

Pastoral Themes

from editorial articles in Faith Magazine by Edward Holloway

page:

2. Living Catechesis (May/Jun 1991, vol.23, no.3)
17. God the Real: Can We Know and Love Him? (Jul/Aug 1989, vol.21, no.4)
30. The Individual Providence of God (Nov/Dec 1990, vol.22, no.6)
42. The Disciple As Discloser of God (May/Jun 1982, vol.14, no.3)
52. Meditation for Christ the Humanist (Sep/Oct 1987, vol.19, no.5)
64. States of Love (Mar/Apr 1990, vol.22, no.2)
77. Descent Into The Libido (May/Jun 1979 , vol.11, no.3)
87. Reflections on Christian Perfection (Jan/Feb 1981, vol.13, no.1)
100. The Apostolate of The Sister in The Modern World (Jul/Aug 1981, vol.13, no.4)
121. Reflections on The Purgative Way (Jan/Feb 1994, vol.26, no.1)
128. The Funeral Mass: Purple or White? (Sep/Oct 1988, vol.20, no.5)
140. A Sermon Preached at Esher (Jan/Feb 1984, vol.16 no.1)

LIVING CATECHESIS

We desperately need a new Catechesis of our people, and for our people. We need it above all for our younger people. They have no clear, no centred knowledge of the Faith. Except in the minority case, they have no firm, orientated Christian identity any more, and that is to infer that they have no identity as Catholics. As a process of teaching, the catechism is out of date and use. There are many ways of teaching, but as an attitude of mind this rejection of catechetics is a mistake in teaching technique, and has now become a spiritual identity crisis. *Weaving the Web* will only deepen the ignorance of the Catholic identity. There are still some reasonably good catechetical books around, but the failure of catechetics rests on more than the disfavour of the catechism. Apart from fashion, and a weary, woolly, enervating form of ecumenism which avoids real issues, and has achieved nothing positive towards reunion in the last quarter of a century, there is a more fundamental reason for failure to catechize. Nobody knows what to teach any more. They don't know where to go. There is a fundamental breakdown in perspective in the Church. There is not an actual breakdown of *magisterium* in the formal sense, but there is a breakdown in the unity and certainty of the vision. After all the delays and the infighting it is doubtful whether the expected "Universal Catechism" which *still* awaits publication, will meet a better fate than the excellent but dead-letter *General Catechetical Directory*.

The Elan Vital of Catechesis

One did not write that we need newer and better catechisms, although we do. We need a living catechesis, which is something different, though something on which good catechisms or books of apologetics (another neglected need) might be based. *Catechesis*¹ as the word lives and is exemplified in the Fathers of the Church is a word of fire. So many of the noblest sermons in the Office of the Church are "catechesis". The word means the perspective, vision, and inner coherence of the whole proclamation of "The Good News". How tired a cliché that expression has become after now twenty-five very sterile years! It should express the *élan vital* of a confident, growing, happy People of God. St. Augustine's *City of God* could be called

"catechesis". It is still reprinted and useful and relevant after sixteen hundred years. It is not, of course, suitable for teaching the young, and it does need some *aggiornamento* as we enter the Third Millennium. Yet how well it has worn! Written in days of despair, with the Vandals at the gates, and in the apparently hopeless defeat of Roman Empire and Roman Catholicism alike, it vindicated a new in a clear, dynamic way the sweep of God's meaning and purpose in creation. This work was a main formative influence on the new Christian culture which, against the odds, emerged so painfully through the dark ages of barbarian chaos and heroic monastic evangelisation. It gave the perspective which fashioned Western Christianity, a perspective which cracked four hundred years ago and is now in collapse. The principle of *catechesis*—the living soul which informs the body of any *catechism*—is vision, perspective, and the morale which is born of the joy of God known and loved in personal experience. St. Paul in all his letters to the churches is the living embodiment of catechesis. This proclamation has a joy to share and a certainty which gives *identity* to love. We have to recover again those Pauline and Augustinian overtones if 'evangelisation' this decade is to be more than the mistrustful, obedient, but hopeless and futile "Charge of the Light Brigade"!

A Vision for Youth

So, from where shall we take our people, and especially our young people? Take them as we must from where St. Paul did—from the reality and certainty of God. Paul to the Athenians—one of the writer's favourite texts—made excellent points relevant to the State of Athens, and the later emerging Greek Church of the Fathers. He said something the Latins never grasped as well as the Greeks, the manner in which we are "co-sharers of the divine nature" through the divinization of Man in the Incarnation of Christ. The full force of Paul's argument to God as "the environment of Man" is comprehensible in its total majesty only in the backdrop of today's scientific knowledge. Paul again it is, speaking more to the faithful remnant of Israel than to the Gentiles, who remarks in the context of living faith that "anyone who would draw near to God must believe that He exists, and is the rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb 11:6). Take them from the "New Physics", and don't demur that it is all theory and will be overturned in a decade. Much of it is fact. Fact may be worked into a more accurate frame, but the conclusions

from fact remain. In every sphere of knowledge in the modern world, the dynamics of fact will not be undone. Nobody is ever going to reason away your television set from you. St. Thomas in his day had to build his metaphysics on the basis of the ancient physics of Aristotle. That all needs updating now indeed—and in philosophy one thinks we could do an even better job—but the essential insights of Thomism, crafted from facts, were and are true. God in his works has always been knowable to His people, as witnessed in the psalms of David, and before the psalms of David.

Logos:- Principle of a Rational Universe

Teach your young the Universe as it appears in the more sober perspectives of ‘anthropic’ theory. Show an ascending equation of creation, elements acting and interacting upon each other within the finest of tolerances, and with the most delicate finesse of creative balance. Let them see, through an intelligent thesis of evolution (and an intelligent thesis of evolution is impossible without the centred mind and will of God), the manner in which from the first explosion of energies the Universe is an ordered ministry of part upon part, law complementary to other law. Elements, atoms, stars, galaxies emerge in vast complexity, but the harmony and ministry of being upon being. Law upon law, abides at all times. Show them as they know it at school, an *equational* Universe. Remind them that equations are never random. They are aware that the “equations” in which men of genius like Einstein expressed discoveries of meaning never before dreamt by men, were born first in a flash of *insight* which saw the unity in diversity in the workings of matter—the ministry, as one likes to call it—of Control and Direction of beings and elements one upon another. Then lead them to the Unity and Genius of the Mind of God, *the Logos* or Eternal Mind in which all of this was willed, framed, and “does hold together” (Col 1:17) in coherence of intelligibility. It never explains itself as self-sufficient. It is not *rational* (and men know Nature through being rational) except through the ultimate reason —HIM WHO IS.

Physics and Christian Philosophy

There is more than one path to the demonstration of the reality of God. One dares to think

(what arrogance!) that from the basis of modern physics the metaphysics of Aquinas could be improved. There are many and exciting ways to prove the reality of God, especially from the nature of man, his questionings and his search for love and meaning. If Catholic philosophy could answer Kant² a little better, these lines to God would have more surety. We live however in a materialistic age. It is true now, it probably will *always* be true, that the most convincing way to demonstrate God is from the facts of Nature all around man, and the impossibility, so obvious in the world of science, of making it intelligible without the prior reality of God³.

Describing the Law of Unity in Creation

In FAITH we often talk of the *Unity-Law of Control and Direction*. The editor has recently been asked by an intelligent church student to define it. One could define it, but not all people are philosophers; better to describe it. It is more than the unity which binds all creation into a great equation of meaning, being, and mutual ministry of law and becoming. It is the *dynamic pattern* of creation itself, always one and the same, even while it develops and changes. An example: a baby at conception is a handful of cells, barely visible to the naked eye. It grows fast, very dynamically, becomes more and more complex, but the unity and harmony of its pattern always remains, and is always more wonderfully evident. The whole dynamism of that development from the ordered explosion, if you like, of conception is to the wonderfully differentiated and complex body (and soul!) of that child after nine months. All through growth in the womb, balance, harmony, interplay of organ upon organ has been maintained. The same is true of the Universe. It has developed like the child in the womb, over billions of years grown more complex and differentiated, but the unity of the whole, the balance of law upon law in the growth of its whole has always been maintained. The nucleus of the baby had a dynamism to one intelligible perfection: the baby at birth. The Unity-Law of Control and Direction—philosophers would call it *finality*—means that the Universe also has, and manifests, ordered growth and control to one dynamic finality, one perfect, crowning end in view. What is that end? *It is us*. The dynamism is to *the brain of man* and the necessary relation of that brain to GOD, in the spiritual soul. If intelligent life exists anywhere else in the Universe, whatever it looks like as a synthesis of matter and “soul”, it will be “Man”, like us. As made to the

substantial likeness of God, we can confidently infer that it will have the same eternal destiny as us.

We penetrate the deep things of God

Thus, the meaning of this Unity-Law of Control and Direction—the essence of patterned purpose at all stages of the development of creation—means that the unity in complexity at all times of this law is precisely to *us*. It makes us possible. The wise men of this world now know and admit that we are “possible” only on the finest and most specific of balances in the evolution of matter. In books and on television programmes, philosophers and scientists are constantly wondering at the “miracle” by which it seems as if the whole sweep of creation was “chosen” precisely to make us. Quite: it was. They marvel even more that in spite of a body and brain *not made* to see, feel, or be aware of the sub-atomic order in any direct sense, we yet have the power to understand the “engineering”, electronic and otherwise, of the Universe⁴. It looks as if we were made for each other, the Universe and ourselves. So we were. Then, they start to get it wrong by beginning to waffle, suggesting in some unintelligible way (extreme anthropic principle) as if *our minds* in some manner made the Universe before we existed. No: but a mind in the likeness of our spirits did. We are made to the image of God the Word: so we comprehend his works. We are not made for the Universe. The Universe, in all that it has and is, is made for us. Ultimately because we transcend the order of mere matter, (not “transcend ourselves” as the most influential of modern Catholic theologians have been teaching) we are made for the WORD whose likeness is in our very being. He resides in us by grace, prompts a life divine in us. And in the “last days” of human civilization and ability to “take it”, He will, and He did manifest Himself to us in the synthesis of the Divine and the Human as principle of life, salvation, wisdom, and good. The unity of this perspective is detailed and complete. It makes a unique sense of the Faith and of the vision of St. Paul in a logic which is so magnificent as to be appalling.

A True Perspective on Evolution Essential

For reasons of philosophy—namely man’s total organic relatedness to the cosmos, as much as

for reasons of scientific discovery—leading Catholic thinkers in the second half of this century have come to accept a theory of the evolution of man. Then they have begun to fall into an error that is disastrous for the coherent and orthodox catechesis of the Faith. They have talked of the evolution of matter and spirit *as one same order of real being* and of man as “transcending himself” all along the line of the history of life, through the anthropoids to mankind of this day. It is the reason the most influential of them hardly talk of theology as such, but rather of anthropology in our relationship to God. Theology is reduced to anthropology—study of the structure and cultural evolution of man as an animal⁵. A first result that follows, if soul and body are one basic energy “transcending itself” all through the evolution of life, would be the unintelligibility of Nature. Living things would be a mixture of determinism and a mixture of freedom, with sheer chaos mounting as life approached the threshold of man. It is against the reality of science (as Sir Peter Medawar reminded Teilhard de Chardin). We do not find it. A second consequence, if mind and matter are one basic energy, is that death dissolves all we have and are. For then, what we call the spiritual in ourselves depends upon the “complexification”⁶ of matter through the brain. Such philosophers and theologians try hard to wriggle out of this consequence, but the logic is inexorable, and common sense recognizes it.

Unity of philosophy and theology in man

A living catechesis will take us to the moment and miracle of man. Soul cannot evolve from matter nor matter “develop” soul. The answer is more wonderful. This Unity-Law in the complex harmony of evolution takes us to the last crowning mutation in matter: a seeming paradox, a brain too powerful for Nature and environmental law to programme deterministically to a set way of life, like other being; a unique exception in all creation. We know it did happen. It is no theory, because we are around. We can abuse our instincts and faculties of the body, but we are not controlled and directed, governed in life, by any determinism of Nature, as are all other things. If there were no “soul” in man, we could not happen, because the brain is made for determination to its way of life, and we are both free and *above* such a relationship to Nature. The wonder of man is that he is *at once* part of the organic evolution of life and also a special creation. The supreme achievement of this Unity-Law in matter is the production of an animal

brain beyond the power of the material order, through all its cosmic evolution to its crowning achievement to endow with intelligible meaning or natural law of life and being. The paradox is resolved because this supreme achievement at the end of the ascent of material being in the Universe is directly and *naturally* related to the spiritual soul. At this point, in the beginning, and whenever human life is conceived now, God does and must create the living spirit into a material “equation of life”, unintelligible in science or in philosophy and theology without Him. In man we have, thus, the ontological link between philosophy and theology. They are not autonomous disciplines of life and wisdom. For God in person is the environmental law of the life of man: in Him we live, and move, and are, and have our being. This perspective upon man gives a majestic insight into the meaning of the “immanence” of God to man. God is not part of our being nor we part of God, but *the Logos*, the Mind of God in whose Being (and coming Manhood) we were conceived, holding all things together in unity as one pattern of fulfilment in Himself (Col. 1:15-20) at the peak of material obedience to His Law of life, makes flesh and spirit an “incarnate” single synthesis in mankind. He crowns the life law, the control and direction of that synthesis of matter and of spirit in Himself. “The Word was made Flesh, and pitched his tent among us, and from His Fulness we have all received, yes grace upon grace. The Law was given by Moses: grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ. No man has looked upon God at anytime, the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him manifest” (John 1:18). This is an anticipation of the perspective of our catechesis, but it was irresistible; too wonderful a vision to withhold.

The Life-Law of every man

At the moment of Man, the soul—simple in nature like the Being of God—becomes the control and direction, the determinant, of the brain of man. Man will be at once matter conditioned in all that belongs to matter, but soar above all natural environmental limitations of matter in the life of intelligence and in the communion of the spirit. In this perspective, man makes sense. It means that we human beings are also through the soul taken up into the spiritual order of the likeness of God: the order where being is ruled by wisdom, truth, ordered love, obedient conformity to the Substance of God to whose likeness we are created.

In our catechesis we have answered the problem of man—who and what he is. We have not answered explicitly what is his meaning and his end, his ultimate fulfilment. We are not governed by a law of determinism like the anthropoids next below us, but as created, man is limited. He is not his own sufficiency or law of life. He needs control and direction, i.e., a law of life proper to his species, but it must come through the soul, and it must be accepted in freedom. There opens up before us the simple, sincere wonder of the relationship to God given in Genesis, the personal and communal fulfilment of man “walking with God in the cool of the evening air” (Gen 2:8) . In what is the first beginnings of “Church” man receives from God not some external guiding code, but an increase of life and depth, an enhancement of very being, the intelligible consummation of which is the possession in love and beauty of Gods own self. God is our Way, Truth, and Life. God is our sunshine, our life energy; in his own final word, God is “our bread”. This is the “life of divine grace”. Observe that it is a real *growing*, the child grows to adult stature. In its own order the soul grows too. God makes us grow large enough to take Him in. Grace is as much an organic life of the spirit in man, as the energy of the sun is an organic life to matter on this earth.

The “Law” mounts to climax

Once we have vindicated the place of the spiritual soul in man, and its relationship to his living body, may our catechesis dispense with that so much emphasized concept of “the Unity-Law” within which all processes of creation are gathered? The repetition of this term does become a bore to some people. We have not finished with it, we must insist upon it. First, it gives the bond between soul and body (spirit and matter) within man. Hence it gives the bond between philosophy and theology in man. This bonding is intrinsic and organic. Philosophy is not actually a purely autonomous discipline, *because man has only one personal end and finality, one consummation in joy*. Science, philosophy, and theology, these orders are not autonomous in their ultimate intelligibility. They all define man: from matter, to the soul, to the being “co-sharers of the divine nature”. So our Unity-Law does not end at man. With mankind, with us as individuals and humankind as a family, it enters upon a further dimension. In human nature, in you and me, it takes up human life and meaning directly into communion with God. God is now

the “environmental law”, the “life -law” of man. In passing into the immanent action of God upon mankind —“in Him we live, and move, and have our being”—the Unity-Law which framed creation takes *all things* now directly under the determinant who is God⁷. It took the whole Universe to make us, and we are made for God. We will look for God’s action in history. Look for it in personal prayer, awareness, and proclamation that He is. We will look for it in the family, in the life of men and women in community and civilisation. We will look for it in a *public identity*—a People of God.

Word, Church, Bible, Magisterium

We will find it all in the last editorial article of FAITH: *Word, Church, and Bible*. The unbroken unity of this concept, all the way from the first flash of the cosmos to the body of man, to the ontological relationship of the soul to matter, to the relationship in communion of man to God, this must be appreciated as the working out of *one thought* in one process, and the thought is in the Logos, in the mind of the Word who is God. In its whole entity and in its whole unified intelligibility, the Universe from matter to man, from man to God, from revelation to the Incarnation of God in Christ, is a garment woven without seam. If this is so in all the physical relationships of the creation, then it is so in the total intelligibility of the creation. The concept itself is a garment “woven without seam”. That is what *the Unity-Law* means. Of course, the laws of physics or of chemistry, or even of psychology, are not all “theology” as such. They are, however, all aspects of the creation that consummates in man. Their ultimate finality is only in the consummation which is Christ the King. A living catechesis for an age which will be ever more fully dominated by technical knowledge and the power of man’s mind *over all things* must see the working of God in human history as a *continuous development* of the Unity-Law towards the fulfilment in freedom of man. Continuity of process and harmony of development is essential to this vision. It does in fact join with the concept of the development of doctrine given us by the Venerable John Henry Newman. Development of doctrine is more than the development of ideas and concepts. It is growth in the knowledge of God in his works, and through it the People of God can and must respond with a deeper certainty in the assent of faith and a deeper joy in their possession of God. We recall the words of Christ: “many prophets

and just men yearned to see the things that you see and they did not see them, and to hear the things that you heard and they did not hear them” (Luke 10:24). Through the ages God gives his Church and People the things they need, and the things they can now further grasp. This is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church after the Ascension of the Lord.

The shadow of the problem of evil

It is impossible in this summary to outline within a living catechesis, a sort of apologetics for the next century, the essential meaning and nature of sin and the manner in which it conditions the crowning Salvation of God into a painful but most magnificent Redemption. There simply is not space. We do have an excellent Faith Pamphlet which goes part of the way, and other references can be given⁸. Of course, it is not possible to understand the thesis we are now presenting without full consideration of the Fall of Man and all its physical and spiritual consequences. This theme can indeed be linked perfectly with the unity of concept behind what we call the Unity-Law of creation and salvation as framed in the mind of Him who was at the end of the ages to be revealed in Christ. It must be borne in mind, however, that sin cannot, as such, be brought into the unity of God’s original plan and concept of creation, for sin has no part in God, and is no part of the original economy of God. The gift of Redemption is a further and free gift of God to man by which God in Christ, as Son of God and Son of Man (origin of our stock, prince, and judge), redeems and restores in Himself the original meaning and destiny of human life. It is a further gift. It is not a second order of creation. It is the restoration in God Incarnate of the one, eternal plan. (Titus, 3:5).

Original Sin as a “Sin of the Stock”

Original Sin is the loss of the holiness in grace—physical and spiritual—of our stock in its relationship to God, its direct and immediate principle of Life and Life more abundant, at the beginning of the history of mankind. There follows also in that loss a consequence and penalty upon the flesh, the onset of disordered desire or “concupiscence” through which the passions and pleasure principles in man are no longer ordered and controlled in their evocation by the wisdom of the soul, itself ruled by the peace and joy of God loved in total harmony. This

consequence is inherited by physical generation, even in the order of our Redemption, because the damage is an internal lesion of our nature, and the physical component of our nature is subject to physical determinism. Such a damage cannot be undone except by death and reformation into resurrection. Man is not wholly corrupt. The striving towards God and God's law of life must always exist in our nature both in body and in soul. God made the "seeking of its proper good" basic and essential to the nature of all being, including material being. The power of the soul, in the free and deliberate act of sin, brings "another law" into the make-up of man. Man is now self-divided, and St. Paul outlines perfectly what must and does happen: "The good that I would, I don't do it: the evil that I would not, that I do. I find a law within my members contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me astray in many things" (Rom. 7:21-8:8). The wound of greed and selfishness and of sheer physical addiction to passionate pleasure deeply damages man's nature. We never attain the utter holiness we would as unfallen, but there is intrinsic growth in grace and goodness. The fall in our nature, as aligned to God, needs to be forgiven and ultimately to be healed in entirety, when "all things are made new" (Rev. 21:1).

Reasonable Truth of Traditional Theology

Modern theologians find great difficulty in the understanding of Original Sin, indeed of the very concept. They shy away from the clear definitions of the Council of Trent, and even more from the frank teaching of the Fathers of the Church and St. Thomas Aquinas that Original Sin *is* an intrinsic damage, and *is* inherited by generation, and is more than "entry into a condition of universal social guilt"⁹. One can, in developing the perspective upon a new catechesis sketched lightly in this article, make a suggestion on the reasonable truth of the Church's sincere doctrine and the unanimous tradition of the Fathers of the Church. In finding a reasonable theory of the evolution of life, we have to set aside the old Darwinism of the creation of species by endless small accretions and adaptations. These do exist, but do not explain species. The multitude of intermediate forms required by the old random Darwinism simply is not found. We have to presume specific mutation, and this can be only through the brain in relation to the environment. Every new species must "integrate" in a communion of life into its environment, and receive from the "law" within that environment its programme and pattern of life. Now

man is a new species, in body and in soul. At the beginning of the species he must “integrate” into the environment which will provide him with his law of life and being, and will harmonize all his powers and faculties. In the unique case of man, there is a unique environment: *God is the environment of man*. Into a living communion with God of wisdom and good, every power physical and spiritual of man’s being must integrate, to receive that living law and relationship we call the life of grace. We prescind from disputes about natural and supernatural orders. God must always be in whatever measure of gift, the giver of joy and fulfillment to mankind.

Sin as an Ontological Disobedience

Up to the creation of man, God’s law of good has framed all natures, and all natures have sought within their natural environment for the good which governs their order and nature. There was no disobedience to God, no sin. Man, at creation was related to God as the proper environment into which he must integrate his being, body and soul as one, in the communion which gives him his life-law. This life-law would harmonize every power and seeking of body and of soul, for whatever its measure, God alone is the happiness of man. If, in the beginning of the stock, through the power of the soul, man should withdraw himself from communion with the prompting grace of God and “disobey” by adoration of himself as his law of life and meaning, then for the first time in all creation a contrary law of selfishness and law-less-ness will be introduced into the whole personality of man. His flesh will fall with the spirit and through the spirit. This will be a total loss of due ordination of the whole physical being of man, body and soul. The damage will be instant and total, and the flesh will generate with both the loss of the original justice of its nature, *and* with the disorder of consequent concupiscence in the flesh. Because the damage is real, ontological, of very being. It is reasonable to suppose that so fundamental a damage, the first intrusion into matter of a law of disobedience to a creature’s natural good, will be generated with the flesh. The spirit can change and regret, but a lesion in the flesh which is the most fundamental possible in the nature of man would, through the brain and generation be passed on. This seminal concept cannot now be further developed.

The “Word” speaks through the ages

Winding up this perspective upon a future Christian catechesis one can only outline the corollaries of the Unity-Law of finalism to God in creation. Only the Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity could become Incarnate for us. Because only in *Him* is all the potential of the Father known, and through the Holy Spirit willed. That is why in Christ : “all things whatever do hold together in unity”. When the Word is made flesh and tabernacles among us, He redeems us in Himself in perfect justice, love, reparation, and obedience to the eternal Unity-Law of the Father’s intent in creation. He makes all things new. *Divine Magisterium*, and therefore infallible magisterium, is His prerogative in his people, the Church, till the end of the ages. Otherwise there is no divinity in Christ, and no consummation of the Unity-Law in Him. The absolute power to rule concerning the *truth* for man extends to every aspect whatever of faith or of morals, of grace and of nature: “All authority is given to Me, in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 16:18).

The Eucharist is supreme and central to all the sacraments. Every sacrament is an act of God, (not a symbol) in Christ. In the Eucharist we are gathered personally and as a people around the self-offering of Jesus in which we are reconciled to the Father for time and for eternity. As Sacrament, Jesus is always *our Bread*, for God is life and “bread” to our nature. That is why the physical body of Jesus Christ must share in this divine relationship of God to all spiritual life, angel or man. Transubstantiation is a fact. This is Jesus, and nothing less. There are many things more one would wish to add, for they spin like a thread woven without seam into this concept of the Unity-Law within which *all created things* are conceived and integrated in life and in mutual ministry. Something like this is needed by the Church, needed by our separated brethren, needed by all mankind, as we move into the Third Millennium of the Inheritance of Christ upon earth. We conclude by defining the Unity-Law, by which all creatures, angels, men, and material universe, cohere together in one thought and one work, in the words of the source of the Law Himself:

“And He who sat upon the throne said, ‘behold I make all things new’. Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true. He said to me: ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the

Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the Fountain of the water of Life. He who conquers shall have this inheritance, and I will be his God and he will be my child” (Rev. 21:1-7).

Therefore, let our liturgy crown the Sacred Head of Jesus Christ seat of all Wisdom, human and divine. It has already bared his Sacred Heart, seat of Redemptive love for us.

NOTES

¹ "Catechesis" although constantly used as a word in pastoral and theological writing, does not figure in the latest edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary. Neither for that matter does "orthopraxis", although "orthodoxy" does get a mention. Catechesis of course means teaching or instruction. The word "catechism" is derivative from it.

² This comment is for philosophers only. A metaphysic based on modern knowledge of the entity of objects would, one suggests, allow us to embody substance and accident in one single concept, and to justify knowledge of the singular as the primary percept of judgement without "abstraction" of a universal form. The primary concept would be of the singular in a cosmic or "universal" relationship of being. The distinction between noumenon and phenomenon would be by-passed.

³ There are some magnificent books on the cosmological arguments to God by Stanley Jaki. priest and scientist, neglected by modern theologians of a newer sort of subjective fideism. One before me now. The latest, is *The Saviour of Science* (Scottish Academic Press: Edinburgh). Others by the same author in a long list: *Cosmos and Creator*, *Angels*, *Apes and Men: The Road of Science & The Ways to God*.

⁴ Man, in the discoveries of modern science, has proved that he has the power to intuit properties of matter that he can never see, not even by indirect experiment. In the order of elemental energies we can argue from indirect evidence from phenomena to new substantial elements and reactions and laws. The phenomenon and the noumenon look to be identified. So much for Kant. But we can perhaps improve St. Thomas too—just as a philosopher of course!

⁵ This concept of the soul as one energy of being with matter in the Universe is becoming very common, especially among Transcendental Thomists.

⁶ The expression is from Teilhard de Chardin, especially in *The Phenomenon of Man*. He makes it clear that the key to the understanding of man does lie in the brain through ages of evolution. He does not find a right answer, nor Rahner with him. If intelligence and freedom are ~radial" aspects of one basic universal energy, then the soul emerges with the complexification of matter in the brain. Vaporize it, and we are no more.

⁷ St. Paul (Acts 17:16-32) does not seem to have fully worked out his own prophetic insight. Certainly, we Latins never did. The Greek Fathers and the Platonists (St. Justin for example) seem however to have understood it better

than we do now. In the third millennium we need to work this insight in more detail. It will become more important and thrilling as man gains ever more power and knowledge of the interlocked unity of all the processes of matter.

⁸ *Evolution and Original Sin* among the Faith Pamphlets. The subject matter forms a large and somewhat ungainly section of *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, as well.

⁹ Rahner's approach in *Foundations*. It is not coherent in itself as fall or damage in the nature. Rahner does not even try to make his perspective match up with the teaching of St. Thomas or the Tridentine definitions.

GOD THE REAL; CAN WE KNOW AND LOVE HIM?

The theme of this article is undertaken with a sense of hopelessness, given its magnitude, through the constant nagging of students, both lay and clerical, who in hallowed halls or Oxbridge cloister are weary of being told that they cannot really know God, even if, (which not all their teachers concede) they can demonstrate his existence. It unsettles their souls, runs counter to their own experience, and in the case of some of their friends, it shatters vocations to the priesthood and sometimes the life of regular, practicing Catholic faith. Even St. Thomas Aquinas, they are told, confessed to the *utter nescience* of our grasp of God.

This must be so, they say, because we cannot comprehend the nature of God, and the nature of God is All-Simple—just the One Thing. You know it or you don't; no half measures. If they were right, it would follow that St. Thomas must have taught that we cannot love God either, in any personal sense. There is a Thomist cliché *nil volitum nisi praecognitum*, - nothing is wanted, or loved, unless first it is known. So, if you don't know God, but only know at Him, you don't love Him in any warm, personal sense, but only love at Him. This, Aquinas certainly did not teach¹. Moreover, the whole of the Bible, Old Testament and the 'Good News' of Christ, would be totally irrational from what we read in the text, if this position were true.

Problems of Nature and Grace

There is an academic problem about knowing God, given that we cannot know his nature as it is in itself. There is only one perfect name for God. The one He himself taught: I AM WHO AM. To penetrate *it in possession*, as we would know and love a dear friend, is not possible for basic, unaided human nature. God is the incomprehensible, the one beyond the finite limits of our nature, or even of an angel's nature. From the powers of human nature unaided and alone, concedes St. Thomas, we can only say what God is by applying to Him superlatively and eminently the spiritual attributes we find in ourselves, and by denying of God all the limitations which proceed first from matter, and then from the contingency, or nature limits of even the spiritual creature. The First Vatican Council, when it defines the power of unaided human reason to know God "from the things that are made" does both these things, and mixes the

attribution of *eminence* and the *negation* of creaturely limits, when for example it says of God that He is "one, true, living ... Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, omnipotent, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect and will, and in every perfection; who, although He is one, singular, altogether simple and unchangeable spiritual substance, must be proclaimed distinct in reality and essence from the world; most blessed in Himself and of Himself, and ineffably most high above all things which are or can be conceived outside Himself².

According to "purely natural powers", Aquinas, and we think the whole of Christian theology with him, and probably before him, held that you could know God by the projection into Him of all that our nature has, at its most noble, and "thrill" to its fullness predicated without created limitations. Likewise, you could love in God, from the very nature of your soul to love such a thing, the goodness and blessedness of God, source of all created good, but from that alone, you did not enter into a personal communion with Him. You did, in the end know *at* God and love *at* God, rather as an athletic teenager who is a member of a good running club, might, if present at the Olympics, know, thrill, and love *at* the person and achievement of the gold winner whom he "adored". But it is not *personal* fulfilment in the real.

When you read either the Scholastics, who wrote 'scientifically' or the Greek Fathers of the Church who, with the exception of St. John Damascene, certainly did not, you do have one large complication. The discussion of the powers of pure, unaided human nature in its relationship to God is so very, very academic. Because at *no time whatever*, in original justice, after the Fall, or since the Redemption of Christ, has human kind ever existed in a "state of pure nature". We have always been in the state of "supernature" - of the call, vocation, and gift in the order of grace, to be made "co-sharers of the divine nature" (2Peter 1:4)

Infiltration of inadequate philosophies

We are never going to find anyone in a "state of unaided nature" to work from. Even before the birth of Christ, even when the pagans were outside the law of Moses it was still true that: "And God made of *one* all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth... that they should seek God, and it might be, touch and find Him; though indeed *he is not far from each one of us, for in*

Him we live, and move, and have our being. Some of your own poets have said 'we are his offspring' ... and as for the times of ignorance, God has overlooked them, etc." (Acts 17:26, 30).

God has always gone before the "natural desire" of fallen men to know Him. He has always *prompted* us to seek after him, that perchance we may find Him! Yet, even in the order of grace, directed to the possession of God in the beatific vision, we do not know and possess God *as He is* in his own nature. Through grace however we do know him in faith and wisdom, we do love him, we "home in" on Him really and for real. Our intellect thrills to Him, seeks in wonder more of Him, loves Him in a partial but real possession, and is *on its way* in a straight line unless we deliberately care to lose this relationship to the complete knowing and loving of God, as He is. (1 John 3:1-3).

The full reasons behind the present heavy emphasis upon our *nescience* (inevitable ignorance) of God from the limitations of our nature are too complex for this article, at least if any room is to be left for saying anything positive and perhaps useful about acquiring an actual love of God. It derives mostly from theories of knowledge dating say from Occam through Kant and Hegel to Wittgenstein (except maybe in his last years), some of which are called Nominalism, others empirical Pragmatism. These systems deny any knowledge of an Absolute, or of anything in its inner self, from the fact that our knowledge comes through sense impressions, is limited through them, and is valid only of the sensory impression and the categories into which our mind processes it.

The student must look it all up. Anyone who has access to a complete set of *the Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, would, with cross-references, find enough work to fill out an industrious sabbatical year. The follow up of the references to philosophers and the Fathers of the Church will, starting young, require a generous lifetime. Many people now teaching have never pursued either an adequate or a sympathetic course in Thomism or the Scholastics in general. They found Aquinas 'out' in the mid-sixties. They think and argue in terms of a deficient theory of knowledge. It is no fault of theirs, but Nominalism and its later developments lead, as in Hume, Locke, and Kant, to a paralyzed denial of our power to form true concepts about reality and about God.

The Etiquette of St. Thomas' Deference

In the medieval period all the Scholastics suffered from undue deference to the writings of one now known as the *pseudo-Areopagite* because he was misidentified with the Dionysius who was converted by St. Paul in his famous address to the men of Athens quoted above. The pseudo-Dionysius is a writer of genius, insight, and for the most part of truth, though he does exaggerate and in matters of the heavenly life of the angelic hierarchy he romanticizes as well. St. Thomas would not perhaps have twisted himself so much in knots to agree with or “interpret” the said Dionysius, if he had known that he was in fact a disciple of the late Platonist thinker Proclus, and can be dated as certainly no earlier than about 450 AD. Nobody in those humble and pious days before theologians thought so much about their “fulfilment” and “identity”, liked to disagree with a saint who walked, as they thought, with St. Paul the apostle³.

In much the same way Aquinas will contort himself at times to agree with St. Augustine of Hippo when it would have been better to say “I don’t think we quite agree”, because while their broad outlook and philosophy is the same, their systems differ in important detail. In the analysis of the knowledge of God by grace, your humble servant much prefers the general approach and thought of Augustine and the Franciscan school to that of St. Thomas—a comment which is neither here nor there! The pseudo-Denis as he is called is a mystic in thought and in writing. He emphasizes too heavily our “nescience” of God even in the order of grace, but he does not deny that somehow or other we do truly know Him and love Him for real. As for St. Thomas, however polite he may be in making revered authorities agree with him, he is himself the clearest of teachers⁴. Most rarely is there any doubt about what he means to say.

By Their Fruits You Shall Know Men

If anyone has a doubt of the actual opinion of St. Thomas concerning whether God can be truly known and loved for real and as person, let them read him on “love” and “delight in the loved” (*dilectio*), and on our relationship to God in contemplation and the contemplative state. Let them read the Mass of Corpus Christi, most of which he composed, and if available the magnificent readings for the suppressed octave of that feast. Then there are his hymns, noblest

of all perhaps the "*Lauda Sion Salvatorem*". Men don't, as a matter of psychology, write like that unless they have experienced the majesty, love, and joy which inspires their muse as "*Him*" not as "something way up there".

One major reason for the false emphasis upon our nescience of God especially among older men, is that many lost their way, their certainties, and even their faith, in the post-conciliar turmoil twenty five years ago. They lost their prayer life and personal communion with God. If you spend your life in a position of constant deliberate dissent from the solemn doctrine of the Church, and if in private conversation you teach the young to dissent and to sneer at the person of the Vicar of Christ, *you are certainly not going to know God in wisdom, nor possess Him in love. You are going simply to be an empty old husk.* The metaphor is taken from hazel nuts. The outside can be full, rounded and plump. When you crack it, it may yield a luscious fruit. It may also yield a dried up sliver of husk.

Theology is not a science, not in a primary sense. Theology is the knowledge of God in the communion of true wisdom and the possession of God in the love that cleaves to the good. A condition of this love, but not the experience itself lies in Christ's admonition, "he that loves me, keeps my commandments". (John 14:23). That is why one is so fond of St. Augustine⁵. *The Confessions* is the easily available title of his search for God in love and his finding of him, but it breathes in comments and asides in all his works. For him, greatest doctor of the Western Church, his theology of Christ is so obviously a relationship learned as person from person.

The Degrees of Being: Their Union in Christ

The most important principle in Scholastic and especially in St. Thomas' philosophy is that of the *analogia entis*, that reality or being is recognised and spoken of not in a univocal meaning, nor in an equivocal meaning, but in an analogous (more correctly an analogical) meaning. If "being" has exactly the same sense and meaning whenever we use the word, we end up at pantheism. In that case we are all self-conscious expressions of God, and God in us and in the creation is still "becoming" and formalising himself. No clear knowledge of such a Godly "nature" is possible. If being or "the real" is an equivocal notion, then there is no relation between what it means in us and in God. The gap is too great to bridge. To this position we

come if we accept too literally the statement that “God is the totally other”. The concept of the analogy of being or existence recognises that there are *degrees of being*, of reality in itself. Even when we say the word “being” or “thing” and apply it to an atom, a stone, a worm, an ape, a man, an angel, or to God, we recognise differing degrees of proportion, and differing degrees of intrinsic greatness in existence of all these things. All that is made by God is one “family” if you like. The most magnificent expression of this teaching is in St. Paul to the Colossians (Col I: 15-20) in which he names Christ as holding the primacy in all the degrees of being and over all the works of God and of man, and in which he states that in Christ, *God and Man, all things do cohere together*. In this recognition, all things have come out from a transcendent and personal God, and all go back to Him in differing degrees of recognition and of service according to their different and intrinsic degrees of likeness to the Divine Being, through which their own is known and conceived⁶. That “divine being” or nature is God in the Person of *The Eternal Word*. All things were made by Him, through Him, and for Him.

The purely material creation can respond to God not by personal knowing and loving in possession, but only by the very process of being what they are and in the round of their sinless, material life, in which they witness to the reality of God and the ordered wisdom of God, and of which they are the most humble manifestation. It is written in the wisdom of Solomon: *“The Spirit of the Lord has filled the orb of the earth, and that (earth) which contains all things, has knowledge of His voice”* (Wisdom. 1:7). Here too, is the basis for that notion of a Unity-Law of Control and Direction, in all the works of God. It is the recognition that in God all degrees of creation and being do “cohere together” in the communion of one harmonious whole.

Personal and Public Revelation of God

In the spiritual creation, that of angels and men, this recognition of the analogy or similitude in the natures of beings means that there is between us and God a real, an intrinsic link. We are really and formally made “in his image and likeness”. We are indeed “his offspring”, and we can, if He wills it, know Him as He is and in his own nature. It means that here on earth we can know him in possession. We call this knowledge “faith”. It has an external aspect in public

revelation and an *internal* aspect in which it relates to a degree of “understanding” of the nature of God and of the truth and right expression of his works. In this sense it is the virtue of wisdom, the interior savouring in the intellect enlightened by grace of both the mind of God and the coherence or “orthodoxy” of divine truth. The relationship to God, in the real, historic order in which we men have *always* been related to him, means that faith, savoured as wisdom, prompts in us through the will, the love of God in truth and in possession.

This is love of God as *person*, real love and experience. The very first degree of it is a most basic sense of peace in the meaning of life and the certainty of purpose in human existence. It means a lot more than a basic peace of conscience. In the sense in which Christ used it to the apostles “my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives do I give unto you (John 14.27). The Hebrew expression and its meaning conveys also love with joy, and joy in belonging. It can grow into the love of God which spills over from the experience of the soul into a strange effect upon the body—the ecstasies of the saints, the stigmata of St. Francis and, one thinks, of Padre Pio.

I Believe or “One does feel?”

When St. Thomas Aquinas insists that the concept “being” or “the real” is spoken and thought in degrees of depth of nature, but always with an intrinsic proportion and linkage one degree to another, all the way up to God, who is known as HE WHO IS, the saint is certainly right from the evidence of all history⁷. God has dominated history as the principle of ultimate truth, goodness, moral harmony and sheer beauty. It is the *temple* which has been the centre of beauty and the expression of the wonderful in human social life and belonging. It is the *divine* which has inspired the most noble in art, literature, music and drama. In this respect *liturgy* is, and should be in all its aspects, the most beautiful and sacral representation of the communion between the human and the divine. It is, especially in the Mass, the highest form of *drama* in the communion of the divine and the human. Can we always say that it is so? Even in childrens’ Masses and in youth Masses it should be Christ centred, and not “us” centred; can we say it always is so?

If St. Thomas were not right in his teaching that *being* differs by intrinsic proportions of depth, and also is linked by the same proportionality to each other and to God, then demonstrating the existence of God would depend in us not on the intelligence, but only on the inner feeling, on a merely subjective “faith” or fideism. This approach is very popular today. Religious teaching in schools presumes “The Father”, it does not prove first that He exists. This subjectivism has ruined Catholic catechetics for a quarter of a century now. It comes about when soul and body are identified as one energy, or one process, as by Teilhard de Chardin and this writer would say, also Karl Rahner. This approach inevitably leads to agnosticism, and whatever qualifications are made, in the end, to quote the late Mgr Ronnie Knox, we “have changed the *I believe to One does feel.*”

The Flesh for the Spirit and both for Christ

Let us come to the heart of the matter. What *is* the relationship between the body and the soul. First, it is wrong to look upon the soul as made simply to control and direct the body, to “look after it” so to say, because the brain of man is a matter-energy formula that needs the soul and is unintelligible in nature without it (see *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* p.81). This statement may be true, but through the spirit the body is meant to be taken up, and ennobled in the order of the spiritual. This is the whole meaning and majesty of the Incarnation of God in Christ, and why we must place the Incarnation in its meaning not at the Fall, but at the meaning and purpose of the Universe itself. The body is not made to be a burden and a nuisance to the spirit. It is the effect of Original Sin which has brought something of this truly into the relationship of the body to the spirit (Romans 7:13-25).

The soul has its own proper powers, superior to the powers and senses of the body. It is through these powers of the intellect and will which define the spiritual substance that we do, even in this life, come to the partial but real inner “knowing” of God, and the partial but real “love” of God. Man is a union and communion of matter and spirit, but these are distinct energies of being. The spirit cannot evolve from or with matter. The senses of the body, and the word read, spoken or thought, these can and do prompt the soul to union with God through the powers of the soul, for man is a unity in nature. From the same unity, the direct action of God

upon the substance of the soul can, and often does exalt the body in the spiritual joy of God known and savoured.

In this communion with God in grace, to quote from memory a quaint phrase from St. John of the Cross: “both constituents of the human person feed on God from their own separate plates”. But the experience is *one* in the one personality of man. It is through the superior powers, proper to the soul, and not dependent intrinsically upon the body for act, that after death and before the final restoration, we may hope to enjoy the blessed possession of God as He Is”, as “co-sharers of the divine nature”. It is within these powers of the soul, the only true intellectual and volitive powers in human nature, that the Godhead itself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comes *to indwell* in the communion of grace, according to the explicit teaching of Christ and of the Church⁸. How this can be without some sort of communion in knowing and in love, simply does not, at least to this writer, appear.

Mystics Who Have Mapped “The Way”

We cannot ignore the explicit teaching of the Fathers of the Church in this matter, nor particularly of the two greatest and most easily available of the canonized mystics of the Reformation period, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa of Avila. It is for their teaching on the degrees of the communion of the soul with God in grace, and the continuity of that knowing and loving into the beatific possession, that they are both declared “doctors” or teachers of the Church. They are not infallible, but they do have very great authority. In the prayer of quiet for instance, in that higher degree of contemplative union in which the agony of the “dark night” of purgation is either not present or is suspended, a man or woman will find no desire to commune with God through “discursive” meditation, but will rest simply in the happy possession of “Him”. Yet, if the need of others should call for sermon or exposition, then “words, similes and metaphors will pour forth with greater abundance and more certainty of conviction” according to St. John of the Cross. In this we understand how an apparently “nameless” but sweet savouring of God as wisdom, through the interior virtue of faith contains and prompts all the knowledge which we strive to express by words and pictures, or what in technical scholastic philosophy would be called the “*species expressa*” of sense data.

One could suggest that this supports St. Thomas Aquinas' theory of the "analogy of the degrees of being and reality" and the "linkage" between them, and does more. It implies that between this inner wordless possession in spiritual joy and the outpouring of words in perhaps beautiful similes, there is also a *natural proportion*, so that in their own order as matter serving the spirit in man, these words and metaphors have a genuine similarity, intrinsically in their own order, to the simple union of the spirit. If it were not so, how would we explain the union and communion of man as one nature? If it were not so, what authority and intrinsic truth would be contained in the parables of Jesus Christ, especially those from St. John's Gospel, which portray the intimate, inner union of man with God? Such parables as the Vine and Branches, the Good Shepherd, or even the relationship of the body of Christ to his divinity, given to us as "the Bread of Life"? Whatever the testimony of reliable mystic saints to the reality of God known in peace and love, there can be few statements more explicit or more shattering than Aquinas himself in this matter, in which he says of personal sanctifying grace that: *"it is nothing other than a certain participation of the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature, and can be caused by none other than God"*⁹.

God the 'Energy' of the Soul: Grace as Response of 'Life'

There is an enormous volume of writing upon the nature of grace. Shall we say starkly that it is that inner response of the soul through intellect and will, which prompts, at the divine communing, the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The sunshine is the natural life-energy of the bough that bursts into flower and fruit in the springtime on earth. In that "environment" it lives, moves, and has its being. In the terms of sharing in his own divine life, God alone is the proper and the only possible life-energy of the created spirit, whether angel or man. God is *our* "environment". In Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28). God is the Sun, the Day-Star from on high who has visited us (Luke 1:78). In the person of Jesus Christ, God has said of Himself that "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and again, "I am come that they may have life and have it the more abundantly" (John 14:6 and 10:10). God is the as the sun. On earth, even in the life of grace his Fullness overwhelms us, we do not compass it. Yet, God's

“sunshine” could be called the ray of participation, the real possession of his being in which the soul does bathe. This degree, like our earthly sunshine, differs in degrees of life-energy according to our response, just as earth’s sunshine differs according to favoured latitudes and positions.

“The Bread of Life”

The response of man’s spirit and whole person to God, like the setting of the blossom on the bough, is a growing in real life, a deepening in God. The virtues and the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the true harvest of the soul. Christ’s own analogy is similar— the Vine and the branches— except that as the Vine he expresses not the office of the Godhead alone to the created spirit, but the office also of his manhood to us through the divine nature. This office is one with Christ’s relationship as *Bread of Life*. Thus we live in and by Him body and soul, and the whole man is “raised up” again at the last day.

In the order of the Incarnation¹⁰ of God we perceive how, in the nature of mankind, body and soul, sense and spirit are linked in a unity of comprehension of God and fulfilment in God. The words and the sacraments of Christ effect what they signify in the body and also in the spirit. The dual energies, material and spiritual, of man’s being receives understanding and love in its own formality. The body, in its sensory imagery and expression, *expresses faithfully* like the sacraments of the Church, in a unity of symbolism, the inner communion of God upon man as a unity of body and soul. This writer at least sees no way of expressing this order of creation, which is in fact the order of the Incarnation of God, and of the action of God in the sacrament, except through the philosophy and theology of Aquinas. It means that the soul, through the data of sense, can faithfully express the simple, higher possession of God in the inner man, and that God the purest of spirits, HE WHO IS, can faithfully reveal Himself and be truly “grasped” by us in the flesh and in the spirit in the revelation of The Word and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Testimony of Mystic Saints

Dare one suggest that there is no need to say that God creates any sort of spiritual

“representative impression” (*species impressa*) within the soul in the order of grace. The soul itself can well be the limiting principle which makes it possible to join itself to God, and yet by its limitations be unable at first either to know Him as he is, or even to possess him to that degree at which deliberate sin becomes morally impossible. Aquinas himself, and more expressly St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila¹¹ imply that as the soul develops in likeness to God through grace, in its very being, that concupiscence is bound, and can even die out. In any case, as the “two flames become one Flame” the affection for that which is contrary to God’s perfection dies in the will, and becomes distasteful.

St. John of the Cross, in his degrees of love, through the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive way; St. Teresa through the imagery of the Interior Castle, in the centre of which the King dwells in his own regal state, express a continuity of process in which the limiting factor to fullness is the created spirit itself, and the fullness of which is the culmination of that process into blessedness when the web of the body (which must rise again, remade without the innate tendency to disobedience implanted by Original Sin) is cut from the transformed spirit.

The Soul as Image of the Trinity

Finally, this writer would like to express a leaning to Augustine rather than to Thomas, in being unable to accept the doctrine of Aquinas that in the possession of beatitude the intellect is superior to the will in the creature. Neither however is the will superior to the intellect. It is a matter of philosophy, and has never been expressed in FAITH (for alas there is no market at all for pure philosophy in our readership!) but it seems that we need to develop our concept of the intellect and will as merely “faculties” of the soul. They should be defined rather as integrating aspects of the very substance of the angel or of the soul of man. The possession of God in beatitude is more than “vision”, it is joy proceeding from vision, and the degree of the joy is determined in proportion to the fullness of the wisdom, of the intellectual vision. In the same way, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the “vision” between the Father knowing and the Son known. The Holy Spirit who proceeds according to will, or “love” is in no way inferior to, or superior to the Father and the Son.

One is saying that the Trinity is of the simple essence of God, and we are made to that image of the Trinity which in God is his “natural” Being. The intellect and will proceed within our substance by a direct analogy with the being of God, and the consequences need to be rethought and Christian philosophy developed a little here. It will make of course all sorts of delightful controversies about whether or not a “natural” end for the nature of man, given that man’s nature expresses the God who is the Supernature by definition, is conceivable etc. Alas, such carnal indulgence cannot detain us here. It is enough for us to know that we can know God and love Him for real, person to person, and that His Incarnation is testimony enough to it. “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you, abide in my love... and this is my commandment unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 14:9,12).

“Holy Father, I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their words will believe in Me. May they all be one Father. May they be one in Us as you are in Me and I am in You. So that the world may believe it was you who sent me. I have given them the glory you have given to me, so that they may be one as We are One. With Me in them and You in Me, may they be so completely one that the world will realise that it was you who sent me, and that I have loved them even as You have loved Me” (John 17:19-23). So, the sweet union and communion of God with men that the disciples knew in their lives on earth, belongs also to us, in the prayer of Christ. Let us confess that love and abide in that love.

NOTES

¹ Aquinas, Knowledge of God: 1. QQ6 to 13 inc.

² First Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Concerning The Catholic Faith [3001 Dz 1782]).

³ The Divine Names: 1. Q 13

⁴ The Loving of God. 2.2. QQ 24 and 28

⁵ St. Augustine: The Confessions; De Trinitate; In Joannem tract. 13

⁶ Aquinas, Delight in God. 1.Q20. 1.2. QQ 23, 25, 26, 28

⁷ Aquinas: Analogy of Being. I.Q 13, art 5; De Veritate, Q1, art 1. De Potentia, Q 7 art 7; Bonaventure:Gilson, Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, c. 7

⁸ Aquinas, Grace, Wisdom, Joy in God: 1. 2. QQ 110,112,115

⁹ Aquinas. 2.2QQ 24, 28, 45. 2. 2. Q 180

¹⁰ Aquinas, Link between The Eucharist and Incarnation: 3. Q79, art 1

¹¹ St. John of the Cross: Allison Peers edition, see Dark Night and Spiritual Canticle; St. Teresa of Avila: Allison Peers edition works, especially, The Way of Perfection and Interior Castles

THE INDIVIDUAL PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Many years ago, on a dusty hillock by Palazzuola, the summer villa of the Venerable English College of Rome, a brother student made a comment which largely passed out of mind, but which has returned to take on more meaning of late. As far as I can see from the Catholic Directory for England and Wales, the same student who must be as time gnarled and woody as myself, is still teaching or counselling at the University of Roma, Basutoland, S. Africa. “The really marvellous thing Slim”, (a college nickname) he said, commenting from the Simple Catechism, “is not that *God* made me, but that God made *me*”. Our parents gave us the body, but not the soul. The spirit is God’s personal cooperation with our parents unto life. He knew and willed it into synthesis of being with the flesh. He made it like Himself in that act of creation which is also an act of election. He elected to make *me*. Tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of years have rolled by since God first breathed the spirit into the fertilised seeds of human flesh. Men and women lived, loved, suffered and died and went to God. We knew nothing about it—not you nor I—they were not *us*. There is no reason of philosophy or theology to presume that the material seed of life, as *this seed*, conditions the type or ‘personality’ of the soul which is co-created into it at the moment of man in the womb of woman. Without going into every nuance of the word “person”—a subject-matter profound in philosophy—it is the soul, God’s unique and direct creation in the divine image, which is the essence of “me” in each and every one of us.

There is a sense true in philosophy in which we are completely human persons and fully “me” only when we receive our bodies back in the resurrection, renewed and glorified upon the pattern of Christ’s own risen flesh. All true, but the saints of God in heaven are very much *persons* in a very full way. Here and now they know and love in the beatific communion of their God “as He is”. We celebrate their feasts, we seek their intercession, they are not pale shades. That is the sense in which one says that the soul, the spirit, makes *me* and the spirit is God’s own gift of *personal* life. God could have made another. I have not been here before, others have. To me they are ‘history’, the past. God’s choice to make me, His call out of nothingness

into being, is a staggering, overwhelming munificence. It is true for *you* as much as for *me*. We have been “lucky in the draw”. There were other possibilities, other “tickets in the drum”, so to speak. God did not draw them all out. For time, and unto eternity, except through my own fault, He has made me “a winner”. It is worth reflecting on. However much you see yourself as a permanent “loser”, in fact God has elected you to be always a winner for time and for eternity. You were elected into being by Him, a son or a daughter for ever. Once you are animated, there are no losers.

Covenant of Life in Christ

We all give the *notional* assent to thoughts such as these. It is harder to make them come home with *areal* assent to the mercies of God. It did not come so fully to this writer until some people, some people suffering very greatly, asked for an article vindicating and explaining the individual providence of God. Is sanctifying grace, our personal “sunshine of the soul”, really and truly a conducting and drawing of God unto Himself in wisdom and in love? The recognition that God made *me*—the accent not on *made* or even on God—suddenly transforms the way you look on all the “faceless” crowd out there. The election into being into *me*, is true for them just as it is for you. They exist by election not by chance. They matter just as you do. They are all your brothers and sisters by an election of God more absolute and unique than the election in communion of flesh by which your parents and theirs called us into being. Suddenly the words “*Our Father who art in heaven*” take on new immediacy, personal bonding, and richer colour. So too, with something of a shudder, do such words of Christ as “in as much as you did it to one of these, the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to *Me*”. My *me* is a share in Christ’s *Me*, Son of God and Son of Man. So is theme of all mankind on earth with me and you. One senses profundities of communion in many such words of Christ which cannot be followed out here.

In our doctrine of marriage, we have superseded the expression ‘*contract*’ with the richer, more personal and familial concept of the ‘*covenant*’. In the same way, one thinks, we can more richly and more truly express the social bonds of justice and love that ought to (but don’t) bind Christian people in society, and all mankind internationally, by discarding the notion of a “social contract” and replacing it with the more intimate, familial notion of a “social covenant”.

For mankind is an extended family, from the Fatherhood of God, and from the flesh of Adam. In the family of salvation and redemption, which ultimately is “the Church”—the revelation of God down the ages from the primal creation of Man—never has been expressed as a social contract. but always as a covenant. That is to say, of a bond which binds from a unity of life and being.

So, in the beginning when Eve is taken out of Adam, but re-joined in a fuller communion of life and being, we have “covenant”. This covenant of life is of its nature, not just in symbol, prophetic of the Church, the People of God and his family, taken out of the decree of the Flesh of Christ to come. To both Adam and to the Christ which he figures belongs the text of the covenant, the mutual belonging: “bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, she shall be wo-man, for she is taken from man” (Gen. 2:23). Human flesh is divided into two sexes, two ministries of life and being, and reunited in a communion, that is to say, a covenant of life, only because Christ is first decreed to come into this order of being as Lord and Saviour. Thus, the nature of Man, and all material creation which climaxes in Man, sings and proclaims its Advent hope in the fact, not just the symbol, of the womb of woman. The womb of woman, the Womb of the Woman clothed with the sun (Rev. 12:1 -6) exists that God, who is to be made “one like us in all things but sin” (Euch. Prayer 4), should find within a creation that is unintelligible without Him, the natural vehicle of his human life—but not of His personhood, which He has always and which is divine. Therefore, Christmastide is the time of the New Covenant in my blood, the communion of God with man, so that we might have life and have it more abundantly. To express this relationship of man to God in the reality of ontology, of the nature of things, not simply in a symbolism of liturgy, the Christ in his flesh is male. Mary, who is the Universe that expects Him and makes Him possible in the flesh, is female. The priesthood of the altar is male, and the Church taken out of the flesh of Christ-to-come and re-joined to Him in the communion of one body (the Mystical Body of Christ) is female. There is a galaxy of profundities, some salvational and some redemptive from sin, contained in Christ’s words: “this Cup is the New Covenant in my blood”—profundities of Christmas time we do not ponder here.

The Agony for our Agonies

We set out to meditate upon the particular, the individual providence of God. We find its

source in the Midnight Mass, the covenant of Life between our spirit and the Spirit of God; the covenant of Life between our flesh and the flesh of God Incarnate. We know that in our communion with God in prayer, and in the taking of the Bread of Life, and drinking of the Blood which is Life-possessing, that we grow and develop by God; that we increase by that inner sap of the soul, which we call the grace of God. Since we live by a covenant of life in God, through his Incarnation into our order of flesh and spirit in one synthesis, can we say something more? Can we say that in our joys we commune in the joys of Christ, in our loving we commune in the loving of Christ, and in our sorrows we commune with the sorrows of Christ? And all of this because we are the family of God the Father, and, as sons and daughters of God, the fruit of the covenant of the flesh and the Spirit expressed for us in the Incarnation, in the Christmas gift of Christ? I think we can say all of this, and that—in a less explicit, less coherent recognition—the ordinary man and woman in the street, the lapsed, and the devout, all sense it too. For they pack the House of God at the midnight Mass in a way they pack it at no other time of the Church's life and year.

We know that we can identify with Christ in his joys and ours, and in his sorrows and ours. For those who suffer greatly, for whom life from the womb and beyond has been a rosary of sorrowful mysteries and little else, can we say more even than that? Can we say that in the agony in the Garden, in the sweat of blood, in that total self-giving unto salvation and redemption, that Christ sorrowed not only with your sorrow, but *because* of your sorrow? The desolate soul looks for a breast on which to sorrow, even when doubting that there is any individual providence of God. In desolation the soul seeks a kindred spirit for consolation of love; the flesh seeks a breast to cradle the head and a hand to caress. When we console the desolate, we sorrow for their sorrow. It would not be love if we did not. Can we say of the many-faceted love and agony of Christ expressed in his sweat of blood, (a text which this writer accepts from the evidence of the most ancient writings of the early Church) that in the agony of Christ was not only sorrow for sin, but agony of communion, personal communion, in love for those who through history would be desolate in sorrow? Did Jesus agonize with you, for your pain? It would be a reasonable development from the theology behind the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It would follow naturally from a theology which believes that in the

agony at Gethsemane, Jesus knew, loved, and sorrowed in reparation for each individual man and woman through history. Such is the power of that unique human soul, linked in being to the Person of God the Son. His consolation for your personal anguish could be part of that individual saving and redeeming providence of God: your chalice was part of His drinking. At the root of human suffering, whether chronic or suddenly come upon us, there can be found for those who humbly seek God and enter within themselves, a certain peace in the ultimate depths of the spirit. This is the consolation of God, and as part of his particular providence it leads on, and up, and out of misery, and hate, and despair. It is true for the individual as well as for the community of the Church that: “my peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give unto you” (John 14:27). Life is not over when sweet homely loves and expectations are shattered. From that centre of peace we will find the providence of God leading on to new vistas. There are lives that depend on us to be reassured and comforted, new works for the Church, new friendships to be found in an apostolic love. New avenues open when sin closes those which were our expectation by right.

St. Augustine as “Everyman”

The providence of God cannot take away the Cross. He told us that it could not and would not. We must take up the Cross and walk with Him. We must have faith, not be runaways, or seek our consolation in forbidden fields. Jesus cannot take away the pain of this inner dying, of human misery, but as Jesus through obedience rose again to newness of life, so can we rise with Him to new life, new loves, new works, and new joys. God is never defeated in us unless we capitulate to ourselves and desert Him. It may be forgivable failure, but it is failure and a lie nevertheless. Look upon the crucifix and see the handiwork of sin that now crucifies you. Then you will not say: “why has God done this to me?” He didn’t. This is part of the Mystery of Iniquity, of sinful freewill in angels and in men. In the latter ages this iniquity will more greatly abound, such that the charity of many will grow cold to God and to the neighbour (Matt. 24:12). As the power of man grows, and the wealth, and the ability to lust irresponsibly grows, so will the decadence and the cruelty of man to man. We could be in those times now.

In pondering the individual providence of God we cannot speak of all, the ambit **is** too vast. It calls for books, not articles. There **is** one writer whose autobiography **is** a magnificent compendium of the providence of God, and he should be read with this nuance in mind. *The Confessions of St. Augustine* are just such a meditation on the personal providence of God, and sing the praise and joy of a great soul, once lost, who looked back across the arches of the years. It may seem strange that in approaching such a theme, we started from the painful mysteries of life, and not the joyful. But then, it was from the angle of pain that the request to talk of grace and providence came. It comes to many others from that aspect, and not from the joys of life. No true servant of God will ever escape the Cross. Goodness gives nobility of soul, and nobility of soul stands out as a certain radiance, visible even in the faces of men and women—yes, and of good children too. It irks the weak, the sinful, and the arrogant. It irks the secret enemies of God, or at least of God’s truth and God’s integrity. It irks even before it acts or refuses to conform to the worldly mind. It irks just because of what it is. When Moses came down from the mountain his face was “horned” (Ex. 34:29), that is to say, it radiated beauty, power, and majesty. The taper that lit that light was the face of God. True goodness, which goes by the name of “justice” or “integrity” in the scriptures, glows in the face and bearing of men and women with something of that power. During a Retreat, during things like Faith Youth Summer Session, one can see that light shine more visibly in young faces (for the young face is more motile) like sunshine bursting through a cloud. Would that the clouds—the greeds, the follies, and the heedlessness—never returned!

Power in proportion to Holiness

The providence of God needs that impact of our personality to bring in the Kingdom to the brothers and sisters who do not know God, or, knowing, dismiss “religion and all that”, or “churchiness” as I have heard it called. The angels of God needed *the Word*, and were made and beatified through the Eternal Word in the love who is the Holy Spirit. When God knit flesh to spirit, He needed, and we needed, *the Word made Flesh*, and we are made and beatified through Him in the same Holy Spirit. The providence of God, if there is to be any flowering of human beauty at all upon this fallen earth, needs our flesh as part of the fullness of the

economy which gives us Christ. The word made flesh in ourselves, in all that we know, do, love, and are—this works with God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to plant, and to water, that God may give the increase (I. Cor. 3:6-9), for only God gives the increase from within the soul of man or woman. This writer does not know exactly why, but the whole of history proclaims that the “great works” which Jesus promised that his disciples would perform when He returned to the Father, are as truly *great works*, found only in the saints. The good and the fervent bear fruit, and the fruit is visible, but the men and women who changed the fortunes of the Church and of mankind are the very few—the saints. It is rash to judge any before they die, and even then until the Church concurs, but even in a non-Catholic school when pupils are asked to name “great spirits” of this age, as such a pupil lately said to me. “it is always safe to nominate Mother Teresa”. The providence of God was incarnate as Man. The providence of God is still incarnate in men. The beauty that we are, is the full “draw” of the Father on the minds and hearts of our brothers and sisters. Many have been the providences of God for us, and maybe we hardly noticed at the time. We are rivulets of the providence of God in our time, and it is a vocation and a call we must answer with faith and with love.

The earth of itself bears fruit

We have speculated that perhaps in the agony in the Garden of Olives Jesus did more than identify with our human griefs, but entered into them and communed with them as individually as well as collectively when He worked the climax of our Redemption. Could we think the same for the joys and the loves of Christ? Could He have joyed in our personal joys and been happy by a communion of his human soul in our good loves and noble decisions? That this could have been so on earth, one is less sure. Certainly, the good decisions for God, which are, especially when we look back, cardinal moments of our personal providence, both gave us joy and holy peace in the presence of God. As such they were, and when they happen, they are known to Jesus, for the joy and love we experience is a communion with the joy of the Holy Spirit. One thinks of the day when a certain boy of eleven resolved to get up and go to daily Mass before school. It was certainly, looking back, a cardinal moment of God’s providence in life. The very time on the town hall clock is remembered. There was certainly an experience of joy, and love

of God, and of the great importance of the decision. He ran straight back down the garden to tell mummy! Jesus of course, was not there to tell. Certainly, God joys in our joys, and loves in our noble loves. They are worked in grace, and worked expressly by grace. We can offer ourselves and all our works, every moment indeed of the day, waking or sleeping, to the penetration and companionship of that love. We pray that God may work in us at all times, so that *“he should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knows not, for the earth of itself brings forth fruit—first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear”* (Mark 4:27-28). Such communion of our being with the being of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is of the very recognition, existentially speaking, of the providence of God, in the presence of God to our lives.

Living out the emotions of Jesus Christ

The thought that in the Agony in the Garden Jesus, through a soul already in fullest communion with the beatific vision, could have known, loved, sorrowed, and redeemed each and every man and woman as an individual is linked to the climactic nature of his experience, and to the exegetical acceptance both of the sweat of blood, and of *“the angel of God strengthening Him”*. The textual evidence, and the evidence from the very early Fathers and documents is strong (Luke 22:43-44). One does not accept the terse *“omit”* in the footnotes of the Jerusalem version. They don’t say why. The text is missing only in the Egyptian school of manuscripts, for which good reasons can be given. It is a principle of exegesis that the *“difficult”* text, if found in the oldest manuscripts is likely to be the true reading. The significance of the *“angel of God strengthening Him”* cannot, regretfully, detain us now. There does not seem any other indication in the Gospels in which one could think that the human infused knowledge of Jesus could reach in communion of knowledge and love to each and every individual. One must say, however, that there are passages in the Last Supper discourse of St. John which make one wonder, because the love and consolation which is breathed out there upon the Eleven is so intimately true for each and every one of us, and for all the disciples of Christ, until the end of time.

Certainly, we can joy in the joys of Jesus and thank Him in a quick thought of thanksgiving, when we rejoice in the beauty, order, and harmony of all Nature around us. We will not be the first ones to do so. There are a number of “nature psalms” in which the psalmist sings that same theme. My favourite is Psalm 104 (103). Jesus also looked upon the spring flowers of Palestine and rejoiced in the “lilies of the field” and that “not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these” (Matt. 6:28). The communion of the love of God must prompt our friendships and our loves, and be the principle upon which we develop in our loves. There are infinite degrees in our loving, measured by our own communion with God and by the communion with the mind and heart of God of those we love. That is inevitable. God himself loves us in communion the more we love Him in communion. If the love of God—our own personal communion of love—prompts all our friendships and our loves, then it will purify them, mature them, and ennoble them. We will have no intimate loves that cannot be joined with the experienced love of God. The same principle precisely applied to life in marriage will mean that all aspects of love and intimacy will be joined in husband and wife through their mutual inner love of God. The very sacramental grace of their state is to conform them to the love which bound God to the world through the womb of Mary. They would find, living their lives honestly and humbly in such a communion with the actual presence and love of Christ, that mutual love, and a sense of mutual ministry, would now make the teaching of the Church much easier, as an experience of love. The union of the spirit and the tenderness of the flesh could be deeper and purer, and the sheer exigencies of physical desire much less.

Love a Holy Communion

“Unless you become as little children you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God” (Matt. 18:3). Jesus Christ so obviously and so intimately loved His “little ones”. It was not a feature of ancient rabbinical behaviour or emphasis. This love was not because they were little, young, and “sweet”. It was not the love that simply says: “my pet”. It was again a communion of personality. The child loves in simple delight, in wholehearted acceptance, in trusting dependence on the beloved grown up. It is easy to love a good child in the child’s uncomplicated love of you. When this response of love in us, us adults, is similar to the child’s,

born of the love of God and anxious to form further in the child that noble love—the “blade” of life’s harvest—into fuller growth, then we love them in communion with Christ’s love for them. Such love is not a patronage, nor even a benevolence, but a belonging and an experience. In this relationship we become the mind and heart of Christ to them—to love, foster, and prompt to higher knowledge and love of God. Because he or she is psychologically seeking, and dependent, and learning, the child unconsciously admires and seeks to be like the “grown-ups” that most they love. The heart of adult “providence” for children lies in this relationship. It is never a patronage. It is a love sought and given. It plants and waters. God gives the increase. Mothers and fathers would find less difficulty in making the choice between the claims of career and the claims of a child’s need for love and someone at home, if they loved God in that way, responded to their children in that way, and to the trusting need of a whole family in that way. They would be a little poorer, but Catholic family life would be so much richer. Something similar is true for priests and Religious, both men and women. Mums and dads have to be available twenty-four hours a day. The priest also, if he would love and be loved in a relationship that both joys and forms, must be always available. Groups must not be cancelled because of school or summer holidays for members of a group not going away, not if some “want to come”. For the ten-year old, two weeks or a month is almost a lifetime. To want to come is a testimony of their love. We have to be available and always be glad to see our friends. The Church is a family, the title ‘Father’, ‘Mother’, ‘Brother’ or ‘Sister’ is not ornamental, it has to be earned. The young especially do nothing for devoted service; they will give their all for being loved. We are part of God’s covenant of life and being with men. We are not God’s very civil servants.

The Fallow Field

What of the thousands of millions who never have nor can come to full communion with Christ? What of those whose cultures and faiths make it physically impossible to evangelize them in any numbers? They too are under one providence of God. The grace of life which comes to them is from Christ’s fullness, their best and noblest teachings and teachers are looking for fulfilment in the One Teacher who is the Christ. One thinks their seeking for a

perfect truth and certainty in perfect good was part of the grief of God made man in the agony of his Passiontide. All grace which enlightens and sweetens, even within a context not fully true to the revelation in the Eternal Word, is still the “draw” of the Father to the Son. Even short of consummation, its resting in holiness of spirit is the grace of the Holy Spirit. There is only one sort of grace: the grace of Christ. Nobody is saved on earth or joys in God on earth save through the Christ, through the Prayer of the Church and its centre which is the Eucharist. God will make up to them that Bread for which they hungered and never ate to satiety. They are all part of Christ’s victory over sin and death. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice. For them Christ’s prayer is efficacious:” Father, I will that where I am, the men Thou hast given me should be with Me; that they may see my Glory, the Glory I had with Thee before ever the world was made” (John 17:24). It is unwise surely to call these “anonymous Christians”, an ambiguous term that can derogate from the unique authority and unique Salvation of Jesus Christ. There is only One God, and He once Incarnate on earth in the divine person of Jesus Christ. These seekers are within the womb of the Church, she quickens them, loves them, and seeks to give them birth. Whether she can depends so much on us, our generous response to the vocational call of Christ. These are not yet born into the light of day, the light in which “The Day-Star from on high has visited us”. God loves them in the womb of the Church. We love them too. They are brothers and sisters to whom we yearn to give the ‘happy birthday’ of Christmastime joy in Christ’s new covenant with us all: his body and his blood.

See, I am with you all days

We conclude then with the certainty that the grace of God, our inner holy-making grace, is the personal communion of God the Trinity unto our human souls and human bodies, unto the one “me” and “you” that God elected into life and being for all eternity. We will all carry the Cross, some more than others, but this inner grace is the pledge of a truly personal, individual conducting of each and every one of us to God. And God is very merciful. We increase, develop, and mature our joys as—led by that inner grace which is part of the individual providence of God for us, and in us—we enter into the mind and heart of Christ. So, we conform our joys and loves to His, and just possibly, enter into His human joy even when on earth in us. Certainly, at

the right hand of Father, Christ, who is still *human* as well as divine, must joy in our holy joys and love us in our good loves. In the worst of our desolations and heartbreaks, we will never equal His. We will find his consoling peace in personal communion with Him. Since he grieved for all that blasted and disfigured the original intended beauty of The Kingdom, we may well believe that his sorrow for our sorrow is, and was on earth, part of the loving consolation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who grieved for our grieving. So we conclude with the alternative prayer from the ferial Mass occurring as we end this article (Weekday missal: 22nd week of the year):

“Lord God of power and might nothing is good which is against your will, and all is of value that comes from your hand. Place in our hearts a desire to please you and fill our minds with insight into love, so that every thought may grow in wisdom, and all our efforts may be filled with your peace”.

THE DISCIPLE AS DISCLOSER OF GOD

I do not know whether there might be anything in the personal life of John Henry Cardinal Newman which could tell against his eventual canonization as a saint of the Church. For me, one of the things which makes me ask myself 'is this man a saint?' is the clarity and exactitude, together with a deep love, of his vision of God and of the truth concerning God. It comes out in his letters of spiritual direction, especially those written during his troubled years as Superior in his early Oratory. It comes across just as fully in his perception of the mind and meaning of God in the doctrine of the Church.

He had an enormous integrity and a most profound humility of interior spirit, virtues impossible except in a man who lives habitually in the presence of God. As he struggled from a partial understanding of what is the Church of Christ to the fully true vision, we find him bursting into the essential relationship of God to men through which the Church subsists when, in the University Sermons quoted by Dessain in his *John Henry Newman*¹. Newman describes Christian Revelation as "the vision of an object, the self-disclosure of God, which far from being enclosed in the propositions necessary to state it, would not be exhausted by many more".

From there the compass is set for him to say later that to want to find every single doctrine of the Church stated in the scriptures in as many words, is to be a slave to the letter; to forget that the Holy Spirit quickens our understanding of the letter in the One, the Person who is there revealed, and who seeks entry into our own understanding to be possessed and loved. He concludes to the necessity for a principle of the development of doctrine in the Church, a principle constitutional to her structure, the operation of which is prompted, guided, and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit through the ages.

In thinking some untidy thoughts upon the pastoral vocation of the priest, in the context of the pastoral visitation of a Pope who is supremely a great pastoral priest², it is the needle sharp definition of Newman's intuition of what Christianity is that momentarily takes one's breath away and uplifts the heart. For the Christian Revelation is "the self-disclosure of God, the disclosure of an object, the self-disclosure to men of a Person". While this is true of all aspects of being a Christian and all vocation in life, it is especially and more profoundly the principle of all vocation to the Religious life, for men or for women, and so very especially the principle of "the call" to be a priest. It was so when the rich young man ran up to Jesus and asked eagerly what more he should do, was looked upon with love, was told, and went away so very, very sad in his rejection

of the Person who had answered his love with an invitation. It was the same - the self-disclosure of God, the beauty of the being of Jesus Christ—which caused the fishermen among the Twelve to abandon their nets at once, and leave all things to follow Him.

The Spirit Wars With The Flesh

It was the same within the courtyards of the Temple and along the hillsides of Galilee. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; men looked upon, marvelled at, loved, and hated ‘the self-disclosure of God’. When God discloses Himself more and more, and challenges more and more the burgeoning powers of life and youth, we do not respond to Him with ready perception and total, generous love all at once. There is an enormous work of growth of soul to begin and to mature. There is an enormous burden of imperfection, selfishness, and instability to be purged out of our being. When we listen to the criticisms the young make against the Church, her liturgy, the commandment of the Sunday observance etc., we forget this weight in them of dissipation of mind and heart, sheer ungoverned sensuality and goodhearted, petty selfishness. They are not angels, nor paragons of wisdom, because they are young and immature. Tell them the truth about their distractions, their restlessness, their inability and unwillingness to fix the eye of their conscience firmly and fully upon ‘the One Revealed’ in the offering of the Mass, upon the ‘One Disclosed’ especially in the moment of the consecration. There is no need to distract them frantically all through the Mass with pretty little ditties upon the guitar, led prayers and charismatic outbursts, so that the Eucharistic Prayer is not prayed but totally overlaid and buried. There is no need to kill a few moments of precious contemplation of ‘that which we have received’—the union and holy communion with the Person of God made Man disclosed in the Sacrament with film shots and film shorts—as happens with weary consistency and absolute lack of spiritual result all over the diocese and all over the deanery. To one’s knowledge, it wearies and annoys the deepest of the young; it wearies and distracts those in whom the sense of personal vocation is most deep, and from whom—properly taught, prompted, and led—one might hope for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.

It is an appalling fact that nobody is born a Christian; nobody is born with the formed knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. In every age Christ has to be re-evangelised. As Christ mediates God to us in His own Person, so we in a lesser but terribly true sense mediate Christ to others, especially to the young. The wholesale lapsation of our young is in no way surprising, because Christ, as He comes over to them at school, from the parochial lectern, from the youth

gathering, is such a very poor thing. The disclosure of God to the young comes over only with holiness and through holiness. It came once through the personalities of good and humble, deeply devout 'mums' and 'dads' who gave us in the past vocations we did not deserve, in terms of the real quality of the spiritual life of priests and bishops. The vocation of every parent is to mirror Christ, to convey the beam. The vocation of the priest is more stringently to do so. We convey it first as Christ Himself did, by the word; then by things which do not so completely depend upon our own adequacy, by liturgy and sacrament, in which Christ acts as we enact. But, just as importantly—whether we be parent or priest—we convey the beam of the personality of Christ by our personal holiness, that is to say to that degree in which our personality radiates the likeness of Christ, and the 'draw' of Christ, and the attractiveness of Christ. That is why so few saints have achieved so very much, and so very many of the rest of us achieve so little—less than ever to-day.

The Mirroring Of Christ

It is to this reflection of the Person of Christ disclosed and revealed that the young respond, those young who are always seeking and looking and yearning for love and peace. It is for the real Christ they are looking, even when they don't know Him or at first do not recognize Him. Through the recognition of real truth, real goodness, real love, and real wisdom and coherence in God's making of the universe, and His care and provision for us, men and women, boys and girls, come to clarify and affirm that true, full likeness of Christ which dwells in their souls by grace, although without the clarity as yet of doctrine and example. They need the word to clarify the inward devotion, the vague image they have by a basic grace. The word which Incarnates Christ as truly God to them—at home, in the Catholic School, and in church, and in the youth group—that word must come from ourselves. It is a word of revealing, and of the impact of a character i.e. Christ commanding, fulfilling, and challenging. The personality of a parent, and of a teacher, and much more of a priest, must en flesh again Jesus Christ to the child who, knowing and loving God in the inward soul with a vague searching and yearning, is trying to put flesh on that inner image, and words on that inward teaching which exists in the vague response of young thinking and young conscience, towards fulfilment in the good and in the truth. What is so appalling today is the quality of the Christ who is being portrayed. If we would know what sort of Person Christ was, we have indeed the Gospels to go by. Just as importantly we have the Pastoral Letters of the men directly formed by Jesus Christ. What sort of Person do these sources portray, what sort of

doctrine and virtue do they inculcate? The image of Christ that comes across is very clear, quite uncompromising, and totally, shall we say remorselessly holy, noble, and chaste in thought, word and deed. If the immediate sources of the Revelation to men of God in Christ are not sufficient from the Gospels and the Pastoral Epistles, then we have the testament of the first books written by the early Christians. What did they think and teach, for instance, of sex and love, of holiness and of sin? Did they condone divorce, abortion, affairs, fornication, premarital sex? What did the pagans themselves testify concerning the vision of human holiness these witnesses both taught and lived? And finally do we teach, demand, challenge, and proffer the same total nobility of mind and heart, of goodness and of integrity? For the holiness of Christ is also the attractiveness of God tangibly revealed to us. Christ's holiness is the standard of our own, of the achievement of personal growth and maturity through which we find fulfilment because we have become a little more Christlike in our own selves. If this seems a blasphemous thing to say, it is not more terrible than St. Peter's statement, born of his experience on the mount of the Transfiguration, that we, through Christ, are made and become co-sharers of the divine nature.

Can we mediate and convey from our own intrinsic truth through grace, and our own intrinsic goodness through faithfulness to Christ's commandments, that personality of Christ, which alone fulfils the young, and moves and 'draws' them within their secret being? We cannot do so unless, living by the veritable Divinity of Jesus Christ, in spite of all our faults and sins, we radiate the nobility, the truth, and the goodness of the Living God to the young. The young must find God 'revealed' in every age through the generation that rears them. We cannot—priests, teachers, parents—do this thing for them by vague 'horizontal' doctrine, vague aspiration, and a generalised talk about 'loving and caring' for the brethren, which never defines what true love requires and what true love forbids. We cannot evangelise Christ to the young unless there comes across the impact of a personality of whom the men of His own age said: "never did man speak like this man".

Read the Gospels: was there any ambiguity in the moral teaching, the teaching concerning holiness of Jesus Christ? Did His "but I say to you" leave people in any doubt, even when they groaned at His teaching? Did He dissolve or modify the Law and the Prophets, or did He develop only to fulfil with more clarity and perfection in the sense once given? If Christ's word is as much God's word as was the teaching of the Prophets whom He came not to dissolve but to fulfil, then that order of constant witness and wisdom must continue today. Do we teach it, and teaching it show the beauty and the truth even through the difficulty of it? If we do not, we are not giving

men the self-disclosure of God once given in Israel, and we must not be surprised if we fail to hold or to evangelise the young. The theologians of organized dissent (and they are now acting as a corporate body) because they repudiate the solemn doctrine Christ in the Church, dissolve His Divinity as the Self-disclosure of God in Him. If they will not return to their rightful obedience as professing Catholic Christians, they should be made excommunicate and should no longer be tolerated by the episcopate or by the papacy. They perpetuate a civil war in the Body Christ which destroys her Gospel, her family peace and her witness. Above all, they destroy the spiritual lives of the young and the chastity of the young, and of the young marrieds. They destroy and dishearten vocations to the priesthood. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand".

Disclosure of the Mind of God

To the young of the Western world in particular, before Christ can be revealed in the majesty of The Way, The Truth, and The Life, first the very existence of God must be demonstrated and confirmed. Do it through the ethos of the schooling of Western youth which presumes the likelihood of a universe that evolved but can in no way be random, being woven through space and time like a garment without seam. Present the Mind of God, who—made Incarnate for us as Christ—is the One in whom all primacy does dwell in heaven and on earth (Col 1: 15-27). Let Him be the Master of Science, because He formulates every law of matter and of living things. The wisdom that unfolds the development of created being is formulated as One Unity in His Divine Intelligence. Let God (and later in their learning, Jesus Christ) be seen the Master of Maths, and not simply the Master of myth, as most youngsters come to think Him. To do all this we must use a new apologetics, build up a structured philosophy that makes sense of the world and the data of modern knowledge, and integrates that manifold wisdom. We can do it now, but we do not do it in our Catholic schools or seminaries.

From thence, go on to a structured theology of Man, the relationship in him of flesh and spirit, the tragedy and sheer coherence of the doctrine of The Fall, the need and place of Revelation, its meaning and fulfilment in Christ. Let the majesty and coherence of the Divine Mind come across, and with it reveal the majesty, the self-discipline, and the beauty of the Love of God, also revealed in Christ, and offered to us now, offered in every age to the boy and girl who prays before the Tabernacle of the parish church. Let them learn to love as they follow the union and communion of God with men which is the beautiful 'Mystery' of the Mass. For the Mass is indeed The Mystery of Faith in the old Greek sense of the expression, the Sacred Synthesis of all that God

in Christ is to us, and works to us. It is the lasting communion of God with men, the self-disclosure of God given at the climax of His life and work, and given to remain on earth till time does end. We do not teach this way. We do not teach a structured philosophy as did the Fathers and the Schoolmen in their own time, to the children of our own age. We do not relate their philosophy intrinsically to the science of our age, and use it to spike the very guns of Atheism and Materialism falsely built upon the sciences of Nature and the thesis of the evolution of matter. There is no way in which Atheism can survive against a well conceived Apologetics of the existence of God, that uses the modern sciences, as is becoming more and more obvious to scientists themselves—as recent controversy in magazines and serious newspapers like *The Times* has recently intimated. Evangelize the Divinity of Christ through it. Don't be afraid of it or run away from it.

Disclosure Of The Heart of God

To Evangelise Christ as given for us—the self-disclosure of God knowing, God providing, God saving, and God loving—is to evangelize a new creation in grace which is even more structured and full of unfolding, definite, and beautiful teaching than would be the New Apologetics for which we have asked. It must be more magnificent, more magisterial, and more fulfilling in possession because it concerns the knowing and loving of God directly. It concerns the self-disclosure of God given in Jesus Christ. Theology is not a science, and here one would disagree respectfully with men as brilliant and orthodox as the late Cardinal Daniélou. Theology is not knowledge *about* God, but knowledge *of* God and the things of God. It may be vastly aided by the sciences, and especially the 'sacred sciences' like biblical study etc., but in its essentials theology is the disclosure of God known personally in love, known through Councils and the life of the Church, known through her magisterium, her liturgy, her sacraments, her day by day profession of the Lord. Perhaps that is why the only theologians anybody ever bothers to read long after their death, are the saints or the near saints, because their configuration to the personality of God revealed in Christ gave depth, insight, full truth, and the warmth of joy to their theology. It is easy to write with joy and with authority about one who is supremely loved. Therefore there is no real distinction between Catechesis and Pastoral Theology, for all the Fathers wrote a very pastoral theology even when they were most erudite. St. Augustine for instance, in the Confessions, is always praying, exclaiming, and addressing God even when he is arguing about the mysteries of God!

Catechesis, as it discloses God to the people and to the young who sit at your feet, is the only pastoral theology that matters. Pastoral theology is much more than the tiresome repetition about how to get oneself across to the people, and how I handle the visiting of the sick, the organisations of the parish and rather difficult types in the parish. It is much more than a course on 'Youthgathers', 'folk-masses', all night vigils and other chromium plated accessories of the spiritual life today. Pastoral Theology is the disclosure of God to the young, a disclosure leading to their knowledge of Him and their personal loving of Him. It can run deep to fathomless depths. It is interesting to observe that all the theology

St. Paul ever wrote was to very mixed congregations, intellectually speaking, and it was all Pastoral Theology. Yet even now we are still plumbing new depths of insight into the meanings of St. Paul. The only theologians who are read long after they are dead are those who wrote with a pastoral, not a scientific intent. Cardinal Newman is read and appreciated more and more as the years pass. Somehow, I don't think that Karl Rahner is set for the same happy fate, which underlines the difference between 'scientific' theology and the theology which is the living and loving disclosure of God. To disclose God to the people is the office of a priest and yet more the office of a bishop. Teach Christ in His majesty; give the full doctrine of the Church with clarity and love, and we will make faithful Christians, and see a surge of vocations to the priesthood. However, the family of God is a family. It lives through unity and peace, good order, good teaching and good example. Every good mother knows that her sons and daughters have their own share of inbuilt original sin, and weakness that leads to personal sin. Corruption within the hearth and home cannot be tolerated.

One may offer a homely and rather shocking parable: great hearted and compassionate parents may take in to the family circle an 'uncle' who is neurotic, life-broken, or "missing on a cylinder" in some way. But no compassionate parent can or does tolerate such an 'uncle' if he becomes sexually interested in the children of the home as they grow up. Neither can the fathers of the Church, namely the bishops, nor the Holy Father who is the pope, tolerate a kindred corruption within the family of the Church. One wishes to say that this is what is being weakly tolerated within the Church today: the doctrinal and moral corruption of the young from false theology, and also the starvation of the children of the family, from the failure to teach clear, full, and magisterial doctrine concerning the Church and the meaning of her doctrines of Faith.

The Devastated Vineyard

To travel on holiday through vast tracts of France, Germany, the Low Countries now is a harrowing experience. You witness a dead Church in a dead Christendom. The abandoned, rotting churches tell their priestless tale. Even prosperous little villages, where surely someone could act as at least 'extraordinary minister' and sacristan, and maintain at least the presence of Christ in the tabernacle, with a light to one side, have again and again the same format. The Church is clean, dead, without lights, the Blessed Sacrament, flowers, signs of life. It is the Meeting Hall for a handful on a Sunday. It is the '*vinea derelicta*', the 'devastated vineyard' of the ancient prophets. The Faith is strong and the Faith has priests where the Faith of the real Vatican II is lived, accepted and preached without dilution. Elsewhere, even in the Sees of sophisticated Cardinals and very much publicized bishops, the adage is fulfilled that 'by their fruits you shall know them'. But then the wages of sin is death, whether sin of the flesh or the much more lethal sin of the intellect, the arrogance and yet the smallness of human pride, by which the human person adores itself, its insights, its conceits, and its physical pleasures. The judgement on Humanism, which is the essence of the neo-Modernist heresy, has been given: "Begone Satan! It is written 'The Lord your God shall you adore, Him only shall you serve'." (Matt. 4: 10.) The full person of God, disclosed in Jesus Christ is to be adored. That personality cannot be known and adored except through its own magisterium, not any man's. The magisterium of God is divine in every age, which is why it must live infallibly through the word in the Church, in every age.

Finally, let the priest teach the young what the Mass is. Let him celebrate the Eucharist himself with a peaceful fulfilment, not the distracting 'joy' we groan under, by which men intrude their own personalities constantly through the Mass, but with a quiet savouring of Christ permanently known and loved. The pattern can be found in the whole ethos of the Gospel of St. John. For if the personality of the priest at Mass discloses his identity i.e. that he is an apostle of Christ and finds joy in his mission, then something of the self-disclosure of Jesus Christ will begin to shine through that man into the souls of the young. It is devastatingly clear that most of the young people who come to the Youth Masses etc., which are now a feature in most dioceses and many deaneries, do not have an idea in the world of what the Mass as Sacrifice is, or even of the Mass as sacrament, as the union and communion of the human with the divine, by which men are nourished into God's own life. That is why they make the most absurd suggestions for its liturgical 'improvement'. They suggest more or less a Jesus-vamped pop concert, though they know in their hearts they would never take it seriously or get out of bed for it. It is simply the only sort of

'celebration' they know anything about. They have never been taught the Mass, either as a liturgy, or in its background context.

Eucharist: Recapitulation of the Covenant

Through the *Entrance Antiphon* and the *Confession* bring them first into the presence of God, in a mood of loving Him with quiet attention of mind and heart. When you teach the readings teach them to think not only of the message of that day and season, but to thrill to the whole background meaning of the Scriptures. The permanent background and psychological context of their knowledge is essential to devotion, which is why a structured and not a 'horizontal' catechesis is essential. Show how the Bible is not a book, but the geological 'laying down' so to speak, of layer after layer of teaching, prophecy, revelation concerning God, a tradition growing through history upwards and becoming a great tree. There were hundreds of years between some of the 'chapters' of this book, and nobody knew who would write the next chapter or when. Yet it reads like a book because there is a unity of order, theme, and detailed fulfilment of prophecy. It had God as its abiding author through space and time, and in that fact is the essence of its authority as revelation and as inspiration. Bring them to its fulfilment in Christ, and teach them to be subconsciously aware of the tears and toils, the rejections and the deliverances suffered by the prophets, who prefigure the work and sacrifice of Christ. Then, teach them to take all this up into the Mass itself, which is the summit of Christ's work, the Redemption of Calvary presented again, interceding again, and ever living in the actual Person of Jesus Christ, especially in the 'moment' of the consecration (and *pace* some moderns, there must be a 'moment' of transubstantiation, or the bread remains bread, and does not become Christ in person).

In that self-offering of Christ, teach them the elements of Redemption: the holiness of Christ, His perfect obedience, the total love of the Father and of us, the apology which is in His pain, the total acceptance of the total pain in restoration for us. For the total work of a total witness and a total love must involve the pain, which is an aspect of the love and the price of faithfulness to the love. Let them bring to that self-offering of Christ their own oblation of their life, of mind and of heart, and present it with their own grief and apology for present sins and past unfaithfulness. They can do all of this by following the Eucharistic Prayer to the *Lamb of God* with devotion of heart. Finally, teach them that God dwells by union and communion of being within every heart that seeks Him, at least by an implicit grace. The Eucharist however is God given totally for us, in love, in inner reformation, in acceptance back through Christ, in the interior

nourishment of the personality by grace. Just as there could be no fuller giving of God to men than by the Incarnation, so also there can be no fuller union with God by communion of heart than the reception of Him as He is in Christ, both God and Man, the whole and real Jesus, under the appearances of bread and wine. For He did say "I am the Bread of Life" and what He gives in the Holy Eucharist as sacrament is not a type, not a figure, not a sign, but the reality Itself—Himself. That is what transubstantiation means.

Through Him: With Him: In Him ...

If we can do these things, and teach these things with a full faith and a humble love of Our Lord, as we do so we will fulfil the identity of a priest. For that identity is to convey, above all through the priestly character, the power over the Body and Blood of Christ, the face of Christ, and the mind and heart of Christ. We become vessels of the Self-Disclosure of God. Then, being loved also for ourselves because we are now loved in the Lord who has more fully conveyed Himself through us, we will find ourselves able to turn to the young and invite them to follow Christ themselves, to give Him their whole being and their whole life. And they will gladly respond, at least many of them, because they find now in their own hearts the peace and certainty of God, amid the joy of God loved. Looking upon our own reassurance to them that we are fulfilled, and seeing that fulfilment in the joy of our own vocation and discipleship, they will with good heart give Him everything they possess, and even in a sleazy and hedonistic world, offer themselves with joy as He offered Himself to the Father.

Not long ago, this writer asked a young man who came to say 'he thought he had a vocation to be a priest' what was the factor which drew him? He answered 'the beauty of the life and the work that is done'. He did not mean this writer, but he was referring to a priest he knew and he loved. He had seen in the beauty and goodness of a pure and totally loved priestly character, something of the beauty of Christ, something of the Master of whom no disciple is more than a dim copy. It would happen more often if only we gave them the full Revelation of God in the Church, God's full Self-Disclosure of Himself. We cannot do so unless we believe Him as He is, love Him as He is, teach Him as He is, and experience a joy which others sense and recognise in loyalty to His commandments as they truly are.

¹ Stephen Dessain *John Henry Newman* O.U.P. pp. 323-336

² The visitation of John Paul II to England during the summer of 1983

A MEDITATION FOR CHRIST THE HUMANIST

The Son of Man came from the Father as Heir to the Ages. He came into "his own domain" at the end of the times, the beginning of our scientific and technological times. What better title for Him who is the norm and pinnacle of all that is truly human and truly Humanist than his own preferred title "the Son of Man"? Yet men, "his own", did not understand Him and would not recognize his credentials, but broke his body upon a tree! Through the ages of human history they do the same to the true 'beautiful people', to those whose striving is to live totally by His truth, His love, and His beauty. Yet it is the beauty of God in person that shines through the face of Jesus Christ, and in it the wisdom of the true Humanism is King, even though He reigns from a Cross. The vision of his prophets, seeing Him "coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and majesty" is no lie. The eye of the prophet, fixed to the sweep of God's eternity, sees all things consummated in the Unity of the *Alpha and Omega*; the Son of God, through whom all things proceed in ordered harmony, in whom Incarnate they climax, and in whose Eternity they are called to joy in consummation.

Men shall see Him again, in his physical reality coming in majesty as He prophesied, but not for all will it be "the Great Day of the Lord". The fulfilment of man is measured by the same yardstick as the beginnings of man, before mankind was. The beginnings of man are in the beginnings of the Universe, and those were beginnings poised under law to fulfilment, just like the living matter poised 'under law' that is developmental in the womb. Upon us, the "sons of Man", have the ends of the same One Law descended—the Law that in-formed the first explosion of initial energies, and works in one harmony as the Unity-Law of Control and Direction until it culminates in the Incarnation of God and the last things. We, mankind, sons and daughters of God, we are the meaning of the Law which is not code but creative wisdom. We are its purpose, and in our very being the Law is supremely embodied.

The Truth Will Set You Free

The ends of the Universe which consummate in us are still under law and under *The Law*. The Marxist is right concerning this, wrong in trying to explain it all by materialism alone, and wrong

about that immanent principle of contradiction—of *antithesis* or war—that he puts at the heart of the Law of the ascent of being and its evolution. Teilhard de Chardin is right about the universal far-flung perspective and the cosmic sweep of the Law. He is wrong in his explicit confusion of mind and matter; wrong in his apparent confusion of God and creation; wrong in his scattering of the principle of the Unity-Law (which can only be centred in a transcendent God) over every particle in the Universe. He is wrong again in his failure to understand the meaning of Original Sin, and wrong in his subordination of Christ to the purposes of creation, and to some other “innermost essence” of the Godhead. Teilhard measured Revelation by the scope of his own intellect, not by the Mystery which reveals to intellect but transcends created intelligence. Thus, he made God to the image of Man, rather than Man to the image of God. Perhaps he would not have done this except for an all too human contempt for the littleness of mind in the rulers on earth of the Inheritance of Christ. Whatever their human frailty, (2 Cor. 4:7) the Holy Spirit of Christ is pledged to conserve so much the more carefully against mortal loss the treasure in the earthenware vessels of their human frailty (2. Cor.4:7). God has given no such guarantee to other clay, no matter how high its genius. Permanent, unconscious pride, even if born only out of annoyance, darkens the vision of God’s truth. In love and in wisdom alike, it is true that “the anger of man works not the Justice (i.e. the wholeness and integrity) of God” (James 1:20).

Men do not escape the sovereignty of the Unity-Law, the fashioner of natures and their fulfilments, which is itself fulfilled in the flesh of the Son of Man and Son of God. The Law for Man and the fulfilment for Man stands in the Fullness of Christ. In the beginning it was poised for His coming, and it stands revealed as The Word made flesh, and the Light made flesh, and the Love made flesh, in the crowned face of Christ the Universal King. We do not escape the Law and its proper obedience to the good and the true upon whom the ends of creation history are come. Of the stuff of matter and of the power of spirit, the pattern of our being consummates the line of creative wisdom through which the long history of the Unity-Law of evolution is woven until its climax, when the seamless garment that Christ wears in his body born of Mary is crowned in the wisdom and truth of his Sacred Head not less than the love that is crowned, though with thorns, in his Sacred Heart. Through love and through gift we are the

offspring of God (Acts 17:28) and our being is not made to any other law and providence than that One Law of One Economy of Creation which is poised in the first flash of ordered energies, and which passes over with the creation of man into the "Law and the Prophets," and culminates in the Messiah of the ages. This is no Law of force, fear, or cold sanctions of legalism. This is the Law, running through the whole economy of God by which He poises every nature according to a wisdom that defines what is its good and what is its true. Only the spiritual creature can defy God's universal Law of good. To disobey this Law brings in, even in innocent ignorance, its own inner grief of recoil. To flaunt it is distortion, loss, and disease of body and of spirit.

In Him We Live and Move and Have Our Being

For we are the offspring of God through Christ, in the beginning of the world, in the beginning of the Universe. All was predestined to climax in us, and in Jesus for us. He is the measure of our wholeness who is the measure of our holiness. Through Him whose Mind poised the universe and flung it over space and time, we have become heirs to the long ages of creation. In this day and hour, full of the knowledge that first filled the Mind of the Word, we are demanding of God the title deeds of our majority. According to the very text of Genesis (Gen. 1:28) were we not born to be lords and rulers in the House of Creation? Heirs we may be, but prodigals and wastrels we may not be. We inherit an Economy, and we do not escape the Law through which the whole Equation of Creation, of which we are an intrinsic part, is poised in most delicate balance and proportion. Come fully of age in a time of scientific pride and power, we are still *under the Law*; not the legal Law given in shadow in Moses until the Heir of all things should come, but the Law of substance that defines our life in truth, in goodness, in our just obedience, and in our joy of communion in God. For just as the 'Law', as it works in creation for material things and material life, works through the 'environment' by which every nature ministers life and law to every other under God, so for us men the Personal Being of God is our Way, our Truth, and our Life. At the peak which is mankind, the Unity-Law within which creation is poised is made Personal and Enfleshed in God the Eternal Word. God then, is made for us 'the environment' of Man. In Him we live and move and have our being. Jesus Christ is

the Law of our life and nature, for we alone are made to the likeness of God. This is *The Law* which must be rightly understood, studied, and lived by the philosopher of Science before he can, as a true humanist, organise the use of living and non-living things around the destinies of Man and the world in which men live.

If the material creation is not used and organised by Man in correct relationship to this ultimate Law—i.e. the nature of Man in its due obedience of truth to the nature of God—then the upward surge of the higher development of Man, such as the perfection of the individual and of human society through the fullness of God’s truth and grace, is not possible. Anything else subordinates Man and the community of men to the level of lust and greed, or to the warped vision forward of human arrogance. This is the philosophic and scientific crucifixion of Man, in the individual and in human societies. Men crucified the Christ and still do crucify Him. Yet Christ is the only Law and manifestation of the true Humanism and of all that is beautiful in humanity. We cannot escape this decree, either for joy or for destructive misery. God alone defined the true Humanism for Man, and that definition and its law of life is the meaning of the lovely folk hymns which are the carols of Christmas time. The Law of good that framed the universe, lies at the feet of Mary.

The Vision That Dazzles Youth

It is right in us, most right of all in the young, to see forward a vision splendid of the world which lies today within our power. Youth does well to see forward an end to ignorance and disease, the making the desert bloom again, the conversion of the enormous resources of scientific wealth away from static—and by an analogy one might say ‘lustful’—engines of war, to the renewal of the natural environment of mankind. Through this the young may dream to begin the integration of the nations into one People of all the earth. They will not be pioneers. This was the vision of God in the beginning and in the origins of mankind from the stock of one flesh. From this vision in the mind of God, Christ is called “Son of Man”, and there is an echo of the social hope and vision in the title of the Church when she is named as “The People of God”. This one communion of the people of the earth is the natural consummation of the scientific civilisation, against which the petty nationalisms and racialisms that divide, look like some

reactionary heresy. To such visions and fulfilments let us bend our wills and our backs. Within nations and over nations, there is a true vision of Liberation Theology, *but count the cost, and cost the towering work true*. We have always had the music-makers, the seers of visions, and the dreamers of dreams through the whole course of history. Into the twilight of cultures we can trace the saga of a Homer, the myths of the heroes of ancient peoples, the distant legends of a 'golden age' that perished with lesser men. Nearer our time, the scientific dreams of men as diverse as Voltaire and H.G. Wells are all of one pedigree, and the modern Liberation theologians, both the orthodox and the less reliable, are variants of one species of human hope. Youth must, and youth ought to frame visions of a Brave New World, but as Gorbachev in Russia begins to dismantle the failed structures of seventy years of monolithic, Marxist certainties, for Man's sake—if God is not believed in—seek to know where the dream has failed. For the Myth of Utopia, whether scientific or pre-scientific, is the dashed hope of the dreamer, but not all their dreams were nightmares, and some of the dreams ought to have come true.

The failure derives from the same deep well as does the vision itself: from out of the minds and hearts of men. There is one, universal reason for the dashing of the 'ideal' hope—failure in personal human quality. First, there is the failure within a man's own self, and then failure in the quality of his fellows as well. The reason for the failure is simple, even when the vision is worthy of man and of his strivings, but those who see visions and dream dreams for mankind are not willing to recognise it. It is always the factor left out of their equation. It is because "*not by bread alone does Man live, but by every word that proceeds from out the mouth of God*" (Matt. 4:10). The warning, we remember, was first given by Christ when offered universal kingship by the Father of Lies and of dashed hopes. The warning is for all time. The true Humanist must be carried by prayer and union of obedient love at the breasts of God, and over his years, and hers, draw life and stature from that source. Only so are the ideals of a man correctly conceived.

Only so does personality deepen so that the ideals may be faithfully lived, and not merely conceived. The living of the good and true asks sacrifice and self-renunciation, for all genuine human joy is a purged joy. A living union with God is the beginning of every insight that will

serve the brethren. The same union with God is the source within which inevitable errors are recognised, and achievement attained in maturity.

The Quality Of Love Defined By Truth

Therefore, never so much before as in this age do we need holiness. We need it individually; we need it socially; we need it as the foundation of community. Holiness is the high price of the right and fruitful deployment of our enormous human powers. To rise to the attainable measure of the beauty and happiness with peace on earth, which is in truth within our scope, we must be more intellectual within our very being, more spiritual, that is, more ruled by *the soul*. Our truth must partake of the wisdom of Christ, whose Intellect framed the laws of the universe and of our own being. Within that type of wisdom, the very health of the environment of Nature is also framed.

Our loving must match the wisdom of the framing of our natures. Truth defines the quality of human love. There is no love which is honest to man's nature and conscience except the love that is the response to the truth framed in the face of Christ. To create a culture which is more intellectual in its essentials is not all. The animal in the jungle knows no sin. It is good and right, living within the humble limits of its being. The animalism of man, whether proceeding from crude lack of intelligence, or from his personal exploitation of his animal senses, knows no law; say better, it flaunts and denies 'the Law'. The power of the human soul—unless it is bound within one common wisdom in its judgements and in its seekings with the wisdom of God Incarnate in the Christ—brings upon earth a self-defeating hell in the search for human happiness, and a false focus of the values which define reality itself, especially the reality of man. None is more intellectual or more spiritual in being than Satan; and none more distorted in evil.

To become more intelligent in the manifestation of his nature and society is the vocation of man in the age of universal civilisation —the ape receding, the angel increasing. There are good angels and evil angels. War itself is not the greatest evil for mankind. The gravest of evils are found deep within the spiritual knowings and lovings of a man. The gravest of all sins is *hubris*, the self-deification of pride. The "sin against the Holy Spirit" is the ultimate degree of

the sin of hubris. It is for mankind today—come now with scientific wisdom nearer to the intellect of God in creating, and nearer to the awful power of God in acting—to know in a new depth, and with a new certainty, the utter need for Christ who is God’s wisdom in the world, God’s love in the world, and God’s patient redeeming of the damaged in the world. For *Man* growing ever more terribly powerful with each decade that passes, so obviously beyond the power of all natural law and natural environment within matter to control, must conform himself to the wisdom of God in Christ. Only by so conforming himself can Man deploy his personal wisdom and personal power in beautiful and creative proportion, and not in the destruction and vicious distortion of human nature. If we will talk of ‘Humanism’, we must seek for and recognise our own Personal Law of life. For man is not his own God, and without God he is the tragic fool of all creation.

With God, despite the lesion of sin in human nature, man is brought into that perfect Law of liberty (James 1:25) which does not invoke the freedom of thought and will as a cloak for wantonness of flesh or spirit. *This integration of our personal lives, with that Environer in whom we live, and move, and have our being, is the Holy Communion of God with men of which the Blessed Eucharist—equally as Sacrifice and Sacrament—is not merely the symbol, but the supreme factual expression.* From communion with God there flows peace, and peace of soul is the primary degree of the experienced love of God. Peace deepens into knowing—the love which is the presence of person unto Person. This is indeed more than the first degree of peace, even though the peace of God itself is more than the world can give a man in any of its delights. The love of the brethren flows naturally from a man’s own peace of soul. It is not abstract—not the love of humanity or of ‘Humanism’—but the humble love of people as they are. The love, that is, of “the men Thou gayest to me”. The love of abstraction and ‘isms’ withdraws to lovely places, ordered quiet, and all provided comforts. It pontificates from ivory towers set among dreaming spires concerning the freedoms and fulfilments of Man. Yet, with sophistry as old as the Garden of Eden it hands them over captive and naked to the conceits and cravings which are men’s pain and forge the chains of human bondage.

The Love Transcendent

The love of men which is begotten with God lives with men in fair and foul, perseveres with them through all their follies, their crudities, and their lack of love returned. If such a love is majestically human, it will rise to the highest measure of the Humanism of Christ. It will leave aside father and mother, wife and child, to be fully identified in Fatherhood and in brotherhood with those “men Thou gayest Me”, even as did Christ. This is the deeper love of true Humanism, which transcends the powers of generation and their joys of flesh and spirit, that the very meaning of sexuality in human nature may be the better forwarded in time and for eternity. Thus devoted at the very highest level of love in the company of Christ, men and women enter more freely upon human lives, to transform and to cherish. In a belonging that is unique, they enter upon lives more privately than within the marriage bed, not only to love and to foster, but to struggle and plead, and resist. For our wrestling is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spirits of wickedness in high and intellectual places. The one who will identify with Jesus Christ in the struggle to hold and heal the wounded being of men, and to form them anew into the image of God, should not encumber himself with lesser loves. The more so because these good but lesser loves will cry out against the price that the dedicated disciple must pay in all ages and in all generations for so precious a ransoming.

Therefore, men and women do not go, they are *sent*, and sent they should be. The committal under obedience and its commission from above argues a great love and a more generous self-giving than that which depends upon a will that chooses always as it sees fit, and may withdraw its gift at notice. *Sent* they must be to the decaying wens of industrial man, as well as to the gracious commuter towns set amid mountain and plain. They should go as Christ went, of their own will but with one consuming vocation. Like Him—sent urgently by the Father—they go to fulfil the one work that defines their vocation and their urge to give love. This is that men may be fulfilled in the joy of Christ; that sons and daughters may be brought forth of their souls more fruitfully than of their flesh. Such a love, and such a yearning towards men is *the true Humanism*. It is very realistic. It sits and counts the cost before going to build a tower (Luke 14:28), then it coldly pays, cash down, the whole and bloody price of human guile, rejection, and hatred of the whole truth. It perseveres with the fallen flesh and spirit of man, in season and out of season. This is the Humanism of Christ.

This is why the Church survives the persecutions of men, whatever may have been in any age the follies and the greeds of the spirit and of the flesh of her members and her leaders as these aided the evil and the arrogant to arraign her and to discredit her.

The Bride Who Asks No Divorce

For in ages of holiness and in ages of her decadence the Church does not fail in the first requirement of love. The first requirement of love is not to write books full of insights or to address men over the television screen. Until the end of time men and women will be fostered in personality only by the communion of love which is truly personal. The family alone can give this, and the life from the parish altar. These two are not replaceable. Nothing can transcend the family home, and the faithful love of a man and a woman enduring *for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part*. In Religion too, the first principle of a *fostering* wisdom, of a truth with love, is the natural, physical contact that is “home” in Christ. This is the parish, and the parish priest, the common altar, and the Tabernacle where God dwells among men. It transcends all diversities of culture, class, and colour. It commands that once at least in the week, the children of *One Father* be gathered through the organic structure of a district as a communion of faith, love, and worship around their common brotherhood in Christ, their common sonship and daughterhood in God. From her organic constitution, then, the Church does not fail in the first test of basic love. She lives in the family home of man, wherever mankind is to be found. The sole test of the truth of love, of its lasting goodness, is works—works of the kind that endure the false and vicious in fallen man, as fully as they accept the delightful virtues. Over the years the prides of life, the emptiness of all Atheism, the insincere luxuriating, the selfishness of power reveal the inner nature of the persecuting force, the ‘Humanism’ of the hedonist or the Marxist, those Revolutionaries against God whose heaven was all on earth, was all of reason’, whose ‘reason’ was the brittle crackle of faggots under the pot — all selfishness and easy way out.

Then gradually men revolt, as in Russia today. For Gorbachov is not a prophet of new signs, but an intelligent reader of the signs of his times at home. The young lead the revolt. They rebel not so much against their elders, as against the image of Man the rulers have made

not to the likeness of God, but to their own mean selves. The shallowness of the intellectuals, their personal smallness, their vanity, the cannibalism of sensuality run riot—it all brings in its own heavy slavery and quick decadence without hope. Men recoil with nausea from an evil tree, known in its evil fruit. Then the Church rises again from her ashes, few in numbers but much more humble, much more pure through her pain. She is aware again—until the clinging worldliness of complacent days and easy honours brings back small men and small achievements—of the first priority of her existence on earth; aware again of *“what on earth is the Church for?”*. She can rise again because she did not fail in the one thing necessary: to live in the House of Man, to bring forth in her womb, through Christ, the children of God, to dedicate them as sons and daughters acceptable at font and altar, even when font and altar are secret, persecuted things, or things lonely, despised, and passed by. She did not fail—whether persecution be of force majeure or of debilitating hedonism within society—to take up all she could, to foster them in their thoughts and desires with all a Mother’s care and humble faithfulness. And this—as in the life of so many a mother—is to be grateful for the least, thankful for the good, and overjoyed at the rare gift of the total best. For the Church is a bride and she knows not divorce.

He Who Can, Let Him Take It

As Mother of men, the Church must be firm with her truth and her authority, like any good parent standing against greed and pride, against the pulling down by her children through insolence of will, a hooliganism of the soul, of those values, perspectives, and guiding lines of inner obedience which refine men and redeem her sons and daughters. These truths she has from Christ. No mere man would have given them, nor without an authority that is *divine*, would men long retain them. Most of all, in the world of technological power, man rebels against these truths that define his happiness and purge his very being. And now we have such great power, power to maximize every bodily pleasure, and power to frustrate every responsibility of function. Fire is good, but fire must be gathered and watched over. The forest fire, whether of insolence or of lust, feeds the maw of hell among mankind. For the Church this means to be reviled and bruised in the noblest of her sons and her daughters, the remnant that

make her a loyal 'Mother' of mankind, as if she were the poor, beaten wife of a most dour husband. But she never leaves him. In the life of parishes and of nations, and in all the affairs of men, it means to be embroiled in crudities and quarrels, but never in spirit to yield oneself into it, never to surrender to it when 'the world' goes that way, and above all never to retreat away from the familial life of the people into the air-conditioned peace of the Ivory Tower. Through all things it means for the Church as 'Mother', and for the pastoral bishop, priest, and toiling laity to persevere and to minister, to teach and to form, and never to give in to the bitter loneliness of disillusionment. For it is one who sows and another who reaps. And again: "unless a wheaten seed falling upon the ground does die, itself remains alone. But, if it die, it brings forth much fruit". (John 4:37; 12:24). For since the only true Humanism is vested in the Son of God, and not in Man on his own, victory lies always in resurrection from a crucifixion. That is why all Humanisms die, but the Humanism that is rooted in Christ rises like the phoenix through all human history.

This is a ministry to save much, although to bring in much that is diseased and storm damaged to the harvesting hand of God, for Whom it is precious. It does not despise the whispered return of the deathbed, and has known the peace of joy that blesses the priest as well as the lost sheep in those last few hours. This faithful ministry of the Church in all her 'ministers', lay and sacerdotal, means to bring out from the reign of chaos and concupiscence some unbelievable gold of rare achievement in the few from those masses of mankind who—surging and drifting through the streets of every nation—leave so much, to be desired in what they are and in the disfigured beauty they embody. This is the genuine Humanism, the very heart's blood of cool, considered realism about men. By the same token of the beauty and the disfigurement in men, it is at once Crucifixion and Redemption obtained and a Kingdom given. The price paid in her noblest sons and daughters by "our Holy Mother the Church" is the price God her founder paid in the same coin, the same human betrayals, same sweat, same blood of man. The 'Humanist' of self-styled type who challenges the Church the more noisily today, because he thinks she cannot show the needed synthesis of ancient truth and modern wisdom, should weigh the matter with more care. If his Religion of Man and of reason is to be so very good, it will be perfect when he goes steadfast in faith to this crucifixion of his hopes:

the evil and the greeds that lie at the very heart of man. Sophisticated ladies and bohemian gentlemen of the Media and the television screen, this is harder than crossing oceans in hot-air balloons—whether oceans of water or oceans of waffle. It is harder than handing out free condoms to ‘save’ sex-destroyed boys and girls from the addiction which is killing them. He or she that can take it, let them take it! (Matt 19:12). And if not, know that Jesus Christ alone is the one, great, true Humanist. He is the Hero; and the strong are lonely.

STATES OF LOVE

There will be thoughts and echoes of thoughts in this article which overlap with the title of one five years back, later to appear as a *Faith Pamphlet* under the title of *The Priest and His Loving*. The theme of this article resolves to stretch beyond the priesthood to other basic states of life and love. Nevertheless one hopes and prays that it may be of use to the young priest and the church student. One dares to hope that it may be relevant to the boy who toys with the thought of the priesthood but draws back from the brink; and to the girl who toys with the thought of the life consecrated to God in a love over which Jesus alone has the marital rights, but who draws back from the brink. For our meditation (so very inadequate) turns upon the deep nature of perfect love in the basic states of life and living; upon its fragrance in adolescence, and the ripening fruit of maturity. For we are concerned with chastity as the integrity, the proper fulness of loving; and with chastity as the integration of the human person in our loving. The perfection of love must include chastity. for chastity belongs to the integrity of all love, according to the state and ministry of that loving. The manner and manifestation of this integrity of love must vary with the states of life and of love.

The Virtue of Personal Beauty

The modern world has lost sight of any such vision, and the Christian world with it, including the Catholic world of the West. If we have not totally lost sight of the vision, it is at the most left on the back-burner of our personal and community consciousness. In the Early Church, and for long after in the flowering of monks and nuns, and in the teaching upon married chastity of the Fathers, this vision was so clear in its witness, and so dynamic. In his life on earth as man, and Son of Man, Jesus doesn't dwell widely on chastity as a virtue. Yet, in St. John, and in the Parables he dwells upon the perfect love of God, and upon the perfect integration of our loving into God. When Jesus relates this to chastity he is explicit. The tactics of the pastoral battling with men, as they groan towards God, waver, fall back, and half-heartedly begin again, Our Lord leaves to the apostles. You find the stress on purity, the warning, the scolding, the cajoling, and the loving in encouragement all through the pastoral epistles. It is robustly frequent in St. Paul

above all, but then Paul had the harder task, he was the apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle of the Pagans in their decadence. We need him again. Where Jesus does dwell upon chastity the context of wholeness and beautifulness in loving is explicit. Its quality of beautifulness is important enough to rate inclusion in the Beatitudes, and its blessing is significant: “*Blessed the pure of heart, they shall look upon God*” (Matt. 5:8). This is more than the promise of the vision that beatifies; it is the mutual recognition of sheer beautifulness, of a virginal integrity in the loving. When a girl comes down the aisle radiant in white to her husband (and how few of them actually deserve this lovely significance!) she is not making a negative statement. Chastity is not a negative virtue. She is claiming and stating the perfection. the *integrity*, the physical and the spiritual beautifulness upon the gift of her lifelong love.

The Youthfulness of Innocence

Chastity is more than a virtue with a promise: “they shall look upon God”. Mercy, let us never forget it, is also a virtue with a promise. “they in turn shall have mercy shown to them” and it is worth resolving to be able to *hold* God to it! Chastity is the perfect bloom upon love, and the fragrance too; to be more philosophically precise it is the *integration into love* of the human personality, the health and wholeness of body and soul in their right ordering to each other, and to God who indwells the Christian soul. No abstract teaching is meant, and from another relationship of soul and body an example — in youth we could race across the rough hills and dales of the north country astride Stonyhurst, leading the field in a cross country run as hazardous as a Grand National — keen air grateful upon heaving chest, dappled sun and cloud bursting through salt-wet brows, easy and powerful the curve of the body to the sweep of the Fell — flint wall seen, coming, overjumped — exhilaration, sheer joy, and what beside? The exultation of youth in the full, the flat-out integration of the powers of the body, yields a sense of innocent power, a rejoicing together of flesh and spirit in one, not without at times a conscious, grateful reference back to God. Analogous is the sense in which one calls chastity the *integrity* of love, a love perfect in its functioning and coordination, hale and whole, which unlike the brief bloom of the body of youth, does not fade. In chastity this integrity, or as a coordination this *integration* of flesh and spirit to the recognised wisdom and governance of

God, offers to the athlete of Christ a joy ever more perfect across the years of life. Indeed it is the real secret of a lasting youth, because innocence is the elixir of youthfulness of soul. To be impure is to be handicapped in loving. It is to miss the expansive joy of a wholeness which is also a holiness.

The Radiance of the Holy

To the youngster who agonizes in the craving for sexual pleasure, or for the unchaste release of that craving (and the craving is other than the pleasure) all this may seem exaggerated, even fanciful. Craving there may be, and if the erotic has been grossly indulged even if only with oneself, craving there certainly will be. But, once indulged and now spent, why always the vague disquiet and sense of emptiness; why the reluctance to discuss and often to confess even within the sacrament of Pardon itself? Perhaps because the urgent experience has been confusedly felt as the desecration of love? For love works like this — in all real loving there is a joy in the goodness, the inner beautifulness of the one who is loved. This is more than the attraction of natural beauty or natural temperament. Love, deep love, may exist without physical beauty, as the world understands it. at all. Yet real goodness is never ugly. Where there is inner goodness of personality, nobility and sweetness shine through the flesh. Such people have a certain radiance, and always a smile. There is no such thing as ugly goodness, just as there is no such thing as goodness which is sour. Into this radiance of the holy. all other qualities of nature and of grace are drawn up: in it they are centred, and at the centre is the presence of God in peace. When true lovers meet, and delight in this mutual “draw” and in its centering, then two “centres”, two persons become as one. This unity links to the Centre of centres, God himself, who dwelling in the two, makes them one spirit, and brothers or sisters through Himself. We are not talking now of the union or communion of marriage, but of the union at the heart of all deep Christian love. Love itself does not depend on sex, or arise through sex. This experience of love through grace and goodness bonds between boy and boy, man and man, between boy and girl, man and woman, between girl and girl, woman and woman. Sex enters into a basic and holy state of love, a sacramental state, yes. But love, even as the sheerest joy between two lovers is not bound to sex or the erotic experience. Any human

love which is rich and real and not an infatuation or a selfishness, puts down a tap-root into the soul's communion with God. This communion is a personal joy, known even in its inchoate and least mature beginnings as peace and happiness: *"My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as this world gives, do! give unto you"* (John 14:27). Jesus in the prophecy of sorrow and distress, left this peace to "his own" as a sign of an abiding joy. It is also the abiding joy between those who love Him. In quite young children, in whom one can perceive a more than average awareness of God and of values of the good, this joy of peace and acceptance bubbles over. They love loving the "man of God" (or "the woman of God") and they love being loved in return. Others not so close to God will give you a smile and wave and be off. The love that is *recognised* between those who inwardly love God deeply is something more than childhood happiness. Of course this love and its communion is not mature, **it** can fade, it can be destroyed. Body and soul, men and women, have to mature. In this context one must place the anguish of Christ, and his curse upon those *"who scandalize one of these little ones who believe in Me"* (Matt. 18:6). The rooted acorn has no deep root: the mature oak thrusts its tap-root deep into the wells of God: it can survive both storm and drought.

To the Image of the Trinity

So God is at the centre of the "drawing together" in true love; slightly misquoting Sir Bernard Lovell in an important address at Guildford Cathedral. God is at this "Centre of Immensities". It will be futile to ask what part in this experience is "natural" and what "supernatural" because *"in Him we live and move, and have our being"* (Acts. 17:28) much as we breathe the unseen air in which our planet is immersed. The grace of God anticipates all our beginnings and prompts them. Chastity in our loving and our friendships is the expression of the wisdom and the truth of God which indwells the soul and the body in grace. That "wisdom" proceeding from communion with God at the centre of the soul. (the correct word is "psyche" for it covers body and soul in one) governs and centres the emotions of the spirit and the flesh in God's order of truth and proportion. Out of this integration in wisdom, there proceeds love in peace. the experience of joy. in the loving of another. This writer is sure that in the understanding of our human *persona*, the relationships of God as Unity in Trinity have still to be more fully developed

and applied to man; for man is made to that Image. God the Father's self-contemplation of the beauty of his truth, begets by intellectual generation (so the Church expresses it) the Word of God, the subsistent Wisdom of God: from the Father and the Son, from God's contemplation of Himself there proceeds "as from one principle of breathing forth", the Communion of the Personal Love of God, whom we name the Holy Spirit. The analogy we suggest is that in the loving also of angel or of man, it is the perfection of wisdom, of truth, which measures the perfection of the love which follows as our self-fulfillment in joy. If there is a lie in the truth, there will be a flaw, a greed, or a darkness in the loving. Perfect love as joy is the communion of perfect wisdom and perfect good will.

The Wisdom of Genesis

This writer would not agree that "we have no knowledge in the understanding, except it comes first through the bodily senses". The soul has its own powers as spiritual, and in the deepest knowing and deepest loving as an experience, the directly spiritual powers are the prevailing part, and the power that lasts. matures, and does not fade with the flesh. There is a knowledge (the fruit of grace) welling up within the centre of the soul which overflows in words and images, through the senses. Likewise there is a love of God, proceeding from wisdom ("the word") within the soul in communion with God, which wells up from the spiritual powers of the soul, overflowing in word and in joy also through the senses. There are many degrees in the ascent of love, but all true human love is a joy common to sense and spirit according to their own orders. When love is expressed in caress or embrace, there must be at its centre an inflexible truthfulness in the manner of the loving, an enormous sincerity. (often painful) and a wisdom in the conscience which governs the loving in God's due proportionality, so that any concupiscence which proceeds from *disorder* in the loving is exorcized by obedience to God's truth, and God's measuring of good, in the relationship. This perfect attuning to God in which man was originally framed in grace is well expressed in Genesis (3:8): "God walked with them in the cool of the evening air". God was a personal experience in peace and in a simple joy. After the soul in Adam forces the flesh to cooperate in disobedience to God's wisdom as "something known" there follows disorder between flesh and spirit in orientation to the good, and disorder

between God and man in the harmony of spiritual communion. Adam no longer “walks with God in the cool of the evening air”, but hides himself from the call of God. - dread of conscience and recognition of guilt. The distinction of state is *divinely* well expressed in the information that while they walked with God in the perfect conformity of truth and good, they were “naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”. After the breach of perfect conformation to the truth and goodness of God, they cover their privy parts, - because they are naked, but now, they are ashamed. Through communion with Christ in grace, we strive to restore, though never very perfectly, that primordial integration of all the faculties of our loving. This is “chastity”. There is the chastity which does include the genital and the erotic as part of its order of love according to wisdom and truth, of which state the integrating goods and meanings are known as “the blessings of marriage”.

Human Love independent of Sex

Human love however is not defined as “human” through marriage and its bodily union, even though marriage is the basic sacrament and most common vocation of dedicated human loving. Sex is a ministry in one state of love basic to human life, but human love can, and does transcend sexual union. Should God beckon further, we are not starved of sheer fulfilment in love because sex is by-passed. “This word is not given to all,” said the Master; it is given by invitation though, “he (or she) who can take it, let them take it” (Matt. 19:12). A vocation to a love which is higher than the vocation of marriage does not need to be by official state or vow. It could be an entirely personal and particular vocation, To be that vocation of virginal chastity which the Church has already defined to be higher in order than the state of holy matrimony (for *both* are holy) (Council of Trent. DS. 1810) it would need to be a choice in a real sense, even in an individual vocation, made “for the Kingdom of God’s sake”: more than staying single for preference or personal convenience. It must be a choice made for closer communion with God whether in a contemplative or active state, or in both together. One must not buck the question, often asked of a priest in pastoral life, - what about the woman, or the man too, who was never asked. The one who was left on the side, or by devotion to a sick parent found that time and age had passed them by?

It is not necessary to be married to reach the highest holiness and communion with God. If in prayer, parish or other good works, life is dedicated to God and to his cares, one need never be lonely or unfulfilled. Loneliness is a state of soul, not a state of life. There are married people who are desperately lonely, especially when through the years, one has grown in wisdom, age and grace, and the partner more shallow, worldly, and dreary with the years. There are crosses to every walk of life and love. Marriage is a great vocation in Christ and the Church, but human fulfilment is not bound to marriage - which is in no way to derogate from the dignity of marriage, its holiness, and its fulfilment of man and woman in nature and in grace. We do tend, in talk and conference, to ignore the single, whether willingly or unwillingly single. They are not second class citizens in the Kingdom of God. To be single, but devout, would not add up to chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake as defined by the Council of Trent. However to the woman who asks (and they do) "no decent man ever proposed to me. I devote my life, my chastity and my charity to the things of God and the good of my neighbour, can I consider myself to have the status of being a virgin for the Kingdom of God's sake?" I would not be sure in Canon Law, but I have replied - "Why not? If no man has thought you worth a ring, Jesus Christ does!" Yet this would mean a commitment, just as do the vows of marriage and the religious state. It is not just a matter of waiting for "Mr. Right".

The Closer to God the Deeper the Joy.

Celibacy under the law of the Church is for the priest the vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, according to the invitation of Christ, (Matt. 19:12) and so it has always been understood by apostolic example and all Catholic tradition. Celibacy as the vow (for it is forgotten that, if they will be without sin, all the unmarried are obliged to be "celibate") is much more than a contractual promise not to marry. In East and West it has always been the preferred and honoured state of commitment to Christ, in the following of Christ's own example and invitation. When Christ calls anyone, man or woman, to a more perfect state of life and vocation, He does not call to any mutilation of body or of spirit. When Christ invites to a more perfect love of Himself, his people and his Kingdom, He does not invite to a lesser joy or

a lesser fulfilment, but to a greater. In this sense there comes to mind the comment of God to the Sadducees, - "He is not the God of the dead (of dust) but of the living" (Luke 20:38). God cannot call to a fuller perfection of life, without calling to a fuller perfection of wisdom and of love. Jesus himself never knew sexual use or erotic pleasure. You may say that the thought of God made man generating a human person through his human nature is unthinkable. Maybe, but if the use of the genital faculty were necessary for full human fulfilment or personal dignity and integrity, it would have been mandatory for one who in his human psyche was perfect man, and perfectly man. I have known, very recently, a wry comment in a parish about the Church's use of "The Holy Family" as the model of family virtues, and married life together. For the child was born without sexual intercourse, and Joseph and Mary never experienced sexual union together! But then, the heart and pivot of family virtues and happy family life does not revolve around sexual intercourse, as the increasing breakdown of modern family life demonstrates. The stable happiness of family life derives from the soul, in its perfect harmony of wisdom and good with the Mind of God, a Mind never arbitrary. but the source of all ordered wisdom. Our Lady and St. Joseph are *not* the model for the normal relationships of married life we grant, but the Church is totally right to put the emphasis and priorities where she does.

State of Exercising Perfection

There is an unconscious chauvinism in the niggling of some theologians against the law of celibacy required by the Western and Roman patriarchate of those who would offer themselves for the priesthood. The concept of a married nun is just a laugh. why? There is no way the ever present cares of natural motherhood could be combined with the exacting ministry of a *reverend* Mother, nor with other rival claims of head and heart. There are going to be some interesting problems occur when the Church of England ordains women vicars in any number. It will surely be sexual discrimination to impose vows of chastity only on women priests. There is no demand for married monks either as far as I have heard. Ah. - but they have taken the "evangelical counsels" for the Kingdom of God's sake, they are in the state of those taking the counsel of Our Lord for the sake of *acquiring* perfection. Is there any reason why less should be asked of the man who offers himself to Christ, to bear His especial sacramental character, and

to be in the state of *exercising* perfection. for the Kingdom of God's sake? If a married nun is an idea that raises a smile, and if a married woman priest raises similar problems, why is it quite all right to have married priests who, to be fully reverend fathers can be only part time natural fathers, or vice-versa? Is it conceded that fathers matter less in the home, and are less necessary to the balanced spiritual and emotional lives of the children'? Somewhere is *The Essays* (I have not been able to find a book that *used* to be in my library) Lord Francis Bacon (1561-1616) remarks that the state of celibacy well became a clergyman, "Because I see not how any man can water abundantly so large a field as the parish, if first he hath to fill so deep a well as holy matrimony". This is at least the basic quote, even if not word perfect, and his Lordship is right.

The Love that is the Closest

To understand the priestly vow of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, turn to the drama of one who did not accept his vocation, the rich young man (Matt. 19: 16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23). It is a marvellous dramatic passage. because he had been a "good boy" from his youth. And, we are told by Mark, "Jesus looking on him *loved* him", and when he turned away, not for the hardship of chastity as a vow, but because he could not give up great wealth, and its easy freedoms and pleasures, Jesus looked after him with sheer sorrow. Jesus had invited him to the life of evangelical perfection. i.e. the perfection laid down in the evangelists — the gospels — and the passage does apply to the monk and the nun. Jesus however invited him to be an apostle, a bishop or a priest, and to come with Peter and the others and follow Him. The invitation applies just as much to the diocesan priest, who for the most part is as poor as any Religious, both institutionally and in his personal income. The following of the Lord is a call to the likeness of Christ's own *personal* apostolate. to which the highest charity and the highest chastity are essential. The call to the priest of chastity for the Kingdom of God's sake, is a call not only to a life and a love intrinsically higher than the life and love of marriage (that is defined at Trent) but to a vocation of love for God and his Christ which would be intrinsically higher in any order of mankind, whether man unfallen or man fallen but redeemed, as we are now. Years ago walking the lanes of Lancashire one remembers arguing with a fellow church student about

this. The vow of chastity he said, would not be necessary for the priest if our nature was unfallen. Our loving would be perfect, unstained by the urges, greeds, fantasies and lusts which disfigure our loving and in or out of marriage, make that love very imperfect, and in the case of a married clergy, in the eyes of the laity very suspect, i.e., no better than the love very imperfect in some of them.

The Door marked ~Knock First”

This is not an adequate view of the life to which Christ invited and still invites. It does not explain why virginity for the Kingdom is taught by the Fathers of the Church *as a more perfect vocation of love of God* and finally defined at Trent as a more perfect state of life. Since both states of life are holy and both willed by God, canonizable perfection can be and has been reached in both. In any state of man, fallen or unfallen, the call to chastity for the Kingdom of God’s sake is a call to an intrinsically deeper communion with God of knowledge and of love. From this closer communion with Christ’s own love as Son of Man, there follows a greater fulfilment and a deeper possibility of dedication in the teaching, forming, and counselling of the People of God. There are many passages which insinuate this view in the little read Apostolic Letter *On Virginity* (Pius XII, 1954) and for the priest, even clearer indications in the Letter *Priestly Celibacy* (Paul VI, 1967). Some references are given in the short appendix. As space runs out, one can testify from long personal experience that the claims made in these papal letters are true. To the writer it came home when trying at the age of nineteen to play it both ways with a very good and sweet girl. Came the day one presumed to lecture her for not going to daily Mass as she could well have done during the holidays. The young man presumed to talk with a certain intensity and power, a certain touch of “*But I say to you*”; in spite of playing it both ways! It has been told and printed before, how she flushed with anger, and retorted “who the hell do you think you are, Jesus Christ?” Suddenly one saw the conflict of two loves, one of a perfect equality, that shares life, and bed, and board, and another which presumes to enter into the most private soul of man or woman, with the key of Christ, and his “*But I say to you*”: the two loves in one vocation are not compatible. No girl should be expected to marry a man who wants to use the “key of Christ”. This most special love of Christ, which yearns to teach

perfection and have the door opened into the rooms marked “private” in every soul, would burn *every time* across the years that one met a noble spirit, man or woman capable of a greater response to the God one loved, So one gave up one love with a deep sense of pain, but chose the other with now, much greater conviction of God’s will and God’s fulfilment. And so it has been, a sheer joy, an enormous fulfilment, in which the love of good people and the good young increases your own inner love and communion with Christ; and the love of Christ deepens further your love and joy in His people. There is no loneliness at all, the family is too large at all times. Loneliness we remind, is a state not of life but of soul. To be “Father”~ in Christ or to be “Mother” in Christ is no courtesy title, and a life of deep interior joy in God and in men.

The Gift must be Given

To this ministry of life and love, chastity is essential to its meaning, and to its joy. In falls against purity there is always and at all times the helping hand of God, and the healing hand of God, but one must be honest: chastity is the very integrity of that love, because the genital has no part in its communion with men and women, with boys and girls. This type of love belongs to a higher communion with Christ. At the same time a man or a woman so dedicated to God in Christ comes to understand more deeply and to revere the sacrament and vocation of marriage. It gives you the people God loves, and then gives to you. It gives you the youngsters especially who are the joy of your own life. As happiness it has to be experienced to be fully understood, which is why the radiance of priests and Religious who really love their lives is always the most fruitful source of vocations.

Chastity the Condition of any Unitive Love

In the life of the priest, the monk, the nun, the actual victorious living of their chastity is essential because out of it wells up the happiness, the radiance or “aura” of their state. They live the highest human state of love, because neither for man fallen nor for man unfallen is marriage and the sexual union necessary for the highest human fulfilment and joy. But, if you fail, you fall between two stools. To use an air-flight metaphor, the exhilaration may be

supreme, but the stalling speed is high. One must use the grace, the grace which God gives as part of “the package”. But, in marriage too, there is that chastity which belongs to the integrity, the inner happiness of the state, and it must be used if the really unitive love of marriage is to be experienced and to sweeten with the years. Marriages break up all the time and at any age today, and often it is the fault of just one of the spouses not of both. Worrying and disconcerting are the number that break up in middle age, from lust, especially male, but also from sheer inner boredom, an emptiness which is revealed only when the children have now left home. Modern marriages rarely break up through too little sex, but often through the desacralization of sex. Long years of primly discreet contraception desacralize sex, and make spiritual growth impossible in the partners. They are not in true communion with God or with each other. More common still are the young marriages in which years of sheerly sexual pleasure and a quite shallow personal relationship, end with a break about eight years into the marriage. You get told, “we agreed we could not have children for at least six years... etc. When they do have the money either they don’t want the children or don’t want the marriage. They have sucked each other dry, and are so bored with each other. The Church’s teaching on chastity in marriage recognises that with all the talk of “complete self-giving” this implies that the openness to conception can never be ruled out. The reason is simple, the teaching rests on the primary meaning of the sexual union of marriage, - children, and all the joys, sorrows, but bonding and building, that goes with the family. However hard the Church’s teaching can be on fallen human nature it does one supreme thing, it sacralizes sex, and in so doing forces upon each partner a respect for the dignity and holiness of the body of the other. Out of this relationship of respect and dignity there grows a closer, more deeply spiritual bond of love. It is this bond of love, in the respect and dignity given to their mutual flesh, which is the true unitive love of marriage and not care-free sex.

The Integration of all loving into the Love of Christ

If chastity, virginal chastity is the integrity, the perfect wholeness of one form of life, the chastity which belongs to their state is equally necessary for the happiness and joy in love of man and wife. After all, theirs is also a state of holiness and of perfection: they cannot mature

within themselves unless they get it's priorities right, and if they don't mature within themselves they will not enjoy, between themselves that unitive, spiritual love which belongs to their state. All love is from and through the soul, and it organises and integrates the faculties of the body into a perfect wisdom, or truth which belongs to the state of life. There is the chastity which is of course not virginal, but which is the integration of the sexual functions of their lives into the wisdom of God and the truth of God which defines that sort of loving, and the perfection which is the "youthful joy" of that sort of loving. It comes as a shock to many Catholic couples to be told that the graces of their sacrament are to enable them to attain holiness and perfection precisely through marriage. . . and not in spite of it. There are many passages of *Christian Marriage* (Pius XI. 1930) and *The Christian Family* (John Paul II, 1981) which makes these points better than this writer. History, the modern history of our youth, and of marriage in the Humanist Western world makes one thing abundantly clear: - the desacralization of the sexual union, and its reduction to a pleasure of the body always available, and at all times and in all circumstances "essential" to the married, has destroyed the beauty, the dignity, and the stability of human love. There is no human love, sexual or without sex, except within that perfection of office, joy, ministry and integrity which God has joined to it in the making of man. The Fall cannot change this order, and grace is at hand to enable us to restore that order of personal joy and personal dignity. For the writer of this article one thing above all has been in mind, something known from the experience of life: that chastity, and especially virginal chastity is the integration of one's loving into the loving of Christ, loving through the truth and the good of God, according to one's state. Chastity in virginity or in marriage is the radiance of an innocent love, and innocence which is also maturity, bonds the old and the young into a common joy in the beautifulness of God: *'Blessed are the pure of heart: for they shall look upon the beauty of God'*.

DESCENT INTO THE LIBIDO

If the Church dithers much longer over the crisis and chaos over sex and love, she will find that she has left to her no youth at all who are chaste, no couples with the psychological attitude to married love capable of making a lifelong union a possibility at all, and no priesthood either, for the church student will have been indoctrinated to believe that without sexual union real happiness is not possible.

The Church must stop running away from the crisis and chaos over sex and love, which troubles both the Church and the whole Western world. She must face up to the basic principles of her own teaching through the ages. She must draw out, partly by fuller authentic development the consequences which are inherent in her own universal and solemn doctrine. When she does, the Church will discover that St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas have been perfectly right, and all the Fathers of the Early Church with them, and that Dr. Domiman as representative of a whole school of thought, —is completely wrong. If the Church, in her highest rulers dithers much longer she will find that she has left to her no youth at all who are chaste, no couples with the *psychological attitude* to sexual union and married love capable of making a lifelong union a possibility at all, and of course no priesthood either, for the church student will have been universally indoctrinated to believe that without sexual union, real happiness is not possible.

Modern errors over sex and love do not begin from arguments about contraception. They begin from errors over quite different aspects of doctrine. These doctrines must *themselves* be re-examined and developed anew in an authentic and orthodox sense continuous with the past, if the real issues of the argument over sex and love are to be resolved. There are three possibilities. We can develop further a new synthesis of theology and modern thought from the ground of the perennial philosophy and theology of the Church. We can retreat to the pre-conciliar positions, with Archbishop Lefebvre, and deny that any authentic development within the perennial philosophy and theology is possible. We can let the Church slide, and dissolve doctrine into the new Liberal Humanism. What we cannot do is to go on dithering, and in the

words of Elijah 'hobble two ways' between Yahweh and Baal. A key doctrine which is mostly mis-taught today among leading European theologians is the doctrine of *Original Sin*. If Original Sin in its orthodox formulation is regarded simply as a mythological recognition of the evolutionary imperfections of man, as human nature struggles out from apehood, then human nature as we have it today is our real and proper state. The urges and pleasure drives of human nature are just as they should be. Given the population problem, and the fact that sexual drive is as dynamic as ever, we can perhaps make a case not only for separating the procreative from the unitive aspects of sexual union, but even for 'developing' the extension of sexual delight beyond the limits of marriage, or indeed of heterosexual unions at all.

Pleasure As Addiction

But *Original Sin* can be looked at in another way. It can mean that *in the beginning* the body of man was so orientated to God through the soul that the pleasure drives of human nature easily and naturally obeyed God's measure for them, and God's meaning for them. This is what *natural law* means, obeying the law and measure which God has defined as proper to your nature and your fulfilment. In such a view of man, which is the *authentic* meaning of the Church's doctrine of Original Sin, man would have lost an intrinsic holiness and peace through sin, at the origins of human existence. In addition man also lost his perfect orientation to God in peace and joy. There would be the further disaster that while this fallen being could no longer develop from good to yet better in a straight and continuous line before God, the disobedience and selfishness which sin had introduced into the nature of man could, and did overdevelop the pleasure drives in human nature, and cause further confusion and tension within the nature of man. In such a case Freud did not discover man as God made him to be. Freud merely discovered the existential counterpart of the 'idea' of Original Sin. He discovered a jangled and confused orientation of the pleasure drives in man, which felicitously in a way, since the word is emotive of addiction and disorder, he named the *libido* of man. Freud did not discover a corrupt human nature, he discovered a confused and jangled and damaged human nature. He then solemnly proceeded, in accordance with the results of Original Sin in himself, wrongly to interpret it, and wrongly to prescribe for it¹.

If the 'new' theologians are wrong, if they are simply the modern counterparts of the reformers who caused the great Schism of the West some four hundred years ago, then there is an appalling horror in telling a youngster, boy or girl, that masturbation is right and natural, and is simply the initial integration of their full identity as a sexual person. For the result of doing this will be to make the addictive urge for that intense pleasure worse than ever, and to bind that addictive urge to acts of sexual intercourse in their teenage relationships as the next phase of their adult experience. Anyone who cannot see that this is the 'natural' result of justifying masturbation is really not capable of being argued with. If masturbation is the first stage of sexual maturation, then it follows that sexual union is the full stage, and that only by loving with sexual experience are men and women going to be able to form mature and stable sexual relationships. From teenage sexuality one would expect to proceed quite naturally to the trial marriage as the obvious preparation for a final commitment. This is in fact precisely what happens in modern life, and the results of it are the destruction of marriage, of the family, and of the balanced human personality. We are creating a world in which an addictive and totally uncontrolled use of sexual pleasure is making it impossible for men and women to live without sexual indulgence, and in which children are always at peril from the adult. Because we have made sexual union part and parcel of human loving itself.

Cannot otherwise brilliant men and women see how foolish it is to admit that in eating and drinking, in smoking, alcohol, and drugs we do indeed sin by addictive greed, and that these become overvalued pleasures in our psyche, and at the same time to except sex from the same possibility and danger? Is it likely that the 'free' and inbuilt pleasure of sexual delight, always available and very intense as an experience, is going to be quite free from any such degradation of state and valuation, but be 'all things bright and beautiful', be 'fun and relaxed'?

Doctrine Of The Soul

Another doctrine of orthodox Christianity which is challenged, and which influences our views on the meaning of love, and the *natural law* of sexual union, is the doctrine that the soul is a truly spiritual reality in man, is not one common energy of being with matter, nor capable of being evolved with matter within a common process of evolution. This writer must make it

clear² that Evolution as a process by which God creates is in no way to be faulted, but that in this process one must be able to find the distinctive place and need for the spiritual soul. And this can be done. If on the other hand you regard the 'soul' as simply an aspect of living matter at its highest point of organisation, then besides the impossibility of believing in the personal immortality of the individual, you also have great difficulty in defining any sort of natural order or law in the pleasure drives of man's nature. If the human personality is spiritual and physical through one common energy of matter, then it is very easy to make sexual delight just an aspect of loving, in all the possible relationships of human love. Therefore once again, the Church must face up to the imminent need to look for a new principle of development in the doctrine and the philosophy of the Church. It is so vitally necessary today that God must have given it, and if God has given it, it is there to be discovered and worked upon.

If we can show both that the soul in man is *not* material nor of the order of physical energy, then it will follow that the basic fulfilment of human nature in all relationships of friendship and of love has not changed since the beginning of human history. Love in man will be defined and ordered first through the soul, in a recognition of nobility and goodness, which is possessed by the one loving in a quiet, fulfilling peace. There will be also an accompanying joy in the body, a joy which belongs to every deep state of loving, and this again will be the sense of peace with joy, and it will be conveyed also by the touch, and the embrace, and the tenderness of love. It will not imply the need or the rightfulness of the specifically sexual pleasure of bodily union. This is clearly a quite separate relationship and bodily pleasure which can be, and is taken up into the consecrated state of love of married union, but which is always dominated by the spiritual love, to be ruled by that love, and as merely a physical pleasure in itself, to be subject to the right ordering of married love. If man truly has a spiritual soul, then there will be from the beginning of man and until the end of time the one same *natural law*, or measure of rightfulness in the sexual exchange of love within the vocation of marriage. Of very nature openness to life will be part of it, and because openness to life is part of that relationship, the sexual union will be positively wrong except in the state and vocation of married love. Certainly this is a very simple rule, and it is simple because it is true. Sexual union is not human love. There are many states and degrees of human love, from the constant

possession of *God* as loved, to the many differing degrees of *human* love, degrees based upon depth of goodness in both the lover and the beloved. There can be great love, as an experience between man and man, man and woman, woman and woman, and such love can be totally fulfilling, but without the acceptance or seeking of the sexual orgasm.

Christian Humility In Loving

Because man is a fallen nature, in youth especially, the state of loving is bound to trigger off sexual desire. This has to be set aside and refused. [The art of loving widely and freely, with all the freedom men and women seek in the modern world, can be learned. The price of such loving is not to universalize the sexual pleasure over every type and relationship of love: the price to be paid is the separating out of the purely erotic enjoyment, which as bodily *is not love*, from the inner possession of a joyful union based upon a common love of God. This common love of itself is a living bond of friendship and of joy. It is an actual experience, and is the supreme joy of the life of a priest. It is not the sole prerogative of the priesthood indeed, or of the religious sisterhood, but it is the gift Christ gives to those “who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God’s sake”, and it is the call and order to which all men and women must increasingly aspire in a world of wide ranging freedoms of life and contact.

The acceptance of tenderness in loving does call for a Christian humility and a great sincerity. In all loving, the power of the spiritual within the experience holds whatever belongs to tenderness, and in marriage what belongs to sexual union, to its law of good and true, and rightful in measure. The less spiritual the love, the less ardent desiring can be indulged as tenderness, for without the upward pull of the spiritual control, the love will become simply a seeking for pleasure each in the other. This can happen also in married life and loving, and the worst advice that can be given to young couples is to develop their mutual sexual enjoyment as an end in itself, to say ‘give it time and care, have fun and relax’. This way of behaving removes the mutual reverence for each other in their life and love. Before long, the drawn out experience of sexual artifice, together perhaps with oral and anal intercourse, which is condoned by many of our modern ‘experts’ has caused nausea, boredom and infidelity. Without the reverence of the *spiritual* in married love, without the sense of the *sacred* even in the act of

making love in the physical sense of the term, fidelity of mind dies first, and then fidelity in the flesh. Because once this using of each other for a more refined sensual enjoyment takes over in marriage, boredom at once supervenes. and the mind is busy first on making this experience something done with another; with somebody perhaps more young, beautiful, and desirable.

Then, and very quickly, the reality of this fantasy is looked for in real life. It is no use telling the experienced priest that he is mistaken in saying this. Some of us know our facts all too often, and only too well, from our pastoral experience. It is a fact that there is an order of perfection in the use of marriage, and that the spiritual with its overtones of reverence and deference to the law of God must be retained if the very experience of sexual union is not to become simply a regular sensuality without deeper meaning. The minimum requirement for such a reverence is that the ordering of the act not to mutual bodily pleasure, but also as an act of love ordained towards the service of life must be retained, If **it is** not so done, then the spiritual in man does not rule, and does not give a total and beautiful meaning to the bodily and physical.

The Church must once again work out, as one cannot in this hastily written article, the full meaning of human love in marriage as God intended it from the beginning, and as God intended it independently of the Fall of man, and the appalling strains that Fall has induced in human nature. Only if the Church does this, will she come to a doctrine which justifies her solemn assertion, upon which she cannot go back without total loss of divine credibility in her magisterium, that the procreative and the unitive aspects of married union in the flesh may never rightly be divorced from each other. She will find that the reason for this is that in the original and basic intention of God, the sexual union of man and woman was meant to be used only with the desire or the acceptance of family, as the consummation with joy in body and in soul of an office of nature and an office in the Church. For the begetting and spiritual formation of sons and daughters of God is an office in the Church, and should be taught as such. The Church will also find that it is a fact that into this intimate union of love between man and woman, there must come something of that addictive desire and not fully controlled craving that we all experience in *all* the pleasure drives of the body. The Fathers of the Church were talking sense, and talking from experience when they spoke of a use of marriage which was not

only for children, but as a healing of disordered desire in the very experience of sexual pleasure itself, It was not the sexual act which they saw as a remedy or a principle of healing for the fierce urges of man's nature, urges which may have been vehemently inflamed from early youth, both by temptation, and by false teaching about joy and fulfilment of personality.

The healing consisted in linking the delight of the body to a spiritual, and faithful, and reverent love. If that is done, then both any element of lustfulness gradually dies out of the relationship between husband and wife, and love itself becomes more sweetly mature, fulfilling and trustful. But, although it may be a hard saying, given the imperfection of our nature, the ordering of the sexual union of itself, and intrinsically to the creation of new life must remain. Sin does not in any way change the order of truth and good in the nature of man as God made man. Not even to soften, limit, and heal the tensions brought by the effects of the Fall into human nature can the Church dispense from that prime principle through which the sexual union and its bodily delight is ruled by the spirit, and saved from becoming mere desire: that prime principle and relationship within marriage is the openness to life, and the reverence which must surround it atone brings reverence into the sexual act, a reverence which through the years matures a unique love in husband and in wife. When the Church has been through all, she will find that the Fathers of the Church are right, and the modern heresies are wrong. Only through the authentic and well worked out doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas can the Church evoke any modern perspective of love in human nature which saves us from 'Animal Farm'.

In The Beginning Or Genesis

Finally, the modern apologists who offer us proposals for a new sexual ethic which is in contradiction to the teaching and ethic of the Catholic Church, state explicitly that through all her past history the Church has been *wrong* in her attitude to and valuation of sexual pleasure., Well, if the Church has been wrong from the beginning in so basic a matter of human happiness and perfection, then that puts paid to any Divinity in her magisterium or in the Person of her Founder. The judgement of the New Reformers is more definitive than they know. Because Jesus must also be lined up on the side of the reactionaries. Moses forbade adultery, but Jesus

went further, he said that *“he who looks on a woman to desire for her, has already committed adultery in his heart ‘ I don’t think that this time we can make an exception’ for the real Jesus, and blame St. Paul or some other disciple for all that went wrong almost from the beginning. This is the usual technique of the Liberal Humanist theologians. Moses allowed divorce at least for some causes — it was Jesus Christ who utterly forbade it, in the name of the order of God established in the beginning and in the name of the restoration of that order in Himself as the Christ. The earlier the Christian writer, as for example Minucius Felix, so much more completely does his doctrine of marriage and of sex approximate to the ideal order postulated by the Fathers and Aquinas in their teaching concerning sexual union and human love.*

But this ‘narrowness’ of view, this refusal to bless the indulgence of sexual joy as a good in its own right as delight, is not confined to the Christians. The Jews were at it too. Apart from the book of Tobit, there is the incident of Sarah, past the age of normal childbearing, and listening to the prophecy that within a year she would be suckling a son ‘shall I give myself to pleasure again, when I am old and my lord is an old man’? (Genesis 18:12) This does not sound reassuringly outgoing. Moreover, in their commentaries on the Law the holier and more revered of the great Rabbis can be found faulting not ‘excessive embraces’ as in the translation I was recently using of such work, but *excessive minglings* according to the Hebrew, a use of married love which they said as fostering merely a mutual use for pleasure and not for spiritual love, was not a perfect relationship. if we have to take the pedigree of this ‘false’ Christian view back through the Rabbis to Abraham, then we have to allow the ‘error’ a pedigree of four thousand years, and not two thousand.

But worse is to come, in the very story of the Fall, and of the first sin and its effects on the human psyche, what do we find except Adam and Eve discovering, as soon as ‘their eyes had been opened’ that they were naked, and rushing off to make coverings for their privy parts. We also notice that they were naked before they ate of the fruit that was forbidden them before they ate and enjoyed their sin, that is to say. And God said to Adam : *“and who has told you that you were naked: have you eaten of the fruit of the tree which I forbade to you?”* What can this simple, inspired, and very beautiful story mean except that before man was damaged by sin, all his joys and his physical drives were in an order of peace, harmony, and propriety in

union with God, and that after sin the immediate result was greed and lust in his pleasure drives, and confusion and embarrassment of conscience? There could be no better sign to a primitive people, than to point to the distinction between the man and his wife, naked and not ashamed, and the man and his wife unable to control aggressive sexual desire in relationship to each other's bodies. At any rate, it is the inability to *control* sexual pleasure drive, which is at the root of the fear of nakedness. Now how long do we have to take that narrative back, at least as a very simple story told around camp fires by holy men, to the people: could it be one hundred thousand years, even half a million years?

Who knows, but it looks as if, *pace* Dr. Dominican, the Church wins the argument from the universal consent of the ages and the sages. If the New Reformers have emptied out the Divinity of Christ in the Church, what sort of authority do they think attaches to any injunctions or qualifications they themselves may wish to put upon the totally unbridled experience of sexual delight? Who do they think they are, Jesus Christ? Let the Church return upon her doctrine meditate it, and develop its norms. She will find that she has to withdraw nothing, and will have succeeded in offering mankind a nobler, deeper vision of the greatness of human personality, of the power to love, and of the control of desire in love which develops out of the deposit of the Faith. This is the real and utterly urgent development of the documents of the Council, to which Pope John Paul must today call the Church. And one will make a prophecy in quiet confidence. In the end, when all matters are taken to the final logic of their conclusions, the Church will find that there are just two tenable positions: that in the beginning God made sex not for loving, but for family in a permanent and consecrated state of love, and that sexual union cannot ever be separated from that relationship and openness to new life: or, on the other hand, sex is for loving, from the age you are first capable of pleasurable masturbation onwards, through every possible permutation of sexual exchange and pleasure. There may of course also be babies, if and when they are wanted. The one doctrine remakes a man or a woman to the personal image of the human nature of Jesus Christ, the other makes a man or a woman a slave of sensual indulgence, and takes away all the permanence, fidelity, and beauty from family life. There are no intermediate positions to be held. To every attempt to limit the extension of sexual exchange, the human mind must say *by what authority?* And, if you have

rejected the Word of the Word of God, you cannot replace it with the word of man.

NOTES

¹ See Catholicism: A New Synthesis: "Love, the Quest of the Holy Grail" p.381

² See Catholicism: A New Synthesis, "The Ascent of Life" p. 62

REFLECTIONS UPON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

The Synod of Rome is over. It reaffirmed the indissolubility of Christian marriage and the solemn teaching of the Church concerning the sexual relationship of the spouses. Pope John Paul II in his concluding address reaffirmed that those who 'attempt remarriage' may not be admitted to Holy Communion unless they will make some sincere and humble effort to live, in the popular expression, as 'brother and sister'. At the same time priests were to extend to them every support, prayer, and consolation possible. There remained to them, besides the sacrament of Penance (which for venial sins is not necessarily the sacrament of 'reconciliation') the Sacrifice of the Mass as their duty, their hope, and their privilege. Concerning the first two matters, FAITH had already stated that it would be so and would have to be so (Editorial Sept./Oct. 1980). It is simply a matter of theology. The Church is constituted not so much upon as *through* the Living Magisterium of Christ as God. That Magisterium through the ages, when it speaks solemnly, is always infallible or Christ is not Divine. If there is no Word of formation and perfection upon earth greater than yours or mine concerning 'what Jesus meant', then the Incarnation Of God among men would have been a waste of time. The Magisterium of the Church is always solemn and definitive when it imposes, in the name of Christ and of Divine law, an obligation under sanction of grave sin upon the consciences of the People of God. Nothing is nearer to the heart of Christ, and the Divinity of Christ, and the Divinity of the Church through Christ, than the life of grace in the People of God. Perhaps basic parish priests have a deeper understanding of the 'existential Christ'. This is our life.

Courage:Charism of Sanctity

Pope John Paul led the Synod firmly and with a cold, precise courage. It was necessary and it was magnificent. This is what St. Luke chapter 22 v. 31 is all about. In the crises of doctrinal doubt and moral revolt within the Church, courage is *the specific charism* of bishops and of priests, but especially of bishops. Courage is the supreme charity of witness, and of defence of God's flock. This supreme charity by which a good shepherd is willing to lay down his life for his

flock — and how much more willingly his popularity and prestige — is itself energised by a total faith. If we pray for them, God does not deny any of us the graces that belong to our state of vocation. Shepherds carry a staff before them because there are wolves about. If they carry the staff, they witness that they will have the courage to use it. There are times when courage as the charism of witness, of martyrdom, is the supreme charism of sanctity, higher than chastity and higher than all other charity. One thinks of St. John Fisher and his lonely witness among the bishops. From the drama which surrounded him and his own vivid personality, men and women thrill to the layman St. Thomas More, standing alone against a brutal king, a schismatic hierarchy, and finally the assembled weight of the Parliament of England. To a man of More's wry humour it must have been the most royal of jests to be in a majority of one against all comers as Christ upon His Cross was in a majority of One. It is a fact of philosophy, of theology—and this writer thinks of the philosophical interpretation of mathematics—that however the suffrages are added, God always constitutes a majority Absolute of One!

The bishops will have gone home with the conviction, gloomy perhaps for some, that the doctrine of the ages and of *CastiConnubii* and *Humanae Vitae* has to stand. The Church could not live down the long past, both those documents, the Second Vatican Council, and now the Synod of Rome 1980, and still maintain any *constitutional doctrinal authority* if these solemn rulings upon the sexual morality of marriage could be set aside. Will they at last now set firmly aside their erroneous 'experts' and cease that playing both sides which has weakened the faith of the people, and to our knowledge destroyed so many vocations to the priesthood among the generous young? We are called to build a new perspective of theology on the basis that the Church's doctrine of human sexuality must stand, because it is divine truth. We have to accept the ecumenical implications as well. Don't be afraid of God. Our discipleship will lead us into a new dimension of evangelisation. That is what the claim of the Incarnation of God is all about.

The Way Ahead

The Pope was right to insist that Holy Communion cannot be given to those living within invalid marriages except on the traditional conditions. To do otherwise is to destroy witness to the indissolubility of marriage, marriage as the sacrament of perfect union and fidelity between

man and woman, and Christ and His Church. We do not save the nature of marriage as *sacrament*, that is to say as an objective and permanent office in the Church which ministers the Covenant of Christ's creative and redemptive love for mankind, by merely admitting a distinction between first and second class marriages.

The Church of England does precisely this, by granting on request a service of reconciliation and restitution to Holy Communion to remarried divorcees. This new status admits with regret the factual dissolution of the first marriage in church, and by granting Holy Communion accepts that the second marriage (or it could even be a third) witnesses sufficiently to the demands of the Christian faith and Christian life, to the full Christian communion of life with Christ. It will not do because it is a humbug. The effect of such recognition is to make it clear to the young that every marriage is a trial marriage because divorce is a fact accepted by the Church herself. There is no *objective* permanence in sacramental marriage. At the Last Supper Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist as the perfect and permanent pledge of unity in Him and with Him of faith, doctrine, witness and charity. The granting or refusal of a second ceremony of remarriage in church is of no importance if the acceptance of a flawed status is good enough witness to Christian life and to the morality of Christian married love between man and woman. The recognition of such a flawed status is a denial through deeds of that restoration of basic human life in marriage which Christ taught so firmly to the scribes and the pharisees. It grants once more in history Moses' law of divorce "for the hardness of your hearts" which Christ expressly revoked (Matt.19: 8).

When to this surrender there is added the surrender of the non-Catholic Churches to the divorcing of the procreative and unitive aspects of the marriage act, then the way ahead lies free for the justification of premarital and extramarital sex on the grounds that in its own right sex is a communion of deep love. Take away the essential relationship to new life, and there is no principle by which homosexual acts and homosexual unions can be outlawed either. Sex becomes 'for loving' and family becomes an option in sexual love. Sex becomes defined through a relationship which is, however unconsciously, flawed and selfish, and a flawed relationship is open to capricious pleasure and infidelity at any time. For there is no objective rule of *divine truth* and *divine evaluation* which can be given to govern the sexual life of mankind. Young

people get the message at once. They have been getting it for years. The churches, no less than the hedonistic world of Western Humanism, are to blame for the sexual decadence among the noblest of their young people. The same judgment must be passed upon the Catholic Church, wherever doctrine and spiritual idealism has been damaged by episcopal ambiguities and by constant theological sabotage. The sabotage goes on still. Journals which openly flaunt papal teaching are subsidized by Church money, and militant opponents of Catholic doctrine can still be found in leading positions within the National Council of Priests and elsewhere. If the doctrine of the Synod of Rome must stand because the doctrine of the Church must stand, then the totally contrary path taken by other churches must be taken into account when demands are made for intercommunion and joint evangelisation. There can be no 'second Pentecost' based on humbug, it is against the nature of the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism will mean a *reconversion of the spirit of man* not only for non-Catholics, but for most Catholics as well. It will mean the rediscovery of the identity of Man in the phenomenon of Jesus Christ.

Christ: The Identity of Man

At the Faith Summer School last year, the editor had been speaking of the way in which we can demonstrate from the very brain of man—an organism structured for programmed control and direction—that the spiritual soul *must*, physically and philosophically *must* be created into the body of man at conception. This perception answers every challenge of science, with or without the theory of evolution, but makes a much more majestic sense *within* a theory of creation by evolution, etc. A young priest rose and very gently made an important point, and a correction of the emphasis. True, he said and granted, but we must not present the soul in man as something given so that the personality of man makes sense, or even that the being of man can be conceived of at all. We have to show people today that *the identity of man is in Jesus Christ*, the identity of man is in *the Person of God*, but God incarnate. In fact, this is what it means for men to be made 'to the image and likeness of God'. God would not have bothered at all with matter but for the possible communion of matter, through the soul, with the Living God. Christ is the Way to this, the Truth of this, the Life of this. This perception sums up every office of Christ as Saviour and Redeemer, and it gives to modern man, so confused in his life and his

loves, *his true identity*, which does not lie in Humanism, but in *life with Christ*. How wonderful that simple perception is! Christ is your identity. Look upon Him and know who you are. Go to Him. He will lift you up. You cannot 'go it alone'. Be your real self by sharing in His life. This is the way of perfection we must teach our youth today, and the perspective through which we must teach it.

The Pillars of Christ

There are two great pillars of human love within the personality of Christ, and upon them all creation of men rests, and the final blessedness of heaven. The first 'pillar of Christ' is the vocation and ministry in the Church of the Covenant of Christian Marriage. All mankind is created *through* Christ, so St. John tells us in the first words of his gospel. This office of Christ as Creator is not simply delegated through men and women, it is truly participated with Christ. There is a real causality with Him. This is why Matrimony as a Sacrament reflects, and is *intrinsically* like to, the union of Christ with the Church. For that union is the union of Christ with all mankind as already the consecrated People of God and Family of God, or at least the willed, destined, and yearned for. Marriage therefore is an office in the Church and a specific ministry in the Church. As a love it participates in Christ's love as He creates, which is why the love of sexual union must be holy in all parts and aspects. It must reflect its causality in Christ. Marriage, we think, should be viewed as a ministry not only because of its basic creative nature in time and for eternity, but also because there is no Sacrament of Baptism in the Church except through Matrimony as going before. For the same reason, because sexual union consummates marriages as a sacrament, this writer would hold that intercourse out of *holy* matrimony is a sacrilege for a Christian. It is the desecration of an act which is lawful only in a sacramental relationship and which in fact fully consummates a sacrament. God may hallow the fruit of such a sacrilege—and God forgive us that we don't teach thoughts like these to our young—for all men are conceived in the likeness of God, but we are speaking of the divine order, and of the dignity in Christ of the identity of man, and the identity of the family.

Angels and men alike, both are created through Christ as The Eternal Word. Christ, therefore, is the *determiner* of all life and being, the angelic and the human life. The Incarnation

of God is the fullest possible manifestation of that determination unto existence, and its forming, teaching, and nourishing to 'the perfect measure of the Manhood of Christ' for us. If Christ as Eternal Word and second Person in the Holy Trinity is *the identity of the Angel*, don't we see how wonderfully, how majestically Christ as The Word made Flesh is the identity of Man? The Incarnation adds—given the Fall—the character of Redemption, forgiveness, and healing, but in one meditation it is impossible to indicate all the riches given for us in Christ. To fulfil this vocation as Saviour and Redeemer, as the origin and the possibility of the identity of Man in God, Jesus needed to come into His material creation as Son of God made Son of Man. He could not use the sexual coming together of man and woman for this. Such actuates the full creative power, spiritual and physical, by which the creature cooperates with God in causing not only human nature, but the created human person as well. Men and women cause with Christ when others are created, but nothing can determine the being or the person of God. The Eternal Word pre-exists in all eternity. What Christ needed was that *the vehicle* of human life and human nature should exist within the creation, so that He could *determine* this 'vessel of election' and take unto Himself our human kind, whilst being uncaused and undetermined in His Divine kind. The answer to the need of God is the womb of woman. We would say this is the whole reason why life was created and developed bi-sexually, that God might determine the womb of woman through her free will and the gift of herself to Him for his purposes: "behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done unto me, according to thy word".

For this purpose, God divided the creative potential of human life into the male—the determiner of the womb unto life, and the female—the seed of life that responds actively to the prompting of this determination within the womb, which is the vehicle of life. This is part of the law of the universe when it is poised in its first creation, so that at the end of time, under that same One Law by which Christ 'subdues all things unto Himself', the Word might set aside the male, whose purpose in creation is to make Christ's act of determining the womb possible, and directly Himself, of His own divine 'fiat', determine the womb of Mary and be Emmanuel, God with us. To be theologically accurate, it is the Father who determines the womb of Mary through the Son, in that act of love which is Holy Spirit in person. That is why in Christian marriage, the male, the determiner of the womb, reflects Christ as he brings into being a life for

time and for eternity. That is why the woman, whose seed responds to the determiner of its life, reflects the Church, and all mankind male and female, as we look to God in Christ for the prompting of life, so that through the ministry of the Church we may grow in life more abundant. Mary is so obviously from her vocation “Mother of the Church”. The link between Baptism and Matrimony underlines a theme beyond our power to develop here: the ritual of Baptism states explicitly that *Christ is the identity of man*, for we are anointed sons and daughters of God in Him.

That is why Christ had to be born as a ‘male’ in the biological sense. From the beginning of the Universe, in the framing of the laws of natural evolution the womb was made so that at the end of the ages He might determine it for His Incarnation. Womanhood is the office of nature that expresses creation’s gift to God that He may prompt life in man, and man can respond with life more abundant. The womb of woman expresses creation’s looking for Christ, and willingness to serve His purpose. All creation sings its ‘fiat’ in the Magnificat of Mary. So Christ must come as the one who determines, that is to say as the male, not as the one that is determined, that is the office of the female.

For the same reason the priesthood of the altar must be given to one who is ‘male’. This office in the Church is a ministerial participation in the Priesthood of Christ across the ages. It must express Him as the origin and determiner of Life. It cannot express Him and continue His ministry and work in one continuity with His Personality unless it expresses Him in this way. The priesthood of the altar shows the office of Christ *to all creation* in the material universe, and it does so through the primary meaning and distinction of male and female. Prophetically speaking it is not from Adam, but from *Christ* that Eve is taken when ‘a rib’—or more correctly a ‘principle of life and generation’—is taken from the stock of Adam, from ‘the Man’. Adam has his office only because of the Christ to come, because he prefigures the One for whom his own work of determining the womb is really made. The day will come when Adam is set aside, and Christ, the true Adam, will determine the womb of a virgin and be Emmanuel, God with us. Nevertheless, from this relationship to Christ, the man in marriage must necessarily be in the likeness of Christ, and the woman in the likeness of the Church, fulfilled through Christ’s creative work and her own response to Him.

Consequences of the Vocation of Marriage

The consequences of this vision of the identity of man in Christ will be: the Covenant of God with Man which determines our creation and our redemption is one love, a faithful love, an indissoluble union. The Covenant of Matrimony will be the same. The Covenant of God with us in His Incarnation is, through sin, also a Re-demption. The Covenant of Matrimony will be the same: "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part". The Covenant of Christ with man embraces the Cross as well as Palm Sunday. Its faithfulness is vindicated in the Resurrection. The Covenant of marriage will not be dissolved by the Cross. Its faithfulness will be vindicated in the Resurrection. Marriage will not allow of 'first' and 'second class' covenants in Christ. It stands upon the foundation of Christ as one of the twin pillars of the Church. He restored it firmly to its original perfection in His own Person, as the image of His relationship to men.

Another consequence of this vision: the holiness and loveliness of married love finds its identity through Christ. It shares with Him in the actual work of creation. Therefore, all that belongs to the body will be taken up to the law of the spirit, by which the flesh and its pleasures are ruled. The law of that love is ministered directly to the spouses by Christ, who loves in them and creates in them. This love cannot dismember the unitive and the creative. The law of this love in Christ is most holy. The flesh is not an end in itself. Made an end in itself it becomes an animal addiction, selfish, and destructive of the union of the spiritual joy with God in peace.

The perfect love of Christ in a man, for the needs of his wife as the 'more fragile vessel' in the physical sense, will often require that sexual union as bodily delight be set aside for that higher, nobler love of cherishing, caring, and considering.

The physical is not truly 'unitive' in the personal sense between spouses except it be subordinate to the nobler and higher law of spiritual love and joy. It is possible in such circumstances to lie in the arms of the beloved, to know the tranquil peace of faithful love and the bodily overflow of a sweet joy of possession, which calls for no urgent erotic union. It is the spirit which keeps marriages together not the flesh. Modern marriage does not lack for libido, and all the while marriage breaks up around us. The very union of the sacrament is neglected by the young of our culture, and the sexual life of the young is corrupted in its teens. The meaning

of love is to be sought first in the spiritual order, not in the carnal order. If this law of truth in human loving is often hard within marriage, the fault is not with God. The fault lies in the weakness and the addictive-ness of the pleasure drives within our fallen human nature. We put an excessive valuation upon the delight (good in itself as God made it) that belongs to the flesh. In this respect also the unitive' power of the act of sexual union can gently refine and heal the turbulence of imperfect young loving. But only if that union in the flesh is taken within a love which as an experience is the holy, reverent, faithful love which a man and a woman gave in their vows 'till death do us part' on the day of their wedding. It is this Pope John Paul was thinking of when he said that a man who looked on his wife with lust was an adulterer in his heart. He repeated what Tertullian, St. Jerome, and others of the Fathers of the Church had said long before. Today's men and women need to hear it again, welcome or unwelcome.

While apart from the actual possibility of family, the 'unitive' power of sexual union between man and wife can sweeten and refine the imperfections of desire in God's imperfect people (and all of us are such), there can be no such refining and sweetening if the basic law of God's primary intention within the act of physical union is set aside by direct violence. There can be no holiness based on a lie, and the need for the violence manifests the lie. In such a case, the Cross must be accepted; and then the grace given, and the refinement of loving received will be deeper still. Sex is not the basis of human loving in marriage. The basis is a spiritual and companionate love ministered through a complementary office in the body. God did not make sex 'for loving', God made sex for children in a state of mutual joy and consecrated loving. That is quite a different emphasis.

The Pillars of Christ: The Love of Perfect Chastity

The second Pillar of Christ that rises on the foundation of Christ's own personality is the word not given to all, but at the same time "he that can take it, let him take it" of the love in perfect chastity which is for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Marriage has its laws which bear hard on fallen human nature, because sex is not the basis of human loving and the perfect fulfilment of the human personality. The soul is the basis of human loving and human fulfilment, and in marriage it is also through the office and function of the sexual nature of the body. Yet, through

that same soul of man, made in the image of Christ as God, there is another and even higher fulfilment of love. Christ bore in His body as man the sexual faculty and its drives, and the physical masculinity of His being as male. In Christ there were no disordered 'drives', of course. The body lived in perfect peace and wisdom through the spirit. Christ did not ever use His sexual faculty, and yet He was a perfect human being, and a perfect man even in the sense of His physical manhood. The sexual power in Christ was not a waste, nor was it, as not used, a curtailment of His personal dignity and fulfilment, because sex is not 'for loving', sex is for family in a state of loving. The order of one's loving, and its fulfilments is defined through the soul in its relationship to the body. The sexual use of His body did not belong to the vocation of Christ, nor to the love of Christ. Because the identity of man is in God, and is in *Christ* as God Incarnate, there are many possible levels of life, of loving, and of love in human nature, whether for male or for female, and they do not all of them require the use of sex as a specific act of intercourse, nor the enjoyment of its physical pleasure. This specific pleasure Christ did not enjoy, and the Son of Man, in whom we are all willed and brought into being was not thereby frustrated. As one has said elsewhere in a slightly different context, the Angels of God lack genitals, but yet they manage to be happy. (*Catholicism: A New Synthesis* p. 422.)

Priesthood and Religious Life

The call to the priesthood and to the Religious life, for men or for women is associated with a type of loving which directly and fully identifies with Christ. In this way of life—a fuller discipleship in Christ—Christ is the identity of a man or of a woman in the most total sense possible. That is why the vow of chastity is attached to the priesthood of the altar in the Western discipline, and it should be so attached. This love for 'the Kingdom of God's sake' has too many depths of meaning to work out here. There is the Kingdom of God which is the forming of the people of God, the work of a priest in the parish, a bishop in his diocese, a pope as 'Servant of the servants of God'. The same type of dedication to the specific work of forming the love of God in men and women, whether by teaching or by pastoral works, and works of healing belongs also to the man or woman Religious who is not a priest. There is also that 'Kingdom of God' which belongs to the fuller life of prayer, study, and liturgy with all its

richness for the Church and the people which belongs to the strictly contemplative life. For contemplation as a state of prayer is found in all states of life and love of God. There is the life and love in Christ which finds a total identity with the life of Christ as person, as an individual so to say. This can be in the perfection of love by which Christ loves the Father, or the perfection of love by which Christ forms, in the priest, the faith and love of God in the people of God that the vocation of marriage yields up to the priest. As space runs short, one would like to linger a little on that one point.

Let no young man be afraid of the voice of God within his secret heart. This love of the people, especially the love of the generous young is the most sheer joy and fulfilment, although since it also involves failure and rejection it means carrying the Cross as well. It is the most perfect identity with Christ, with His sorrows and with His joys, with His fulfilments. It does not dim with age, nor lessen as sex dies in the body. You give up sex in one specific sense, and the particular vocation that derives from it. You cannot have everything. You do not give up love. Your love, and the family of that love, widens enormously, and you have the joy of being able to choose and walk with the most noble and generous men and women as your friends. When others are reaching old age, and children have left the nest, and loneliness has set in, you are a fig tree by the running waters that yields its fruit in every season and whose foliage never fades. The young still accept you. If you stay chaste, if you love as Christ loved, then you will not grow old. There is no need to grow old in a priest, it seems to this writer to be the result either of an imperfect and not fully faithful love, or else of careerism earlier in life.

You must love Christ *alone* if you want a total identity with Him, and the joy that John, the beloved disciple found in Him. If you find it, then you have found the pearl of great price. You may gladly go and sell all that you have, a sweet girl, a warm hearth and home, a handful of nice kids, a holy, deep love and your sexual satisfaction, and anything else you care to name. You may sell it all and buy the field that holds the pearl of great price. For love in human nature is first in the soul, not in the body. From the soul, and into the body as a sheer warmth of affection, there goes out in this deeper love of Christ a sheer love of authority, teaching, caring, and cherishing. It should have no rival, it must enter with a unique authority into the most intimate life and loves of other people. Only Christ Himself loves more uniquely, more deeply. This love does not

share body, bed, and board with any other. Christ did not. This love hears the most literal meaning of “Come follow Me”.

One can promise you a unique fulfilment, and since you will never be able to do in a day or in a lifetime all that you ought to do, you won't have any identity crisis. You won't have time. Besides you cannot have an identity crisis. Your identity is 'another Christ' and men and women will treat you that way, children especially. Humble in prayer, be sure that you never through sexual weakness betray their total trust in you. You are called also to tenderness. You don't give up the joy of tenderness in soul or body. You are called to prudence, but not to mutilation of the spirit. In passing, may one say that homosexuality is not an argument about tenderness and love between men. It is an argument about a sexual relationship between men. That is something quite different. Christ knew tenderness to men and women, and especially to St. John the Evangelist. In this sort of love, the second pillar of the Church, all the warmth spiritual and physical of true human loving goes out to men and women as the family of God. You give up sex, but sex is not love, **sex** is a function in one state of love, a union which also unifies and deepens the personal love of man and wife. Even then, only if nobly and spiritually used. It dies with age. Love never dies, in or out of marriage, just because the sexual urge weakens and fades away. Most of all it is the experience of *the quality* of the love that Christ gives which is the tremendous joy of the priesthood. It is the power to challenge and evoke, and to be given back—as through you boys and girls, men and women come to know God and lay hold on Him—a quite unique love for you, the reflection of their love for Christ. Nobody is worthy of this, nobody can earn it, and to receive it is above all the other loves that life can give. Taste and see; the Lord is sweet.

As a priest you come more and more to reverence marriage and to see your own vocation as complementary to it. Good parents give you their golden lads and lassies in every decade. You build on, where their power falls off. Without their sterling success in their own vocation, your vocation becomes one awful, sad salvage operation. Don't be afraid of God. If He invites you to be totally like Him, he won't hurt you. He is the source of all life, virility, and joy in being. Alas, there is no time to finish a most untidy article, and we have not done justice to the priesthood and its fulfilment. One last word though. The same fulfilment is possible in forming

the mind and heart, for the good religious sister. The Religious Orders of women need to be more pastorally, more parochially orientated, *working among young mothers most of all*. They would get more vocations if they did. And the Church, while she cannot ordain women, could and should give them a higher prophetic vocation in the Church. They should teach and form as 'mothers' as a priest does as a 'father'. But about all that, perhaps some other time.

THE DIVINE CALL OF THE SISTER AND HER APOSTOLATE IN THE MODERN WORLD

A lecture given at the invitation of the Consortium Perfectae Caritatis" group at their International Assembly in Rome

This paper is addressed especially to you, reverend and dear Sisters in Christ. And I have stressed your apostolate in the world of today, for as Religious you are called to an apostolate, and not since the first missionary impetus of the Christian Faith has the need for your apostolate been as great, or the call so urgent as it is today. Jesus, too, when He was surrounded by those Twelve who are called apostles, on a higher and more special title than any other, was also accompanied and sustained by those devout women who had followed Him out of Galilee, ministering to Him from their substance. You do more than minister to Him of the substance which is money and goods, for you minister to Him the very substance of your being. You give more than the widow whom the Lord praised because she had put into the treasury her whole livelihood; you have been content to give Him not your livelihood but your life, with every power of wisdom, love, and service in your being.

This is to say that as David loved Jonathan with a love 'greater than the love for woman'¹, so you have loved Jesus the Lord with a love greater than the love for men, however holy that love may be. The concern that has brought us here must be our need to witness that this love of God, which is centred especially upon the Eternal Word made flesh for us, is not an abstract or notional love, but a reality and a fulfilling experience. We seek the perspective and the mystique by which we may re-create it ever more deeply in our own personalities down the years of life, and may be able to communicate this joy and its call to other younger brothers and sisters through Our Lord, so that as we fade with the years they may, in increasing numbers, take our places and fulfil the mission to mankind of the Saviour until He come again.

Vocation Through Joy

The experience by which a good boy thrills to the knowledge and love of Jesus as friend and Master may lead him on to the priesthood. As a psychological experience—the savouring of the

Lord in wisdom and joy—it does not differ in any essential from the same delight in Christ which leads a good girl to the religious life. When I was a boy serving the altar, the old style altar frontals were worked with a text which preached a short, pithy sermon. Under the tabernacle of the church of St. Peter in my home town the message read: *Magister adest et vocat te*—The Master is here and is asking for you. It made a deep impression upon me when I would drop in at lunchtime from the Catholic school nearby to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed Sacrament—who is ‘He’ and not ‘it’—faced fully and dominantly down the church to all who came in. I think that it should do so today and can be made to do so with full conformity to the revised liturgy of the Church. If Jesus in the tabernacle is God in person, then there is no shame that the tabernacle should be the principal focus in our parish churches, preferably overlooking the altar of sacrifice which faces the people, with a great Cross from roof or wall hanging between tabernacle and altar—sacrifice and sacrament—and marking the unity of them both in that Eternal Sacrifice which the Mass continues through the ages of man.

The Master is here and is asking for you: when a youth takes it literally it may lead him on to the priesthood, but we bear in mind that the words were first spoken by a woman to her sister², and that they both heeded the call. The Master’s invitation is to men and women alike, to his brothers and to his sisters. It has been my privilege and happiness to help many young men towards the priesthood and some who were not so young. First, through thirteen years in the training of late vocations, and in this context ‘late vocation’ meant anything from eighteen to nearly forty years of age. Even now something of the same influence remains through the Faith Association with which I am connected and its Youth Group movement.

Forgive me therefore if I say with a certain emphasis, the emphasis not of the academic expert, but the pastoral priest who is a serving soldier of Jesus Christ, that I think vocations are evoked and fired through the infection of love and joy in Christ, and by no other way. One must be able first to say to a boy or a girl: “I am happy in being a priest, in being a nun, I find it a life of richness and joy. I am fulfilled as I never could be in any other way of life. it is meaningful indeed, for its meaning suffuses my whole life and being, and so I cannot have the slightest doubt about my identity”. Why should we doubt our identity, if “I live now not I, but Christ lives in me”?³ Why should we worry about meaning, when the burden of all we do, every influence

we exercise, is to draw the lineaments of Christ in the minds of the young whom good parents entrust to us with so much reverence and so much love on their part? The supreme joy of a good mother and father, the supreme fulfilment of their marriage, is to see beauty of mind and heart growing in their children. How much more so is this true for the priest, the religious brother or sister, whose life and work it is to be with so many more members of God's family, and to have access to so many more youngsters than simply one family of one's own flesh.

I find it hard to understand, (but, when I reflect on the ravages of radical Humanism in the Church today I do understand) the type of priest who mutters about the 'loneliness' of his life. In the years of my own priesthood I have never been lonely. Quite honestly, the problem has been how to keep up with all the deep and loving friendships you have formed with so many individuals and families. In so many different places I have observed another phenomenon as well, which is rarely mentioned. Married couples grow older and very often a little sad. In the middle years of life their children marry and move away, their careers in the world also move towards an end, and they resign themselves to retirement, and to the mentality of old age. It is not so with the priest, especially the pastoral priest. Sunday in and Sunday out God gives you new Sons and daughters at the font of baptism, and through every decade of your life a new horde of golden lads and lasses come tumbling into your life.

The amazing thing is that though your years pile up, these children still love you, listen to you, and fully accept you. You, the priest, never grow old. The Lord increases your life in its latter end. Your family never finishes. Your children never grow up and leave you lonely. The psalmist spoke nothing more than the literal truth when he wrote: "Blessed the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who ponders upon his law by day and by night: he is like a tree planted by the running waters, yielding fruit in due season, its leaves ever green"⁴. Jesus Christ is true to His promise: if a man gives up father and mother, wife, children, and lands for His name's sake, then he does receive back one hundredfold in the same coin of human love and fulfilment in the present time, though not without persecutions⁵. As it is for a man, so it must be, and it should be for the woman as a Religious Sister.

Holiness as the Source of Joy

In the beginning of the Church's life, the personality of Our Lord Jesus Christ attracted 'vocations'. That is to say, He drew men and women to follow Him as disciples by the power, the wisdom, and the loveableness of His personality. Miracles alone may create awe but not loving disciples. To say we seek vocations is to say we seek apostles or disciples, and from the day when Christ called Peter and Andrew, James and John from their nets, to the raising up of the great Orders and Congregations within the Church, the law of life for the Church has been the same. It has been the great soul, the man or woman who radiates something of the personality of Jesus, Son of God and Man, who draws others to follow him or her in the way of total commitment to God in Christ. It is going to be the same now. The first requirement for attracting new apostles is a holiness that appeals to the good and the noble of heart. Such a holiness must appeal first from the beauty of character and personality it confers on those who lead and who seek, and secondly this type of holiness must appeal because its type and impact is relevant to the world today and to the *ethos* of the young of today.

"The Disciple is not Above His Master"

Men and women cannot be brought to give themselves to God with total commitment in joy except they firmly believe in the Master they follow and can give the real and not merely the notional assent to His literal Divinity in the unity of His one Person. Only so can they accept with security and happiness the values by which He teaches them to live. The Master whose cause has brought us here is Lord and Messiah of all the ages of Man. All that we do when we attract others to come after us and follow Him is to allow Our Lord to use us in order to evoke in the minds and hearts of other men that faith with love and joy which first brought us into Our Lord's apostolate. Nobody gives his life to the love of God for love of us, but only because through us Christ communicates Himself to the brethren in an understanding and experience similar to that by which he attracted us. So, there are no vocations where there is no exultant faith, no vocations where the Master cannot be laid hold on truly because the doctrine we teach, the personality we radiate is something quite other than his own. The 'essential' in what we give, that is to say, the doctrine and the vision of God in Christ, and the 'existential' in what

we give, that is to say, a personality conformed to Christ and obviously fulfilled in His joy must make up one single harmony of testimony. Men preach by their lives as well as by their words.

It is not possible to communicate full faith in Christ through a faith which is confused and agnostic at its very root, which is doubtful of the Lord as God the Eternal Word pre-existent before time, now become for us the fullness of the Godhead in the corporeal form of a man. Neither can any man or woman proclaim Christ's "Come, follow Me" with a joy which carries conviction, through a personality divided by contestation, and embittered by cynicism and resentments. We must face up to the brutal facts of the life of the Church today, and cease to pretend to ourselves that we can push on with a brave smile, and the motto of "business as usual". The appalling loss of vocations, and of ordained priests and consecrated Religious in the Western hemisphere, which in a few areas of Europe amounts to nearly 90% compared with little more than ten years ago, is devastating witness to the very disintegration of the Church in the cultural heartlands of Europe especially.

Our problem will not go away simply by ignoring it, nor will it yield to prayer alone, even the most earnest prayer. It requires positive leadership and action, conviction and faith in word and pastoral letter, and very great courage in the shepherds of the Church of Christ. With respect, it seems rather futile to discuss the Evangelisation of the Peoples when the Church herself is disintegrating through error in faith, in morals, and in the values of her ascetic and spiritual life. It is not possible to treat this as a little local difficulty listed with others among the influences which hinder the spreading of the Gospel. Let the real issues in the Church be faced with realism, the people and the priesthood rallied, the Faith itself reaffirmed and then a solution to genuine intellectual and cultural difficulties be sought. A solution to these difficulties can be found. It is essential that the scandal of the so-called "dual magisterium" be ended first, whatever the cost and the pain of it, in the seminaries, the novitiates, and the universities of the Church.

Council and Aggiornamento

In some countries such as Great Britain, it is still possible to hear again and again that the

turmoil within the Church is simply the confusion and upset of change and new attitudes emerging, that nothing is seriously wrong, and the Holy Spirit has the matter firmly in hand. The storm will blow over, like one of the winter gales that howl and tear through our countryside. Surely men and women of deep and inward spirit can no longer indulge such wishful thinking, even in Britain and the United States much less in those areas of Europe especially, which have been and still are the storm centres of the deep trouble in the Church.

Because our interest does not lie in the merely polemical, we must try to see the problems of the Church today—which are also very obviously problems of recruitment to her ministry in both its official and its wider sense—in the perspective of history. The turmoil which preceded and prompted the Encyclical *Pascendi* in the early years of this century manifested a major crisis in the life of the Catholic Church. We must ask whether there was any similar crisis of faith and intellect in the non-Catholic Christian Churches? We know very well there was. What was then called *Modernism* in Catholic circles, divided and continues to divide those Churches in the very heart of their faith, witness and moral life. This division is the main reason for the loss of faith, practice, and Christian influence in the life of their people and nations. A Church without the literal Divinity of Christ is a Church without guiding authority over the life of man. Such a Church becomes little more than an association for generalized idealism and social moral welfare. The non-Catholic Churches can yet tolerate this withering of spiritual life longer than we can, because with a married clergy, and but few religious orders, the ordained minister can retreat within his own hearth and home, and rally around him a congregation according to his way of thinking.

A celibate priesthood which is one brotherhood in Christ, a dedicated sisterhood in religion, cannot so survive. Your life and your joy depend upon total commitment, total certainty in faith and love, and the joy of union with Christ in clear and undoubting faith. When all of this goes, not lust but a most dreadful loneliness enters the soul of the priest and the Religious, and it is this, the loneliness of uncertain faith which is the principal reason for the wholesale defections, even as the same uncertainty kills vocations before they are begun, or kills them in the seminary itself.

Because the term ‘Modernism’ is both emotive and a term very misleading to the young, I do not intend to use it any further in this address, but to speak of the phenomenon of Christian, and especially Catholic disintegration by what I think is a truer and fuller name—Radical Humanism. We know how the Church of the sixty years which preceded the Second Vatican Council tried to defend itself against the inroads of this Humanism. We are always hearing of the age of “Fortress Vatican”. At that time it was the only way in which the Church could have reacted. It had its real achievements, and it preserved intact the heart of doctrine and spiritual life, but it was an essentially defensive reaction; and it did encourage a Maginot Line mentality among theologians. The most this period could have done was to buy time for a fuller and better synthesis to be worked out between Catholic theology and what is either well proven or at least intrinsically probable in the philosophy of modern science and the culture based upon it.

The opportunity was lost despite the warning given by Cardinal Newman, in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*⁶, and the time was wasted. I am not interested now in the narrow issue of who was to blame and why. I am interested in suggesting to you the present crisis of faith and life in the Church is not an incidental confusion, but the culmination of a long slow crisis in the Church, and in Christendom itself, perhaps the greatest crisis of truth and error in theology since the rise of Arianism, and that therefore we can no longer refuse to admit it and meet it. The very Encyclicals of this century up to the Second Vatican Council, culminating in *Humani Generis* demonstrate that the action taken by Pope St. Pius X in *Pascendi Gregis* had deferred and slowed, but in no way solved or resolved the crisis of Faith and Humanism. They show also that the root of the malaise of the Church, and of Christendom as a culture, did not lie and does not lie in structures, canon law, liturgy, or the use of the vernacular, necessary and urgent though reform in these spheres may have been. The heart of the crisis is a crisis of the intellect, in the order of that framework of philosophy through which theology is supported and explained.

The real reason for the calling of the Second Vatican Council was the resurgence of this crisis of Radical Humanism in theology, though most of the bishops, aware of a certain obsolescence in the life of the Church and the training of the clergy, were eager to see reforms

without any true understanding of the leaven which was fermenting the centres of higher studies. There was so much justified resentment against obscurantism, excessive censorship, and ultraconservative taboos. Nevertheless, the face of the “new theology” as it appeared over the blurbs of the paperbacks which came out everywhere during the sitting of the Council—though mostly young, and always handsome in exquisite grey suiting and silver-grey tie—was in most cases the face of Humanism applied to the doctrine of the Faith.

Some of us who have no deep learning in history but still have a sense of history, found that assertive title “the new theology” a little ominous. Four hundred and fifty years earlier a devout father had removed a brilliant boy named Thomas More from Oxford because of the effect on his faith of the “New Learning” which was in ferment there. You know how matters developed after that. The present Humanism, whether we call it scientific or existentialist, which threatens to disintegrate the Church today, is only the natural and final culmination of those principles of human autonomy and nominalism in philosophy, which over-sowed the New Learning. Yet Thomas More, as we know, was never content with the negative answer, nor did he fail to admire and assimilate the new wisdoms of his age. Apart from him, God raised up saints, scholars, and new Religious Orders in that period to separate the dross of error from the gold of new truth. Today, we have to bring the same process to its fulfilment as both the new truths and the specific errors sown in the beginnings of the age of science ripen to harvest.

The saints, scholars, and Orders raised by God at that time did not reform the Church by greater laxity and permissiveness, nor by wholesale laicisations given readily on demand. They did **it**, as witness the founding fathers of the Jesuit Order, by combining a new freedom in individual initiative and development, with self-discipline and obedience which was total in integrity and sincerity. With incidental differences, much the same is demanded of us today. The modern scientific civilisation, in which Marxism is capable of developing into a Humanism and Western type Humanism capable of assimilating Marxist principles, is moving towards a unity which must be crowned by the head of God Incarnate, or by the head of Man who is his own god. It is not a different culture from that which began with the ‘New Learning’. It is its climax, the flowering of its principles in both error and in truth; for there is also a flowering of truth. What the Holy Spirit asked us to recognize and undertake at the Second Vatican Council

is the fulfilment and ultimate development of what both Trent and the first Vatican Council sought to confirm and to further, and not the repudiation of both those Councils, and of the whole history of the Church these last four hundred years, as we are sometimes asked to believe.

Council and Renewal

I will be honest and admit that I agree with the school popularly called the “new theologians” that the structure and perspective of the scholastic philosophy which has been the framework through which we both viewed and explained our theology and our adult catechetics is out of date and needs further development. It was very likely to be out of date in some respects, because it has not suffered significant development since the 13th century. Indeed, the very *Summa* of St. Thomas is still clearer, better expressed, and much more convincing than some of the manuals based upon him which were my own staple diet here in the Eternal City some thirty-five years ago. It is unlikely that the world which had moved into the atomic age, the world of Marx, Darwin, Freud, and Einstein, to mention only typical names, could be corrected and won back to Christ by naked application of the learning of the Middle Ages. Were St. Thomas alive today he would be livid at our stupidity and complacency. He would at once set himself to develop, realign, and enlarge upon his own works, using the new learning and the new techniques of today.

No doubt he would have made a wonderful job of **it**, but since unfortunately he now has other and more rewarding things to do, we lesser spirits have urgently to undertake the task as best we can. Such a development and realignment of the “*philosophia perennis*” can be educed. It does not require the jettisoning of the traditional theology of the Church, nor of the entire perspectives of the traditional philosophy of the Church. After the late Council there took place, in the centres of higher learning in the Church, the wholesale jettisoning of traditional philosophy and theology of the Church, and I am bound to say that the undue subordination of all things to Ecumenism helped the process on, for the theology of the non-Catholic ecclesial communities has long been enervated by the same rationalist principles. Most of our bishops had little idea that such a Palace Revolution had occurred during and after the Council in their

universities and seminaries. They gave these new, eager minds free rein with the best of intentions. In fact, however, the old had been discarded, but nothing new and more true had been developed to replace it, and to fulfil the hopes of the Council. The only alternative was the radical humanist alternative which the Church had rejected with emphasis and fear sixty years earlier, and that alternative even in its most modern presentation is still untrue, and the cause of the totally unexpected and devastating fruits of change which we see all around us.

This theme is too large to pursue in detail, although it is the one all important issue which confronts the Church today. We cannot refuse to face it, for a divided Church and a dual and conflicting magisterium does not attract apostles. Neither can we send apostles who profess themselves to be still uncertain seekers after the truth, and who have not been formed in mind and heart according to the personality of Jesus Christ. The most urgent work before the Church today, and the Synod of Bishops which meets periodically at Rome, is to reaffirm the literal Divinity of Christ, the certainty and inerrancy of the magisterium, and the full doctrine of the faith which follows upon the incarnation of God: consequences which are openly denied in her seminaries and pastoral training centres. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

After that, we are called not to another era of “fortress Vatican” but to bring forth from the Treasury of the Faith, as householders of God, “things both old and new”⁷. That is to say to forge a new synthesis of Catholicism and the proven wisdom of the modern age. Very briefly: we have to cease to be afraid of Evolution, whether as a biological theory, or in the more important aspect of a unifying philosophy of growth and development over all created being in the universe. In this philosophical sense, this outlook or ethos is all pervasive of modern life and underpins the conscious and the subconscious mentality of the young. We can show how this process of Creation manifests the existence of God Transcendent, because the Universe is an equation of inter-dependent beings poised in a meaningful relationship, and remaining a unity even in most complex ascent of being. Equations, whatever their sort, are never random. We can also show the real distinction, as principles of being, between matter and spirit, now very largely denied in the Catholic schools, and in this bring a vitally needed principle of correction to the extremely influential thought of Teilhard de Chardin. We can show, for instance, that

living matter is still instinctual in being, because the merely organic is *programmed*, that is, it is controlled and directed with just one value towards an equally fixed material environment. But man is not so defined, man is free. Somehow that brain of man escapes the physical need of being programmed to an environment, the material necessity of all physical brains, which underlies indeed the computerized science of our times.

How can this be? Because more than the brain explains man. In man, matter becomes, of its own order, directly relative to the spiritual soul, and man passes out of the order of the physical environment for his law of life and being. God becomes the environment of Man: as St. Paul put it to the very sophisticated and scientific audience of ancient Athens, “in Him we live and move, and are, and have our being”. This principle can be developed all the way from the necessity of the primeval revelation to man, even to the Incarnation for man of the Eternal Word made flesh, and the unique and wonderful function in our lives of the Holy Eucharist. We will find here only development, not contradiction. Humanism makes man his own law of life, measure, and fulfilment. God is the measure of man’s life, his increase in wisdom, and his inner joy and moral grandeur. We can show how. We can crown creation with Christ. Humanism in fact, since it crowns creation falsely with self-sufficient man, crowns it with Anti-Christ.

We can also show that the spiritual-physical union of nature which is a man was attuned for law of life and being to God in the beginning, and that withdrawal from this relationship of life and grace must create a true and devastating fall in the status, orientation, and harmony of the natural powers of man. In brief, we show that original sin is a true lesion of man’s nature and state, and is not the natural leftovers of creation by Evolution, nor just a manifestation of the ignorance and perfectibility of human nature. We can show all of this, and so much more. The theme cannot be pursued here, but the theme is all important today.⁸

Application to the Formation of Apostles

The matters concerning which I have been speaking to you are not abstract themes above your heads or your competence. You dare not persuade yourselves it is so, because the formation of the personalities of young apostles is affected vitally and immediately by the conclusions we draw in the matters just mentioned concerning God and Man, matter and spirit, love and

human sexuality. The Humanist perspective of Creation—and I am bound to say that, much as he would have disavowed it, the uncorrected details of Teilhard's thought are being used to further the Humanist perspective—makes God one with Creation, and Revelation to be the evolution of higher human idealism within that immanent evolution of Creation.

In that case, the Revelation of God is simply the ongoing process of human insight through history, and every man measures this wisdom against the evaluation his own conscience makes about it. We are seeing the confusion, darkness, and babel of voices to which this leads. There is no transcendent God against whose eternal truth and light we measure ourselves for inspiration in the truth, or for repentance and conversion. The Divinity of Christ is only supreme human excellence, and Christ himself may well be superseded in time. Indeed, the final Anti-Christ will reasonably and logically be expected to make just this claim. It is the culmination of total Humanism.

There is no use pretending that all of this has nothing to do with seminary or novitiate training. One young priest brought up on these conclusions from reading this type of theology, put it this way to a friend of mine at a meeting of our National Priests' Council three years back, when they were talking about prayer while walking in the grounds: "It is different for you, Hubert, you were brought up to believe in a personal God, but for me, everything is God". So, he did not believe in prayer, except as the expression of a creative urge towards betterment. There was no longer union and communion with the One Living God who is also *Person*.

In precisely the same way, the problems and rebellions over love and sex which pervade the entire life of the young today, and not least in our seminaries and novitiates, derive directly from the teaching that matter and spirit are but one order of being, and besides, there is no such thing as original sin. In this case, the sexual orgasm is always the expression of love, rising through different levels, and having different degrees of joy and meaning. It is capable of being totally separated from procreation, which is only its basic, biological meaning. It becomes an intrinsic symbol of love not only between man and woman, but between man and man, woman and woman. I need hardly tell you that the evaluation of love which follows from a false definition of man's nature, and a false definition of what sin is, is the real reason for the revolt against celibacy, and for the denial or doubt of the whole validity of the consecrated life of love

with chastity. Therefore, the head-wrenching things I have been asking you to consider and to follow are completely relevant to your problems, either directly or a little further removed down the intellectual scale. We cannot restore and win back, except we answer the issues of man and God, Humanism or authentic Christianity, in the fundamentals, and in an inspiring way. This alone will give also the balance between orthodox Catholicism and a fruitful, humble Ecumenism.

I will leave this sphere of the fundamentals now, in order briefly to make suggestions on the training of the modern girl in the Religious Life, since I was originally asked to do just this. Let there be freedom of expression, behaviour, thought, and initiative even as there is for young men. The modern girl is educated now, up to say the age of eighteen, together with boys for the most part, and in any case expecting the freedoms and moral dignity accorded to a boy. Do not let the mentality of the chaperone, which in days past dominated so many of the Religious Orders of Sisters, remain with you. With this freedom in work, play, and expression there must be, for both man and woman the most strict honesty and sincerity in one's loves and friendships, an honesty which must be openly asked for, the more freedom is conceded. There must also be an exact, and most definitive philosophy of human love, but the details of what I have already told you we cannot consider now. In the priest, I think, we have to stop talking of celibacy as a supreme sacrifice and a beautiful symbol of something or other. It is not a supreme sacrifice, and it is not a symbol of something, though it is the reality of something. We must make it clear that the living of celibacy in the pastoral or the Religious priesthood is the living of the full, rich human love of Jesus Christ. There are many degrees of love, and though all of them are holy, not all of them are mutually compatible in one human life and attainment.

When I was a heart-stricken youth of nineteen, there was a song going around, the refrain of which stated: "but you can't marry ten pretty girls". It answered my crisis, and made the Church's point as well. If you are going to respond with love to a noble, delightful, and open personality, you can go on doing this all your life, and you cannot take that love to bed every time. That is precisely what the modern world is trying to do, to the breakup of marriage as an institution, and the slavery to sensuality and even drugs of millions of good boys and girls. We

must teach them that you can love freely if you will give up 'free love'. You can love as real persons with a love which is a fulfilling experience, wide ranging, and yet free. You learn to separate out from this experience not the love which is joy, nor even the sensible warmth which accompanies it, but exclusive possessiveness and the sexual in the restricted meaning of the word. To achieve this much, a tremendous sincerity is needed, utterly clear and certain moral principles and a constant living in the presence of God⁷ All your human love is shared with Christ, indeed derives through Him, and in all whom you love you desire the increase of Christ, possessed in the fruition of peace.

Love As The Fulfilment Of Apostleship

This type of philosophy of love is the only one which will hold the modern youth. Once again, their lives must be ruled in this age either by Christ the King or by the wisdom of an unaided and fallen Humanism. In practice, it means you teach a way of life in which the physical function is defined by its primary meaning in nature, a meaning defined through the wisdom of the spirit, which in the last analysis is the wisdom of God through which Creation is poised. The means by which you do this is grace, the life within a man which proceeds from union and communion with the Indwelling Trinity.

This is the only way of life by which young men and women of modern culture can move and mix freely with all the freedom of modern life and still retain the dignities of fidelity and chastity in their personal lives and marital relationships. It requires a higher level of personal, cold-blooded and deliberate holiness than was general in the Christian population in more conformist ages. The alternative to this way of life is the virtual identification of love and the passion of desire, so that whatever qualifications you make about the quality and meaning of your love, the sexual union, or at least the sexual act, becomes an intrusive necessity in each and all of your loves. The contraceptive pill and device becomes the only remedy to the heterosexual problems that arise, while the homosexual situation becomes just one of many normalcies of love. The addiction to compulsive sensuality remains at all times, and destroys every freedom of the spirit.

Observe that this down to earth problem of the relationships of priests and nuns to their

charges, and of the relationships of men and women in modern office and factory life, is also in its alternative between the Humanism of Christ, and the Humanism of fallen man, the same issue of deep philosophical principle we touched upon earlier. There is no solution to pragmatic problems unless the intellectual problem is first recognized and then resolved. We call Christ the man of sorrows, but He was so because of our sins. His sorrows did not proceed from within Himself. In Himself—and Christ had only one personality actually, the Person He was, the Divine Person—Christ was the man of noble joy and surpassing self-fulfilment.

St. John could not have loved Him as the beloved disciple⁹ unless deep, mature, and most holy fulfilment in love as an experience proceeded from the personality of God made man. The same evidence is contained more briefly in the Magdalen's rapturous embrace to the Risen Lord even if the Lord did, very gently discourage her.¹⁰ In calling us to chastity as priests, or brothers, or sisters, Christ is not calling us to noble frustration, but to a deeper and more fulfilling love. In marriage also, there is not complete joy down the years of life together unless the mutual love deepens in Christ, and with Christ, and according to the mind of Christ. Therefore tensions and a certain irritability and mutual boredom develop when, for whatever excuses, the true order and relationship between sense and spirit is not obeyed in the living of married life. The order of truth which God defined in the Creation, through the mind of the Eternal Word from which all things proceed, is also the order of truth in which, experientially and in the human soul, love has to be lived, if that love is to be perfect and to be serene. In a discussion on the meaning of sexuality in marriage, a well-known British authoress who had done so much to attack the doctrine reaffirmed in *Humanae Vitae* wrote "sex is for loving": she meant that the baby was your own decision. I corrected her with "sex is for children: in a state of loving," which is a very different attitude to life, marriage and sex.

In the Religious vocation then, we teach the aspiring apostle that ours is a vocation of loving indeed. This love cannot be serene, pure, and true—cannot be joy in the sense in which that word translates the Latin *Gaudium*—unless it is specified through truth, and matured in wisdom. The purely emotional and subjective 'love' which has no specific focus of knowledge and truth at all, sinks rapidly into becoming a diffuse, and dissipating experience. There is little need to add that if we teach and preach a love which is full and free and outgoing, that we have

also to teach all those restraints and checks to our very loveable, but very fallen nature which must accompany human affection if love is to be sincere and preserved from both the sudden storm of lust and the slow fossilisation of possessiveness. There is nothing in this subject-matter **in** the wisdom of the saints in past generations which is out of date now, or which can be ignored by a liberated generation.

The price of loving with a great freedom and a deep joy is both eternal vigilance and exquisite personal humility. This needs to be said not only of the general life and relationships of Religious, but especially of the relationships between priests and nuns, and obviously the more so in youth. It is to be expected that nobility of spirit proceeding from mutual love of Christ will prompt a special love between good priests and good sisters. The philosophy of immediate flight merely destroys the personality. But, if prompted by Christ, let it be shared with Christ, and purified by the norms of Christ as we know them through the masters of the spiritual life. No one is worthy of true love who is too little to be humble, too stupid to be afraid of his or her impulsive weakness. Instead of the embarrassment and excessive reticence which surrounds this matter in Religious Life, there should be a much more open and happy admission both of honest love and also of personal and very natural problems. If this were so, there would be fewer priests and nuns whose personalities were very unattractive to the young apostle, and fewer defections among deep and sensitive spirits. I am not quoting from him verbally, but St. John of the Cross gives us the supreme norm of all genuine love when he teaches that if the love of the friend withdraws from God, then that love must be set aside, or made more pure and sincere.¹¹ If the love of the friend is one with peace of heart and loyalty to Christ in conscience and in vocation, then that love is true and spiritual. It is a simple test, but to apply it and live it is exquisite wisdom and sometimes a painful purification of heart and intention.

Mission In The World

The modern girl will not be attracted to the Religious Life unless she feels that she is accorded the same freedoms and opportunities as a man, and is treated as equal in dignity with a man. The field of work is obvious: education of every kind, nursing, and missionary evangelism, counselling in the many aspects of social welfare, pastoral visiting and formation in the parish,

the deanery, the district. There are also many cultural and intellectual activities through which men and women today seek to understand their world and themselves. In Britain these are increasingly attained through the newly conceived community and cultural centres which have direct links with the schools or the community. Wherever there is opportunity to bring men, women and children to know God and to love Him, and to form the majesty of God in their faces and personalities, there is the ministry of apostleship, there is the 'one thing necessary' which Jesus tried to reveal to Martha, and there is the identity of our lives as priests and nuns.

Yet, see that you retain, however wide-ranging your work, the mutual comfort and basic love of the community of which you are a member. In Christ we are called into a family, called into a familial love. This must mean a definite rule of life and association, and also a rule of obedience. Apostles, from the college of bishops to any sisterhood, are also a team, and there is no co-partnership in work and ministry without obedience. It is written also that "a brother who is helped by a brother is like a strong tower"¹²: the same is true for the sister who is helped by a sister. Hiving off in print frocks in pairs, with a typewriter, to a bed-sitter, is a pathetic folly. The Kingdom of God is not brought in by conceited gimmicks, but many a girl has been ruined by them, and many an Order is in process of being ruined. When Christ invited us to leave father and mother, husband and wife, children or lands for His Name's sake and the Gospel's, He also promised us one hundredfold. But, as was remarked earlier, in the same coin of love, brothers and sisters one hundredfold, and children to be loved without number. This basic, family love in Christ is first in our calling, it must be the main formative influence of our life and works, and our mutual defence in persecution and in sorrow. We cannot do without the community, and the community cannot be projected except through prayer, chastity, poverty, obedience and familial love.

Under normal circumstances the religious, and the pastoral priest also, needs some distinctive dress. I do not regard this myself as a protection against temptation, which seems to me another derivative of the chaperone mentality which is so stunting of mature personality. I do regard it as a witness to Christ and as a sign of commitment. It also becomes a sign of a way of life and works which make you the sort of person you are. This both attracts the young to join

you in your mission for Christ, and says in effect that without that dedication, prayer, and pondering in God, you do not become that sort of person—an apostle. This is the reason why Orders and Congregations which have given up the rule and the habit, and often true community as well, are disintegrating around us. Psychologically speaking they identify with ‘the world,’ that secular ethos of preoccupied mankind, which asks eternally with Pilate, its age-old symbol, “What is truth?”, and then goes its troubled way. We identify with Christ, and the household of the faith, and we trust that through that identification we can enlighten and sweeten the world. We will never call apostles from the world by identifying with the world; to do so leaves youths and girls who are in the world thoroughly bewildered.

Is the ministry of the modern woman to be Holy Order also? No. As time is very short, one can only make a brief speculative suggestion to reinforce the certain face of apostolic tradition. God would not have made man male and female except He needed the womb of Mary— from the beginning of time, from the poisoning of the Universe—for the Incarnation of the Word. For through Christ all things are membered together. There had to exist in Creation the vehicle which is the natural way of bringing human life into the world without it being also the determination of created personality. Sexual union is a true creative work with God. It brings into being not only human life, but through and with God, the human person. But Christ is not a human person. Christ is the pre-existent Eternal Word through whom all things are made as their Exemplar. God needed the permission of Mary to be able to use her flesh and her womb to bring into earth and time the already Living Word who is God as Son of Man. He needed the vehicle through which life is given, without being determined to existence as a person by the created will. This latter would have been impossible. For me, this is the meaning of exegesis of the vision of John, in the Book of Revelation, in which he sees “a woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and crowned with twelve stars.”¹³

Now, apart from the High Church Anglican, non-Catholic theological systems are systems of imputation of grace, and ‘holy gifts’, and their systems of ministry are delegation and nomination from God, whether through the congregation or not. For the Catholic, both Roman and Orthodox, it is otherwise. We are engrafted into a Life. Our relationship to the Godhead through Christ is truly *ontological*, of the very nature of being. We are made through the

characters of baptism and confirmation, co-sharers of the Divine Nature. It is the same with Holy Order. This is, as Paul states: "A Great Mystery, in Christ and in the Church" and we have no time to develop it. But as you know, although our relationship to Christ in the Mystical Body is not one of univocal physical identity in being, it yet transcends the order of the merely moral association. It is an insertion, in the order of charity and adoption, into that Divine Life which God has by very nature of being. In the character of the ministerial priesthood too, we minister *in the person of Christ*. He acts through His minister in the Holy Eucharist, the forgiveness of sins, the solemn definition of doctrine, as in His own person. It is more than a deputation or delegation it is an assimilation to the Person of Christ, whether it be as priest, as prophet, or as king.

Now Christ in the flesh is sexually a man. His very manhood manifests the majesty of the Godhead as creative power more fully in the flesh of the male than of the female because as has been said, the female exists in complementary service to the Godhead, so that human nature may be given to Christ without merely human personality. In the words of St. Paul, in this sense, the man is for God, and the woman is for man, but the man is only through the woman. We cannot extend across the ages the ministering personality of Christ, as "alter Christus," except we perfectly and fully extend that same Personality as He really is and exists, and the personality of Christ as Incarnate is in the form of the male.

We need not however, be jealous of each other's gifts. The purpose of the participation by other men of the personal ministry of the Man Christ is to increase in us that life which is a participation of the Divine Being; and the Divine Being is without sex, and in Christ, in this gift, there is no distinction of male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free. All exists for this supreme configuration to God through Christ, and every honour from God, however great, even the character of the ministerial priesthood, is incidental to this supreme gift, to which and for which all things, even the Incarnation of God Himself, have been given.

As human culture becomes more intellectual, the essential equality of spiritual nature between man and woman will be manifest by equality of work and status in most spheres. The familial nature of man, by which both man and woman are necessary for new being will not change, nor will the psychological harmony of different functions of ministry one to another.

However liberated women become, we will not transcend the family, the familial nature of society, nor the familial Church. The development of human nature will perfect human nature in its order, but not change that order. Till the end of time, then, he who is 'alter Christus' must be *Alter Christus*, and Christ is not a woman.

In Conclusion

One can say to you from personal and happy experience that eager young vocations can be won for Christ in numbers as great as the past. We must however offer them a firm, clear, and coherent doctrine which is truly one continuity with the past teaching of the Church, while it opens out new vistas of majesty in Christ, upon the age of today. Our personalities must underline our words in what those personalities are and the impact they make. We must also be able to give the explicit testimony: "If I had my time over again, I would choose the same again, but with fewer hesitations; though I am not sure the good Lord would say the same for me!" We must rally the Church to a clear, coherent and firm teaching again in seminaries and novitiates. Rome has given a lead in documents such as *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, and it is for bishops to have the courage to insist.

It is no charity to let a situation of loss of faith through false Humanism develop. The men and women, boys and girls, who are lost to the Church, and to the Religious Life through it, change so sadly in their very personalities, as we know from our own friends. The first thing that goes is prayer, then their chastity, and after that there is no knowing what else they may lose. At the same time, we rally to the fullness of Christ's truth, we have to offer men the full and perfect vision of all things, and the disciplines of every wisdom, gathered up in majesty in the crowned Head of Christ the King, King and fulfilment of all wisdom, divine and human.

This is the vision and development which, as the world fuses into one economy, and soon into one culture, will fulfil the aspirations of all learning, the new and the old. The answer is in the Church, true Humanism is in Christ's humanity alone, through His Godhead. We will find that Jesus does today draw good young men and women as their true magnet, if He is presented to them in the majesty and the unity of His wisdom, His love, His mercy, and His surpassing redemption. For the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory is His, forever and ever.

NOTES

¹2Samuel 1:26

²John 11:28

³Galatians 2:20

⁴Psalms 1:2-3

⁵Mark 10:29-30

⁶Development of Doctrine: The Introduction, peroration

⁷Matthew 13:52

⁸For fuller development see *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (1970) by Edward Holloway

⁹John 21:20

¹⁰John 20:17

¹¹cf. *St. John of the Cross: Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, Book 3, c.23

¹²Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 6:14

¹³Revelations 12:3 ff.

REFLECTION ON THE PURGATIVE WAY

This reflective meditation is not precisely in line with the meanings of St. John of the Cross, in his division of the pilgrimage of the spirit through the purgative way, into the illuminative and finally (in the saints!) into the fullness of the unitive way in this life. Yet one's musings do bear a relationship to the teaching of the saint and the processes he outlines in the work of God within the soul; processes however which he is at pains to stress differ in order, time sequence, and combination of aspect, in the pilgrim way of each and every individual personality. The thought which came originally to mind, was to offer a short meditation on purgatory in old age, which is not quite the same thing as old age as purgatory,—which alas in so many ways it is. It became clear that the theme had important relationships to every age of life, even though it has some special relevance to our relationship to God in old age.

Trial by ordeal

For the theme is the pain of self-recognition, and that pain is common to all the ages of life, though there is a special sort of self-recognition, and of pain in that, which belongs to the eventide of life. What we are talking about is something more than guilt, although especially in youth guilt will have its place in such self-recognition, and to a degree greater than the pain of which we are thinking, which is really a pain born of love. It is a pain born of love, but yet of a love which is so very imperfect.

This writer can remember a little boy of eleven years old, who just hated to have to take his snotty-nosed little brother with him everywhere he went on a Saturday. His friends were not accepting: "You got that kid again? Oh hell, we don't want him, he can't keep up with us, and he's a nuisance", and so on. So once, that bloody-minded big brother, having the kid on his own, walked him into a rapidly approaching electric storm. The kid howled to go home, begged to go home. No way, said big brother, you want to come out with me when I don't want you? OK, we are going on! The big brother felt guilty; deliberately, rottenly guilty, and hardened his heart against conscience and God. Suddenly there was a flash of lightning so close that it was more purple than white, there was a crackling noise from it before the thunder roared, and big brother underwent a catharsis.

Was he afraid of death? Not a bit of it, he never thought of it. He was afraid of God—terrified of death and judgement, of the Living Presence of the Living God against whom he was hardening his heart in an act of bitter, juvenile, uncharitableness. He was afraid of hell, as the just punishment of the cruel of heart. They turned and sprinted for home, and that Saturday evening big brother went to confession. The priest gave him three Hail Marys in the usual tired, kindly voice; a bit like getting money out of a hole in the wall of the bank with your credit card. He thought nothing of it, probably was a bit amused, probably recognised big brother and visualised little brother, and let the waters of human sin roll on their polluted way for the better part of another hour. But, a certain young man had learned a lesson, an existential lesson about conscience, God, and the Living Presence of the Lord of Love. One hopes it made a difference, for sure it is that he never forgot it.

But if such fear is based on a basic love ignored, as it is, certainly there was an awful lot of sheerly servile fear there. And servile fear—the fear of punishment, the fear of dread—is better than nothing at all. But there is a pain of the spirit, a pain of the soul which is deeper and purer, because it is a pain of love. It is this more worthy ‘purgatorial’ pain we wish to consider now, although alas, it is a pain born of sin and selfishness. Yet—as in our lives and friendships —there is many a pain born of selfishness and shame, and ‘letting down’ those we love. At the base of the pain is a love of the other which makes the pain more searing.

Parable of the spider

There are many types of such pain of conscience. Many a time in the confessional people may speak of a lasting pain, a pain of shame and regret at perhaps the mental persecution of a husband, wife, or elderly relative who had become so big a burden, a burden under which finally one collapsed with more than a touch of neurosis. But the type of pain of conscience which one would like to speak of now is especially the pain of the sincere and the good who have a besetting sin. It will usually be a sin of the body, sensual sin especially impurity, and always of course in the committing there will be an element of addiction.

There can be many degrees in this pain of failure, maybe constant failure. It can exist in people who would surprise you. It has been a constant factor in the spiritual direction given by this writer to the young, to tell them to take the pain of failure, of self-recognition, “with both hands, and let it burn”. It is the only real penance for the sin. Yet, the burning must be pure burning—that is to say, without brooding, proud fury at oneself, or the relief of self-pity. To

wallow in self-pity can actually lessen the pain of purgation. It concentrates the spirit upon itself, accepts worthlessness with near despair, and ‘resigns’ from the ascent of the Mount Carmel of the spirit. We must never do that. Even trapped house spiders don’t do that. They go on trying to climb up the sides of the bath, relying on their own legs until they wither with exhaustion.

We do not rely on our own legs. As the sons and daughters of God, we are powered by the grace of God, a divine ‘transmission’ within us. It is the very moment we become subconsciously complacent—‘I’ve been going along so well now for quite a time,—that beginning to rely on our own legs, we fall to the bottom of the bath. Poor spider! It is not only spiders who do it. St. Peter did it, when he jumped into the roaring sea: *“Lord if it is you, bid me come to across the water”*. Come then! It was the loving, loyal Peter, for sure: but also the ‘brave me’ Peter. At once, relying on his own legs, he realised that you can’t walk on waves—panic button—*“Lord save me”* (Mt 14.28-33). There is a touch of sheer humour, almost mischievous humour, I always think, in the answer of Christ, as he reaches out his hand,—*“Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?”*. The emphasis added is mine, but the text will take it.

The Confession of St. Paul

St. Paul of course knew much the same experience, at least in my opinion, although by immediate recourse to God, it looks as if he did not fall to the bottom of the bath. The reference is to the time, (and he is ‘boasting’ to the Corinthians with a touch of irony against himself) when after being rapt to the highest degree of ecstasy in God—whether in the body or out of the body, he could not tell—he was almost overwhelmed by *“a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me”*. Now I do not go along with the modern commentators; to me, they are just a bit wimpish. They presume that Paul is talking about some humiliating physical illness or symptom, and he does drop hints in other places of his Pastoral Letters that he had them. I just do not believe that a man of Paul’s driving, dynamic spirit and sheer clarity of mind would ever have felt utter devastation at the onset, howsoever sudden, of some physical faulting in this mortal coil. But, if the *“sting of my flesh”*—and that is powerful language—had been a searing, libidinous series of impure temptations or surges, oh yes, that indeed would humiliate him to the depth of his being.

For his being had naturally and supernaturally been exalted to the highest heaven. When in panic he besought the Lord to take it away from him, the answer of the Lord was a bit like the remark to Peter: *“my grace is sufficient for you. It is my power which is made perfect in your weakness”*. It is the only way spiders ever climb stubbornly right up the bath and over the top.

There is another place where Paul remarks that, in the treasures of the contemplation of God, and the balsam of the inner grace of God “*we carry this treasure in earthenware vessels*”. There is no direct indication whether it was before or after that other experience.

I am very, very fond of the *Imitation of Christ*, it is one of my favourite books of reading, meditation, yes and spiritual reproof! But, if it has a flaw among great virtues, it would be the tendency to overdo the emphasis upon the worthlessness of our poor, lost selves. On the other hand it has passages of beautiful and tender reassurance, such as “but now, having recovered thy spirit after the storm, grow thou strong again in the light of my mercies says the Lord. For behold I am at hand to recover thee, and restore thee not only to thy former self, but with abundance and beyond all former measure”. It is book 3, chapter 30. I sometimes give it either in Confession or after counselling. It is so easy to remember.

The eye of God

Now to return to the essential point, the sense of utter misery, even despair, after repetitive falls into sins, especially but not only sins of the flesh. It is important not to wallow in sheer hopelessness or self-hate, or self-pity. Sheer hopelessness is close to despair, and is a sin in itself, because it is a perverse form of the sin of pride. To wallow in self-pity is to lose the whole point of the inner misery. Such people and such souls do love God, that is the oh so important point. They do love Him, but there is this awful addictive weakness and the oft accepted and greedily accepted lusting in itself. St. Augustine knew all about that just before God conquered heroically in him by grace —for Augustine himself never conquered.

He mentions in the *Confessions* how his former sins, lusts and addictions plucked like seductive nymphs at the fleshly garment of his spirit, saying “art thou really going to banish us for ever; how canst thou ever be happy without us? Have we not been thy constant companions down thy years”¹. After his conversion he writes, “then did I come to know that no man (or woman!) can be pure and continent without Thee!” The spider had done the impossible, it had climbed out of the trap. But with men, it is impossible. With God all things are possible!

Sign of Peace

The importance of taking the agony of failure again with both hands, and letting the pain burn without mercy, is that if it is so taken, it is born of love, born of grief, not born of self-hate or self-pity. This is purgatory. This is the eye of God and the holiness of God, the tropic, equatorial heat of

God beating upon the squalor of the spirit, and all our deep ingrained selfishness, littleness and disjointed values and drives. Yet, if joined to God in love, almost in a hopeless sort of love (“oh, you of little faith, why do you doubt”) the cancers of our hopeless selves are laid bare to the radiation of the Sun of Justice, and through the pain the radiation heals.

The first sign is peace, then an utter humility, a love that dares not be more than timid, a sense of convalescence, weakness after a grave illness. Yet the first sign is the inner kiss of peace. How often will Christ forgive His brother if he sins against Him. “*Seven times? I say to you not seven times, but seventy times, seven times*”. But the Lord never counts. It is important to realise that the searing eye of God is the cause, at least the primary cause, of this misery of soul in those that love Him, but are weak, especially under the appalling pressures of addiction. It does not have to be drink, drugs, tobacco. Much more often it is sex, or in another relationship, a neurotic rejection of another (‘my Cross’) under daily stress.

The eye of God burns upon the weakness and the weak spot, but such pain born of love,—God’s for us, and ours for Him—is a healing pain, it is the real penance for sin. It is the essential expiation and rebuilding of Purgatory itself. There is no pain to liken it to except the pain of fire. Oh yes, St. John of the Cross does explain all this and much more in his book *The Dark Night of the Soul*, but because he goes on to draw a map of the whole process of greatness of soul, by which the saints go on to the highest—or almost the highest—perfection possible in this life, the rest of us forget that the essence of the Dark Night of the Soul is lived less permanently in the state of grief, pain and misery one has outlined above, and which is the lot of so many.

Such pain then heals and rebuilds. Yet there is never any final security, any passing beyond temptation. There is no guarantee, only the hand of God held fast. There is a piece of prosody which has become rather corny, it was written in a different context, but it may apply to the present one. I used to have it upon my desk when I was a young priest, until time and droppages took it the way of all created matter: “I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. But he replied: ‘Go out into the darkness, and place your hand into the hand of God. That will be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way’.” Pope or Prince, priest or peasant, there is no other safe way.

Terminus and Terminal

Did we not mention something about ‘purgatory in old age’ at the start of these ruminations? Well, yes. Of course old age is in itself a purgatory, in as much as it is a slow dying, the removal

year by year of something you used to be able to do, often for God's work, but now find too much. But no, it was not that sense of purgatory in old age that was intended. The reflection was that in older years there is something other than the bitter burning of spiritual pain. There is a more gentle, more constant, but very, very deep sort of pain with love. I have made this point often in the confessional to those of older years, and met with an enthusiastic recognition of the syndrome. It is the grief that the ingrained faults of long, long years—faults of speech, manner, temperament, judgement, petty selfishness—are still there, and that at this juncture along the road it ought to be otherwise!

Forgive me a digression, but it really happened. I was recently coming back from Preston on the Glasgow-Euston Inter-City train, when the 'voice' said "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your chief conductor speaking we are rapidly approaching Euston station where this train will *terminate*". In the event our arrival wasn't as messy as this made it sound. But the point is that in old age you are rapidly approaching the 'termination', and there is a grief, born not of frustrated ambition at not getting a *summa cum laude* from God, but actually a grief of love. You wish the sins and negligences of youth were not only forgiven, but overcome in their disordered effects and affects.

This too is a pain of purgation. St. John of the Cross has another likeness which fits the case. Speaking of our habitual sins and imperfections, he remarks somewhere that a precious damask curtain may have been damaged by some very stubborn stain. Over many a year it has been washed 'in the strongest lye', (we would say been given a going over with really good 'biologicals'); yet, he says, though the stain is not visible to the direct eye in strong sunlight, at the evening of the day, as the sun sets aslant, the outline of the stain will still appear in that softer, indirect light. The problem for some of us, is that it does not need the soft light of a setting sun to see the stain at all.

Yet, is not this experience just another of the sweet mercies of the Lord which we do not deserve? For this pain is purgatorial, it is a pain of expiation, and it does prompt a deeper love, even with the sadness of self-recognition. For, it says to us, 'hurry up': when you were young you didn't bother. There was so much time. Even in middle age it was 'oh, a long, long way off,—sorry God of course, but now there are things to do'. The prompting of this sort of purgatorial pain calls to a closer union with God. And in that lies a more resigned sweetness—the body being now so unable—a more contemplative prayer and a hope at least of more sweetness with people. It is a gift to be treasured, a retreat every day in itself. We said it was purgatorial, expiatory; yes, but it is

something more. It is sheer love from God. For the essence of purgatory is not purging, not pain, not even expiation, but the hastening of the Day of the Lord. In youth or in age, we only suffer because we are not fit to know and love Him as He is.

NOTES

¹ St. Augustine *Confessions* Bk. 9

THE FUNERAL MASS: PURPLE OR WHITE?

Have you noticed that we seem to be in the presence of another ‘palace revolution’ in the pastoral life of the Church? Nothing has been said by way of official information to the clergy, nor any consultation entered into with the clergy. The liturgy of the Requiem Mass is being quietly changed over from purple to white. In my experience of the modern Church, consultation does not take place until a contrary custom has been introduced and the wishes of ‘the authorities’ have become known. The diocesan directory is a beautifully produced and very informative document. It gives almost all pertinent information, except the age of the clergy. If one may judge from the *national* clerical directory, some of the local ones still give that information as well. In others it was stopped because, introduced without consultation of the clergy, some of them thought it impertinent information and there was a rumble of protest. Where it is printed, it makes gloomy reading concerning the decline and fall of the Church. Far more than the number of baptisms recorded, the rate of vocations to the priesthood is a clear indication of her true vitality. In fact, you do not need the diocesan directory to tell you the score. A glance around, especially at large gatherings like clergy funerals, tells you the score.

What is in the Book

Among the useful items in a diocesan handbook is the order of the day for the Mass and the Divine Office. It will give the daily seasonal Mass, any Mass commemorating the saints, and the colour of the Mass vestment to be worn according to the Mass. The directory will also give, where helpful, directions for the saying of the Divine Office of the day. This, the liturgical Prayer of the Church, is strongly recommended upon devout layfolk as well, especially in the shorter (and cheaper) form of the book of Morning and Evening Prayer. The thoughtful and prayerful layperson will not find a better or more scriptural manual of prayer, and in its recitation will be aware of a unity of communion with ‘the Church at prayer’ all over the world. The colours of the Mass vestment and other altar or lectionary drapes will vary according to what is most signified in the Mass of the season or of a saint: white or green, red or purple. Purple is the colour of penance, of intercessory prayer in need or supplication. It is the colour also of

expiation and of “preparation of spirit” in our lives. Purple is the liturgical colour for the seasons of Advent and Lent. There is some difference of stress between the liturgical seasons of Lent and of Advent, though both are seasons of penance, and of the prayer which seeks purification and deepening of spirit. Advent is more emphatically the time of “preparation of the spirit”, to enter prepared for a great event to come. The theme of Advent rings out in the proclamation of the Baptist: “Prepare a way for the Lord. Clear a straight path for him. Every ravine shall be filled in, every mountain and hill laid low, the crooked way made straight and the rugged way made smooth—then all mankind shall see the Salvation of God” (Luke 3: 4-5) This prayer mounts in the so-called “great O antiphons”, because each aspiration towards the Messiah begins with “Oh!” and is fulfilled in the Midnight Mass of Christmas time. Lent prepares us more specifically by a longer period of self-purification, pardon, reconciliation and communion with the mind of Christ, to identify ourselves with Him along the way of Palm Sunday, through the Eucharist of the New Covenant, to the betrayal and crucifixion of the Lord. Only by so walking with Him, and identifying with Him, can we enter also with Him into the renewal of life, and the sheer rapture and joy of Easter Sunday. In the journey of the Christian soul to God after death, overtones of both Advent and of Lent before Easter must enter.

The Purple Times

We cannot always be in a state of rejoicing before the Lord as if all was achieved in us. There have to be—as the liturgical seasons of the Church wisely provide—times of emphasis upon purification, upon penance and discipline, upon re-education into God, and that preparation of the spirit which is a sort of “getting down to it”. In the catechesis of youngsters, one has sometimes called purple and the purple seasons: “the colour of homework”. It is the colour of learning with pain, of hard beginnings, but of beginnings with hope of a harvest to come. It is the colour of the faithful but weak soul (and that is all of us) when we pray with a sense of being lost, of sadness, confusion, or not knowing where or how to go. Therefore, it is the colour of the sacrament of pardon and peace. It is the colour in which the Holy Spirit “prays within us with unutterable groaning and interprets and presents our prayers” (Rom.8:27). These are purple thoughts, thoughts of love but of love with expiation and renewal, and surely they

should be basically expressed in the *outward* sign of the Mass of Christian death, its hope, and its still pilgrim way up to the glory of the beatitude of God?

The Masses of the seasons will be white or green, purple, or briefly red, according to the season and its stress. The Masses for the saints will be white, or red for the martyr. These are festal colours. The saints have obtained their crown. The Church is sure of it and of them. Conferences of bishops have power to vary the liturgical colours of the Mass, but only the better to set forth, according to the culture of different peoples, the universal tradition and thought of the Church—not to vary that tradition. In the Greek and Latin traditions at least, purple and black have never been festal colours. Yet, there is a unique exception: a Mass which must be called a “feast” and is so-called and is in some sense festal, but not in the festal colours. This is the “Feast of All Souls”, the commemorative Mass of expiation for the souls in Purgatory. In all directories known to this writer, it is “P/B” (Purple or Black) in official liturgical colour. Purple is preferred to black, a colour which does not express redemptive life and redemptive hope, and which came late on the scene as a liturgical colour. The universal Order Book published for the Western patriarchate by Rome as the basis of local directories, states expressly that “in the Requiem or Funeral Mass, purple is to be preferred before black.” *There is no mention at all of white.* And, in a passing comment on the use of flowers (“not on the altar”), and of the restrained leadership of the organ, the traditional purple stress of intercession, expiation, and confidence in mercy asked and mercy to be received is maintained. The funeral Mass has, as a liturgy, been of one order with the Feast of All Souls, and without the consent of the Holy See it seems dangerous to change it.

“At Mass we are in Heaven”

On the day before the Feast of All Souls—the Commemoration of All Saints—the liturgical colour is white, indeed often expressed in more affluent churches in dazzling gold, the colour of Light and Life, the colour of “The Daystar from on high who has come to visit us” (Luke 1:78). This white and gold is the colour of blessedness and beatitude, the colour of those who have obtained and entered their crowning mercy *by God’s most certain gift and not by man’s*

presuming. This bold distinction of liturgical symbolism makes a striking contrast not only of rite, but of the teaching and formation of the People of God which the liturgical rite contains. The liturgy of the Church, especially her liturgy of the Eucharist and of the sacraments is the principal teaching tool of the Church. The liturgy is *drama*, not simply the proclamation of the word. The liturgy is teaching lived out in the 'public work' (liturgy means 'public work') the 'actio' or living environment which surrounds the very being of the Church on earth in her relationship to God Incarnate. For the Greeks, the Eucharist is simply and without qualification "the Divine Liturgy": the public action and communion of the People of God around the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In a certain diocese last year, a visiting theologian gave scandal to many of the priests at an in-service conference by saying something about the Eucharist being not so much the 'real presence' as the 'real absence' of Christ. However meant, and whatever he intended, this is dubious and negative thinking and a nonsense besides. The Liturgy which *is* the Eucharist is worked and centred around the Living Person of the Word made Flesh, who is also by that fact *the Bread made Man*. The good father's theology has the ethos of the new radicalism. In the liturgy of the East, once more, the communion of the Angels of God around the presence of The Trinity and The Lamb of God lying upon the altar is even more explicit and recognised than in the liturgy of the West. Yet for us also, the Preface which precedes all the eucharistic canons points a reality which is explicit enough, even though much of the teaching force of "Lord God of the hosts of Heaven" is lost in a decadent translation by "God of power and might". To the liturgist who interposes "but the word *hosts* means communion wafers to the people one must say: Dear sir or madam, every schoolchild knows that 'hosts' also mean vast numbers and mighty escorts. Do not patronize us, we are not morons, let us have the full vision of the truth.

The Estates that stand before God

The liturgy of the Eucharist is very much the *Life of the Real Presence*—the Lamb of the New Covenant and the Unleavened Bread of life. Because it is *a drama in the order of the ontological* (i.e. in the order of very being)—the re-enactment upon our altars of the Incarnation of God—the same Jesus remains in the Tabernacle, in the Tent of Meeting of the parish church, to be

adored and visited, loved and consulted by His People. Changes in the liturgy are changes in the public catechesis of the Church. A change of sign and emphasis is not simply a change in the mantelpiece decorations of the life lived and the life proclaimed in Jesus Christ. Changes in the sign—because the sign is also catechesis—affects the sacral order and proportion of the Faith as proclaimed. Changes have to be scrutinized not only for gains, but for losses and errors, and subtle derogations from the emphasis of tradition in the Church. The contrast the Church offers her people in the Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls, is stark but meaningful and complementary. These complementary feasts unite in one total communion of faith, hope, and love all three estates of the People of God: The Church Glorious, the Church Expiating, the Church Pilgrim. These three are all states and estates of grace, all of them in their proper *but differing* relationships membered into the one Real Presence of Christ Eucharistic and Christ Triumphant.

All Souls and month of Holy Souls

It is neither accidental nor incidental that in the heartbeat of the Church's pastoral life the Feast of All Souls ushers in with November, "the month of the Holy Souls", month of remembrance and of Masses offered for the faithful departed. For them, and hopefully for us contrite sinners of the Church Pilgrim, this thought ushers in—before Advent renews the Church's liturgical year—the Feast of Christ the King, the Second Coming of the Prince of Peace and Beatitude, in whom and for whom all creation will then say—not now in pain, nor in expiation, but in possession—"consummatum est". One has a right to ask of our readers, of bishops, yes and of the Holy See, whether the liturgical change apparently by stealth in the Requiem Mass from purple to white is not something more than a mere incidental. Are we in the presence of a change in the catechesis the liturgy speaks to us, of a derogation from the doctrine of purgatory and expiation, from the very possibility of eternal damnation, and of the importance of sin and the need with loving trust for humble prayer and conversion (the gospel *metanoia*) of soul? Are we being taught to take heaven for granted, with all its impact upon the full truth and the full sanctity of Christian life? The doctrine of hell, as also the existence of angels, is very unpopular and unfashionable among progressive theologians. Purgatory is rarely

mentioned and confession all but dead. Are we being bulldozed into one more 'horizontal' superficiality? The liturgical, as also the verbal catechesis of the Church, must be pastoral, that is it must be orientated not to the specialist nor even the well-instructed but to the run of the mill practising and not always practising Catholic. We could, by a simple change of vestment colour, be seeing a derogation from the doctrine of sin and the need for prayer, and from the expiatory importance of the Mass as offered for *the living and for the dead*. Certainly, the stipend given for the offering of a Mass is much rarer now among the people. There are certainly theologians who don't believe the stress matters, as there are many who do not accept the validity of the "Mass offering" at all.

The full meaning and purpose of the "ends of the sacrifice of the Mass" was beautifully expressed in the offertory rite of the Mass recently superseded. The offertory rite of the Novus Ordo Mass seems in this respect to be a poor substitute, and one must call attention to the ghastly expression: "will become our spiritual drink". This all plays into the hands of Lefebvre and his followers. It may well be that overtones of the new offertory rite can be found in the document called the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" or in St. Hippolytus, but if theology is not to be replaced by anthropology, so neither is it by archaeology. Infancy has its beauty, but we are all meant to grow to adult fulness. The Church also grows in the comprehension and expression of her fulness. If these various misgivings are unjustified, this writer at least would be profoundly grateful for a good theological presentation of the superior theology of the white, or 'paschal' Funeral Mass and Requiem Mass, and for an official reassurance, not from anywhere but from Rome.

Give an Account of your Stewardship

For there is no use pretending that everything that came out in the name of the Council has been for the good. In the European and North American provinces of the Catholic Church fungoid fruits of doctrinal and moral decay are very apparent. There are other Churches of the Catholic Church. In the Third World, and by way of a European exception in Poland, the full acceptance of the Second Vatican Council and its basic liturgy *together with* doctrinal, moral,

and liturgical conservatism shows dramatically different results. So decline is not, in spite of MgrLefehvre, related to the pastoral doctrine and decrees of the Second Vatican Council. but to their interpretation and implementation. Disturbingly, one thinks to see the same basic contradictions in the three yearly meetings of the Synod of Rome. We saw it in the controversy over the recognition of divorce and the admission of divorcees to Holy Communion. We saw it in the recent Synod over the offices, ministries, and vocations to be attributed to laypeople in the Church. The division is between a majority of the bishops of the developed West and a majority of the bishops in the less affluent and much humbler Third World. The differences at root redound into differences that are of the fullness of the Faith. The fruits the Council looked for, including abundant vocations, are manifest in the Churches of the Poor: the fruits of pride too apparent in the Churches of the Rich.

The liturgies of for instance Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion with its link both to Penance and the Mass of Corpus Christi, Marriage, and Requiem Mass and its Absolutions, these are pastoral teaching liturgies for parishioners of all ages of life. For many of our people they are, so sadly, the only real catechetics they ever get. It does matter what they say, what they proclaim, and what they seem to imply in the thought pictures of the man in the street. They are signs and symbols of our Faith and there should be no ambiguity in what they teach simple people. It does not seem to be absurdly trivial to make 'all this fuss' over the colour of a Mass vestment. The world still fails to understand, and still makes a matter of a cheap laugh, the splitting of the Christian world over a syllable: *hom~~o~~ousion* or *hom~~oi~~ousion*, but on that syllable depended the true Divinity of Christ or the Gnosticism at the root of ancient and modern dissenting doctrines of Christ.

The Unspoken Pressures

As this writer saw it in the south of England, it came in this way. From about 1968 there "happened" the "white" funeral. Nothing was said about it for or against. It happened usually at more prestigious churches and centres of liturgical leadership. On enquiry one was told simply that "it is done at this or that liturgical centre", "done on the Continent" or "you can always use

white for any other colour, bishops have power to vary all that now, you know” etc. At clergy funerals it still happened that most of the clergy wore purple, but among the progressives white increasingly appeared. It was the coming thing for the “man of the Church in the modern world”. Soon the very preference was being used to identify men as ‘conservative or ‘radical’ for we all knew that something more than the superficial was afoot. But authority said nothing at all as on so many pastoral matters at the time. One has to say that after a while, this abundance of purples and whites made the concelebrating clergy look like nothing so much as a venerable bed of mixed petunias, manifesting the disunity about important insights into doctrine, a disunity which persists until now. For this writer, it came to a head with the funeral of a bishop early in the seventies.

The mainly purple clergy were bunched in the church, but the leading concelebrants processed down the middle in white vestments—said variously to be “diocesan” or “borrowed from the seminary” or whatever—but vaguely official. There was a small purple dagger of a cross on the back of each vestment which could possibly signify the murmur “et tu, Brute”? or be like a nervous smile on the face of a bold little boy. The memorial booklet of the Mass was composed in white and gold. In an issue of FAITH for 1971 was the comment that “not even the most holy and loved of bishops should be buried in paschal white and gold. To give the crown of eternal life, to declare eternal glory obtained, that belongs to God and to no human presumption. In her liturgy, the Church gives it in the name of God, not her own, to the saints she canonizes.

She gives it in her Funeral Liturgy to infants or to adults who certainly could never have lost that white robe of innocence which the baptismal rite declares and gives back. For all of us who are conscious of deliberate sin, perhaps very grave sin, our faith and our hope, our confidence of mercy, our last gasp of the names ‘Jesus’, ‘Mary’ will and must have overtones of the act of contrition, and of that state of purgatory, expiation in love, and re-education into the Holmes of God which we hope and pray will be our lot. That for me is the heart of the matter. The Funeral Rite did wholly express that theology. I think it still should. Changed to paschal white and gold, one suggests it does not. It is a serious pastoral matter.

Creeping Devaluation of Asceticism

The need to raise the matter now arises because of the introduction in many dioceses of the “diocesan Mass vestment”. This rather undistinguished vestment—for it has to be cheap and mass produced—does not seem to be really necessary. It can make the clergy in procession look a mass of clones without personalities of their own. However, it is there, and through it the unspoken preference of a bishop can be expressed in this matter of the Funeral Mass in a new and very total way. The clergy funeral notice simply prescribes “diocesan vestment”, and this of course is a white vestment. Some dioceses may have different colours for different occasions. The one I am thinking of does not. It’s white. By this prescription, all concelebrating clergy are forced to wear white. It does reduce the ‘petunia effect’ but is it changing the expression of the mind of the Church? At a distinguished funeral lately for a deservedly loved and respected priest, one was saved only by a timely or untimely acute bronchitis from being the only recusant purple bloom in a sea of some two hundred whites.

One noticed again that the memorial Mass booklet was in interleaved sheets of gold and white. It may be and does look very beautiful, but is it a case of the superficial and subjective replacing a deeper, truer, and more comprehensive theology? Does it not say to the people: “It will always be alright on the night”. And is this what the Church means to teach? We saw the same thing in the decrying also, in the early seventies, of the practice of frequent confession, and then the effort to replace it by the general absolution. In that sacrament we now suffer from a vacuum in both respects. Basically, the attack on confession was a denial of the importance of sin, and of the importance of common sins of the flesh. All that mattered was a “fundamental option” towards God. He “takes us just as we are”. Is not the same false theology, destructive of spiritual greatness of soul, at least boosted by the automatic burial in paschal white and gold?

What we have, well done, seems best

One is told “but the liturgy of Christian death *should* be paschal. It is a matter for joy and rejoicing, and when properly explained to the mourners a source of consolation to them. We can be morally certain of the salvation of some people, especially brother priests, who went to

their God with their last breath a prayer, or after a long illness wonderfully borne". This is all granted, but that last dying prayer, did it express the paschal certainty, or was it a last breath of love, trust, contrition and abandonment to the loving mercy of God? If the latter, then let the Funeral Mass, especially in the clad person of the priest, express that same purple, that essentially Lenten thought that was coloured nevertheless by the paschal hope and victory of Christ. It seems that the *official* liturgy of the Roman Mass Order expresses this duality much more objectively and much more sincerely. In moderation there are flowers, perhaps in white and gold, and in the culture of all European peoples at least, these are a normal sign of mourning, consolation, and hope. There is the organ—but not blaring with triumphalism. There is the purple vestment going with a Mass that is from first to last a Mass of expiation, contrition, intercession, and humble love. There is at the head of the coffin the Paschal Candle, bearing the wounds that marked Christ's body after so bloody a triumphant and expiation for us. Surely the Paschal and the Purgative are thus most wonderfully shown forth, and a perfect and balanced lesson in the faith is taught by the liturgical catechesis of the Church.

First and Second Class Funerals

Once the clergy are buried with paschal white and gold the people everywhere expect and ask for it. Are only the priests first class citizens in the rite of Christian death and committal to God? Indeed, once diocesan authority is implicitly used by the recommendation of "diocesan vestment", then the clergy switch over automatically anyway. And this is obviously intended. What do you do in the case of the totally lapsed and purely nominal Catholic? We know there is an increasing frequency of parish priests refusing to officiate at the funerals of such. For this writer's part, one regards the new elitism with horror. It always totally alienates all children and relatives concerned. It also takes upon oneself an unjustifiable presumption of judgement, even as the white funeral seems to make a presumption which also belongs to the prerogative of God. In rather more parishes one can see a frank acceptance of the principle of the first and second class funeral. Many priests very understandably recoil from the all-white funeral for the totally lapsed, purely nominal, and often utterly indifferent Christian. They feel it makes a nonsense of the paschal theme, and obviously trivializes the whole exhortation to "watch and

pray for you know not the day nor the hour". They don't in any way intend to lessen the hope and prayer of divine mercy. None of us can judge how much an individual has been crucified by life and its pressures, and by its agnosticism, through which no help was ever given. They just sense that white is "inappropriate" and the mourners, often pretty lapsed themselves, who are busy committing the deceased to the infinite mercy of God, would also be a little surprised, unless the white becomes so automatic that nobody worries at all about what it means anyway.

Memorial Mass of Thanksgiving for "Life and Works"

This distinction of the first and second class funeral rite can be observed on the continent of Europe. On the television screen one has seen in news items, funerals in France for instance, which were celebrated in white. But, when scores of young French soldiers were killed by a massive bomb in the Lebanon—and no doubt many of them were a bunch of "three timers" (hatched, matched and despatched)—one observed the French hierarchy at the national Mass of mourning in purple! There should be no such thing as a first and a second class funeral. It is a most horrible hypocrisy. No man, no saint however great can anticipate the awards and the judgements of God: "in thy sight, no man living shall be justified". Let us all be in purple or all be in white, but please no ~Humanist' class distinctions before the throne of God.

Because of the coming in of the 'paschal' funeral, another subtle change of thought is creeping into the parishes. The Anglicans, at least, often celebrate what is called "*A Memorial Service of Thanksgiving for the life and works of N.N.*". Well, if the Church Catholic wishes to introduce any such, I am not going to discuss its merits or its theology here. It is not the same thing as the personal funeral service, even among Anglicans. It is certainly not the same thing as the Requiem Mass of a deceased Christian of whatever spiritual and worldly merits in the Catholic Church. At some Funeral Masses of the clergy one thinks to see overtones of the said Memorial Thanksgiving Mass. Certainly in the parish, this priest has been asked for the white funeral, together with opportunity after the homily (in which the family history and benefactions to the Church were to figure) for representatives of the community or of respected organisations to say their piece in homage to the dead. In other words, for the personal and family panegyric, a thing which is explicitly forbidden. This is also a variant upon

the first or second class funeral theme.

“To you all flesh must come with burden of sin”

Quite apart from the people and their gross, known, and secret sins, we priests know that dying we too are “purple souls” in the hour of our death. We did not enter, most of us, or at least get very far into, that “dark night of the soul” which is the purgatory of great saints. Willy-nilly we must enter it now. There is a paschal light at the end of the tunnel, brightening as the soul loves more fully in knowledge, expiation, and possession, but it is the liturgy for us of All Souls, not the Daylight yet of the Paschal joy of Easter. It would cheapen our Easter Morn before God to teach or manifest it otherwise. In the deeps of our being, and in the seal of confession we have known our own sins, and the sins of the people, and brother priests: “the scanty triumphs grace has won, the broken vow, the frequent fall”.

As we pass into the presence of God, we won't be presenting an admission ticket worked in white and gold with gold leaf edges. The Holy See should tell us whether the liturgy of the Funeral Mass should be the liturgy of All Souls or the Liturgy of All Saints. If wrong in preference, this writer will humbly accept a new ruling, for it will be *new* in the tradition of the Church. For himself he would—unless Holy Mother Church expressed a general contrary preference for her children—prefer to be buried in purple, and from a purple Mass. Flowers and music maybe; the proclamation of the Paschal joy and hope that stands in the Candle who is Christ, and not man's merits ... oh yes, please dear Lord! But the Paschal Crown is your crowning mercy, and You know it—no desert of mine. Not even Holy Mother Church and a multitude of white robed priest brethren can give me that. *“To You all flesh will come, with its burden of sin: Too heavy for us, our offences. It is You that wipe them away”* (Ps. 65).

A SERMON PREACHED AT ESHER

I don't believe in churches that are dual purpose buildings. Sometimes poverty forces that solution upon us, but it is makeshift, second best. There are people today who urge that all new churches should be dual purpose buildings. They would have a day-chapel, heated of course, and double-glazed to serve as a cry-chapel, perhaps with a revolving tabernacle, so that the nave or main hall, can be used during the week as a nursery school, a day centre for senior citizens, youth club at weekends or whatever you will. There are places like that not far across the river from here, and apart from anything else they stink permanently not of incense but of beer and tobacco—not really the odour of sanctity. For me, I like a church like our own here, the Church of The Holy Name, and of course the 'Holy Name' is 'Jesus.' This is 'Jesus' Church'. He lives here. Every morning He offers Himself to the Father anew, using the same words He used in anguish at the Supper two thousand years ago. He uses my tongue and hands, and your minds and hearts united with mine, but it is the same Person, Jesus, Lord of the Holy Name, who offers, who is priest, who is offered and who is received by His people in union and in a living communion.

The House of God

Then He stays here. This is his house, the House of God and the tabernacle of God's flesh and Divinity with men. In this church, designed as an ordinary town or village church should be (Cathedrals and Basilicas often just have to have a different solution), as you come in your eye catches the red glow of the Altar Lamp and moves centrally to the beautiful brass tabernacle that overlooks the altar of Jesus' daily and yet eternal Sacrifice. Here abides the 'real Presence' of Jesus. This small amount of white, consecrated bread within is the Bread of Life Himself. It is Jesus. It does not symbolize Jesus or speak of Jesus. The altar cloth says as much in the overhang before your eyes, for it reads in Latin: "Holy, Holy, Holy One". Some weeks when the cloths are changed it will declare the same Presence but with an invitation to you to come in a little more often and linger a little longer to pray, to visit Him. Then, it will read "the Master is here, and He is asking for you". Behind the altar, and the tabernacle above and behind it,

your eye must rise and your heart with it to the magnificent stained glass window which floods the nave with beauty and with teaching. Consider it. It proclaims the themes of Jesus teaching, healing, and feeding the people. The central panel features Christ crucified with Mary and John at his sides. But the same panel, and the whole masterpiece with it, is dominated from above by Christ emerging victorious from the tomb. Now that is how a church should be built, and how bricks and glass should talk to men. All of this sheds a lasting lustre on your former parish priest, Canon Desmond Leahy, who built it, and built it with no cost spared, in simplicity, but in perfect beauty and good taste.

A church should be if humanly possible in a street, a town or a village centre, best of all near market square or shopping complex. Then the people of God, and their children too, and sometimes their dogs with them, come in and pray, and candlelight flickers in token of prayer offered, and love and memory abiding. It is human, and it should be warm. Just a little background heating will do during the week. There should be shrines and statues, not too many, and not too garish, but human in every sense. The abstract does not raise the simple mind and heart to God, certainly not the child's mind. For in this House of Prayer God dwells, and you come in as his guest. Here we have nothing at all of stealable value thank God, and no real vandal problem. So the House of God, like many a house in village towns to this day, has a door open till darkness falls. It should be that way. Prayer is love; come in to pray and love, and teach your children to do the same. They flash past *Arbrook Lane* often enough on their bikes. As I have often said to you, this House is a room in all your homes and houses. It is more; it is a room that joins all your homes together in one. It belongs to you all as part of your home life, part of your family life. It joins in a physical sense as well as in a spiritual sense, all the homes and houses, big and small, of this parish into one *City of God* round here. This is what makes a parish, one family of God, around Christ's altar and living presence everywhere.

What does it matter if this House of God is empty, more or less, most of the day. Are not your own? Dad at work, Mum very likely at work, half-day perhaps, but shopping on the way home. The children, at school, often till 530pm in the evening, falling in wearily from school and train, and looking at once for something to eat. Often enough your own place does not come alive till evening time, when dad and mum and light and love, and food and warmth make it

shine with the life it protects. But you don't let it out as a day centre during the cold hours! Your church too, it comes alive on Saturdays and Sundays, in light and love, in prayer and worship, in people and all the busy concerns of meeting, doing, and caring. It lives for a while in the morning too, just like your own before work and school cause scurried flight. It lives in the evening often too, when there is Mass, or Benediction, or a group at prayer, or in a word when there is 'something on' around the House that is a room in the home of every family, and in the hearts of every family in this parish.

That is how it should be. Life is more than getting and making, typing and looking at computer screens. The Lord is not interested very much in the spewing out of packets of food and sink cleaners and what have you. The heart of life is in loving possession, in knowing and in loving, and in being loved. When you come to church it is just the same, the quiet beautiful house of God, with maybe a lingering fragrance of flower and of incense, is the House of God, where you come to possess and to be possessed, to know and be known, to love and to be loved. And, the Lord is always 'in', always 'at home'; never too busy just now, and never 'not available' because it is siesta time.

The Wisdom of the Poor

Years ago in Rome, I was taught a lesson in this type of thinking. I was twenty years old, and standing with a group in St. Mary Major's admiring the mosaic of pure gold blocks within the roof and forming a frieze around the wall of the huge rectangular nave. I had not long before been appalled at what I had seen in the slums of Rome, in Trastevere and elsewhere. I remarked in very basic Italian to one working man standing near to me, that surely it would have been better to sell of all this and provide decent housing for the poor of Rome! His reply shocked me. "I am a socialist and a Marxist" he said (it was Mussolini's time in Italy as well!), but I believe in God, and count myself a Catholic, though I don't go to church very often. But you are a young fool, unfortunately all Englishmen lack judgement, and that's why you are at war right now. No, you should not destroy all this beauty to provide homes and food. You should take money and goods off the rich and redistribute wealth. The State should provide for its people. Have you ever asked yourself where all the beauty and art of the world is? It is in the

homes of the rich, or in museums. Nobody wants to visit museums. The Church is the only place a poor man can walk in, and say 'my Father's house, and it belongs as much to me as to the next man'. Men don't live by bread alone, but by beauty and the joy it gives. Let the churches be as beautiful as you like. Let it cost as much money as you like, so long as the poor and deprived can come in here, and be welcome, and enjoy it all. It lifts up their hearts". He was quite right of course, and it was a lesson I have never forgotten. The church is God's house and the house of the rich and the poor. In its beauty, and in the presence of the Living God therein, all people may rejoice. there is no other place on earth where this is true.

Into the church as well—the 'common room' that joins all your homes into the one City of God dwelling with his people—you also share with Him your joys and your sorrows, your hopes and your fears, your anguished cares and your time of thanksgiving. You do it never so much as when you offer the Mass through your priest and thus through Christ The Priest: "*Through Him, and with Him, and in Him*". You do it in rejoicing, in baptism and marriage, and also in human loss, when you bury your loved ones from the altar. The church of God, your parish home, is part of your life and your family, your hearth and your home. For that reason, I do not believe in the shared ecumenical church. You would not happily share your family home with another family, however much you loved and respected them. You might offer hospitality for a while, but living together is another matter. You could not bring up your children in your way. Your home would not have that precise fragrance of formation, teaching, looking at life, and savouring of life which is your way of life, your gift to each other, and your gift to your children.

You would not be comparing and despising the way, and the family atmosphere of another couple. It just would not be you, and often the judgements, and outlook, and priorities of those others would jar on you and divide the loyalty of your children. You want your own borne, you want your own family and your own personal identity. It is exactly the same with your own church and your own tabernacle of prayer. It is your most intimate resting place in God at all times. It has its own fragrance of formation, and it marks the temple where Christ is known and loved and taught in the one and only fullness of the uniquely true Church. For there is only one fully true Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church.

This is the full identity of the Life of Christ on earth dwelling with men. Its identity must be kept. It must not be fudged, either in its doctrine as the Church of God, or in the personal life, and Catholic profession of yourselves and your children. If in this way you love God, and Jesus Christ, and your children in Jesus Christ, you don't despise others, snub others, or run away from others. On the contrary you yearn to bring them into that one unique fullness of Christ. Before this happens, in many a life, and in many a church community, Anglican or Evangelical, or what you will, there is going to be that anguish of attraction and rejection, half-sight and half-coming which one finds in say, the *Confessions of St. Augustine*. The path to God, if true and authentic, is not going to be a federated combine of businesses run by benign ecclesiastical bureaucrats. Let there be all the mutual prayer you like, the dialogue, the sincere discussion, the ecumenical house meetings during Lent, as we have already in this parish, etc, etc. But also, let there be the central focus of complete identity, and perfect family love of Christ in our own spiritual home, around our own spiritual hearth.

A certain priest, quite well known both in assent and in dissent, wrote a book called "*Mission or Maintenance?*" as if there was a sharp choice between the two. That is not how life is, or how truth is. There must be *maintenance before there can be mission*. Unless there is the complete fullness of faith, and fullness of love, and fullness of chastity maintained in Christ, and forming our people, especially our young people, then there is going to be *no mission* at all. There is no mission in which everyone bows the head and heart reverently at the name of Jesus, but does not admit his Godhead in doctrine, nor his teaching in their moral life and personal spiritual perfection. I don't believe in shared fathers and mothers. I don't believe in shared marriage beds and shared children. For the same reasons of a perfect union and communion in the fullness of Christ, I don't believe in shared churches or shared tabernacles.

Full Identity in our Lord

I don't believe in shared ecumenical schools either. We have some of them around already, and the testimony I get from parents is that they do not form committed and intelligent Catholics. I don't see how they can do so. The atmosphere of a school, like the atmosphere of the home must be *one*, a communion of unity. I do believe in ecumenical hospitality in Catholic Schools. I

do believe where there is room for inviting non-Catholics with open arms, at least devout and practising non-Catholic Christians. If they do not wish their children to be positively instructed in the Catholic faith, well and good. But, the Faith of the School must be *the faith of the Catholic Church*, and the life of the school, and the spiritual formation of the school, and the morality taught in the school must be fully and unambiguously the faith and life and morality of the Catholic Church. This is quite impossible in the shared School, and anyone who states otherwise is either very naive or being frankly dishonest.

Most of the people at the top pushing for the shared 'Christian' School—a very open-ended Christianity—are certainly not simple, naive souls. The school, in our Catholic tradition has always been seen as the extension of the home. If of the home, then of the family. You cannot share a home, or a family. If the school is the extension of the home, then it is the extension of the tabernacle, the parish church, the Eucharist as offering and communion, the full communion of the Fullness of Christ on earth. It cannot be *shared*. When you share, as when you enter into written covenants of action, you agree to equal rights and equal status. Whatever you say to the contrary, it means to the people that reunion and intercommunion is already here, and on terms acceptable to the Churches as they already are. This is unacceptable as truth, and unacceptable in the vague and permissive moral formation it must and will entail.

I have seen something of the sheer struggle to give a Catholic formation in a fully Catholic school. It is as in fact in a school in our own diocese, which is still the largest Catholic Comprehensive School in England and Wales. For two years I took the "*Religion and Life*" talks and discussion with the 5th and 6th forms. I was also asked to give the talks on 'sex and love' with reference to *Humanae Vitae*, although the school did not lack competent, devout, and orthodox Catholic married teachers. I hope that I do not offend anybody if I say that I got the impression that other people were just terrified of doing that particular job anyway. There is no audience more sincere, utterly direct, caustic, or devastating than the age group sixteen to twenty-three. In the religious sense, it is hard going at the top in the modern Comprehensive School. You *can* get through to those who want to know, but I soon discovered that you could not talk about things like sex and love and the morality of sexual relationships in love, without first convincing boys and girls, and especially boys that God really *does* exist, that the spiritual

soul and personal survival is a reality, and that revelation up to Christ is God's provision for mankind, and is the law of personal perfection of character and happiness in being. You must be coherent and persuasive. You must be totally clear, and the teaching of God and his Christ must be authoritative. Wooliness of any kind whatever is utterly useless in dealing with the mind and the heart of the modern youngster. I could achieve something in that school, but in a shared school, even if I were allowed to put my case and my vision of the meaning of Christ in the modern world, I would know not only that other local clergymen, or non-Catholic lay teachers, would be jealous of my impact, but also that on sex and love, on matters of premarital sex, at least among the engaged, certainly on contraception, and probably on abortion, local non-Catholic clergymen would openly disagree with me.

So much for Catholic formation in your shared school. Anyone who says or thinks that in such a shared school, a school in which Catholics have no more rights than anybody else, there would be any possibility of giving their own, specifically Catholic formation to Catholic pupils, is once again being dishonestly misled by those who know better, or is very simple indeed. Even as things are, the curriculum of the modern Comprehensive School is one of excruciating complexity. I found that out when I took the *Religion and Life* groups as well. Even in a Catholic School, one of the first things to go out, in the higher classes, is the subject of R.E., from competition with special courses and special seminars, among the Ordinary and Advanced level pupils. When the difficult problem of fitting everything in to the criss-cross of conflicting claims is made worse by the absence of teachers during winter epidemics and so on. Once again, it is the R.E. which is, however reluctantly, disrupted. Anybody who thinks that into a situation like this special provision is going to be made for young adult Catholics, is living in cloud cuckoo land. So, I don't believe in shared schools. If they are brought in, I don't think that they will be worth the support of the Catholic people.

Return to Solid Catechesis

Many of you say, and have said to me, that the same is true already of our present Catholic schools. There are many honourable exceptions, but others of them give no solid, coherent formation in the Faith as it is. Youngsters, when asked, will say of a theme that they "have done

it” but cannot give any account whatever afterwards of what they have learned or what it means. This is due to a hopelessly inefficient, and often inaccurate form of catechizing, which has prevailed across the Western world since the end of the Council. The inadequacies of which have been exposed, without much result, by the Roman Catechetical Directory of more than ten years ago, and very recently in the strong address of Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Faith, which we have recently published in *Faith* magazine. The basic cause is Rationalism in religion, the teaching of emotional attitudes and aspirations instead of facts, and the teaching of facts of the Faith, like Christ’s literal Divinity, the literal presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the miracles of Christ, the birth narrative of Christ, as symbols of hope and aspiration but not as facts. To all of this, ecumenism as we have most often known it and expressed it, has made for the ignoring of the evidence for the infallibility of the Church, and for sheer minimalism in explaining the nature and authority of the Church. One must repeat that there are schools indeed which are most honourable exceptions, but the situation is far from satisfactory, especially in schools in which less than half the pupils are Catholics already. The coming of the *Shared Christian School* will simply institutionalize this situation.

Shared evangelization is every bit as hopeless a concept. It is possible to have a joint mission with a limited theme such as “Christ the Redeemer” in which his Divinity is presumed rather than explained, and in which not all the consequences are drawn out. It is quite hopeless to talk of common evangelism when we do not have a common doctrine of Christ, of the nature and authority of the Church, and even more patently no common doctrine of personal life and morals, in marriage or out of marriage. You cannot limit the Catholic Faith in its *unshareable* essence only to the Offering of Mass on Sundays. The Catholic Faith is also a total formation of mind, heart, assent, vision, and personal holiness. You cannot share one church, one tabernacle, one school, and engage in one common work of evangelisation, with excellent and delightful people, who nevertheless believe what they want, and do what they want, and still retain the Catholic Identity, and rear good Catholics in your vocation as parents.

A Matter of Integrity

So there you are. I'm sorry to be such an old square. In these matters you do have a parish priest who is an unrepentant square. In extenuation, I will say that in all the doctrinal issues so far which have split the Church in the last thirty years and caused enormous loss of support among the people, I have been consistently right—If to be where the final judgment of Rome has come down, is to be in the right. Very much more distinguished people have been wrong. I was square enough to be saying and writing that Hans Kung was basically and dangerously *wrong* as a Catholic theologian in the early sixties when some people still on the episcopal bench were writing rave reviews for his *Structures of the Church* and his later companion volume *The Church*. So, hopeless old square as I am, I do happen to be right at times. You may find however that your children, both boys and girls find the vision of Christ and his creation, and the vision of personal holiness in Christ as I see Him and understand Him, to be both deeper and more convincing than that of other people. They may therefore continue to practice their religion when they go up to university or go out to work.

In *Faith Movement* we do find that the teaching we give modern youth bears much better and much more long lasting fruit than the teaching most of them obtained at their Catholic schools. We will not teach anyone to be hostile to ecumenism, because even if some of the people pushing so hard during the Council at bishops who had hardly even heard of it, were in fact only rationalists at heart, even so they did what was the will of God. The Holy Spirit does not get outmanoeuvred or worsted in a General Council. For me however ecumenism means the turn of all Christians first, and then all men of goodwill to Christ on Christ's own terms, utterly on his terms, in mind, heart, and conversion of life. Perhaps the call is given because the End is nearer than we think, perhaps it is one of the 'signs of the times'.

Certainly, we witness a great falling away, an ocean of affluence, heedlessness, and immorality. As before His Crucifixion, Jesus should have, and one would expect Him to have, a sort of Palm Sunday, a time however brief of recognition and acclaim, at least by the young, the little ones', the deep and sincere of heart, if not by the important people. However that may be, Christ will not come again in His Church, or in any vision or call to conversion He gives to His Church, in terms of Indifferentism to the full truth, or any deviation from the sheer perfection

of the vision of human holiness that lives in his own Blessed Self as the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God.

So, while it embarrasses me more than a little to speak to you like this, it is a matter of integrity to do so. Without integrity, no priest is of any value to his people, especially in their own moments of doubt, of sorrow, and of trial upon their pilgrim way through life. I ought to end with a telling quote from Holy Writ, and I would be sure there are many, but what comes to mind is something quite different, something from an old favourite of mine, who I read managed to die in the Catholic Church even if he did not manage to find it in the prime of his life. So, in my apologetic for my own thoughts and stand, I'll just lean over the saddle and say with John Wayne: "*a man's gotta do, what a man's gotta do*". It's all a matter of integrity. And now I'll ride out into the sunset, and we will all rise for *The Creed*.