasted in the bud. The noblest expression of love' theme, which often they have got from school talks on sex at around thirteen is particularly a temptation for the ardent and noble spirits, especially the girls. In the older 'teens both boys and girls will tell you that while they enjoyed sex, (they will even admit it becomes addictive) they did it to break down 'the last barrier' between them and someone they loved. In the rivalries of love it becomes the ultimate witness of yearning, an appeal to the partner to 'please love me'. Usually the love is meant to be exclusive.

### **The Emphasis on Sex as an Emotion**

Thus the emphasis is on sexual union simply as an interpersonal relationship of 'loving', in what on their grossly immature and incoherent assessment could be called its unitive aspect. They will have received much the same presentation of sexual love from many of their parents. although so often they have had from them no teaching or comment at all. While many parents agonize for their adolescent children, and pray for them, they don't want to know what they are up to. They feel inadequate, unable to help. These young are very well aware that sexual intercourse brings in new life. The nicer ones among them consider it delightful, and thoughtful of God to have linked children with loving companionship and self surrender. But for them the 'total self-giving' lies in the mutual commingling, and in the solemn significance which, from very nature and as a *psychological* experience it must possess, whether fertile or infertile. They agree this is spoiled by the condom. They would consider that when 'open to new life'

especially wanted new life, the act has a more complete 'unitive' meaning. However they divorce their personal sense of union from any procreative element in the so-called love-making: "you cannot have an endless stream of babies from loving". These tentative sexual unions in the modern young break up all the time, and often with great emotional damage to either sex, and more especially to the girl. At last, they settle down to live together with someone or finally get married. In my opinion the deliberate infertility of so many young couples in affluent and permissive "white" countries has a twofold cause. There is the dread and insecurity in love deriving from the divorce or fragility of their own parents marriages, and not less, the personal insecurity and dread arising from emotional collapse in their own psyche. They have had so many shattering and shattered experiences, their own personality is in fragments. This, much more than say, enforced sexual abstinence in harsh economic circumstances, is the real reason for their lack of courage in the acceptance of new lives and the ongoing responsibility of children. They are emotionally and spiritually impotent. It is not suggested that all young people see love and sex in the manner outlined, that none escape, to be rightly taught and formed, so that they grow into a mature and chaste loving. It is suggested that what we have outlined is the *majority* case, and that one major contributing factor is our failure to teach the primary meaning of the physical difference between male and female in an honest way. If you do not teach 'new life' as the *primary* end of the sexual communion, and of marriage as a sacrament, then in fact, though not in intention, you shovel the whole meaning of sexual union around the sexual act and its bodily pleasure<sup>7</sup>. That is what we have done and is happening. - the whole experience of sexual love, and its definition, in and out of marriage, has been put into orbit around the sexual act — and this is a total error.

### **Pope Paul - Two Primary Ends?**

When *Casti Connubii* and *Humanae Vitae* are read together and compared, the first thing to strike one, is the enormous superiority of the earlier document. It is nobler in magisterial fullness, in diction, and in clear pastoral counsel. It is true that Paul VI was restricting himself to a narrower but intensely controverted aspect of doctrine, but even so the gap remains. Paul VI, a man by nature hesitant in decision said, and said clearly what Christ had promised he must

say, - the truth of the Faith. Yet, if *Casti Connubii* had been re-edited in 1968, with just a few pages added beyond the encyclical of 1930, it would have done as well, and maybe better, The doctrinal relevance of *Casti Connubii* to the revolt of 1968, as well as to the collapse of the moral doctrine of the Church of England around 1930, is fully clear.

There are limits to the length of a FAITH article, even when the editor is judging his own case. It would be fascinating, instructive, and of advantage to the argument, if one could print, compare, and comment on the several noble and beautiful expositions of the basic meaning of marriage to be found in Pius XI, Pius XII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Some references can be put into the appendix. but we have not space to do what we would like to do. A basic question is, did Paul VI speak and think of *two primary ends* in marriage, inseparably linked in the intention and will of God? It is true that in the Latin of the encyclical, he uses the singular word 'ratio' i.e. 'aspect' to apply to both considerations, the unitive and the procreative. However, the English translations of the C.T.S., and of Flannery in *The Conciliar and post-Conciliar Documents* (and Flannery does at least once correct an error in the CTS rendering) seem a just translation of the original<sup>8</sup>. At the Faith Summer Session last August, a theologically competent young man referred in conversation to '*the two polarities* of sexual intercourse, the unitive and the procreative' ... he is completely orthodox, but that is how they speak, and how they are taught., the two polarities, the *two primary* meanings. Did Pope Paul say that, and if he did, was it true, was it a new development, was it a new insight . . . or just the confusion of thoughts which even now, have yet to find their true harmonious development in the Church?

### **The Flaw in "Humanae Vitae"**

That Pope Paul did at least confusedly speak that way must be conceded from the passage in his encyclical where he appeals to scientists to bring in research to improve the basis for the use of natural rhythms for the chaste limitation of offspring, and thus show "that there can be *no contradiction between two divine laws, that which governs the transmitting of life, and that which governs the fostering of married love*". He links this appeal to a reference with a similar aspiration towards more secure natural family planning, made in a major allocution by Pius XII<sup>9</sup>. The context however is not the same, Pius XII makes no reference direct or implicit to any

“contradiction between two divine laws”. The expression “two divine laws” is unfortunate, and surely loose, the Latin text indeed does not say “two”; just “the divine laws” but the two principal English translations are faithful to the sense. the time of the encyclical’s publication, one read those lines with a start! Through the ages of history and certainly through the Great Depression of the thirties there have been countless cases of great difficulty for couples, especially in mixed marriages. The Pope’s comment would imply that *there was a contradiction*, here and now, between “two divine laws” — one could fairly say “two primary purposes or ends”, which science must resolve, because apparently the author of life and of love, and its divine law, did not! This difficulty in marriage, though most acute in our times, has occurred all through history. and its source goes back to the Garden of Eden and the Fall. With pain, one suggests that the Pope’s aside was not a careful piece of theology. *The Thomist* (op.cit.) recognizes that “some” say the Council abandoned the Church’s former teaching in *The Church in the Modern World* (sec. 48) and rebuts this with a reference to the footnotes<sup>10</sup>.

However, footnotes all the way from St. Augustine to Pius XII, do not compensate for consent to omission by silence, in the text itself! The authors of the study above quoted justly refer to a “certain primacy or ultimacy”<sup>11</sup> which the Pope gives to procreation, among the finalities of marriage in *Humanae Vitae*, section eight. Because there is no space for a fuller study, it is to basic realities we must address ourselves. God is not the virtual author of our present problem. In the days on earth of God Incarnate, the Law of Moses allowed divorce (still a human problem!) for the “hardness of your hearts”, and the God who framed marriage “as it was in the beginning” revoked the Mosaic concession<sup>12</sup>. His bishops gathered around Him groaned and protested. Today, besides divorce, the world demands both contraception and abortion. Through Christ’s Vicar, the Holy Spirit. “receiving of the things that are mine, and showing them to you” (John 16:12-15), has refused a concession to the fallen human heart. As before, bishops, priests, and people gathered around Christ’s spokesman have groaned, and protested. God is inviolable. His truth one and eternal. He did not forget anything when He made us.

### **Original Sin central to the question**

There is no study in *Humanae Vitae* of Original Sin and the disordered desire which derives from Original Sin, and is topped up over history by men's personal sins. This was disconcerting, and one remarked it at the time. The entire theology of sexuality in the Church, from the Fathers of the East to Augustine and Aquinas in the West, and down to our own time, has been and must be coloured by the consequences of *concupiscence* in the psyche of human beings. The problem is not of God's making, but is there from the first record in Genesis. This damage within the nature of man is an internal lesion of the nature. It can admit a partial healing by the life of grace, but it cannot be undone — not until the body rise again in the likeness of Christ's own, and the fullness of Christ be found in a flesh fully redeemed (Rom 8:23). For the overtones of this theme, see St Paul to the Romans chapters 5 to 8, and for preference in the literal RSV rendering, for the all important verses concerning the Pauline theology of Original Sin. There can be no developments nor "insights" into the theology of marriage nor of sexuality in general which ignore the conclusions the Church's tradition has always drawn from the physical consequences of Original Sin.

From FAITH Sept/Oct 1986. *Holiness in the Twenty-first Century* we quote at length under the sub-heading *Heresies and Hedonism*:

*"Two principles of error in particular mark present derogation from the Church's traditional and apostolic doctrine of chastity in the human person. The denial of Original Sin as a true fall from harmonious integration between body and soul in response to God's will and God's truth, and the denial of real distinction of principle in human nature between body and soul, matter and spirit. If these two errors are linked, there is found the basis for a convenient, and utterly destructive hedonism. If matter and spirit are only the one order of being and of nature, then you must believe that the affection of loving is just one linked and commingling experience of joy and pleasure. The joy of spirit in the love of a deep and good partner, boy or girl, brings with it the delight of tenderness in caress and touch, you may accept it all as one. If the same twin joys result in erotic arousal as well, you may accept all three together as just the one affect, one loving, one total experience. This last is the modern lie. Body and soul make one person, so a*

spiritual love may lead to and be expressed in the delight of tenderness, yes. The genital pleasure however is not of one kind, species, and natural arousal as 'all human loving'. Once this error is accepted, then you can no more forbid the personal solitary perversion of sexual pleasure, homosexuality, or premarital sex, than you can forbid fornication and adultery. Loving, in body and in soul, in all aspects of the flesh, has become one undivided pleasurable experience, of which the genital, in adulthood is the final 'top up'. This seems to be the erroneous teaching of Dr. Jack Dominian<sup>13</sup> among many other people.

### **Evolution a controlled Universe**

The other root of error, in denying or ignoring Original Sin as a fact of anthropology and human psychology, fails to see that Nature below man is not a haphazard coupling of desire, but a natural harmony of times and seasons, *governed by natural law*; that is to say, by a successive harmony which turns on, and turns off periods of desire, in terms of times of proper function and breeding season. In their natural state, unconfused by human domestication, it is the environment which controls this *ordered* response in life below mankind. Creation by evolution would only emphasize this truth, not undermine it. It would mean that when the soul was created into an animal brain which now of its physical mutation required this higher principle of being and of determination to intelligent life and purpose, that the spiritual soul, which is not a material energy, and which *cannot evolve*, would inherit a body already made to obey its natural seasons of purpose and right use. This natural obedience, *now made subject to the soul*, would be taken up in the order of grace and governed by *the wisdom of the soul*, not by the material environment, in terms of right and wrong, good and bad. It is this which would give what theology has called '*immunity from concupiscence*' (i.e. disordered desire) in the state of original holiness and justice. In the beginning, by the coming together of a flesh which looked for control and direction, and a spirit in communion with the wisdom of God, there was the perfect and harmonious Adam, 'naked and not ashamed' because in man and woman as God made them, there was one harmony of natural law, and of peace in the spiritual wisdom of God through grace. Thus, Original Sin and its consequences is not only a fact of a fall from grace and destination in God; it is also a fact of biology, a fall from *proper union and harmony* in the flesh,

and in the psyche of Man. It is therefore a real, and an intrinsic wounding of our nature. Because a law of “seeking for its proper good” belongs to everything God made, including the order of its animal life, before there was “man” — man’s body of flesh will never be “totally corrupt”. God’s law can never be wholly eradicated from the flesh. But, the flesh is also made to be controlled and ruled by the soul, and this, the fallen intellect has imposed its own law of self-adoration and lust within the body. We are redeemable, but we remain damaged until the resurrection of the flesh in the likeness of Christ. Nobody has ever put it as poignantly or as clearly as St. Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, before quoted.

### **Joy common to loving, and Joy specific to purpose**

Out of this synthesis and vision of Man, which is the vision of the Fathers of the Christian Church, and all her great teaching saints through the ages will, indeed must, arise the doctrine and philosophy of love traditional to the Catholic Christian Church. Because we are unities of spirit and matter, there must be a joy common to all our loving. a joy in soul and body. This joy is naturally expressed in the flesh as tenderness and caress. The specific pleasures are not. either in the animal world, or even less in man’s higher spiritual order, there to be enjoyed as aspects of enjoyment or ‘loving’ at all times. They go with their natural function and finality, they are not concomitant with all joy and loving. Such are our eating and drinking, and the genital pleasure. These are specified by the ends they serve. Men destroy themselves by addictions of their own making, - alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and the various addictive ‘kick’ drugs, taken for sensual pleasure of one kind or another as sheer ends in themselves. Sensual addiction of any sort. destroys the spiritual life and the experienced joy of communion in God. Sex and its pleasure is overdeveloped as desire in fallen man, even as a yearning on the biological plane.

Even in the noblest spirits its perfect control is a constant problem. This we all know from experience, and without any demeaning of that function which peoples heaven, or of its good and natural pleasure. This is the reason for the high esteem the Catholic Church (and for that matter all high religions) has put upon chastity. It represents the re-integration of man’s psyche, with wisdom and good in control of the fallen, stormy passions of a damaged nature.

This is a theology and a philosophy of man far removed from that of Dr. Dominian, and the many who support him. It is why in commenting in FAITH (July/August 1988) *“Twenty Years after Humanae Vitae”* one capped Dominian’s deploring of the *“negative attitude to sexual pleasure in the Christian tradition from the second century onwards”*<sup>14</sup> with the comment that after the eating of the forbidden fruit, in the first chapters of Genesis, they found they were naked. . . and *were* ashamed; and they covered their genitals with fig leaves! The story speaks for itself, and Dr. Dominian has to go a vast way back in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, to before the Fall, before there is an end to his sort of sexual negativity! The simple truth is that he is wrong, and wrong to the spiritual disaster of many a delightful boy or girl who may read him. Sex is not for ‘loving’ - sex is for family in a consecrated state of loving, and makes that loving an office and a ministry in the Church, in time and for eternity.

John Mahoney S.J. in an article in *The Tablet* some time back, referred to St Augustine as “a flawed genius”. He was not, he knew and taught together with Aquinas <sup>15</sup>that man was a nature flawed by the consequences of Original Sin. Catholics loyal to the magisterium of the Church through history, cannot develop further a doctrine of personal holiness in the modern world, unless they evaluate more precisely the meaning of concupiscence’ as a fact of human biology and psychology, as well as a statement in theology. After all, it is the doctrine of the Church that the state of fallen nature and its internal disorder is passed on by *generation*, not by an arbitrary curse.

### **The Soul the unitive principle of love**

A man and a woman may live together in a companionate friendship, call it love if you will. They may love each other nobly and deeply. They may enjoy the tenderness of their complementary qualities as male and female. It will never give them the right to sexual communion or the deliberate acceptance of its pleasure. Men may live with men, and women with women, and in Orders of religion they do that. They may love in God more deeply even than married people, - but they will never have the right to sexual intercourse or deliberate erotic arousal. Sex is not ‘for loving’ nor is it the final ‘topping up’ of love in the adult state. The *unitive* principle in human loving does not come through the genitals, which is why the boy-girl affairs break up,

and their later marriages founder. The *unitive* principle in all human loving and states of life, comes from the wisdom of God, its reflection in the soul, and the common purpose in that wisdom and good, which draws people to each other. This is true in marriage and out of marriage. In the life of men and women, the genitals and their erotic pleasure, orbit around the primacy of God, and his peace in the souls of the spouses. It is not the spirit, and the human love, which orbits about the pleasure of the genitals.

### **Original Sin does not change Original Law.**

In the state of original holiness, God placed *a law* between the functions and natural pleasures of the flesh, and the wisdom of the soul, which was to interpret that law in terms of truth, good, and our personal growth and fulfilment. Sin has confused that 'natural law' which is God's truth in nature, but it cannot replace it. Sin has made it so very, very hard for us, but no other law of truth can be given to our nature just because it is fallen. Christ has restored the dignity and sacrament of the "two in one flesh". Christ's grace can heal and does, but it cannot undo what is a form of biological damage in the relationship between body, soul and the original order established by God. God's intention was, God's best intention still is. that every baby be a *wanted* baby. In an unfallen human order, where this could not be so, sexual union would not be used. In sexual communion the spiritual happiness in each other and in God, and the total joy of flesh and spirit of the spouses, is meant to be taken up in a common joy unto God. The act of sexual union is fully unitive only to the extent that it is one with the meaning of God's will, within the covenant of body and soul which is Christian marriage. This is the sincere 'self-giving' which is a great sacrament in the Person of Christ, and His creative relationship through marriage, to His People, the Church (Eph. 5:23-33).

If the openness to life is deliberately and completely excluded or blocked later, then the physical aspect of the union does not have its specific finality at all, and the communion is not *spiritually* unitive either as a human relationship. Therefore it is not surprising that when the love affairs of the teenagers break up, they leave behind a sense of degradation. Under the original law of God, and original harmony of marriage, the sexual urge would not have that unbridled greed which we now discover in it, just as, without noticing the analogy, we may

often guzzle greedily in eating and drinking. In sexual exchange there would have been an accompanying peace in God which would have ordered our subjective pleasure of sense in its just proportion both to the soul, and to the wisdom of God in the specifying of our act. Even in the present state, there are some, more than a very few, who go far along that road to the mutual perfection of each other, which also is a 'unitive' aspect of the grace of their state.

### **Perfect love casts away fear**

Perfect love casts out fear, and where there is a dread of offspring there is an imperfection in the love common to God and the spouses. God is not the author of fear. Let us concede that there are the best and holiest reasons for not desiring another child. Then the best and most perfect union would surely be to abstain from intercourse, but to love tenderly and *unitively*<sup>16</sup> in a love which gave more perfect peace between the couple. The very sacrifice of the erotic pleasure in many a relationship is a sweeter and nobler expression of the unitive bond of marriage. St Peter can be justly quoted in this respect (I Pet.3 :7). Where this is found too hard, and for most it will, the licit use of Natural Family Planning has its tremendous value, within a love which is faithful in thought to the values of its spiritual covenant. It ministers to a love which is sexually unitive, although imperfect because of fear. This concession of God to the tensions brought into honest love by an imperfect human nature, leaves open a basic submission to the *unchangeable* purpose of God. For younger people it is often a necessary condition for mutual help in the spiritual life, in the sense of St. Paul (I. Cor. 7:5). As science perfects its techniques, it can become a more elegant means of living and sinning selfishly against the nature of marriage.

We do not consider this case. but that use, approved by the Church, in which it is a help to a redeemed but still very imperfect human nature. As a parish priest one found that a number of couples, where shift work or illness made a problem, do prefer to abstain for indefinite periods. Two men in particular (they would be amazed to be thought heroes) told me that they found their love now more unitive and deep because of their consideration for their wives, who themselves responded with a deeper, grateful love. This writer has always thought that The Greek Fathers of the Church, and Augustine and Aquinas in the West are right to teach

that intercourse for hope of family is still the most perfect use. Whether others agree or not, it is so wrong to make the unitive potential of marriage orbit so exclusively around the sexual act, - and that is what we are tending to do.

### **Loving in God's truth the only 'free' love**

There is so much that has been left out, and so much more that exceeds the ability of the writer. This article aspires at least, only to be a seminal and pastoral approach to meditating the impact of Original Sin on all our loving, in and out of the bond of marriage. Constantly we behave as if Original Sin and its consequences were an abstract, academic doctrine, which had nothing to do with the transition of man's flesh from the natural law, ministered by the environment of Nature, to the natural role of the spirit to take over, for better or worse, the internal governing of the senses of the flesh and their finalities, or purposes. In the order of Christ's redeeming grace, and the economy in the Church of His Revelation, we can get the eternal, unchanging vision of God right, through all our stress. We can teach not only the married, but just as importantly the young before marriage, an order of loving in which they recognise in themselves the spiritual basis of a love for another, and the natural physical joy which accompanies it, and yet separate out and refuse a purely erotic arousal.

The erotic as such is not 'part of feeling love' in any state, and in the state of the unmarried and those vowed to chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake does not belong to it, or to them, at all. In the present state of mankind the love of tenderness almost automatically triggers sexual desire in the young. They must know why this happens, and why its insurgence against an honest will is not just 'natural' and part of love's topping up, to be avidly accepted. If they are prudent and sincere, they can be very free of spirit, and enjoy many a worthwhile love, without inevitable bondage to erotic desire. There will nearly always be some involuntary incursion of the erotic into their sincere tenderness, and this may be ignored, if there is honest recognition of when consent or sensual 'take-over' is beginning. They can know it from a certain unease in the inward man or woman, and a sense of being 'cloyed' in their mutual relationship. There is often a sense of some loss of the presence of God and peace of soul. While this advice is relevant especially to those vowed to chastity, the principle applies to the

married, in friendships at work and the office, and also sometimes within marriage, for as the joint author of *Christian Marriage: Covenant in Christ*<sup>17</sup> once told us at a Summer School, it is unreal to think there can be no lust within marriage, but spiritual maturity has to be attained here also. In teaching all this, in making the distinction of order and element, of true and untrue clear concerning love as a psychological experience, we have to talk clearly and objectively. We have to be able to state that the primary purpose of marriage as a sacrament, and of its bodily union as an act, is the blessing of offspring within a ministry of consecrated love. This covenant and ministry images the communion of Christ with Mankind through his Church. This human covenant, in its fidelity and indissoluble bonding, fulfils every quality, natural and complementary, between the sexual nature of the spouses. What, therefore, God has re-ordered in One Adam, reflecting the communion between our flesh and Christ's, let not divorce put asunder.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Code of 1917. Literally, it defines the ends of marriage as "For the procreation and (Christian) education of offspring, mutual love and support, and the remedying of concupiscence" (Can. 1013. 1). Note that in English 'concupiscence' usually means sexual desire, but as applied to original sin, the word means all disorderly physical drives, not just sexual.

<sup>2</sup> C.T.S. Translation of *Gaudium et Spes*. Relevant sections begin at no. 47.

<sup>3</sup> The Code of 1983. Concerning marriage, Canon 1055 says: "which of its own nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses, and to the procreation and upbringing of children ... ". The pedigree from the Roman Catechism of this order is impeccable, but given the dissent in the Church can be and has been used to show an inversion of primacies in the definition.

<sup>4</sup> *Christian Marriage: Covenant in Christ* by Andrew and Dora Nash, available in the *Faith Pamphlet* series. Reference to p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *The Thomist* July 1988, vol. 52, no. 3. Article by Grisez, Boyle, Finnis, and May. Offprints, one is advised, are available from Dr. John Finnis at University College, Oxford: entitled "Every Marital Act Ought to be Open to New Life: Toward a Clearer Understanding". The first half of this long article is very abstract and complex, above the intellect of most priests and people. The second part is more pastoral in tone, helpful and instructive.

<sup>6</sup> The older formulation may be blunt, but is reaffirmed by Pius XI in *Casti Connubii* section 17. He calls the summary of the Code of Canon Law "succinct"!

<sup>7</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Address to Catholic Midwives*, Section 43. Important because he reaffirms explicitly the traditional order of primary ends in marriage. From CTS as *Marriage and the Moral Law* (1951).

<sup>8</sup> The CTS version renders "amoris significationes conjugalis vitae *propriae* cum recto ordine congruant" by "expression of love *essential* to married life ... " etc. The word *propriae* means "belonging exclusively to" and in Flannery is corrected to "the expression of love particular to married life". (See AAS An et vol LX p. 496, CTS. *The Regulation of Birth* 1968, and Flannery, Vatican Council, vol 2, p 408.

<sup>9</sup> *Marriage and the Moral Law*, allocution to "Family Campaign". (CTS as above. section 15 p. 35).

<sup>10</sup> A continuation of the same lengthy footnotes to p. 416.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit from *The Thomist* p.416.

<sup>12</sup> The text of Matthew 19:3-11 implies that God did not *forget* anything when He made Adam. He divided Adam. and then re-ened the flesh of humankind more beautifully but just as unitively as before!

<sup>13</sup> For instance in *Proposal for a New Sexual Ethic*. I understand the same in repeated in his recent book on 'Relationships'.

<sup>14</sup> *Proposal for a New Sexual Ethic* — Sexual Pleasure. p 27.

<sup>15</sup> Council of Trent Decree on Original Sin (see DS. 1510-1515).

<sup>16</sup> *Casti Connubii*, Pius XI. Where he advises the moderate use of sexual union in case later abstinence may be necessary. He does not consider this against the *unitive* purpose of marriage. (CTS. Christian Marriage: p. 54 sec. 115).

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Nash, lecturing Faith Summer Session, Strawberry Hill. 1985.

## AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY

The heart of community is the heart of love, and the eye of love is focussed through truth, otherwise love is blind. The subtle sense of security, the joy of belonging which defines 'community' has its roots in a sense of a man's own worth. A man possesses worth if he is loved and wanted and has a stake among his brethren. Without this stake a man lives in community but is not of it. There is not (or should not be) a child in the world who doubts that he or she is worth loving, and ought to be loved. To mother and father they are a *value* beyond all doubt. Why? well just by *being* of course!

### The Unity of Love

The core of the personal sense of belonging in community is an extension of the relationship of family. It is an extension of the worth and love that defines hearth and home. It is therefore ontological - i.e. of being - in its basic nature. Because the relationship of belonging in community is an extension of the belonging that defines 'family', it takes for granted a personal worth-value, akin to that through which any child matures as it grows. These love-values, which energize human life and fulfil it, whether in the home or in friendship, are of one nature; from God they derive, through God they focus, in God they are fulfilled.

The quality of the truth and the love which fulfils marriage and the home grows out of values unique to the nature of man. It is not found in the apes. These values-as-quality are not conventions of human culture, and they are certainly not neutral in their relationship to God. Above the merely animal and merely physical, they derive in human nature through the action of God. Through union with God they are fulfilled in the spirit of a man, and in one same order of value and type, they reach out to the friend in every relationship of human life.

For in its essence - which is spiritual and companionate, not sexual - love is of one common order in all human relationships. Love differs in degree, and in application according to vocation. In one vocation, uniquely and heterosexually, it binds up the whole of the sexual in man to the whole of the spiritual, and consecrates in God the office and the ministry of making life. Yet, if it is to be true and human, the 'spiritual' which informs and powers the loving of

men, is, in its essential nature, the same in order within the community of contemplatives, through every degree of true and noble friendship, to that totally fulfilling love that binds brother and sister apostles of Christ to each other in the shared communion of their joy in Christ.

God is the source of human love and its basic, bonding joy. So true love is of one order, but infinite in variety and in degree of depth, wherever mankind is found. But now the heart of belonging, the surety of being loved and wanted, is going out of human society increasingly, although the world has grown to be a much more crowded scene. The overwhelming pressure of communication should have made the world for all men a less lonely and more comfortable place. The fundamental answer to this paradox derives from the increasing loss of God as the principle of a man's human worth, of his truth and of his mutual loving and being wanted.

To extend the analogy with family belonging, in the modern, secular society and community, men live in a home built upon a deep agnosticism - which means the non-communication of *certainties* of living and loving - and a divorce of family solidarity. There are some families which are manifestly united, truly a 'community'. There are others - especially small 'nuclear' families, which are just physically related individuals - going their own way under one roof. A child does not mature well in a home which is not also a communion of life and love; nor where the routine answer of mummy and daddy to the endless "why?" of childhood is "I really don't know dear, you do keep on and on!"

The parallel extends today to the state as community. This sense of the loss of communion, because there are no certainties in living and loving and because one does not *belong* in a family communion, has often begun within the home and the school long before it extends to the racial ghetto. It is a factor of neurosis between people of the same stock and culture, before it extends to people of another race, colour and creed. When you are worth nothing to your neighbour - especially your more powerful neighbour - then despair enters the heart. Despair enters when all love finally goes. Hope is a love looking desperately for fulfilment. It is desire yearning for more, or yearning for something. If every sense of being loved should go between individuals, or between groups in society, then hope dies and despair takes over. In the family and between lovers despair makes for arson, wrecking and murderous

hate. It does the same in society, and the pressure builds up slowly and invisibly for a long time before the enormous explosion.

### **The People and Their Opium**

The basic values that make for the social happiness of men can exist with many an unconscious denial of the proper status and rights which belong to an individual or a community. Sixty years ago racialism was not the scourge it is today, *except among the emerging leaders of a princely caste*. Yet racial subordination was in fact much more absolute. Men who could not hope to vindicate such rights, who had no ability whatever to enter the world of literacy and the powered machine, could let even oppression go by without developing those psychological factors of mind which breed hatred. After all, they knew oppression no less from their own landlords and princes than from the white man who dispossessed them. Even the white man could be loved in some measure as a brother, when God was still the common Father over all, and it was not thinkable to resist or to govern one's own destiny in the white man's world. Once, however, the power to understand and to work within the power factors of industrial scientific civilisation become even distantly possible, then this status of an inferior existence breeds a bitter, smouldering hate. It will not be stilled except by total liberty or by genocide.

Yet, at root, the loneliness of being *unwanted* whether in the individual, the family or the racial group is based upon an accusation: *you do not love me*. Love is not only the fulfilling of the Law, it is also the fulfilling of a natural law and a demand of nature. It is also the requirement of the *communion of God* among men, in all their relationships. That is why it is the second commandment, and derives from the first: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself.*"

Religion was never actually the opium of the people. Loved according to its true nature and relationship to God, it asked too much of a man to be that! Yet religion did have, and does have, a tranquillising and healing property similar to that which comforting sleep upon its mother's breast has for a sick child. The psalmist knew the same (cf. Ps 131.2) and in the great sorrows and chronic burdens of life, many have known that the peace of God which possesses the soul from within itself, is an oasis of tranquil joy which mitigates pain and prevents the

onset of neurosis. Something very similar happens when communities within society live deeply by religion. This peace in God it was that "*knit up the ravelled sleeve of care*", whether the cares followed personal rejection, social injustice or racial injustice. The true 'opium' of the people was, and is something very different. It was lavishly prescribed in ancient Rome, which was a very pluralistic, very tense and self-divided society. The actual *opium* was sensual addiction and sadistic excitements, the free 'bread and circuses' of history. The same essential opium is doled out today to the common proletarians in the West, through the commercialised sensuality of a society ruled by the interplay of values known as Humanism.

Within this order—the decadent television, the wild, physical youth music and lyrics, the free pill and condom, and the scourge of drink and drugs—are part of a close parallel with the pre-Christian world in our post-Christian world. This is the true opium of the people, and like the 'pot' and the 'acid', the heroin and the cocaine etc., it rots the personality and the dynamism out of a man, and it never fulfils the mind and the heart. Even when it makes a man or woman lost in a sensuous ecstasy, it brings them back to a nameless nausea, a deep unhappiness, and an utter self-contempt. This the pastoral priest knows for fact, not theory, from his own parish youth as they grow up.

There is a personal self-contempt that may lead to conversion, or to bitter anger and social hatred of others. The same type of degradation and the extrapolation of frustration and self-hate can and does afflict societies as well. You see it in the dangerous little gangs of cycle-borne youngsters - boys and girls - who make themselves a frustrated nuisance around your church, your school, your presbytery. Watch these kids at play. Their play at fourteen is openly obscene. Many of them are already sexually deeply corrupted. It is not that they have 'nothing to do', but they have nothing to live for, and *no peace, no joy within their hearts*. They watch you for weakness, however pleasantly you chat to them. They are often quite evil, deeply malicious, and very cruel. They are masters in the art of doing maximum damage especially to the more beautiful and vulnerable aspects of a church.

We dare to say that the tap-root of social peace and social love within that wider family group which is the community, draws life from a basic union with God, and from a minimum centering of the personality of a man upon God. The social values which derive from the

extension of the family relationships of men - that is to say the institutions of civil rule, of service, of education and of recreation - must embody implicitly something of this underlying relationship to God. Through this alone do human relations - which are all basically relationships of 'friendship' - enjoy meaningfulness, peace, and right order.

### **Neurosis of The West**

From the nature of man as soul and body, it is connatural to him to *sacramentalise* religion, to develop its organic relationships in community, liturgy and beauty of every kind. The institutions of man living in society are, by nature at least, relationships of love and care, and they involve the *sacramentalisation* of community, in the relationships of men to each other. Therefore, to be rightly focussed, the natural institutions of civilised man must embody something of this underlying relationship to God, as the source and centre of human truth, of right living and right loving.

If this does not happen, then human institutions of state - not least hospitals, homes for the elderly and schools - become impersonal and mechanical in atmosphere. There was an experiment some time ago in America in which steel 'mechanical mothers' dispensed milk to young monkeys, while barren woolly toy 'mothers' were available for hugging. The poor creatures took their milk quickly from the machines without any emotion whatever, and strove in vain to exact a hug or caress from the barren but warm and woolly toys. They all, those that survived, became neurotic animals. There is a moral here for man; life and love must be personal, spiritual and certain in ministering truth, and warm in ministering love. As God is the source of all being and life, nothing lives in peace without Him, neither the individual, nor the social orders built between men.

Are we saying that the secular society, with the dichotomy between religion and the inspiration of the state which this order imposes, will constitute a state of neurotic tension within human society, one that must lead to social disintegration just as the same tensions lead to the breakup of a family? One thinks so. It seems to be the lesson of Western philosophic Liberalism. We find it not only in the amorphous city culture of Western man, but in every tribal society that has been disintegrated by him, without the replacement of its ancient tribal

sanctions of rightfulness and moral love. The West has nothing with which to replace them, for it is the Agnostic Society. It must follow that the secular society is unnatural to man, with all the consequences that follow from a society of love-deprivation and unnatural tensions. You cannot make men love God by the sword, but without the basic, unconscious love of God, men cannot live in meaningful peace. There is a threshold of frustration which gives us the clinically wretched and neurotic individual. There exists also in society a threshold of disorientation which, if overpassed, gives us a society miserable and neurotic in a clinically recognisable sense. In the West, men are visibly ill. The addition of high unemployment to spiritual emptiness and decadence can only give an excuse for a sudden violent explosion, the real causes of which go much deeper than is perceived.

Since God is the Envioner of Man, as an individual, in the family and in society, Religion must, through history, be interwoven into the fabric of culture. The history of Man is indeed rather a Greek tragedy than a triumph of the progress of the spirit. This is the work of the power of sin, original and personal. To write off Religion because of its distortions in history, is to write off mankind itself. All social folly, religious or secular, proceeds from the folly within the hearts of men. We can see why the Christ of God was crucified, in spite of the natural place of religion in history, and therefore of his Kingdom. And we can see why He had to say to Pilate, the representative of the state: *"You say it: I am a King. For this was I born, for this came I into the world, that I might give witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth, listens to my voice"* and also why He had to add, *"but now my Kingdom is not from here"* (Jn 18:36-38).

Pilate responded, as might the BBC today with, "What is Truth?!" Men have always killed their prophets, and canonised them when they were safely out of the way. But despite the dross taken into it from the human heart, Religion has been the home of the human spirit - home, sweet home! Around this hearth of belonging - to God and to the brethren - all other things in man have found their place, their peace, their order.

### **Law as the Index of Decline**

When this orientation - the *natural* environment of men in their communal relationships - is disrupted, social neurosis and chaos follow upon the decadence of individual personalities. The

simple sayings of Christ that can read like truisms, are bluntly expressive of terribly real laws of human life. For it is out of the fundamental love of God within a man that the love of his neighbour derives. Both in personal love and justice, and social love and justice, the erosion of personalities by arrogance, sensualism, greed, real or practical atheism, or all these together, makes inevitably for a decline in the truth, the integrity, and the care that men manifest to each other. God is not mocked: *“the things a man does sow, those also shall he reap”*. The organism of social care withers as the sap of meaning and love which men impart to each other dries up. The institutions of education and welfare may remain, grow more complex in mechanical service, but they ossify for want of the sweet grace of personal love.

When God ceases to be the ‘Environment’ within which men live and are and have their being, then the laws of society will show that decline in true human values that reflects the average impact of the lives of citizens interacting upon each other. There will be a slackening in the laws which define the right to live and the sanctity of life. The laws governing marriage will manifest a similar drop in the degree of idealism, commitment and responsibility through which marriage as a vocation is defined. Impatience will increase with the ‘useless’ and ‘senseless’ task of caring for the incurably sick or heavily handicapped. Benefits may proliferate in the still affluent society, but it will become harder and harder to get children to accept any responsibility for their aged parents. Children and the aged both come a poor second to the mother who ‘goes out to work’ even when there is no economic need whatever.

As living, inner charity grows cold, because *“iniquity has abounded”* (Mt 24:12) euthanasia and ‘death with dignity’ is more mooted, and the deliberate ‘mercy killing’ of the old is practiced on the sly. The incinerators will smoke with the holocausts of children sucked out of the womb, while young men and women will scream about ‘animal rights’ and wave banners proclaiming ‘meat is murder’! Welfare can be funded, sex can be bought in the street, but *love* is a man’s personal gift to his neighbour, born of the quality of his own soul. First, it is God’s gift to man, and then man’s response to God, before it can turn in blessing to the neighbour.

Among the nations, the priest and the prophet have been the focus of God’s Parenting, through which was sacramentalised the social love of the whole community unto God. In the lands of Christendom this has been ‘The Church’ organised around its local altar, of which the

external structure of the church as building was merely the shell protecting the living kernel. Within the concept of the church as 'parish' one must include the city or village hall, and also the school, which mostly was first the initiative of the Church. There follow all those activities - religious, social, good neighbourly - which were, and to a measure still are organised around the boundaries of the parish.

What the 'parish priest' has been throughout the broad meander of the countryside, that the bishop was among the civil leaders of community. All human culture has been sacral, and to the degree that our own has abandoned its orientation within the sacral, it has fallen lewd, trivial, even neurotic in theme and in artistic content. In the West the decline of community, of responsibility and of mutual affection is more advanced among the generality of society than in the areas taken over for Marxism by the sword. The West does not even *try* to put a noble facade upon its works.

The erosion of the values that enoble the personality of a man - his home, his children, and beyond these the character of a people within its nationhood - all this is pursued through drama which is a lie about life and love, through the slanted soap opera, the total, ubiquitous irreverence about sex in every part of the media, through commercialised solicitation, verbal and visual. In the 'sex education' of the child, the scientific biological aspect of physical sex is alone stressed, and the emphasis is frankly on the avoidance of its natural purpose rather than on the nobility of that purpose. Added to that, the philosophy of science, which dominates the social and educational life of the West, has been allowed to become a factor of practical atheism, from the mutual irrelevance of scientific and religious thought as both are usually presented..

### **The Dry Rot of the Agnostic Community**

All of this destroys community, because it destroys *Man*. There is nothing in this manner of living and of being which feeds the human spirit with an intrinsic truth and an intrinsic good. There is nothing which gathers up every faculty of soul and body in focus to the source of the life of a man and the increase of that life. Men are scattered abroad and their potential poured meaninglessly into the desert sand.

It is intrinsic truth and intrinsic love which, from the fulfilment it confers, causes a man to love, not 'humanity', but his fellow men. There is no hypocrisy so naive or so self-righteous as that of the godless soul who professes to have no conscience to examine, but whose life is one constant effort to justify himself and his propaganda. Through men and women like these - the *Impuritans* of history, the makers of our culture, our commerce and our media - there ferments and then festers in our inner cities the actual achievement of the dominant modern social philosophy that delights to be known as Liberal Humanism.

The walls and pavements are open museums of phallic art, which in their lack of any sort of inhibition would darken the mind of Freud with doubt. The dalliance of the teenagers - many of whom have been taught at school that masturbation is good for you, and offsets urges to rape - is a matching piece to the background. It is not worthy of the name 'human' in any context. Below the serried ranks of flats, where the lights twinkle and die as on some obsolete computer from an early edition of *Dr. Who* there teem those sad, unbelievable youngsters who, from the late nineteen-sixties onwards have been handed back to us across other frontiers, between finger and thumb as if something unclean. They are still with us as the wreckers of football matches, trains, and schools and sometimes whole housing estates.

They come white of face and hideous of speech, these serfs of the Freudian society. Their countenances are wide in that curious illusion of width that derives from utter dissipation matched to moronic mentality. One has watched them appalled, (and not a little scared), as they roughed up a Tube train on their way to the Cup Final. They are barbarians, these poor sinned against savage slaves of captive mothers and fathers, as much as any that roamed Sodom and Gomorrah in biblical days. Their hair styles prove nothing, nor the musical crudities their commercial masters lay out for them. It is the *personalities* that appal, so marked in their very features. It is the way of life, so meaningless; the sensualism, so devoid of love; the pathless drift, the degradation of the image of God, so without hope that sickens.

Over it all is their own angry scorn for their very selves, which is the heart-core of their aggression. This last perhaps is virtue, an act of contrition wrung from nature for its own detestable corruption, and maybe God accepts it into a state of grace. But, for the corrupted

intelligentsia, by whose scorn of God and envy of good, these little ones have been scandalized: better for them that the millstone had been hung about their necks and they had been drowned in the depths of the sea (cf. ).

Men and women like these teemed and sweated, copulated and were crucified, in the streets of ancient Greece and Rome. That also was a civilisation run by epicureans and humanists of delightful elegance and 'fun'. History repeats itself, men repeat their history, holiness and evil repeat themselves out of the interweaving lives and *mores* of men. There is no love, no holy and responsible care for the child, unless it springs from the deep roots in a man of his love of God first, and his rightful obedience to the law of God's truth.

### **Newman:- A Crucified Prophet**

In so far as the root of social breakdown and the crumbling of community has been due to the failure of the Church to match her enemies, and to educe from the heritage of the Faith a new, orthodox, but relevant vision of the unity of science and revelation, we must point the accusing finger in a different direction. The Church - even today confused by her own proud Sadducees, - has been so tardy in recognising the emergence of new dominants of thought and their consequences in modern culture.

It is not that she lacked warning, but that her strategists have lacked intelligence and perhaps that humble concern that sharpens intelligence. She has, in her teachers, so often simply opposed and demeaned the rising philosophy of science. In excuse, there can be pleaded the arrogance and insolence of 'liberals' whose theories and constructions pile high on the scrap heaps of history. The Church could not expect anything better from bawlers and liars of genius; not expect responsibility, truth, cleanness of heart, and care for the minds and hearts of children. But whatever the provocation, it is the duty of the churchman to separate the wheat from the chaff, not to ignore with equal arrogance and smallness the entire growth. In philosophy - and the way of life that in the end, inevitable and existentially grows out of it - mining the ore of new truth is toil enough, but then it has to be refined from a great deal of dross.

It is significant that a Christian churchman of genius sounded the alarm to the Church more than one hundred years ago. He called for a new synthesis of authentic Christian truth and the modern scientific society. He was totally ignored by the Church of England which he had left, and by the Church of Rome he had joined. In common with the best minds of his day, Cardinal Newman had a lively appreciation of Evolution as a philosophy of history, *as development in depth*, not simply as a biological theory poised upon a defective Darwinian basis.

In the final paragraphs of the Introduction to his *Essay on The Development of Christian Doctrine* he writes:

“Facts have been modified or discarded which were once first principles in argument: new facts and new principles have been brought to light: philosophical views and polemical discussions of various tendencies have been maintained with more or less success. Not only has the relative situation of controversies and theologies altered, but infidelity itself is in a different - I am bound to say a more hopeful position as regards Christianity. The facts of revealed Religion, though in their substance unaltered, present a less compact, less orderly front to the attacks of its enemies now, than formerly, and allow of the introduction of new inquiries and theories concerning its sources, and its rise ... The assailants of dogmatic truth have got the start of its adherents of whatever creed: philosophy is completing what criticism has begun. Apprehensions are not unreasonably excited lest we should have a new world to conquer before we have weapons for the warfare. Already infidelity has its views and conjectures, on which it arranges the facts of ecclesiastical history: and it is sure to consider the absence of any antagonist theory as evidence of the reality of its own”.

These words have proved prophetic, and now the Church is beaten to her knees. It was about all this that the Second Vatican Council was called. The Church indeed had no weapons, no new vision, no developmental perspective through which to frame her doctrine and inspire her terribly overdue '*aggiornamento*'. The infidels took over - the philosophers of historic relativism, which means of the immanence of the divine in man, the denial of the spiritual

order, or of the transcendence and infinite perfection of God. For that is what 'Modernism' in its technical sense as a heresy against Faith is all about. It is out of this mess that the Church must now fight her way. She cannot surrender the truth of God to the dated opinions of man, and man fallen. Neither can she return once more to the shattered remnants of that Maginot Line which she blew up - all too hastily indeed - twenty years ago. God always provides upon the mountain what she needs, if she will but look *humbly* for it.

### **The Renewal of Intellect, and of Will**

As far as this meditation goes, we are concerned to show that we cannot separate out the *intellectual* truth from the *emotional* aspiration to God (and that is a sin very dear to the English heart). In his own day Cardinal Newman, in many an earlier letter of his Anglican days, warned that the Low Church stress upon *orthopraxis* - right doing and kind doing - and its contempt for *orthodoxy* - right believing and right knowing, must in the end bring in, by gradual decline, the loss of the vision of human perfection, right morals and the inner worth that defines a man's care for his neighbour and recognition of his neighbour as 'child of God'.

Most of the Liberation theologians too, fasten all too easily upon the Christ who, by dignifying human work also liberates the human spirit from slavery to one's brother man, and points to the vision of a new society of care and good-will made possible by the new power and potential of modern technology. So far so good, but let them look honestly upon the hedonist decadence of the West and the hard-faced, unsmiling tyranny of the Marxist East. The heart of community - the heart of sheer joy with peace - rests with neither.

No social order, however fine, will feed the mind and the soul from within. Man needs an absolute truth and an absolute good, and a true philosophy of love first. He needs to feed on God and His Christ, who is the Bread of Heaven. Here is the only final guarantee of loving community and honest personal care. All our loving proceeds from our inner, personal integrity. From that truth of God that defines love, we may love a good child, form him, help him on his way to mutual discipleship in Christ.

From that *true* love we may have bitten the lip to deny and crucify the urge of soft lust, its whispered excuses, its subtle lies - all that St. Augustine portrays so well, in that personal crisis

of his that culminated in the storm of tears which ended with his surrender to God. What is true of the personal heart and its law of love, is true of the human community, in its laws, its amusements, its education, its attitude to sex, love, marriage, and social and racial respect. The heart of belonging has gone out of society because God no longer belongs. There is no other way except a way back, a path of prayer and repentance, a preaching of a baptism of conversion for the remission of sins.

The little ones cannot understand philosophy or theology, but in their children and their children's children, that 'abstract' thought lives in concrete deeds, attitudes and rebellious lies in the face of God. We do need a new, deeper and more authentic Catholic philosophy. But it must energise a new, more personal, more prayerful and more utterly obedient holiness of heart. At no time in history will the simple truism *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* be out of date. There will be no intellectual substitute for this obedient love. It is written in the books of Wisdom *"My son, love God with filial fear, and keep his commandments, for this is all the duty man"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13). It is the law of personal salvation; less obviously, but just as inexorably, it is the law of communal fulfilment; the law of peace and of love among men that live in community.

## **MONEY, MEANING, AND MORALITY**

Money, its meaning and its morality much preoccupied the Church, her theologians, her canonists, and especially her casuists through all her history, until about the year 1873. In that year the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith issued a final summary of all previous rulings, threw it into the lap of prudent confessors and others, who were neither to disquiet their penitents unduly, nor themselves be unduly disquieted (rulings of 1830 and 1838) and withdrew from the unequal fray. It had become impossible to distinguish between the uses of money, and judge between lawful interest and the extortion which is usury within the unified workings of a frenziedly developing Capitalist system. We have heard a lot since about social justice. but not much about true usury.

### **Money In A Primitive Economy**

The rulings of the Church and the endless casuistry over the nature of a *mutuum* - a loan, mere and naked - turned upon whether 'interest', be it little or large, was a lawful increment or an unjustifiable extortion, that is usury. Fallen man is naturally avaricious, but the increasing complexity of the squabbling - especially after Calvin aligned his theology with the bankers - leads us to suspect, with the benefit of hindsight, that 'money' might not necessarily be one simple thing, one meaning, or one univocal definition.

Money might be analogical in being, as the philosophers would say. It might have different degrees of nature and reality. This possibility was barely apparent in the ancient world. Certainly Aristotle overlooked it, and his rational insights exactly agreed with the biblical and later the Christian understanding of money and the morals of its use. In the capitalist system, money has undergone an evolution, like life itself through the dinosaurs to the highest mammals. Prescinding from all the theological questions about the manner of the creation of man, can we pursue that developmental analogy a little further?

The supreme mammal is man, but within man's nature there is a flaw and a fall. There is original sin, and its disastrous and abiding consequences: "the law of my members" that fights

against “the law of my mind”. There is also the goodness inherent in natural pleasures, together with the ugly, the greedy, the disordered within the drives of human nature. There is a very close analogy between the ‘concupiscence’ left from original sin, and the ‘usurious’ within the modern market economy.

For Aristotle, for the prophets of the Old Testament and for the moralists of the Christian Church, money was said to be ‘sterile’. It was gold, precious metal, precious stones. It was a means of exchange and a store of value, but of itself it begot no increase and budded nothing. It could represent the fruitful goods of nature or materials worked up by man. It could, and in a static economy mostly did represent food bought in famine - seed for the spring sowing in a poor man’s hand. So whether you could claim monetary increase on ‘sterile’ money depended on whether the extrinsic use of that money created new wealth. If not, you had no intrinsic claim to interest.

You could justify an extrinsic claim, however, for the loss of other gainful use of the capital - loss consequential on the loan, danger of losing the capital, and difficulty in recovering it etc. But if you were merely sitting on idle silver before you loaned it, you had no claim to intrinsic increase. You got back the same in ‘idle’ money as you gave in ‘idle’ money. The apologists took it absolutely for granted that the money given and returned was *real* money, a commodity of lasting value and human desirability. It did not ‘inflate’, or if it did, only in the most imperceptible of degrees.

### **Finance By Faith Alone**

Nothing of this is true today. The money that people have in their National Savings Investment account, or in a conservative Building Society has no objective value whatever. The rates offered on modern money as interest, the rates asked for mortgages, both manifest the usury at the heart of modern economics. Interest in the ancient world was based upon the rates of ‘natural increase’ in a basic economy, and that would never, in the best of years, exceed five per cent. Modern rates of interest on loans and credit vary up to some 22%, and interest on capital at present to around 12%.

There is no economy, even in the modern world, which shows a 'natural' growth rate approximating to such levels. Over the years in modern societies, the rates of money interest on the savings of the poor and the aged have in no way equalled the 'rate of inflation'. In many countries inflation or the price tag put on goods rises by more than one hundred per cent a year. When this happens, the savings of the poor which were money saved when the price tag on basic goods was much lower, is wiped out overnight, no matter how many years of sweat and toil they represent. This is obviously a great and usurious oppression of the poor.

The collapse in value of 'money in the bank' will have nothing to do with real money. It may be a matter of international crisis - fear of war for instance. It may be due to fear of civil commotion in a country, or any other instability at all which causes a loss of confidence in the productive power and good social order of a community. Many a crisis can bring down the whole pack of cards, because in modern capitalism your money is *not any objective, real value*. It is only 'promises to pay' and those promises are no longer backed by coin of value, nor by objective goods.

The final end of the capitalist economy is the destruction of objective values and its replacement by faith, faith alone, not backed by good works. It is not the intention of this inexpert writer to suggest an economic solution, nor to join those who think that all would be solved by bringing back the gold standard, well as the Swiss seem to have fared by staying with it. One does suggest that there must be a great moral flaw in a system in which all objectivity is withdrawn from the savings of the poor, and that some means should be found - even if it lies in a far-reaching reform of the whole fiscal system - to bring back some objectivity between the reward placed on labour over the years, and the value of that labour when withdrawn as savings much later.

### **The Age Of Fertile Money**

However 'money' is defined - even when it is created out of thin air by banks in the granting of advances, or by governments in issuing unbacked 'promises to pay' - is it true that that money in our world, far from being 'sterile' is in fact 'fertile' of its nature? One thinks it is. But at the same time, the philosophy of the older pre-capitalist world was perfectly true, and in no way

has the Church erred or even changed in her doctrine of the moral and immoral uses of money and interest.

In the classical world hard cash as a local venture or a local loan, was set against returns in hard cash. There was no other guarantee, nor any other power mobilized by money. In the modern world money as a means of exchange is 'fertile' because it is interchangeable and inter-definable with all the goods of nature, and all the manufactures of mankind, in one total, global planetary mass. The world as a whole and the works of man and of nature *as a totality* is a fertile quantum. And in as much as money - that anonymous mercantile thing - is synonymous with the gaining, promotion, using, and saving of that fertile quantum, then money must be granted to have, now, an intrinsic fertility.

The way in which money has reached this development, however, is not by any ratio of objective money used to objective money created. It has been done by two means: the artificial creation of 'promise money' to make advances which can be turned into goods of production or consumption; and the new, very modern appearance of what is called 'surplus value' within the industrial economy. Surplus value is often said to be the value that the *machine* has brought into production, enormously outpacing the productive power of human labour. While this aspect is true, there is another. In the apportioning of money owed by the state to its citizens, especially its less fortunate citizens, the surplus value represents *human inventiveness*, (which is hardly ever mentioned in the theories of value), and also human stability and good order, by which the value of the assets of the rich is maintained.

### **State Mobilisation Of Resources**

In effect, modern the capitalist economy is always a state economy. Through its national financial system as a function of the larger international system, it mobilizes the total productive resources of a whole community. Its money is defined through this ability to mobilize - through the actualisation of productive power, which is physical, technological and inventive. It says in effect: 'Go ahead, I will give you all that you need to buy to produce, or buy to eat while you are producing, at a price to be paid from your incremental repayments. Don't worry. I cannot go bankrupt. I command all resources. The entire country and its money are

mine to dispose and apportion'. Of course, as we know, if all the creditors, all the people with the bank advances, try to get real goods with this paper money *at once* the whole system breaks down. The promises can never be converted simultaneously. or even in large measure into goods at a stable, equitable rate. At the same time, in a well ordered society, in a stable law abiding community, in an inventive and hard-working and peaceful society, this formula of business confidence works wonders in maximizing the production of wealth.

These factors of wealth creation have nothing to do with money as precious coin and as an objective, non-inflationary value. In the ancient world and in the medieval world, money still measured the value of goods and was a stable claim on goods. In the modern world, *promises to give goods* measure the value of present goods. Since these paper promises are created indirectly through banks and directly through governments, it is *the state power* which decides the value which, at any given time, measures the purchasing power of the money. For it is not a stable value, not objective at all. It depends upon the policies of government and the stability of government.

Just as in war a strong victor can take over the whole wealth and productive power of a vanquished enemy (the treaty of Versailles broke the back of German money in that way after the First World War) so the international financial market can bring about the total collapse of a country and its production, by losing confidence in a weak government and a troubled social order, and judging and trading its currency as worthless.

### **Honest Money A Human Right**

One is not attempting, without expert economic knowledge and in a few pages, to pass judgements or argue economic cures. One is suggesting that the modern industrial economy - since it depends no longer on any objective measure of goods and their value - does involve a moral obligation to order that economy first to stability, and then to protect the values which are the savings of the poor and the wages of workpeople. Once gold measured this morality with a cold, harsh objectivity. Now the relationship of money to stability and honest reward must, in the hands and minds of the rulers of the state, take over the functions of that blind goddess of gold.

Gold was often 'Kali' - the cruel one - but her measure, if not her donation, was the same for all. In the present crisis on the international money markets, at last *fear* is bringing in some measure of international cooperation and international responsibility. But, there is no such principle of responsibility at the heart of the capitalist system as such. Quite rightly we have heard the international stock and money markets described as "Casino Mondial". It will not do.

In the name of the new principle of *Human Rights* we must ask for the introduction into the world system of a basic natural law of human morality. For modern money is based no longer on gold, but on the powers, virtues and initiatives of men living in human society. Like gold, this non-metallic 'human factor' is the creator of wealth and the stable value behind money. Through its needs - spiritual and material - the moral creation and manipulation of money must be defined. At present it is not. The very title of such control based on human rights is not even appreciated.

### **Who Owns 'Surplus Value'**

Karl Marx defined the 'surplus value' of the burgeoning capitalist economy as the excess which the capitalist took in gain, after merely subsistence wages had been paid to the worker. For Marx this was the basic exploitation of the capitalist system. That capitalism did, and in the Far East and South America in particular does so exploit the worker, according to the classical Marxist analysis, there can be no doubt. The wrong however lay and lies in the balance of apportionment. Surplus value never did 'belong to the worker' in that narrow definition. Besides wages, there must be put aside the capital for maintenance and renewal and new investment. This is a charge in the common interest of all.

Then, what is the value of an entrepreneur and organiser of real genius? Not as high perhaps as some of the top incomes apportioned in the City until the last collapse, but as high as the recognition of real 'skill' nevertheless. Napoleon could never have conquered so far and so often without the revolutionary ardour and mystique of the post-revolutionary French conscripts. But they likewise would have been nothing without Napoleon; his military genius, and even more his dynamic and magnetic personality inspired them and led them. As military market value, Napoleon could demand high reward.

He also, like modern capitalism, overstretched himself through greed and ambition and crashed! An outstanding captain of industry is worth more than a workman's wage. Few writers, however, when considering the progressive wealth - the 'surplus value' above survival value brought into modern economies - assess the cumulative value of the inventor. Who can measure the industrial spin-off from recondite, academic work - from the Newtons, the Einsteins, the Maxwells, the Plancks of this world? Who can begin to assess the hardly noticed improvements suggested by humble men and women at work who were poorly rewarded, but whose prototype thought has been copied, improved and developed at enormous speed in the world of technology?

Could anyone assess the surplus value now accruing to the man who first invented the wheel? Surplus value never did belong 'mainly to the worker'. It was in the beginning and it is much more now a *social credit* which belongs to the whole of society. To this realisation we add the acknowledgement that the worth of money, the degree and stability of wealth in modern economies, whether capitalist or communist, depends upon the moral qualities of citizens - upon peace, good order, industriousness and mutual cooperation.

It must therefore be true that the apportioning of money - of claims on goods, claims on wealth as social surplus - transcends the basic claim of salary, wage, or dividends. The modern citizen has a claim on society, on the state in hard fact, simply as a member of the family - of the community of which he or she is a member. This is not always apparent to the right wing political mentality, or in its policies.

### **Riches And Social Peace**

If large numbers of unemployed youths can unsettle a country's whole economy and cause a run on the currency it does bring home to us that the patient, law-abiding loyalty to the laws and peace of that country from such underprivileged folk, is part of the stability of the wealth of the rich. The same rich, through government, *do* owe them a living. They owe them not only every sincere effort to regenerate decayed inner cities and areas of lost industry, but owe them also generous, not barely frugal, provision in housing, health, education, allowances and

pensions.

We are all partners in the social structure through which the worth of money is defined. One does hope that our present ruling politicians are aware of this intrinsic claim of justice from the poor and from the unemployed. While writing these musings on money, its meanings and its moral consequences, one paused to watch a news item concerning the deliberations of the American President and his crisis committee to end the crash on the markets of the world. One of the President's principal financial advisers told us that "there has got to be a danger of some recession. There has got to be some downturn. In the last few weeks there has been an enormous wipe out of money, of wealth. If folks have lost it, then they can't spend it". It does bring home to all that 'money' is simply the bidding up of notional market valuation of stocks and shares, based on hopes of ever bigger returns to come. Based on hope, not on solid facts.

The faith wavers, the hopes fade, the rush is on to get out of the dollar, of the stocks, of the gambled options, without too much pain before the rest rush in. If somebody's fairly modest will is going for probate at that time, then the heirs will be thousands down in the value of dad's unit trusts. It is all part of the system admittedly, but it does bring home the fragile nature of modern money, its froth-like creation, and its absolute lack of any objective measuring rod of value.

### **Usury Still Oppression**

What then is the fruit of these musings of an economic tenderfoot? First, to forget all the silly charges about the Church having changed her teaching concerning usury and the infertility of money. Financially speaking, they were all on a different planet then. The Church spoke about money which had an objective commodity value - a non-inflating entity - and of uses in trade where you could actually discern causes and effects. In our world, money has not merely largely, it has, (except perhaps in Switzerland), lost all its relationship to old fashioned money. Money is a subjective thing, a 'claim on goods' that is fluid and uncertain.

There is no real control on the morality of its creation out of nothing, or the distribution of its claim on goods. There is absolutely no guarantee of its equity through time, as savings, as a claim on goods in later years. Usury - a claim for interest on the sterile giving of credit which is

made out of nothing, out of a bank advance, with the demand for hopelessly high interest on the capital - is part of the very credit card world.

The average student is loaded down with it. Credit card rates are somewhere around 22%, and if you look at the legally necessary declaration of APR on all sorts of goods from hire purchase cars to unsecured loans, you will find figures of between 12% to 30% of the advance. Modern states do try, by various means to offset the effect, but the sheer greed of the modern credit explosion, of the pressure on the young to buy with money they do not have at present, is itself a vast cause of destabilization and of social unrest.

### **Obligation Rests On The Central Power**

If there is no hope of any return to an objective standard of measure and equity in the meaning of money - i.e. the purchasing power of money across the years - then one suggests another factor of morality has to be invoked. It will bring us back to the basic norms and considerations of the Fathers of the Church and of the theologians before the age of capitalism, when they spoke of usury and condemned it. The maintenance of the value of money is an obligation upon government. In the last analysis the central government does or can control the making of the money and the makers of the money.

If we are told that no one government can do this effectively because money is international, and credit, like the oceans, washes the boundaries of all the world, there opens out a further moral imperative. Such obligation becomes international rather than national. A recognition of such moral obligation requires the concerted cooperation of governments to enforce. The present forum of the United Nations may be a poor thing, but it does represent some recognition of an international morality and of human rights which are international because they derive from the nature of man.

One is saying that some type of objectivity in its value, which brings back *honesty* into money and credit by avoiding the fierce swings of deflation and inflation, is a matter of human rights - one that is not much considered as yet. It would be a fit subject for a forum like the United Nations. At the far end of such a road the logical development would be a world order with some sort of world government. Many pressures besides those of commutative and social

justice in finance, are leading the world that way.

The thought should not panic us. The European Economic Community within its own family of states is already set on such a path. We are becoming quite familiar with the European Court at Strasbourg overruling our national justice at Westminster. One would like to suggest too that, no matter how far removed any such recognition of the principle of justice in money may seem from the principles and tussles of the classical war against usury which the Church waged in the pre-capitalist era, we would be back again in the same court of moral judgment with the same reference to the needs of the poor, the rights of the poor and the morality of the just price and the just profit.

### **New Synthesis Of Capitalism And Socialism?**

There remains a last point to make in these somewhat refracted musings on money, its meanings and its morals. The socialist manipulation of money and its rewards is as total as the capitalist. In Russia Gorbachov is seeking to loosen the system by "*glasnost*" and "*perestroika*", (though we have no guarantee from week to week that he will not be overthrown) and the Chinese begin to move along the same lines. In the Marxist economy the state power appropriates the whole 'surplus value' of the economy beyond subsistence costs more heartily than did any last century capitalist, and reinvests them as it sees fit.

The emphasis in the recent past has been heavy industry, armaments and the conquest of space. It has made for a poor, drab, unimaginative and uninventive community. It has diminished responsibility, incentive and real participation. This system has been able, until now at least, to give a greater stability to basic prices and basic inflation, but that is about all. In no sense has it created a community that is rich either in goods or in culture. Surely there opens before us the recognition that on the plane of social justice, distribution of wealth and financial justice, the answer lies in a synthesis of capitalism and socialism.

Both systems rely on the state power to create money and to manipulate its value. One presumes that any hope of money with an objective value from its own nature, at least on a world scale is no longer possible. (Switzerland is a very small country. and not a great trading power). In the capitalist system the world has possessed the freedom, flexibility, market

demand and incentives - or shall we say hearty greed - to create an enormous volume of wealth, even if not of happiness and holiness. For consumerism is no synonym for culture, happiness and social civilisation. The Socialist system, though it has run dry from sheer lack of incentive, freedom and flexibility, has shown us that, even if it is achieved by manipulation - by 'social norms' that is to say - the concept of justice and of a basic objective value in money and savings, can be compatible with international finance.

### **“Perestroika” Beyond The Financial**

If the basic philosophies of the two systems were brought together and purged partially of their different flaws, one could create a third system. Call it perhaps Social Capitalism. The basic attribution of ownership and the creation of wealth would remain predicated to the individual or the corporation, as at present in Western and Japanese capitalism. But that individualism, or recognition of the individual right to own and to control, would be defined *of its very nature* by social control, social justice, social responsibility and vocation. If we came to attain this we would find ourselves back with that much despised and maligned thing of the papal Social Encyclicals: the Corporate State.

Is it not a fact that the evolution of the money and credit of the world is driving us into such a solution, even as the whole world itself is becoming one technological, scientific civilization - one *Corporate State* - in every aspect of human development and civilisation? No man is an island: no state is an island: no community of countries is an island. There is no doubt that the acceptance of the Corporate State, and the definition of individual initiatives within a common social obedience and justice, would leave a lot of room for that tug of war between the claims of the creative but greedy rich, and the claims of the disadvantaged, which some call a healthy creative tension between 'haves' and 'have-nots' and others of us think of rather as the eternal tensions of human greed. Whatever about this, a basic consensus could be arrived at, which achieved a basic social justice in the value and apportioning of money and goods, both within nations and between nations.

It would mean that the Church was right once more, and that the recognition of usury as social sin. had returned home within the post-Reformation capitalist system. If from Catholic

Christianity alone we have the doctrinal means to effect a social system which combines the rights and creative powers of the individual, and the claims of social justice and compassion in the unified world of the third millennium, something else, something more important dawns on us as well.

We need within human society and human culture a more important, and more far reaching *perestroika*. We need to offer a new vision, a new synthesis of the meaning *not of money, but of man*, to this unified world created out of so many cultures. We need a new synthesis of the vision of science and the vision of the Faith of Christ, to defeat the anaemic rationalism which has all but killed Christianity itself. This synthesis also we can give to feed the spirit, which is so much more than the feeding that money gives.

To develop and apply such a theological re-structuring or '*perestroika*', we need the full identity and integrity of the Catholic Christian faith. There is no other springboard from which to take off, because that full identity is not an identity merely of values within a structure or synthesis of teachings. It is an identity with the Person, The Word and Fullness of Jesus Christ, who alone develops within us all the full Light and Love of the world, as totally and magisterially in the third millennium as he did in the first millennium *Anno Domini*.

We must keep the identity of the divine Christ, the full Christ. We must keep the identity of the Church Catholic and Roman, the Church of Peter - of the Lord's own: "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"(Luke 22:31). We must keep the full, positive, infallibility of Jesus and the Church gathered around Him and defining in His Name. We must keep Ecumenism too, within this one world of so many converging needs and converging cultures. It is the manifestation of the common seeking for God and for his Christ. It is the charity which seeks, and the answer to this seeking - this God-hunger - will be found in the "Word made Flesh for the life of the world". We can create this 'new synthesis' with God's help. It is the real, the great *perestroika* to which we are called. With regard to money, its meaning, and its morality, it is written again: "*seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Holiness, and all other things will be added unto you*" (Lk 12:31).

## REFLECTIONS ON THE GREAT GOD "MAMMON"

On the mount of the transfiguration, it was Moses and Elijah who were found conversing with Jesus. (cf. Luke 9:28-36) Jesus was radiant with the glory of the Most Blessed One—the *shekinah*—but yet they were conversing in sombre vein of the Salvation and Redemption which the Messiah was to accomplish by passion and death in Jerusalem; in Jerusalem, the City of God's peace with men, the vision of beauty from God's dwelling with men!

Why Moses and Elijah? The scripture scholars, and most importantly of course the Fathers of the Church, see 'the Law and the Prophets' in this companionship with Jesus—the twin pillars of the doctrine, liturgy and spiritual life of Israel. The reason for Moses we can see at once. He is a supreme Christ-figure in the whole of the Old Testament. Moses was the literal redeemer from bondage of the People of God. Through all the triumphs ran also the sweat, blood, tears and heartbreaks from dealing with a stiff-necked people. And the "great prophet who is to come after me" (Deut. 18:15)—the very God of Moses—was to endure the same and terribly more.

But why Elijah? There were several great prophets of the Messianic age who spoke implicitly of the unique, divine sonship of the Messiah. Why not Isaiah for instance? Well, of course, the cynics will say that in the case of Isaiah there might have to be two or even three of him, which would be an embarrassment. But there are other reasons which can be adduced. Elijah for the Jews stood for lonely fidelity, a man utterly alone, a voice calling, through bitter persecution, for the repentance and conversion of heart of a sensual and idolatrous nation. Had he not been swept up to heaven in a chariot of fire? And for what purpose, except to come again to announce the advent of the Messiah? He did come again in the person of John the Baptist. Both Elijah and John were prophets of poverty and loneliness, and they were laughing stocks for the derision of men (Matt. 11:18). They were prophets who, like Jesus, gave witness so that "*out of many hearts their secret thoughts might he laid bare*". Yes, there is a natural place for Elijah, a man as poor and destitute as John the Baptist, on the mountain of the transfiguration.

Elijah also was the one and lonely prophet of Yahweh who dared to take on the four

hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. (cf. I Kgs. c.18). Elijah put it to the people—a ‘high noon’ of the gods. What a circus! It was the only way in those primitive and desperate days. It makes wonderful reading even now, as tense drama and potentially wonderful movie material. It was a gladiatorial combat of the gods: the prophets of the ‘god’ who failed to answer, and the prophet of the God who answered by fire. He was Israel’s true God; winner takes all. They were proven apostates and traitors to the Lord, and they would pay with their lives. Islam has much the same theology today! At high noon on Mount Carmel it was Elijah who won. On the mount of Calvary, under a more perfect Covenant, it was the Son of the Father’s delight who gave himself—priest, prophet and king—as a peace offering for a rebellious and idolatrous people.

### **Baal and Mammon**

Baal was the god of the riches of the earth, of landed power, the making of money and even of the supreme oblation: the blood of men. Ashtoreth his sister-consort was the goddess of fertility, but also of sheer lust, and the ‘fun time’ of wild abandon. In many a well-illustrated reader of ancient civilisations, and in a good museum, one can view the excited obscenity of Canaanite figurines. They lacked the porn magazine and the ‘blue’ video, but history does repeat itself. In many ways, Baal was the personification of ‘Mammon’ in ancient Israel.

Mammon is personalized for us as the god of materialism, worldly covetousness and the arrogance of the pride of life (cf. 1 John 2:16). Yet, ‘mammon’ is only the Aramaic word for ‘riches’. However, those riches, in the mouth of Christ and from His general usage, seem to have overtones of the common, merciless greed of the mercantile society, the society in which everything whatever is up for sale. We live grossly in that social philosophy today. It seems to be the prevailing philosophy and theology of our present government. It lives and preaches in many a glossy advertisement of the media and television; in nothing so powerfully as the brilliant advertisements for powerful and most desirable cars—and of course the god-like males, and sensuous goddesses who feature with them. We can well use ‘Mammon’—the worship of riches, power and sensuousness—as our god-name for what John the evangelist, and more importantly Christ himself, would have called “this world”.

### **Christian Morality's Last Kick**

Jesus proclaimed that *"you cannot serve God and Mammon"*, and the *"Pharisees, who were greedy, jeered at Him"* (Luke 16:14). The Sadducees, the 'dissenting magisterium' of the Jewish world, were even more prominent among the great bankers and merchants of Israel. We may live in a post-Christian age, but this does not absolve us who still profess Christ and prepare to re-evangelize Him, from working to preserve the consequences of Christian inspired social reforms, even in a grossly materialistic age which spans all manner and classes of people. To be blunt about it, there is not a single agency which deals with the managing of social poverty and human suffering which agrees with the policies of government at present. All the Christian communities and their leaderships have openly condemned the trend of government social policy in recent years; all the professions too, doctors and nurses, dealing with the common burden of human suffering. We have to ask ourselves whether the proclamation of a strident philosophy of 'privatisation' and 'market economy forces' is not in fact a deliberate abandonment of post-war policies and reforms, which were actually the last kick of a basically Christian Britain.

While a teenager before the last war, one saw the local Labour Party at Woolwich, south-east London, in grass roots action. In the grinding poverty of those depression years, our working-class family was strongly supportive of the Labour party. My mother was an active worker for them, besides working for the Catholic Evidence Guild, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and any church activity going. She rather disliked the appellation "socialist party". She knew her theology, shall we say, but in any case she had a more than average share of robust common sense. She saw through Lenin at once, recognising from working-class petty dictators in the home, that arrogance, brutality and greed was not a matter of class, but of personal and social opportunity.

Original Sin and its consequences lies equal and heavy on all classes of men. In my home parish, the 'Catholic Club' was a stronghold of the working class Irish and the Labour Party. (Once I watched Herbert Morrison play snooker there, he was good with a cue). The secularist and agnostic element in the Labour Party was growing all the time, but Ernie Bevin (whom our family knew) was a devout believer and a former Sunday School teacher. Nye Bevan was not a

formal Christian, but even in reading *"In Place of Fear"*, his manifesto for the Welfare State in place of religion, the values of the Gospel obtained from the culture of the Welsh chapel are obvious. Bevan though must have had a poor religious experience; his Humanist dream was a Utopia in place of 'the fear of God' and of punishment, which seemed to be his conception of the cultural role of religion. He had no concept of the love of God, but his values of charity—especially in the framing of the NHS—were and (as far as they are being allowed to survive), are sheerly Christian. I think Mother Teresa and he would have liked each other. She might have done as good a job on him as she did on Malcolm Muggeridge!

### **The 'Option For The Poor'**

In the eventide of the old *"Daily Herald"*—a morally quite puritan paper with, until its last desperate efforts to compete, a responsible tradition of 'family' sexual propriety—Morgan Phillips could write proudly in an editorial that "The Labour Party has always been more Methodist than Marxist". He was, of course, a Methodist, but the affirmation was substantially true. Of course, it is not now, but the social achievements of those post-war years did, and does have a Christian, even unconsciously a Catholic basis, and the question arises whether in the present philosophy of government, there is not a basic sea-change which should be pinpointed and resisted. Certainly, we do not see now, as we might have done in the late forties of this century, any social 'preferential option for the poor'. As Catholics, according to the recent Popes and especially our present Pope John Paul II, we are committed to such an option. and not simply in South America.

As a curate for twelve years in one of the heaviest industrial parishes of South-East London, I was able to visit pastorally, to teach late vocations, to be a part-time chaplain to London University, to be closely connected with the Young Christian Workers, and to be a chaplain to their local Trades Union (adult) Group. It was a full education in the university of life. What stays in my mind especially from the social scene was meeting a non-Catholic Trades Union official, a man desperately searching for God, but tortured with scientific atheism and agnosticism. He was what people would call 'a lovely man' in temperament. In conversation, he put his finger at once upon the greedy lust for power, pleasure and domination which energised

most of the militants among his fellow shop stewards. “They work for greed and envy”, he would say. “in power they would be as cruel and corrupt as anything they seek to overthrow”.

The present collapse of Marxism in Russia and East Europe is proof enough that he was right. You don't argue with history. Without God, there is neither love, nor humility, nor integrity in any human relationships. This man liked the arguments for God, the soul and religion that I was able to offer him. He liked also the social solutions, which were simply the basics of the Church's social teaching; of the corporate state as the free and *democratic* dialogue of capital and labour. For where you have power on both sides, and true dialogue in this dynamism of capital and labour you may claim to have democracy. You do not have it in a 'Dictatorship of the People' as Marxist states liked to call themselves. But do you have it either in an elective oligarchy of the British type?

### **Catholic Influence On The Social Charter**

The present Prime Minister is alone in the European Community in her opposition to the 'social contract' with representatives of the labour force together with management on the governing boards of larger companies. For this writer the most exciting thing about the 'European' ideas of social peace and social pensions, is that just as the basics of the British Welfare State were a post-Christian achievement of the morally easier aspects of the Christian Gospel, so also the European achievement of Community—of social and economic power in dialogue, and of *a Capitalism with an obligation of social obedience to direct social control*—is a post-Christian achievement of the teaching contained in many of the Social Encyclicals, all the way from *Quadragesimo Anno* to the present time.

Jacques Delors is a Catholic who knows his Encyclicals, although in this system the debt to Catholic theology is unacknowledged. For example, the right to private property and ownership is basic, but it is not an absolute right. It is a right which of its very being (ontologically) is subject to the claims and dialogue of those who have what the medievals would call the “rights of use”. This means an intrinsic subordination of ownership to the rights and claims of those who by their labour are integral to the fruitfulness of capital and management. Is it because Britain is among that small minority of the E.E.C. that is not Catholic in a residual sense, that the

present Government, by the wholesale privatisation of even the most basic provisions of care, would throw us back to, say, the late twenties and early thirties. It would take us back into a capitalism which *does not admit a control*—which of its nature must be both social and governmental—over its profit-making activities.

One might argue that very rich and basically greedy materialisms, like the society of West Germany, are highly successful, entrepreneurial societies. Yes, but West German society bears also a heavy burden of company social taxation. The *social obedience* is built into its entrepreneurial system. In this country I have watched over a lifetime both the unions and management destroy each other by endless civil war, while the rest of the world—especially Japan and Germany —takes our bread and our prosperity. The German system has made for social peace. Mammon is not worshipped with the purity of a religion, which is what is implicit in the present British ‘monetarist’ commercial philosophy. Yet, Germany does worship Mammon indeed, that must be conceded.

### **An Unreformed Class Bias**

Britain was the original home not only of the Industrial Revolution, but also of modern economic capitalism. One could not say of capitalism pure and simple. The Lombard bankers, the Republic of Venice, the early prince merchants of Austria and the German dukedoms knew the approach lanes to the modern motorway of capitalism. But Britain, from Adam Smith on, begot a capitalism which is born of the extreme individualism of an old, non-episcopal form of Protestantism, with contempt for beggary and the poor. It was a capitalism which was a form of secular Evangelicism. It lived by pure individualism, and *it did not recognise any intrinsic ontological duty of social obedience of capital to the rights either of labour or of the community as a commonwealth*. If you do recognise that intrinsic duty of social obedience, you do not need to ‘nationalise’ everything. Government may act directly or mediate between capital and labour, to enforce rightful obedience as to what is just.

People are right to say that great groups of workers do not any longer have the right to withdraw their labour if this will plunge the community into chaos. Our needs and our duties are now too closely integrated by technology as well as by social evolution. This is true against

the still existent Trade Union dinosaurs. But it must be equally true that in such a philosophy and theology, there is a duty of government, when it is the employer, to go to social arbitration and to accept the result. I am sure, from memory, that this social obedience of government as 'management' has been refused several times in modern British history, by governments which were called Socialist as well as Conservative. We are not a post-Catholic post-Christianity!

Our problems are bedevilled also by the afterglow of a particularly rigid, basically military class system. It was, I suggest, the needs of Empire and its wars and policing which threw up, if not the Public School itself, at least the ethos of the British Public School. The system knew great virtues, as many Imperial systems did, not least the Roman. But with a social system based on pure capitalism—a capitalism of the *absolute* rights of money—it could explain why intrinsic co-operation seems alien to the British economic system. It is always 'us' versus 'them'. Interestingly, the capitalism of Japan—another version indeed of the worship of Mammon as God—is *intrinsically* much more cooperative in enterprise than ours. Japanese firms do much better than our own when planted in British soil. It is also a fact that the feudalism and the militarist society of the Shoguns was one in which the warrior prince accepted full social responsibility for the life of his followers and their descendants. We had no such social tradition after the Elizabethan Settlement of faith and of society. G. K. Chesterton is probably right to ruminate that "we are the silent people, that has not spoken yet", because at Waterloo brave individualist peasants (many of them Irish) and a stubbornly brave, but politically ignorant general, won the battle and perpetuated a defective tradition of society even to the present day. One prays that the present outbreaks in many quarters of ugly, bitter violence is not the final awakening against a pressure of social reaction which has dared a bridge too far.

### **Two Cities, One Kingdom**

It is never going to be possible to give a definitive solution to the eternal debate in society between how much is or should be secular and how much is or should be sacral. Church and State, sacral and secular, these are natural autonomies of power. But in the condition of unfallen mankind there would be no deep tensions, because the wisdom of God and the truth of God, not to say the charity of God, would integrate both orders. That is now an impossible

dream. In my opinion, contrary to the usual interpretation, that is the reality and the grief contained in Christ's words: "*if my Kingdom were of this world, my men would be fighting that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my Kingdom is not from here*" (Jn 18:36). In the modern translations this is slurred or fudged to mean "but no my Kingdom is not of this kind". This is not what is said. The Greek text is perfectly clear: "*nun de*" means simply "*but now*". It is not a disclaimer, it is a recognition that Church and State can never—given sin—be one integrated Kingdom of God, as they should be.

When it is tried, the greeds of the world always—but always—disrupt the harmony of the 'Good News' of man's meaning and salvation, which is the office of the Church. However, because they should be integrated by very nature, there is endless war between Satan and Christ—from the argument about public decency in books, television, pornographic sales, the media corruption of the very young, and all the horrors of our time, to the legalisation of abortion and now experimentation on the human embryo. One is saying that there must be some real effort to integrate the two laws of the two Cities of God, and that even in a greedy, materialistic, thoroughly ungodly culture, the little that remains in the social order of the sacral values of Christ in society must, as sacral, be retained. We must be able to recognize when a tyranny of elective monopoly has gone beyond the greed and selfishness of the well off, and is now a basic change in the philosophy and theology of society. At the time of writing this page, the Prime Minister has been asked in the Commons, "what she will be doing with the one thousand pounds she has saved on the poll-tax". She has replied: "I shall know how to continue to be generous to my favourite charities". Precisely: the inbuilt structure of a basic decency in *social* provision, especially to the sick, old, and deprived young is not a concept within her understanding of society. Indeed, she has said that "society does not exist, there is only the individual and family". She is not at all a post-Catholic post-Christian! Riches for those who win; a handful of larger coins for the poor.

### **Bread alone no solution**

In making this point, there is no pretence that the recognition of a charity which is of right—that belongs to human dignity as *loving*—adequately embodied in the fabric of modern society,

will bring in the Kingdom of God. It won't. That was the pathetic hope and error of so many Christian and non-Christian socialists after the Second World War, when endless welfare and improved education was to bring in the kingdom of the perfect man. As I once suggested in an editorial on Liberation Theology this gives us merely more handsome and muscular hooligans.

The Kingdom of Man, truly so, is also the Kingdom of the finding of the *Son of Man*. And that is a theme we cannot go into now. Milk, orange juice and decent school dinners would be a boon to many an undernourished, deprived child of a broken home. But it we will not cure hedonism, bloody-mindedness, practical atheism, sexual frenzy, or any of the other ills of a desacralised society with bottles of milk for the young. All the same, while knowing and teaching the priorities of the Life of man— which is “through every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”—Jesus Christ did remark that the giver of “a cup of cold water, to these the least of my brothers and sisters” would not lose his or her reward. We should not discard in our society even the shattered fragments of the patrimony of Christ. This, in fact, is all that this article has said, or meant to say. But there is also now the new face of the god Mammon. This is economic nationalism, sometimes power-block nationalism, and the role of the multinational companies and holding-groups associated with them. The multinationals have the power to drop a country and thousands of workers from a great height, and walk away to invest their power and capital where there is hard working slave labour at much less cost to them. They seem to be fulfilling in modern society the exact role of the all-powerful individual capitalist towards the local impoverished poor of Victorian days.

There is the rise of great industrial empires—not unconnected with the former, of course—like Japan, the USA, Germany, and soon the integrated European Community. They are all in frenzied competition to produce and outbid each other. They are already subjecting the whole life of modern man to the tyranny of money, consumerism and Mammon worship. They have already done much to denature the family as the basic unit of human life, its security, and its relaxed happiness. A little while ago I noticed in passing a news item on the TV, that workers at the Rover plants in Britain had agreed in principle to *working times of 24 hour shifts*, because it was the only way in which their new 200 and 400 series cars could be sold competitively against the Japanese. We are approaching an era in which the commercialisation of life is

denaturing the very human, happy, holy life of man, as well as denaturing his environment in the name of riches and power.

### **Control of “Economic Environment”**

I would end with a thought from another television programme from several years back now, the name of which I have forgotten. The speaker was an Indian, and almost certainly from the ethos of his thoughts, a Hindu. This was his basic theme: you Westerners, (I presume he meant the USA and the European Community), have now a vast industrial empire, and more than enough good land, good water and good food. You are fighting an industrial war with Japan, Korea, Taiwan and in doing so you are destroying the basis of your culture and a relaxed, human way of living. You cannot win in this war. The Japanese will accept near slavery conditions of soul for much less than you. Their working people have never known time for gracious living as you have. But, he added, the Japanese themselves will soon be overtaken by the vast hordes of my own countrymen. waiting to be mobilised for profit, at wages which are riches to them, and exploitation to you.

They will be followed by the greater hordes of China. And as Marxism declines from its own inner denial of individual dignity and creativity, (a creativity which is often certainly a sheer greed, but still a creativity), the already almost fully competitive masses of the Russian republics must be another consideration. Can you, asked this lecturer, (so near to a mystic), afford to throw your countries open to imports with which you cannot compete, in a frenzied order of robotic production in which the psyche of man is itself reduced to a greedy, unthinking, maddened ape? What of the values of contemplation, of beauty in writing and art, the uplift of high religion, and all the other values which civilize the human spirit and give peace and communion within the bosom of the family?

### **A Great Wall of the Spirit?**

He made a really terrible, quite ‘heretical’ suggestion. I think he said, you should close your economic frontiers to this invasion from the slave hordes from outside. You should form a great protectionist area, in which you would have enough and more than enough to live richly, as you

already do. There is a limit to consumerism for the sake of consumerism, profit for the sake of profit. *The life of a man is within himself*. I think he accepted as a fact, if not as a *desideratum*, the secular humanism of Western society. But he reminded us of the great literature, art, architecture, and graces of many a kind from our Christian past. He thought we still had some of it left, and that we should build a sort of cultural Great Wall of China against the slightly elevated slaves of multinational and economic national power, coming especially from the rising East and its swarming population of young hard-working proletarians. He wanted us to do it for the same motives as the ancient Chinese emperors before us—to safeguard the beauty and life of the spirit at home against the barbarian from outside.

I was stunned, because it was the first time a man who was billed as an *economist* talked about saving the quality and beauty of life against the frenzy of worldwide, free consumerist competition. He was saying that we had a choice; a choice not to be destroyed as individuals and families by endless night shifts, and by the enslavement of the family and family love ('crèches will be provided for all our working mothers' etc.) to a form of competition which was not dissimilar to desperate hand-to-hand fighting on the battlefield.

I do not know whether he is right, I do not know how practical his suggestions are. At the time, they seemed to make sense. Nobody today likes to think in terms of the frontier, and the protectionist group. But for me he made a point which haunts the mind, and will not go away. He was saying that we must find a way to bring the sacral, the natural, and the truly strong family unit back into our society, before we lost it all. He knew we were greedy, but said in effect 'you have enough and more than enough. Protect yourselves now. Form a sort of Western Economic union and close your countries to a competition which increasingly must degrade and depersonalize your young. He was saying in economics, what the present Prince of Wales often says about architecture (whether he is right or wrong in the individual case): 'you have a choice between a more expensive beauty, which expresses the nobility of the human spirit and the contours of human life, or the ever-repetitive architecture of the bee-hive and the battery hen'.

At the end of it all, he was saying that: not by bread, more bread, and yet more bread, does man live, but by the inner beauty of the Kingdom of God within you. (cf. ) Beauty, life and

peaceful joy proceeds from the springs of God. Through history it has been called the sacral society. It is an environment of the spirit worth living in. Its God is alien to Mammon, as it was alien to Baal in the days of Elijah, and to Jesus Christ in our own. That speaker may not be right in detail, but he made a central point. We must not despair of receiving a response, if we try as foolishly as Jesus did, to bring in God's Kingdom in the Empire of Mammon.

## FACT AND PHILOSOPHY IN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

All over the “Third World”, countries and nations continue to vanish into the Marxist system after a sudden coup. They reappear within the military and financial alliances of Soviet or Chinese Communism. The citizen of the Western democracies, especially if comfortably middle class, and still in a job, reads it gloomily or watches scenes on a television documentary, and wonders why “we never win”. This struggle, spiritual, intellectual, and social probably is the real Third World War, the struggle of the Superpowers Russia and the United States of America for territory, trade, and supportive alliances. It has come to be seen as a war between Capitalism and Socialism as philosophies of state, a war in which the peoples of North Europe in the NATO alliance are only half-heartedly on the North American side. Can what is vaguely called “The West” win this war? Unless there comes about revolutionary change in the spiritual values and social perceptions of the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, they are certain to lose the Undeveloped World to Socialist Revolution of one type or another, and probably to systems Marxist in character.

### **Facts of Feudalism**

Long before theology comes to be discussed there is a basic pragmatic question. Is it possible for states which have entered into the modern world with totally feudal, totally inflexible social and economic systems, to evolve by degrees into the kind of controlled Capitalism or ‘mixed’ system Socialism we are familiar with in the West? It does not seem possible. In these countries, the classic dialectic of Marx, the progression from thesis, to antithesis, and through violent revolution to synthesis, is lived out in pragmatic fact. In this system, a state of thesis—of basic, primitive stability—can live with the antithesis of exploitation or vast social and economic inequality for a long time. What triggers the confrontation to war and revolution is when, through scientific and technical progress, the *potential* of the economy to bring in a new order of literacy, relative affluence, and personal liberation is perceived to be there, but the achievement is impossible within the feudal social and economic order. The feudal social inflexibility as ‘confrontation’ increases and extends also to the psychological and intellectual

order. Doubtless it is this pragmatic fact which allows Fr. Boff and other theologians, to “use the Marxist analysis as a tool” and to be fairly accurate. For in Latin America eighty percent of the population are peasants, more than half of them illiterate. To be illiterate in today’s world is to be a serf. These people are still in the Iron Age. Indeed, in culture and quality of life they have less than the Saxons who invaded our shores fifteen hundred years ago. The few who own all things, govern all things, and enjoy all things material, have much more than the kings and barons of the middle-ages. In culture, life-style, education, and belonging to the modern technological and affluent world, they are equal to any in North America or the European West. The gap between them and their poor is so enormous that it is like the gap between the Pharaohs and the fellahin. When that occurs, the very sense and feeling of being one community, one nation, and family, of mutually ‘belonging’ disappears. It is a situation that exists between black and white in South Africa, but the difference between rich and poor in Latin America is not much less. When this situation develops—the gap between what is now potentially possible and the real actual situation—then the stable state of social ‘thesis’ as defined by Marx, erupts into the revolutionary fury of social ‘antithesis’. The Liberation theologians of South America will not be wrong in their social analysis, nor in their projection forward of social expectation. They are treating of peoples of violent, passionate temperament, who have never been used to compromise on the personal or the social plane.

### **Islam also in Ferment**

In Catholic circles what is called ‘Liberation theology’ has its spotlight on Latin America because of the basically Catholic culture of that vast area. The pragmatic problem though is worldwide, and is being fought out with explosive drama among the Islamic, mainly Arab peoples, where the social antithesis is, if possible, greater than within Latin America. Saudi Arabia, despite its desert condition, is a very rich country indeed, but ruled within a totally inflexible and feudal order by a handful of super-rich families. The political system is, and must be, inherently unstable in the world of modern potential, and must succumb to the impatience and social critique of its own best young minds. The question of the state of Israel apart, the Islamic revolution is complicated by the internecine war between a *religious* socialism, based on the

Old Testament and the Koran, inspired by the ancient theocratic heritage of 'one community with God as Father' and a *Marxist* socialism based upon the scientific atheism of the Soviet system. If the Arab states wish to burst into the 'new world' of technological affluence through applied science, they will have difficulty with the necessarily analytical criticism of the scientific mind. One shudders to think what an Arab Bultmann could do to the Koran, while the rigid fundamentalism of orthodox Mahometanism is incompatible with the full dignity of womanhood. At the moment, aided by hatred of the 'financial colonialism' of the so-called 'Christian' West, and in protest against Western moral hedonism, the fundamentalist faction is doing the better. Given time and development however it will have the greater problem.

### **The fallibility of Marx**

Marx made many mistakes of economic theory and philosophy. He was wrong about the nature and social meaning of 'surplus value', though why, cannot detain us here. He was wrong to believe that it would be the *developed* industrial countries that would bring in Marxism. In fact, no developed country so far has ever gone Marxist by national, popular revolution. Those developed countries which are now behind the Iron Curtain were taken over by Russia in fire, blood, and denial of human rights. Russia herself, when she fell to the Bolsheviks in 1917, was in the same situation as a Latin American state. She was not a developed country. There was a central nucleus of modern technological and social power, a great *potential* frustrated by a feudal society. The vast mass of the people were serfs. The Marxist analysis of the ontological (i.e. the *necessary*) evolution of society through thesis, violent antithesis, and by war to final social synthesis, has been disproved, as a necessary law of nature, by the development of the social systems of most industrial nations of North and West Europe. It was disproved by the evolution of Great Britain, West Germany, Norway, Sweden etc, and by the giant prosperity of the United States itself, in which so much of the poverty and deprivation is racial and ethnic rather than truly social. The political development of say Norway, Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland has reached a peak of egalitarian freedom almost impossible to better. It was not done by the law of necessary social revolutionary war. These nations, (even our own British history in the past, whatever the problems of the present,) have shown that the basic, the

*ontological* law of human history is, and can be, a progression from an undeveloped state of basic relationships, the thesis, through technical invention, *and mutual social dialogue in communion* to a higher state of social synthesis. The ‘war’ is not inevitable. What saves the Marxist analysis, and makes it correct in expert theological hands in Latin America, is the impact not of a law of nature but of *original sin* within human nature. Life is not heaven on earth in Great Britain, nor in Scandinavia, nor in any part of the developed and industrial West. There is plenty of sin, decadence, and spiritual unhappiness. That is because the true Liberation Theology is the message of *personal* Redemption to the image of God in Christ, a redemption lived out in the society and community of the Church, by the “People of God”. No amount of social perfection or financial justice is going to bring in *this* order, because not by bread alone does Man live, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

### **The Church Must Keep Her Nerve**

Yet, among these Nordic nations, highly inventive and cooperative by temperament, the greeds of original sin as they pass into personal life and social life, did not extend so fully to the social order. There were many upheavals, but, by revision not revolution, finally they made it. In Latin America, in Africa, in Arabia, and India, it is likely to be otherwise. The greeds of possession and power, and the blindness of vision these greeds bring in, look likely to prevent the natural law of charity upon which the universe is founded, and human society is founded, from bringing in social synthesis by a path that is stormy but less than social armed revolution. Where original sin passes into social sin in the personalities and institutions of an inadequate social order—then Marx will, by accident, be right about the course of events. If this is going to happen in pragmatic fact in Latin America, then the Church must not be caught wrong-footed again, as she was in Europe between 1880 to about 1930. She must not lose her working class because of the lack of living support from her bishops and priests. Whatever the doctrine of the Social Encyclicals, the Church in Europe lost her working people because she insisted on a path of gradual reform that was just *too* gradual, and She was reluctant to recognise that the possessors of money and power would not yield except to much more drastic pressure. The

Church was also rightly afraid of the corrosive, atheistic Marxism of so many socialist leaders, and of the follies of some of her own priests. Yet, in the popular mind in France, Spain, and Italy, the Church said one thing in social theory and acted out another in social practice. This alienation of the Church and the masses must not be allowed to occur again in Latin America, whatever incidental reasons there are for fear. The Church must keep her nerve and remember the recent lessons of history.

### **Capitalism and Feudalism**

It is worth asking just *why* there is so much hatred of what is called the 'Financial Colonialism' of the USA and Europe among the underdeveloped peoples all over the world. It is because fair trading and fair profit by the Capitalist, and especially by the powerful multinational corporations, had for so long to be done *through* the existing political and social institutions of those countries. As it developed the culture and affluence of a few, it also became by the financial support it gave to armies, dictatorships, and political institutions of social power, a means of continuing a social order which was indefensible, and is now even more indefensible. To get his money back, to make a return on his investment, the Capitalist, whether a person or a corporation, had to go along with the regime and back the regime's survival, while perhaps exhorting its leaders to be much better boys. The exhortations have not been heeded any more than were the exhortations of the Church to Capitalists over the turn of the century.

As society in the Undeveloped Nations lost its sense of being one communion of basic care and love, one people as a family, so the relationship also to the centres of Capitalism became ever more a relationship of permanent subjugation and repression. The United States of America in particular has made crass mistakes by constantly trying to shore up totally decadent regimes with dollars, while feebly tinkering with the introduction of Western forms of 'democracy'. Countries emerging from the Iron Age don't want that form of Government. They want, and need a strong, paternalistic socialism. They want their Saviours—their Castros and Gadaffis. They hope and believe that these men will be their benevolent Fathers in social reform. They are not ready nor able for Western Socialism or for Western democracy. In any case, how could the USA have even hoped to win in Indo-China when they were supporting a

social regime in which the landlord could come in with his armed men nor the local police and at harvest time claim forty to fifty per cent of the crops as his ground rent? The support should have been given at ground level to grass roots movements for radical reform. It was instead mediated through the top, through the regime, and through a mass of corruption.

The same is true also of Latin America. So much of the vast sums usuriously lent, sums which now threaten the stability of the very fabric of Western banking systems, was wasted on repressive wars, or recycled by individual corruption and corporate investment *outside* the country concerned. It ended up again in reinvestment from a poor Latin American country back into the USA stock market, or perhaps in a very private account somewhere in Switzerland. The Russians, who are masters of international financial strategy, played their master stroke when they persuaded the Arab states to quadruple the world price of oil. This, followed by inevitable recession, a recession made worse by aggressive Japanese Capitalism, has now brought the economies of Latin America into total inflationary disaster, while the blame for the appalling level of debt interest falls not on the subtle machinations of the Soviets but on the Capitalist institutions of North America and the West. The Americans, and the West in general cannot win because they continue to defend their loans and their investments through regimes which cannot be defended, and are not going to be talked away or voted away. They should cut their losses, bear the drop in their standards of living, and then give their attention and their money to the new, grass roots 'revolutionary' regimes on genuinely helpful non-usurious terms. They could do it; and it would cost a lot less than an international war. As Britain has found, the "wicked men" of African revolution in one decade, after they have forced the colonial master to admit defeat, become within another decade the grave elder statesmen of a new order.

### **Living the "Option For The Poor"**

One says it with regret, but the timing of the recent guideline document on Liberation Theology has been unfortunate, coming so soon after the scandal of the 'Marcinkus affair' at the Vatican Bank. This has done dreadful harm to the image of the Church everywhere, and quite naturally has been exploited by Marxist circles in Latin America. In a past issue of *The Tablet*, Archbishop Marcinkus was reported (though it sounds more like 'ben trovato') to have said that the Church

“could not be run on *Hail Marys*”. If he did say it, he was totally wrong. The Church should be run on nothing but *Hail Marys*. The Vatican should not possess a Bank, trading in multimillions as an international corporation. It makes nonsense of the proclaimed “option towards the poor”. If Jesus Christ walked in the Vatican today, he might well say of the said bank—“take these things away, and make not my Father’s House a house of traffic or a den of thieves”. St. Francis reformed a worldly and corrupt Church and age by becoming a living and personal option for the poor, and dealing in nothing but ‘Hail Marys’.

Among my parishioners is a director of one of the leading merchant banks of the City of London. His comment, right or wrong, is worth recording:“Everyone in the City knew the reputation of men like Sindona, Calvi, and their friends. They represent the most cynical and unacceptable face of Capitalism. What was Marcinkus doing in such company? Did he think they were members of the ‘Band of Hope’? To us in the City, it looks as if the Vatican Bank wanted to make a few million fast bucks, and got its fingers burnt. What did it want the money for anyway?” Only the Pope himself, in personal communion between his soul and Our Lord, can decide how far his apostolic missionary pilgrimages must take a first priority of his time, and for how long. Some of us would hope and pray that he may soon find more time to be in closer personal charge of all the work and initiatives of the Curia. Such a constraint of life, although in matters most important, must be a crucifixion for any active, loving, pastoral Bishop of Rome. Yet, there is a spot on the terrain of Rome called the *Quo Vadis*, where Peter, according to ancient legend fleeing the City, met His Master coming in and asked *Quo Vadis* — wherever are you going Lord! “To Rome,” replied the Lord, “to be crucified again in your place”. The legend is probably true and it may contain a wisdom for all time.

### **Hopes and Perils of a ‘New’ Dialectic.**

There are many species of ‘Liberation Theology’, some of them quite orthodox, and some simply the Marxist ideology of heaven only upon earth, flavoured with the language and emotions of Catholicism. The only one which this writer has any real knowledge of from reading is the variant of Ernesto Cardenal SJ, the lovable and gifted Minister of Culture of the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua. He is a man whose poetry is glorious even in translation, so that one

wishes one were more fluent in Spanish! One can trace in his writing a new variant of Marxism, one which opens the way to a correction which, if it prevailed, could usher in a new renaissance of the Church in South America.

The Latin American Church ought by right of numbers and vitality, if not yet of vocations, to become a leading centre of the Church's life in the world, in the next century. Classical Marxism is founded upon Atheism, the law of progress through inevitable war, and the subordination of the individual to the state. Yet, as we pointed out in FAITH (May/June 1984, *The Rediscovery of God*), the time has already arrived when the data of science itself makes belief in a transcendental Mind, i.e. God, an inevitability of philosophy and mathematics. Marxism, as a scientific dialectic is doomed. There is a variant of Liberation Theology, and it is certainly in the thought of the likeable Ernesto, which can either be corrected into a new and magnificent vision of the Gospel and of Christ's Person, or be made with time into a new blueprint for the ultimate Anti-Christ. It is impossible to quote at length in this article, but something of the majesty and the muddle comes over in Fr. Cardenal's address to the audience in Frankfurt, when in 1980 he received the prestigious Peace Prize of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association:

*"All these things (i.e. basic welfare objectives which he listed) are one with the revolution of the Universe: that is why our religion is Catholic, that is to say universal, not just because it is the religion of all men, but because it is the religion of the whole cosmos. It reaches from molluscs to the stars, it embraces all other rites, and all that was true in all the ancient pagan religions, and it embraces more than religion—in the conventional sense of the word. It embraces the whole man or woman (with their poetry, their painting, their folklore, their dances, their seedtime and harvesting, the growth of plants and animals, and the love between men and women) and outside this religion there is no salvation".*

His audience of staid German businessmen, according to *The Tablet* (Oct. 25. 1980) rose to it all with roaring applause, tears, and elation. Yes, but they did for Adolf Hitler too, as I watched, and heard, in my boyhood. They love the loud Wagnerian overtone, the ecstatic, unbearable,

emotional climacteric; but the *actual meaning*, the truth, and the heart of the truth that controls the emotion, and justifies the emotion, all that is more than a little vague. There was some more, and we cannot quote it all: *"I believe in the kingdom of heaven. I believe that the kingdom of heaven is the earth and the cosmos, the company of inhabited planets. And I believe in the resurrection of the dead in this kingdom ...I ask for help for the Revolution taking place in Nicaragua ...I ask you to help in this liberation as in all liberations that are to come, because they obey the same law which also guides the stars, the law of gravity, the law of attraction, the law of love itself".*

### **Agony and Ecstasy.**

Now all this is one fine muddle, and in his poetry, which is more familiar to this writer, Father Ernesto says much the same thing. There is no clear distinction at all between what belongs to God and what to Caesar, i.e. to the community as State. There is not even any certainty, from what we have printed, that Fr. Cardenal believes in a personal God, a soul that survives death, a further state of sheer bliss beyond the kingdom of human life on earth, which he does seem to identify with the kingdom of God. The rhapsody could be assented to by an orthodox Catholic or by the vaguest of Humanists—so long as you don't *think* or ask basic questions. What about the Kingdom which is within you? What, dear Ernesto, about the purity of heart and sexual morals that gives sweet joy in God, and is warred against by 'the law in my members contradicting the law of my mind'. What about the *revolution against sin*, personal real, individual to every man and woman that sin which disfigures the image of God more totally than any form of social and economic exploitation? Do you believe in the *literal* Divinity of Christ, or that he who commits sin becomes the self-made serf and slave of sin? (John 8:31).

What about the 'macho' attitude of the Latin American male to his long suffering, sexually worn out wife? What about the heroic *muchachos* boozing and copulating around in the bush? What about all the greed for power, dominion, urge to remake men and women *to one's own blueprint* which will certainly come in the wake of the revolution? To remake society is a noble and glorious ambition, but it will not bring in universal joy, freedom from oppression, that nobility of mind and heart that truly liberates, and ennobles a beautiful human being. There

were those, my dear Ernesto, in this land of Britain, who thought much the same as you in 1945, and thrilled to the same ambitions. One of them, Aneurin Bevan, wrote a book called *'In Place of Fear'* written with something of the lyric beauty native to the Welsh, who know how to rival in poetic vision even the Latin Americans. Aneurin said expressly that "religion, with its rule of fear and sanction, had no power any longer upon the psyche of modern man". So we brought in the Kingdom with free milk and free orange juice, better schools, better pensions, full employment, the National Health Service (and it was one of the best things we did) and myself, your humble servant, wrote lots of articles in the *Catholic Herald* justifying, quite rightly, the new vision, and new hope. Moreover, this made some bishops, to my knowledge, very nervous, and they advised Catholic societies not to ask for such a *wild* young man as their chaplain, etc. etc.

But do you know, dear Fr. Ernesto, it did not bring in the Kingdom! It was good in itself, and still is—but all that liberation, schooling, medical services, and the oceans of orange juice and milk, raised us up a generation of taller, healthier, equally bloody-minded little hooligans into the swinging sixties and beyond! Well, they were not all like that, but the percentage rate of beautiful people did not rise any, and certainly not among the types who called themselves 'the beautiful people'. There is a factor left out, dear Father, in your ecstasy, and it adds up to: "You shall love the Lord your God, with your whole heart, and your whole soul, and all your mind, and all your strength", and the *second*, (note the *second* Ernesto,) is like unto it: "You shalt love your neighbour as you love yourself". This love is the fulfilment of the universal law, but it is written eternally in stone, the stone of the Ten Commandments of the Law, and the law precedes all economics, and alone guarantees the lasting decency of any economic order.

### **A Theology of Scientific Evolution.**

The Liberation Theology of Father Ernesto Cardenal at least, is an improvement on the Marxist dialectic, and also could be its modern replacement. It is much more suited to the scientific wisdom of say the next fifty years ahead. It is not founded upon Atheism, quite the contrary, but it need not be founded upon a God who is personal, transcendent, and other than the order of matter-energy either. As he writes it at least, the God of Ernesto Cardenal is the most

vaguely 'ecumenical' of all. He is one and the same in all religions, and so long as you love your brother in social justice, then you live in the one true Faith, and are a child of the resurrection. Love, as it ascends in being from "molluscs to the stars" (for which Ernesto, lose a mark, it should be "from the stars to molluscs," the galaxies came first) expresses itself as the one true Super-religion above all religions, of which all Faiths are but aspects, though possibly we who are 'Catholics' in the conventional sense, may claim a little credit for being nearer by name to the universal law. There is no certainty here of spirit rather than of matter, no clear vision of the nature of God, or even less of Man, of the future of man beyond a metaphorical resurrection, and no Law of life and perfection for the inward man. Father Ernesto will find that there is no way of guaranteeing the *quality* of men, especially when the Revolution has achieved its more obvious goals.

And in any case, there is more to Man than lots of bread, poetry, and People's Palaces. There is the knowledge and recognition of "He Who Is", of whom it has been written: "*the love of Jesus, what it is, none but his lovers know*". It needs to be revealed in a Person, and it conforms men and women to the likeness of God through truth that is dogmatic and as merciless as the revolution against sin. It contains pain of purification too. It is much harder to effect than the entwining of a man and a woman through the throbbing of drums while the cicada sings to a hot Latin night. There is another facet in this newer Marxism which is superior to Marx, and truer to reality. The law of its dialectic is not the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of *thesis, antithesis, to synthesis*. In this philosophy and Theology of Liberation, *Love*—the power of communion, and growth, and life in peace—is the one universal law, and the antithesis, at least in Cardenal's thought, is incidental and presumably sin-derived. He does talk, a little sillily, about the 'revolution' of the universe, but his panorama does not make internecine struggle basic to universal and human progress. It would be very hard to express the "Equation" for the development of the universe from the primal explosion of ordered energies in terms of constant intrinsic antithesis and revolution.

### **Either Christ or Anti-Christ.**

It is surely no accident that theologians like Johann-Baptiste Metz and Hans Küng acclaim

Ernesto Cardenal and others like him. They themselves are not orthodox Catholic theologians. Their Christ is not pre-existent, and their soul is doubtfully distinct from the body. In which case there is no life eternal for the individual, because if 'spirit' as we know it and experience it, is the final result of the complexification of matter, the ultimate self-centring of the *Noosphere*—as Teilhard would put it—then with the disintegration of your senile bag of chemicals, you have gone too. There is no way round this argument and this conclusion. It may be framed with ecstatic goodwill, but the Liberation Theology of men like Fr. Ernesto Cardenal is the blue-print for the Ultimate Big Brother, and the ultimate Anti-Christ of a world state. What you need for this is a God who is immanent in matter-energy, not transcendent; a God therefore who does not work and speak in history as Lord of History, to whom men bend the knee, but a God who speaks only in Man, is made conscious only in Man, and whose authority resides and is exercised in the perfect man.

You know you are the perfect man when conscious of a mission to the brethren, you offer yourself, are accepted, and set about organising them to make a better job of themselves. Naturally, you know best, because history, acting here and now shows you to be a bigger, better, and much more intelligent brother. Just as mother nature selects the better and knows what to do with the less well adapted, so the gifted son or daughter of the ultimate liberation revolution will know what to do, (quite mercifully of course,) with types and species who get in their way and are obviously not adapted to the total good of the community of Man. Unless it is corrected, the new Liberation Theology which confounds heaven and earth, matter and spirit, sin and suffering, God and Man, can be, and will be the Ultimate Humanism without divine magisterium. It has only the Magisterium of Man, exercised in the name of 'love' but according to the wisdom and will of Man, and that of a mankind fallen. To make a technical point in theology, it is theologically speaking, the basis of the ultimate Neo-Modernism, and is much superior to classic Marxism.

### **Creation is to the Incarnation**

Classic Marxism did, and does, erect a warped caricature of the constitution of the Catholic Church in its teaching on community, membership of one another, service, and power for the

common good exercised by a final magisterium which resides in the top echelons of The Party. The new Marxism is superior, and has the added advantage of directly copying and invoking the Christian 'Law of Love' as the foundation stone of the Universe, and the Law of its ascent to Man. It seems conveniently to ignore sin as a personal factor in human life, and to be aware of it only as either an incidental stage of development or as the resistance of organism to change. Yet this new and much more dangerous theology that muddles church and state, heaven and earth in one order of reality, does possess this vision of a Key-Law framing all creation. And through it the error can be corrected if Christian men, especially those high in the Church, are big enough and humble enough to correct it. The error can be corrected by postulating a Unity-Law of control and direction, working through every order of spirit and matter, working through the Angels of God, and in matter from "molluscs to the stars" if Ernesto Cardenal wants to see it that way.

It is a Law proceeding from God Transcendent, and all its laws, loves, and hopes are aligned upon the Incarnation of God, the Lord of History and the Master Magisterium for mankind. It is a vision that accepts with joy, not with fear and constant nit-picking, the vision of the Evolution of the Universe, until in the majestic brain of man matter-energy, which is *not the soul*, becomes of its own formula and degree of advance, relative as a principle of being—as an *ens quo* as Aquinas would have said—to the spiritual soul, through which act of special creation Man is at once a spiritual and a material being, a special creation and yet physically the apex of the evolution of an ordered, Mind-directed cosmos. Once we have *Man*, soul and body in the synthesis of one being, then the whole order of Revelation from Adam to Christ unfolds with utter consistency and superb majesty. The doctrine of Original Sin, too, makes perfect sense of why the achievement of Man in the spirit and the body, in personal holiness and social justice makes so poor a showing. We can, in the concept of the Unity-Law of creation, which is the word of the Word Eternal embodied in natural laws, answer every need of man, and exorcise every human arrogance. We so obviously need this vision of God the Christ, which is the meaning of "*the Woman clothed with the Sun*": the planet whose life looks to man, whose manhood looks to Christ, and in which the womb of Mary is the meaning of womanhood and of the Church and of the Magisterium of "Emmanuel". A poet like Ernesto ought to be able to see

the point. In which case he would do better to resign from the Government of Nicaragua, but continue to give witness to the liberating truth, in word and deed. Then when, to his horror, comrades grown fat, affluent, and arrogant, give themselves to disdain of God, and turn to “eating and drinking, beating and bullying the maidservants and manservants”, (Luke 12: 45), he can at least become a saint and a martyr, and not just one more disillusioned visionary.

As a postscript one would ask—*should* the Church go beyond merely teaching principles of social justice, and call for a state order in the modern world which embodies naturally in its political order the basic tenets of what would be a Christian Welfare State? Should we teach a familial basis to the interplay of the rights of the individual and the needs of the community which supports even the most gifted individual? Should we teach something like a Christian Socialism, for want of a less emotive word? One suggests we should, but the right to own and prosper would need to be defined through the individual, but in his social relationship and social service, and social obedience. It must not be defined through the state, which subordinates the individual to the state. It all needs working out—but then the Guideline document from Cardinal Ratzinger did invite us to think beyond the present and do a little working out using the landmarks of an authentic Catholicism.