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Teilhard, Evolution, and Christ



It is only a couple of years now since, during our theological studies for the priesthood, Teilhard's works were ordered removed from our seminary library and our rooms. Everyone seems to know about that monitum; why do so few know that Pope Paul has called Teilhard "an indispensable man for our times" and insisted that "his expression of the faith is necessary for us"? Why was it necessary for the Theology Digest to present, in the Spring.

1966, issue, a condensation of a three-year-old defense of Teilhard: "Is Teilhard Dangerous?"

We ask these questions, not with any intention of answering them—or even of seeking answers for them. Rather, mindful of our Lord's advice to "leave the dead to bury their dead," we want only to go on record as profoundly grateful for the workings of the Spirit which have so swiftly and fruitfully brought Teilhard's vision to the forefront of the Church's consciousness.

In particular, we want to give editorial prominence, rather than a simple review, to the long-awaited book by Father Christopher F. Mooney, S.J., Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ. Published a couple of months ago by Harper and Row, New York, this study sells for \$6.00 and is worth many times that amount. As a doctoral dissertation, it embodies the fruit of long years of research, and it more than lives up to the high expectations of all of us who have had our appetites whetted by Father Mooney's studies in various periodicals, particularly Theological Studies and The Harvard Theological Review. It casts some much needed light on many difficulties inherent in Teilhard's evolutionary vision: that Teilhard compromises the gratuity of the Incarnation and the transcendence of the Word, for example—and that he in no way takes into account the reality of sin. The difficulties are not definitively resolved, to be sure, but the solid, mature, and serious discussion they receive shows clearly the inadequacy of that solution which consists in a global, unthinking rejection of Teilhard's synthesis.

The author, who is chairman of Fordham's theology department, himself admits that he has not spoken the last word on his fascinating subject; but his book will certainly be the definitive study in its field for a good while to come. He deals expertly, allowing Teilhard to speak for himself wherever possible, with such stumbling blocks as "Christ's Body as a Physic-

al Centre" for the world, and physical and moral "Evil in the Context of Evolution." His sensitive account of the genesis of Teilhard's vision should do much to dispel the too-prevalent impression that the near-legendary Jesuit set out in an arbitrary and purely speculative way to unify the various disciplines and doctrines which seemed to him to be needlessly fragmented. It was from his lived experience of Christ's eucharistic and incarnational Presence throughout the world, and of the inherent sacredness of matter, that Teilhard was impelled to identify (however cautiously) Christ and the Omega of evolution.

Father Mooney has chosen his title well: just as traditional theology has always seen much more in the mystery of Christ than the christological questions (some of them so banal) treated by the manuals, so this study of Teilhard's thought shows how manifestly impossible it is to divorce our understanding of the God-man in himself from the total mystery of an evolving creation in, through, and for Christ.

Like Teilhard's own, Father Mooney's message is one of hope—not a facile, dogmatic, and unthinking optimism, but a hope characterized by the tension of faith. We speak from a limited—but, we think, valid—fund of experience, when we say that this message is well suited to the needs of today's questioning, searching students. It is needed, not only by those bereft of faith's support, but just as much by those whose faith seeks understanding and who have come to feel keenly the contemporary irrelevance of scholastic thought.

The author has produced a well rounded study, candidly pointing out the real risks involved in a synthesis of christology and evolution, yet sympathetically probing the value of such a synthesis. The notes are full and conclusive (they contain most of the argumentation); the bibliography, while justifiably less full than Cuenot's, given the more restricted subject matter, is nonetheless superb; and the index is thoroughly adequate. This book should be required reading in every seminary and college theology curriculum. We hope it will make it forever unnecessary to write any more articles asking, "Is Teilhard Dangerous?"

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Fr. Michael D. Meilach, ofm

Incarnational Theology in Action: Saint Vincent de Paul

Edward Martin, C.M.

As we enter the threshold of the era of cosmic theology, wherein theologians are in ever increasing numbers perceiving an Incarnational dimension in all creation, does it not seem that the succoring of human misery takes on an even deeper meaning? For those who work among the very poor and diseased, there has always been the unending psychological struggle to see Christ in such wretched people. How does one recognize Christ in such ununloving, comprehending. constantly struggling. grasping, miserable people? Often overwhelmed by their wretched state, they lash out at anyone who extends a hand to help. Others seem to cast aside their very humanity in their preoccupation with animal-level existence. How does one manage to keep seeing Christ in the midst of such unrelenting ugliness? How many religious who have dedicated their lives to the poor have asked and continue to ask this question? How many times has the answer offered been couched in the form of a philosophical postulate: Christ is there, at least potentially. Or perhaps they have been told to love them simply because

Christ loves them, and that should be enough for anyone who wants to please Christ. After all, the main thing is to snatch their souls from the devil, so why worry about whether or not in the psychological order you can recognize Christ in these miserable creatures?

Of course, there is something to be said for loving them because Christ loves them, provided we do so precisely because we put on Christ, and consequently, by reason of this mysterious union, begin to see with the eyes and judgement of Christ. Theologians today are once again emphasizing that Christians are, by the very fact that they are Christians, the signs and instruments of God's love in creation. As Christ revealed to us through himself the love of his father, so we by our very baptism, and all the more so by reason of confirmation, are to be truly Christians precisely by bearing witness to Christ, by orienting the world to its true center in the mystery of Christ. The basic task of the Christian community, then, is to be faithful to and perfective of this sign value. Yet, in the realm of charity, how many ventures have - after the initial insight and burst of enthusiasm — deteriorated into some sort or other of impersonal, institutionalized philanthropy? No one ever wanted this to happen. The transition, in all probability, was far from an obvious one. Yet. gradually, imperceptably, it did. Could it not be that the good intending persons involved were unable to find the tremendous energy necessary to continually strive to see Christ in these people? Could it not be that too often they were looking for some recognition of Christ on the psychological level where he is not yet to be recognized? And yet, for man to truly function in a human way, can he persevere long without the integration of the psychological order? Perhaps we have been missing the point of the presence of the Incarnation in creatures. Perhaps we have first to learn to accept and love human beings, with all of their repulsive characteristics, simply as human persons! Maybe we need a genuine Christian humanism as our starting point, and then only after that has been established, in the obscurity of faith, will such persons be gradually able to appear as the image of their creator. In other words, we've got to resist more effectively, the practical tendency to see persons as incarcerated souls in whom the integral sarx principle is but a means to an end. We may succor the body, but only to get at the soul. Rather, we have got to accept another as he is - a human being, and be genuinely concerned with everything that contributes towards his human dignity, fulfilling his human personality.

Saint Vincent de Paul was one who did just that. Although university-educated at Toulouse. Vincent repeatedly claimed to be but a simple country man. His natural inclination of mind quite clearly was towards practical affairs rather than theological speculations. Therefore, we can hardly expect him to have presented us with a twentieth century exposition of the incarnational principle in the cosmos. As a matter of fact, the intellectual climate in which he lived was one of decadant theology. For the most part there was a minimum of effort expended in delving more deeply into the inner meaning of revelation. Rather, there was a marked preference for moralizing. The emphasis was on the sufferings of Christ, the enthronement of the Eucharist in the tabernacle, and a semi-pelagian interpretation of Christian life. No man can be entirely immune from the currents of his own age. Yet, under the guidance of the Spirit, Vincent rather consistently manifested what may almost be called an instinct for essential Christianity. He indisputably was a man of amazing vision, for he had come to see with the eyes of Christ. He looked at his fellow man, especially those suffering and in need, with the compassion that can only be attributed to Christ himself. So persistent and prodigious were his works to relieve human want that they subsequently earned him the title of Patron of Charitable Works.

Vincent grew up a very poor peasant, and apparently like most in that position failed to see in his poverty a blessing from God. As a youth, he was not above ambition for modest wealth and po-

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sition. Shortly after ordination. while making a Mediterranean voyage, he was captured by Barbary pirates. It was only after his successful escape and return to France that he began to show the first signs of his later greatness. Like most Frenchmen before and after whose aim is to make an imprint on their world, he gravitated toward Paris, where providentially he took as spiritual director. Cardinal de Bérulle, the founder of the Oratory in France and perhaps the one who more than anyone else can be given credit for focusing French spirituality in the seventeenth and following centuries on the mystery of the Incarnation. As a result of his early association with Bérulle, Vincent's spirituality never wandered very far from a Christ centered orientation.

A few years later, in 1611, when the curé of Clichy (a suburb of Paris) joined Bérulle's Oratory, Vincent was named his successor. The population of Clichy was

made up in great part of poor, devout peasants who lived in the simplest manner. They numbered about six hundred. Vincent, exhibiting a combination of diligence and competence rare for country curés at that time, taught the children catechism, ministered to the needy, consoled the sick, reconciled those who were at variance, and in short, made himself all things to all men to gain all for Christ. From his very first days there, the poverty of their situation deeply moved him. Only by this time, poverty no longer tempted him to look elsewhere for more comfortable opportunities. Rather, he experienced a great love for these poor. When he was an old man he often referred to his happy days in Clichy with emotion.

The next phase in Vincent's life is a particularly interesting one in the light of his later sanctity. His happy stay at Clichy proved to be short-lived, for Bérulle advised him to place the parish in the hands of an administrator and join the household of Philip de Gondi, General of the Galleys, to take up the role of tutor to this nobleman's two sons. This appointment was of the sort that was much coveted by the ecclesiastics of that time. It implied comfort, wealth and prestige. Vincent cringed at the prospect of any one of these as realities in his life, much less all three. He soon experienced an intense inner conflict stemming from the tension he sensed between his inclination to serve the poor and his willingness to obey Bérulle's estimate that much good could be accomplished from his ministry to the de Gondis. After considerable

wavering and no little suffering, Vincent heeded Bérulle's counsels and remained in the de Gondi household. However, he was incapable of limiting himself to instructing the children and doling out the alms of the mistress of the house. Instead his heart went out to those chained to galley service, and through his persistence their lot was appreciably improved. This is an important insight into Vincent's character. While accepting the customs of his day, he never ceased to point out the unchristian, inhuman aspects of them, all the while doing all that he could on a practical level to right them and thereby make the situation a little more bearable.

Also at this time he personally began to preach parish missions on the estates of the de Gondis in an effort to bring about a genuine confrontation with Christ in country areas that frequently suffered neglect at the hands of a clergy who were largely intoxicated by the lure of Paris. This was Vincent de Paul. He perceived a human need. He responded personally. He not only exercised vision in detecting what must be done, but was not the type to merely speculate. He immediately personally involved himself. This pattern appears time and again in Vincent's long life, e. g. in addition to organizing parish missions, Vincent saw almost immediately the necessity of having fervent priests to maintain Christian awareness. So, he began retreats for those about to be ordained: he founded and staffed seminaries with his followers; he championed a reform of preaching in which he instructed priests to return to a simple presentation of God's word rather than attempt an exercise in elocution. Furthermore, to foster a renewal of the clergy he gave conferences every Tuesday to the priests of Paris and sponsored priests' retreats.

In addition to the parish missions, he organized confraternities of charity to efficiently and consistently provide food, clothing and in some instances shelter for the needy. He came to the assistance of the very large beggar class of Paris, founded orphanages and foundling homes, as well as houses of refuge for unwed mothers. He reorganized and staffed the public hospitals with his Daughters of Charity. In addition to ministering to the galley slaves, he engaged in the ransom of captives from the Barbery pirates. Living in an age when a succession of devastating civil wars decimated France, Vincent did not simply throw up his hands in anguish as did most of his contemporaries. He was ever a man of action, the instrument of a God who acts, a vigorous and vital member of a Christ who weeps with the weeping and then does all that he can to alleviate the cause of the sorrow. Vincent organized relief missions for the devastated provinces.

All during this strenuous and unending effort to help the victims of poverty and misery, Vincent was instructing his Daughters that the needy were their masters, that they were to consider themselves as servants of the poor. The allusion is clear. He had come to serve. Vincent de Paul had grasped the evangelical point of view clearly.

Moreover, in the midst of this plethora of external works, Vincent led the way in personal involvement. He was most certainly not an administrator imprisoned in an institution, with visits by appointment only, carefully filing away applications for assistance and supervising the management of fund producing investments. As a matter of fact, Vincent financed his ventures, for the most part, by personally begging for funds. It has often been said that Vincent de Paul was an organizing and directive genius by reason of the extensive success he consistently exhibited in organizing and stabilizing associations of charity. The secret of this genius, it seems, is to be found in his inimitable faculty of inspiring others with a holy, selfsacrificing enthusiasm, and of encouraging others to persevere in a work once undertaken, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. To what can we trace this faculty? In his rule for the Daughters of Charity he pointed out that their principal purpose was to honor our Lord Jesus Christ as the Source and Model of all charity by serving him corporally and spiritually in the person of the poor. He was thoroughly Christ-centered in his source of activity and thoroughly Christian in the specification of the Christ-inspired activities flowing from such a source. He loved the poor in a personal way as Christ always showed a special affinity for the poor.

Likewise for his Priests of the Mission he demanded that they take a fourth vow to labor for Christ in the person of the poor. Without a doubt, Vincent con-

centrated his personal mystique on the special place which the poor have always enjoyed in the designs of God, and he never allowed himself to be distracted from his set purpose of rejecting Christ's service and consolation to them. Interestingly, this he always did as a poor man himself. He identified himself, as did Christ, with the poor, not allowing the rationalization of prudence, expediency or more effective accomplishment to take him very far from the daily experience of personally felt poverty.

Another interesting feature of Vincent's Christian witness was his determination that to execute this service to the poor, he would not allow his religious communities to be handicaped by narrow-visioned contemporary views on the necessary ingredients for the religious state. Of course, strictly speaking, neither of Vincent's communities are religious. but rather persons living in community under private vows. Even this concept was somewhat of an innovation, but more important for our insight into his personality, were his views on cloister for women. Vincent had learned at first hand that the authorities in Rome were not of a mind to accept the concept of a community of women who were not protected by a cloister, but rather as Vincent insisted, mingled freely with the poor in their own hovels, and who used the parish church for their chapel. Saint Francis de Sales had intended that the Visitation be freed from the restriction of the cloister. Vincent came into the picture when he was named by Francis to be the second superior of the Visitation upon the death of the Bishop of Geneva. It was his painful experience to witness the unsuccessful attempt of Saint Jane de Chantal and her followers to maintain this hitherto unheard of privilege. So it was that when it came time to try again — this time with his own Daughters of Charity - Vincent was adamant in witholding final application for the official approbation of Rome until he was certain that the Daughters would not be held to a cloister. He was evidently not a man to accede passively to authority when the effective care of the poor was at stake. This does not mean that he was willful in resisting authority, but simply that he insisted that the Daughters had to be free of the cloister or else there would be only small groups of women dedicated to the service of the poor with little more external framework than private vows. In fine, he was not afraid to inaugurate new structures in order more effectively to signify the charity of Christ to the world. And he did not hesitate to oppose vigorously serious tampering with those structures.

Still another area of Saint Vincent's activities which reveals to us how completely he put on Christ is that of his personal relations with the Abbé de Saint Cyran. Their first encounters gave rise to a warm friendship, that began to cool only after Saint Cyran committed himself to becoming the driving force behind the Jansenist irruption at Port Royal. Vincent recognized the grave danger of Jansenism and led in the combat against it, but never personally turned on Saint Cyran. It was the latter who lowered their discussions to personal attacks and who eventually broke off their relationship. Vincent felt anxiety over where the Abbé's path was leading, but gave no evidence of bitterness over the personal abuse he received.

It is hoped that as a result of these few and brief glimpses of the character of Saint Vincent de Paul, at least two general impressions can be gleaned. First of all, he was a man who had thoroughly put on Christ. About this we have no doubt. Secondly, however, we reflect that every Saint puts his own unique stamp on the witness to Christ his life bears. For Vincent it was an unmistakably Christlike concern for the plight of the poor. What seems to be specifically Vincentian about this was his never retracted personal involvement, and in his efforts to perpetuate the help needed, his apparent ability to organize charities without institutionalizing (in the impersonalizing sense) them. In looking at the details of these endeavors, we constantly find him accepting people on their own terms. Certainly, he always included a catechetical and spiritual formation program in his works. Still, he had an uncanny ability for putting first things first, namely, first raising or restoring men to the dignity of a truly human existence.

In 1960, for the tercentenary of the death of Vincent de Paul, a French film company put out an excellent short life of the Saint. It perhaps best captured the spirit of Saint Vincent of all the things written or said of him. And in particular did it do so in

one powerful scene where Monsieur Vincent arrived at the squalid village of Chatillon-les-Dombes. The people had long been without a priest; the church was in ruins; a plague was beginning among the peasants. One of the wretched villagers coming upon Vincent just as he finished at-

tending a dying mother and was leaving with his arm on the shoulder of her little orphan daughter, blurted out at him: "What are you doing here? There is no priest or God here!" Vincent characteristically answered: "The priest is here. God will come later!"

Lines for Profession

Sister M. Florian, O.S.F.

If I could leap those hills As high as daylight (But ah, who knows what sober candles Splash the night? Who knows what bell-words splinter Silence of this day? The words grow the rapid width of eternity, These words I say.) If I could leap the hills And fold away The years that fall satin-wise From my waking soul today, If I could carve this day On my granite breast And place the breadth of fear Finally to rest, Then would I lay my crucifix On the heart of my tomorrows And light the faithful tapers Around all future sorrows.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

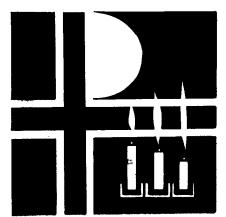
Marginals on

Perfectae Caritatis — II

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

In our work of renewal, it is more than religious for all seasons which the Church urges us to be. She makes it plain that we must be religious of two directions. To look in two directions, and more especially to move in two directions is less a matter of a charism than of an acquired art. While it is not a happy condition of life that a religious be running in all directions, it is needful for an intelligent approach to adaptation that a religious be able to move in two directions, past and forward. In the present preoccupation with self-development, the tending of this talent for bilateral spiritual vision and movement may sometimes be neglected.

Vatican Council II has urged us all to go forward. But in the de-



cree, "Perfectae Caritatis," it reminds us that we religious cannot properly go forward unless we look backward, nor soar upward if we do not plunge downward. Neither will it be sufficient to do this once. "The adaptation and renewal of the religious life includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time" (P. C. #2). A constant return. How much of the Church's ageless wisdom inflames that word, how much of her awareness of the stuff of which her children are made! "He knows what we are made of: He remembers that we are but dust" (Ps. 102:13-14). So does the Church. She exhorts us to remember that if our efforts to proclaim a new message of religious life do not gather their strength from and discover their character in the original purpose of our religious life and the spirit of our founder, we shall only be carrying dust against the wind.

It must always be for us not a task of discovering the past, but of constantly recovering it. Only in this continual repossession of a heritage shall we be able to determine the best means of presently dispensing its riches, both to our own inner selves and to all

the people of God. Before we can adapt anything "to the changed conditions of our time." we shall obviously have to be conversant with unchangeables. To strike bottom bedrock, we could put it this way: that we have to understand what we are changing before we can availingly change it. Similarly, we shall have to love with a knowledgeable love what we are changing if we are not to deface or even to mutilate it. It is invigorating to run forward and let the wind whistle in one's ears; but a race presupposes a starting point and it has a goal. To run for the mere exhibaration of running is a sport that palls in a very short time. Too long pursued, it precipitates heart attacks or total collapse. Which is to say: crisis or defection.

In urging a constant return to the sources of all Christian life and the original spirit of the institute, Vatican II is putting only a single obligation on Franciscans. The Gospels: the Rule. This is for Franciscans not so much a matter of an equation as of a single synonym. "The form of life of the Order of the Poor Sisters which the blessed Francis founded is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," says Saint Clare in her Rule which is simply a sustained echo of the Rule of Saint Francis.

Francis was renovator, a radical, a reformer. He was so effective in these roles because he understood what he was renewing, respected the roots without which plants cannot live, and knew that there cannot be reformation without a knowledge of and love for the original formation. He always went back to the Gospels, He al-

ways returned to Christ. That is why he was able to press forward with strength and purpose. He never betrayed the people of God by having only Francis to give them. He brought them Christ. And he did this so effectively that his message and his burden were unmistakable to both the learned hierarchy of his time and the unlettered country folk. They called him "the Christ of Umbria."

We cannot hope to express. much less to be, the Christ of Los Angeles or the Christ of Springfield. the Christ of the ward, the classroom, or the cloister, unless we are steeped in our sources: his gospel; and in our Source: himself. We can be availingly original only in the measure that we are imitators of Christ. We bear authentic witness to our times best when we bear it as Francis our father did - by witnessing to Christ. In this same way, we shall reinvigorate a blasé world with the freshness of Franciscan spirituality only in so far as we have drunk from the wellsprings of Franciscanism. The new era will become a wonder and not a horror according to the skill with which it puts new flesh on the strong sinews of source and origin.

The Church is currently striving in her outward forms to return to the simplicity of early Christianity, but without sacrificing anything of the intellectual, cultural, and even cultic developments of the centuries, even as she prepares herself for the future by identifying herself with the present. In returning to a source, we do not retrace our path to recover a modus operandi but an inspiration. In religious adapta-

tion we shall not want to study the original spirit of our institute with an architectural eye so as to continue to reproduce a given style, but with an architectural heart so that we rediscover the dream that was in the heart of the builder and learn to reproduce it with different building materials and even in a different style.

Twentieth-century Franciscan attempts to imitate Saint Francis literally in those manifestations of his ideal which had a proper setting in the thirteenth century will end at best in caricature, at worst in apostasy. We can, in fact, become so bemused by the manifestations of an ideal that we fail to understand the ideal itself, or at least cannot distinguish the one from the other. It can be the subtlest of self-deceptions to work at reproducing in ourselves the mode and manner of the founder while neglecting to restate the spirit which produced through him an appropriate contemporaneity of mode and manner and will produce in us an appropriate but necessarily different contemporaneity. It can even be merely another manifestation of the weakness which fights the spirit of the law with its own letter.

We shall not, for example, witness to the spirit of Francis today by not handling money because Francis refused to handle money. We could, however, offer the people of God a wonderfully "disconcerting" witness to the spirit of Francis by unwinding ourselves from our comforts and conveniences. He was such a hard

realist, that little man who shook the thirteenth century with his presence. He knew how love of riches enervated men, so he simply put his two hands behind his back and steadfastly refused to "get the feel" of it. He insisted on preserving holes in all his pockets. Perhaps our greatest need in our struggle to delineate a present Franciscan witness to poverty is simply to have holes in our pockets. To relax a little our grasp on things, to leave off being proprietors of created goods and thus become their lord, as Francis was.

It is not so much what Francis did that we need to do, as it is what Francis was that we need to be. He was so realistic because he was so simple. He was so simple because he believed God. In an age that loves above all to look at itself in a hand mirror and whisper: "How adult!" it may cause some squirming on chairs and polite coughing behind hands to touch on the subject of childlikeness. Yet, a sophisticated spirituality will stub its pedicured toes not only on Francis, but on Christ. "Unless you be converted and become as little children ..." (Mt. 18:3).

Is not the explanation of why some of us grow so annoyed at the concept of "child" in religious life, why we take hardly to task those who use this term, that we have failed to plumb the meaning or even to recognize the mystery in Christ's unequivocal requirement for entrance into his kingdom? Not "unless you are as

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little children," but "unless you become as little children." Our Lord talks of a "conversion," advising us that we must undergo a change of belief and opinion, that we must readjust and rectify our sense of values if we are to have part of all with him. The divine Master tells us plainly that there is work to be done; he tells of a process of becoming. And in such a metamorphosis, there is always involved the arduous and the painful

The apostles were still not free of their complicated ideas about the expected millenium, their ambitious bickerings, their very "adult" ideas about a triumphal Messiah when Christ called them his "little children." But he was trying to convert them. And they were in the process of becoming. Thus he would honor them with this affectionate title of distinction. When we grow distressed over the idea of a superior calling a novice "my child," we betray ourselves as unrealistic about the kingdom of the spirit, forgetting that it was grown men with hairy arms and smelling of fish and sweat whom Christ called his "little children." That it was to men of age and able to speak for themselves (as well as to show ready evidence of ability to sin for themselves) whom fiery Paul sought to win for the Kingdom with the tender invitation "my little children."

True, we can embarrass and even destroy the noble spiritual concept of "child"; we can evade the responsibility entailed in seeking such clear vision by distorting the idea of "child" into a kind of infantilism. This is indeed tragic failure. But distortion of idea in-

dicates only a deficiency in the distorters and not a defect in idea. We cannot live in this wonderfully challenging era of adaptation and renewal like irresponsible singers among the daisies, but we can make our adaptation more effectual and ensure its validity by approaching and executing it with the uncompromising vision of the child and all his taste for basic verities. Even the child's eternal question "why?" can be our norm. If we do not know why we are currently doing or have been doing certain things, then we must either discover the valid reason and do these things intelligently; or we must face the fact that if a reason once existed. it no longer does, and so put away these things. Similarly, if we wish to change things, it is required that we can answer "why?".

One evidence of spiritual adulthood is the capacity for becoming like a child. It is a very difficult business to become as a little child, taking God at his word, believing our Father, trusting the Will which we cannot fathom, understanding among other things that it is only love that will effect any kind of valid renewal in anything.

This was the kind of child Saint Francis was. His simple holiness was his greatness as well as the secret of such a power over others as the world has not seen excelled. This is the spirit of our founder to which we are urged by Vatican Council II to return. Francis was a hard realist. That is why he was so great a poet. He never escaped down words or even ideas; but pursued them to an ultimate meaning. The dreamer-saint of Assisi was a man

of such action as to happily upset a whole European society by his humble presence. Like all great dreamers, he got things moving. In fact, he got things done — and by the very simple expedient of doing them. He was first of all himself what he invited others to be. Surely there is no need to discuss Francis' witness to Christ in the Church before all the people of God. It is not a matter of the means of giving witness which he chose. He simply was himself a witness by his personal holiness.

Father Charles Davis had some simple and burning words of wisdom for us in the January 29. 1966 issue of America in his article. "A Hidden God." Speaking of his own efforts to revivify a "slipping" faith in others, he says: "They come to talks by speakers like myself. They hear about the new liturgy, about the new understanding of the layman's role, about the collegiality, Church and the world, about a thousand and one new and exciting ideas. They are duly impressed. But who will speak to them quite simply of God as of a person he intimately knows, and make the reality and presence of God come alive for them once more?" Who? Surely Franciscans must. For this is the way that our father Francis spoke. This is the way he brought back to a languid and sensual society the enthusiasm and joy of the children of God.

Father Davis goes on: "Before such need, how superficial, pathetically superficial, is much of the busyness with renewal. We reformers know so much about religion and about the Church and about theology, but we stand

empty-handed and uncomfortable when confronted with sheer hunger for God. Holiness is less easily acquired than fluency in contemporary thinking. But people who, after listening to our enthusiastic discourses, quietly ask us to lead them to God are, though they do not know it, demanding holiness in us. I fear they may find everything else but that.... Saints were required in the past to renew the Church. We suppose we can get by as spiritual operators.

In our modern efforts to resolve our identity crisis whether as individuals or as an Order, Franciscans have the inspiration of a founder who knew exactly who he was. "I am the herald of the great King." If it was an appropriately medieval title for him, it is still a presently meaningful one for us. Francis was only, after all, identifying himself as the keryx whom each of us must be. And he called out the kerygma less by his discourses than by his person, witnessing in words but witnessing more truly in being.

We are acutely concerned these days with the problem of relevancy. The fact that so many prelates in Saint Francis' day were avaricious, venal men; that so many devotees of pilgrimages and relic-collecting were cruel to their servants and licentious in their sexual relationships; that the "pious" were often the most crafty and cunning, shows clearly enough that relevancy is not a specifically modern problem. Making the Church relevant to man's daily life, making the Gospels relevant to the large and small business of human existence will always, in the end, reduce to personal holiness. Father Charles Davis points out in the article quoted above: "He [God] waits for those prepared at long last to meet him in the silent and humbling darkness of faith and to surrender themselves unreservedly to his love. On those who do so, the solid work of renewal depends."

To meet God in faith, to surrender absolutely to his love is within the scope of each one, whether in friary or cloister, classroom or surgery or jungle. This is the whole secret of why Saint Francis in his simple way made the gospel suddenly very relevant to men and emerged as the man of the pope's dream who held up the tottering Church with his own shoulder.

To emulate him in theory but not in practice is only a new version of the pharisee's excuse: "the gift!" Francis possessed nothing. For him, this meant very literal privations like eating crusts and drinking water in company with disgruntled Brother Masseo when he. quite as much as Masseo, appreciated beef and wine. He was the great Christian existentialist. He was a far better kind of empiricist in his simplicity than we are in our sophistication. Francis was not afraid to experience the things we are sometimes merely glib about. Taking the beggar's place with his cup and in his rags, Francis was the forerunner of all work in the inner city. He was disconcertingly realistic about poverty. For him it could only mean identification with the poor.

It would not be in a presently theatrical display of begging bread at the neighbor's doors that we would show the first spirit of the Order today, but it is perfectly and practically possible to "adapt this idea to the changed conditions of our time." If it is necessary to have our institutions furnished and equipped according to the required standards of modern professionalism, it is still not necessary to be a prince in one's cell. It is less quaint than it is sincere to guard against wastefulness. It would scarcely evince a sense of realism or practicality to leave a lecture hall, enthusiastic over an impassioned discourse on poverty in the modern world, only to consign to the cafeteria garbage disposal the selected expensive dessert from which we have eaten two spoonfuls. These are very simple things. The kind of things that children understand. They may warn us that we are becoming so "adult" as to miss the point which a child clearly sees and which he points out, usually in an embarrassingly piercing voice and before com-

"It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions —all of which make up the patrimony of each institute — be faithfully held in honor" (P. C. #2b). A sound tradition of realistic, identifying love belongs to Franciscans. A son or daughter of Francis is never so much estranged from the spirit of the founder as when he does not love in this identifying manner. Saint Francis always wanted to experience the pain of others, the beggar, the leper, and — in his prayer on Mt. Alverna — the redeeming Christ. He always want-

ed to see things just as they were. We are still putting up Christmas cribs in churches and homes in the twentieth century because back in the thirteenth Francis wanted "to see how it was." He "promoted among his sons (their members) an adequate knowledge of the social conditions of the times they lived (live) in and of the needs of the Church," (P. C. #2d) simply by entering into them. The Church of the thirteenth century needed to purify itself of triumphalism, of riches, of splendid trappings. So, instead of attacking the Church, Francis was himself poor. Lepers were despised and avoided. So, instead of belaboring society, Francis himself sought them out and washed them and cared for them. And so with other conditions, with other needs. It was a terribly realistic approach he had. To return to the "original spirit of his institute," to his "spirit and special aims" (P. C.

#2b), demands that we become as little children. Because we are not.

"The purpose of the religious life is to help the members follow Christ and be united to God through the profession of the evangelical counsels. It should be constantly kept in mind, therefore, that even the best adjustments made in accordance with the needs of our age will be ineffectual unless they are animated by a renewal of spirit. This must take precedence over even the active ministry" (P. C. #2e). There is that "constantly" again! And there is a statement as simple as the heart of Saint Francis. The Council Fathers have warned us that the best outward adjustments will avail nothing without an interior renovation. And so in the work of renewal we must look first into our own heart and let the difficult work of personal cleansing and uncluttering hold precedence.

The Feast

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

The cupped heart waits for bread,
And granite words
Are spread before its hunger.
Shall the teeth
Of sorrow bite the stone,
Or shall the tongue
Tell jeremiads on such stony feasts?
Unwilling-slow, the cupped heart closes on
The petric fare
And finds the stone is bread.

Riposte:

Re-evaluating Poverty

The first century of the Franciscan order - the 13th - was filled with controversy over the theory and practice of poverty. Contemporary Franciscans should be familiar with this controversy because it reveals Francis' mind in the matter of poverty and the wrong way to realize it. Francis wanted (1) that his followers shed the ownership mentality and live as pilgrims and strangers in this world, (2) that they have a horror of money and valuable property which foster avarice, and (3) that they be able to associate with the poorest on equal terms.

So extreme an attitude naturally caused immense difficulties as the Order expanded. By 1247 the friars had developed a theory embracing and justifying several mitigations already conceded by Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV; Franciscans could legally claim to live in absolute poverty without having to practice it.

Pope Nicholas III accepted the absolute-poverty doctrine of St. Bonaventure in 1279; but in 1317 Pope John XXII apparently denied that Christ and the Apostles had practiced absolute poverty, and he then cancelled the system of papal ownership. It is unfortunate that the needed opposition to the casuistic and compromising attitude to poverty came from the Spirituals; for they were tainted with Joachimism and anti-papalism, and thus discredited their own valid cause where poverty was concerned.

I would like to offer some conclusions from the above, all-too-brief historical outline, in the hope that they may be taken up for serious discussion in future RIPOSTE columns by readers concerned over the current status of Franciscan poverty: (1) renunciation of common ownership does not guarantee the real practice of poverty as long as use is not restricted; (2) neither Christ nor Francis was concerned with the legal distinction between ownership and use; (3) Francis wanted his followers to live insecure lives, economically - to identify themselves with the poor; (4) we will have to experiment with different economic and sociological structures and discontinue our rationalizations about the "spirit of poverty."

Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M.

West Chicago, Ill.

Christ's Risen Manhood

In riposte to the article, "The Crisis of Vocations II" (THE CORD, April 1966), I do not find it necessary to change the stress that Franciscans put on the humanity of Christ, provided we put the stress on the resurrected, divinized humanity of Christ. The risen Christ is with us in the Holy Spirit... in the Holy Eucharist, and through the Holy Spirit in mortal humanity. No, we Franciscans need not change our goal of following Christ according to the gospel: what we need to do is to follow Christ through to the resurrection, ascension, and the coming to humanity in the Holy Spirit.

Sister M. John Hartmann, O.S.F.

Manitowoc, Wis.

Letters for this column, in which readers are invited to express their views on any subject pertinent to the Franciscan or religious life, should be addressed to The Riposte Editor; names will be witheld on request.

Sister Mary Agnes, O.S.C.

Enclosure is a physical thing. It is not a way of life. Grilles and locked doors do not make contemplatives; they are not the life of the cloistered nun. To say they are, or what is more likely, to act as if they were, is to mistake chosen accident for essence. This should be remembered by people on both sides of the wall when analyzing the value of the cloistered life in the present day Church.

To say that Christianity is focusing on communal worship and witnessing may be an oversimplification, but it does give a good indication of contemporary trends in religious thought. Both these realities are necessary for everyone, but not in equal measure. While some concentrate on the former, the majority devote themselves and their energies to the latter in the active apostolate. There is, as Canon Robert Guelluy points out, unity in diversity in each Christian's calling:

Each one must recognize the path into which the Holy Spirit is leading him... To answer this vocation is not merely an individual call. It is to co-operate with God's plans for the whole community, in which he assigns a special place and a particular role to each one [Christian Commitment to God, p. 85].

There are really no degrees of vocation. God does not plan things that way. He has proposed a spirit by which all are to live, each in his respective way. The Holy Spirit constantly hovers over all, loving within all that his kingdom may come for all.

Contemporary writers are of one mind with Saint Paul in exhorting us to be witnesses of the Church. This is an essential counterpart to our baptismal initiation: to manifest the Christ within us. Yet monastic life is centered about the Divine Office and the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. Prayer is its center not only by standards of importance. but even in the proportion of time it is accorded. Is it possible. then, for cloistered religious, cut off as they are from the rest of the world, to be witnesses within the framework of their life? Can they bear Christ's testimony to those with whom they do not even come in contact?

If the whole matter of love and sacrifice is viewed through the eyes of a mathematical surveyor, rather than those of faith, it will certainly have to be conceded that the nun behind cloister walls has very little chance to give Christ to others. The few whose services bring them inside the enclosure, and family visitors, will perhaps come within the direct influence of the sisters; but these comprise at best a severely limited number.

Through the eyes of faith, the picture is seen in a totally different light — it becomes, as it

were, three-dimensional. God has made some of his members mediators between himself and the other members, not in an obvious and active sense, but in a more hidden and profound way that is discernible only by an enlightened faith.

God has, in fact, spoken to men through his Word, incarnate and crucified. The contemplative is one who receives the Word in her heart, nourishes it, and radiates the growth to all the other members of the Body. Her charges are not within the limits of the classroom, hospital ward, or tenement area. She takes the whole world, and every human being in that world, into her embrace. Deeply rooted in the heart of Christ she is free to go to the highways and byways of his mystical Body dispensing the truth, light, understanding, and love which she herself has received.

Personal holiness depends on God-given grace and on the individual's response which brings about a greater capacity for the indwelling of the Trinity. Conscious of this the dedicated contemplative will strive to possess a magnanimous spirit. Christ himself prays in her. He is her voice, her heart, her will, whereby salvation is continued.

We are so prone to be hypnotized by activity, especially when we see the tangible, satisfying results of our industry. It is worthy of recall that the footsore Christ traversing the Palestinian paths gained very few followers. Nailed to the Cross, unable

to say a word, he redeemed the world. The silence of the tomb on Easter Sunday morning spoke volumes about the love between a Father and a Son poured out on every creature.

Without looking at their active ministry we can see how Saint Paul and our Lady were witnesses. Paul is probably everybody's outstanding example of the apostle in action; it is high time someone pointed out the less spectacular but equally important, hidden roots of his apostolic success. As he himself told the Corinthians, "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with pretentious speech of wisdom, announcing unto you the witness to Christ. For I determined to know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2-1-2). It was through prayer and contemplation that he gained that knowledge, and so thorough was it that "my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

It is a case of being someone, rather than of doing something. There was a space of three days between the time that Saul was, struck down from his horse and the moment his eyes were opened; but he became a witness to God's mercy as soon as he surrendered himself to Him. Without word or sign, the new convert, though still unbaptized, was already an ensign of the infant Church. Al-

ready he was a vessel of election and was functioning as such even if he did not understand it; even though no one knew it.

Elizabeth had no preliminary communication with Mary regarding the great things the Lord had accomplished in her; yet she was almost overcome with the tremendous awareness of Christ emanating from her cousin. Our Lady could not keep from manifesting the divine Fruit of her fiat. The young girl Mary lived a simple life with Anne and Joachim, meeting the townsfolk occasionally, doing her domestic tasks, gathering with others for prayer. The routine strongly resembles that of a monastic family. Our Lady was, and that monastic family is, giving testimony of the living God. The Mother of Sorrows chose to be with her Son on Calvary, but her physical presence was not necessary to make her Coredemptress. The spiritual union between Son and Mother was so intense that it could have borne its combined fruit on Calvary independent of physical proximity.

By her poverty the nun in solemn vows bears witness to the ideal that should motivate every contemporary Christian in his choice between God and wealth. She is a living verification of God's transcendence. Her poverty of spirit affects a society so likely to misjudge the superfluous for essentials. It stimulates the comfortable to generosity; and it encourages the poor and neglected to confidence in God's bounty.

In her virginity the consecrated woman is, in an eminent degree, a vital witness to the virgin Church. Her cloistered life proclaims that there is a life higher than that to which we are begotten by the mothers of our flesh. Intensely aware of her role in the Church, she goes before her divine Lord not for herself alone, but for every member of the human race: adoring, praising, thanking, interceding. She desires divine union not only for herself, but for all others as well. The deeper her union with Christ, the more conscious is she that this intense love is too much for just herself — and the more earnestly does she long to share it.

Maternity is inseparable from the virgin's love for Christ. The very love between them begets children to divine life; she attains spiritual fruitfulness to the degree that she loves the Church, the Body of Christ.

Wanting to be fruitful for the Church, the contemplative is ever mindful of the necessity of being faithful to God. The test of faithfulness is obedience, the unifying force in community life. Jesus regarded doing his Father's will as the very essence of his sonship. As obedience is the eternal ex-



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pression of what the Father is for the painful experience because for the Son, so is it the day by day expression of what Christ is for the virgin handmaid. Subject and superior alike can grow in understanding of the freedom and glory of obedience by studying the Incarnate Word and the Eternal Father in a continual exchange of giving. The cloistered community perpetuates within the Church this salient gospel counsel; it speaks eloquently to all of the loving devotion marked by docility to the Church's teachings.

It must happen to all of us at one time or another that the full responsibility of our commitment meets us with such force as almost to stagger us. Then it is no small consolation for persons in the hidden life to know that, as they are in their cloisters for fellow members in the active ministry, so the missioners include the contemplatives in their labors. Whatever his function, if one member of the Body grows in holiness, the whole Body is therefore more holy.

The cloistered religious is keenly aware of the suffering members of the Church. They are most dear to her. She unites with them in faith, compassionates with them in real love, and supports them by her own personal sufferings. For their sake she welcomes hardships of soul and body. She not only accepts, but loves the darkness and interior crucifixion which at times leave her grasping for the hand of Christ which seems not to be there, but all the while is closer to her than she is to herself. She is grateful it brings her new understanding of others merged in the shadows of their own personal agony. It identifies her with Christ's suffering Body; it expands yet more the dimensions of her giving in imitation of the Lord's kenosis, self-emptying unto death.

With every fibre of her being the cloistered religious longs to be united with each and every one of her brothers and sisters in Christ. She loves them so much that she places herself in a mode of life conspicuous for its hiddenness. She is remote from the world, but acutely interested in every person in it. Receiving few words from the outside she is continually transmitting the Word received in her prayer.

Each member of the community is, finally, a witness for the other members. One religious, looking at another, can truly say, "You are the Church." Her love for all the unknown people for whom she is offering her life can well be measured by the love she shows her sisters with whom she lives. In a community where this conviction is a vital force, the love and respect among its members can be nothing less than monumental; cannot but effect a marvelous growth in Christ individually and, collectively, bringing about a perfect unity in the Pleroma.

The dedicated contemplative is anxious to end her earthly pilgrimage to become a witness in the heavenly Jerusalem, yet is willing to remain on earth until the end of time to proclaim the presence of God, who is Love.

BOOK REVIEWS

Theology in Transition: A Bibliographical Evaluation 1954-1964. Edited by Elmer O'Brien, S. J. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966. Pp. 282. Cloth, \$5.95.

The study of theology is becoming more extensive and intensive in our age of renewal and re-evaluation. This volume, which will be of interest to the student of theological thought, is the result of the inaugural session of the Contemporary Theology Institute, Loyola College, Montreal. The editor rightly observes, in his foreword, that the "pages which follow, reproducing the main papers" given at this institute, provide a generously comprehensive record of production from 1954 to 1964.

Joseph Hugh Crehan, S. J., introduces the study of theological trends during this period, giving us a panoramic view of such topics as these: sources of theology; inspiration, infallibility, theology of the laity, Church membership, sacraments, our Lady, marriage, theology of the state, Christ and time, and doctrinal development. These topics are repeated throughout the book. but each time from a different viewpoint: scriptural, patristic, and liturgical.

The greater part of the work is devoted to the scriptural studies. The Old Testament studies are very well developed by Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., who presents his investigations in a logical and theological order. The New Testament studies are the work of John J. Collins, S. J., who touches on certain scriptural points of interest to all Christians.

The liturgical studies by John H. Miller, C.S.C., form a doctrinal and theological investigation of liturgy rather than a merely historical narrative. The author presents some of his own viewpoints on certain liturgical questions which differ from those of other liturgists; e. g., the definition and nature of liturgy is in contrast to that presented by Josef A. Jungmann, S. J.

The concluding chapter of the book is the work of the editor; entitled "Theology in Transition," it gives a general evaluation of the so-called "new theology," or as Father O'Brien prefers to call it, the 'transformation' or new approach to theology.

This book is not a simple chronicle of the theological probity of the past decade, but rather a doctrinal analysis and evaluation of the various monographs which have appeared from 1954 to 1964. The subtitle of the book is "a bibliographical evaluation," and this purpose is certainly fulfilled. After each chapter the reader will find a rather comprehensive bibliography. As each contributor has noted in his opening paragraph, the work is not complete in every aspect, since that would require a monumental work. This text is not intended for the expert in theology; but it has an important role to fill in our present day of theological investigation by both layman and priest. The subject and name indices make it quite handy as a ready and easy reference work.

The book refers not so much to the past as to the future, since the evaluations it presents are those of theological doctrine which began around 1954 and still continue to-

- Method C. Billy, O.F.M. Conv.

Theological Dictionary, By Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler. Trans. Richard Strachan. Ed. Cornelius Ernst, New York: Herder and Herder, 1965, Pp. 493, \$6.50.

Karl Rahner and his student and biographer Herbert Vorgrimler have each contributed approximately half the six hundred entries in this encyclopedic dictionary of, dogmatic theology. It can be assumed that Rahner's task was theological and Vorgrimler's scriptural. It can equally be assumed that they closely cooperated in this work and that each entry reflects Rahner's thought.

As in his other works, the student of theology will encounter in the Theological Dictionary Rahner's characteristic approach to theology.

Under each title selected for its significance and relevance the reader will receive a concise statement of the official teaching of the Church, whether it stems from Chalcedon, Trent, or Vatican II, The reader, however, can only expect to gain but a glimpse into the creative and problematic aspect of Rahner's theological mind. Due to the brevity demanded of a dictionary, the reader will for the most part have to look to Rahner's many and varied monographs for a more extended treatment of any particular questions. In this dictionary, for example, one will find under the title Orders the traditional teaching of the Church with no indication of uncertainty concerning the ordination of priests. In a short work entitled Bishops: Their Status and Function, however, Rahner writes:

All that can be said with some degree of certainty is that a priest cannot ordain a bishop. It is not, however, certain that he cannot — under certain circumstances validly confer ordination to the priesthood (p. 49).

Nevertheless with its abundance of cross reference the reader of this Theological Dictionary will so move from subject to related subject in an ever-expanding circle that he will grasp an insight into Rahner's thought in as brief a manner as possible. He will, for instance, be referred in the article on God to Christ and the Church, as well as to Faith, Justification and Religion. From these topics he will be further referred to the Sacraments, Authority, Obedience, and Freedom, as well as to Death, Eschatology, Other World, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and Limbo. From these considerations, moreover, the interested reader will be directed in a logical fashion to Creation, to Monogenism, Polygenism and Polyphylism, to Original Justice and the Fall, as well as to Myth and Demythologization. In short, the student interested in one or another point of theology will be led over a wide variety of topics relevant to, and much discussed in, contemporary circles.

While in most cases the reader will proceed from traditional Church

teaching to an incipient raising of questions and of possibilities for further development, he will in a few instances encounter some of Rahner's more startling and problematical positions. Thus, for example, under the entry Obedience where Rahner considers this aspect of religious life the student will read:

It is wise to obey even an absurd command — provided what is required is not immoral.... It is, of course, very difficult to distinguish a command which is objectively mistaken from one that is immoral. In view of this difficulty it is downright un-Christian to fall back on the immoral maxim that "orders are orders"; rather the subject has a duty openly to resist authority if it requires what is plainly absurd (pp. 320-321).

Here, as in many other places, the reader will appreciate the observation that Rahner seems to vacillate between traditional and contemporary theological positions. To evaluate correctly Rahner's contribution, however, the theologically interested reader should correlate Rahner's apparent ambivalence with his notions of theology and of the theologian's office.

For Rahner Christian Theology (pp. 456-459) is the attempt to understand systematically God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the questions that arise from this attempt. Catholic theology, in addition, is grounded upon the solid foundation of doctrine, as it is proposed by the ordinary and extraordinary magisterium of the Church, the sole authentic interpreter of this revelation. Theology, therefore, necessarily depends upon and presupposes Scripture and Tradition, as well as its own historical development.

The theologian, however, is not to be confused with the archeologist or with the student of Christian antiquities. Because theology has not reached, and will never reach, the final stage of its development, the theologian cannot limit himself to the history of theology. Of necessity he must seek to understand the divine truths in his own historical situation. He must contribute his matter of theology - the word of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The methodical attempt, then, to understand this revelation is an existential concern for the theologian, and not something of mere scholarly interest. In fact,

It is an essential part of the business of theology to confront contemporary man's "view of life" with the message of the Gospel, because theology is always an effort to hear and understand on the part of man who has a secular historical experience and because this experience must embody itself in the act of theology if he is to hear God's word at all (p. 457).

At present, unfortunately, Catholic theology is very far from meeting the religious needs of the age, despite its vast wealth of historical learning. Unhesitatingly, Rahner places the blame for the slowness in overcoming this state of affairs on the blunders of Modernism, which proposed wrong solutions for the many problems it correctly grasped, no less than on the clerical intrigues which drove numerous adherents of Modernism out of communion with the Church. "To this day," Rahner says, "'Modernism' unfortunately remains a term used for spiteful invective by arrogant people in the Church who have no idea how difficult faith is for men of our time" (p. 290).

From this understanding of theology and of the theologian's task Rahner has sought to reinterpret Thomist theology in the light of more modern philosophical ideas, particularly those of Kant and Heidegger. One of Rahner's earliest works, in fact, was an attempt to form a synthesis between Aquinas and Heidegger. In this attempt at reinterpretation Rahner has developed ideas concerning the relativity of the truth of statements about divine realities. He has theorized that finite statements about the infinite do contain elements of the truth, but as finite statements they cannot constitute the ultimate, total comprehension of truth. In principle, therefore, every

own insights into the very subject formula which attempts to express the faith can be surpassed while retaining the truth it formulated. Vatican II's decree On Ecumenism has explicitly ratified this notion.

If this be true for formulas of official Church teaching, it is all the more so for customary modes of expression and description. Thus, under the title Other World Rahner writes:

This expression . . . and its imagery is mythical.... Consequently this term is ill-suited to convey escatological belief, since heaven is neither the highest physical dimension nor (when complete) the beatitude of pure spirits but the new, perfected state of this world, in which the history of this world "finds its resolution" (p. 331).

The reader, furthermore, will be reminded that the term Purgatory came into use during the Middle Ages and that it need not stand in the way of a better and more accurate term for the process it attempts to describe. Not content merely to raise this observation, Rahner goes on to give his own understanding of the purgative process (pp. 391-392).

From a brief perusal of the Theological Dictionary, then, it should be obvious why Karl Rahner is among all Catholic theologians considered closest in stature to the Protestant theologians Karl Barth and Paul Tillich. From an ecumenical perspective, incidentally, Rahner maintains that the theological formulations of Trent (p. 467) offer sufficient opportunities for the full integration into Catholicism of the real religious aim and aspirations of the Reformation. One could hardly disagree, it would seem, with the honor given to the twentieth century's Doctor of the Church at the recent convocation of the world's leading theologians at the University of Notre Dame. At/ this conference Karl Rahner was praised as "a theologian who has shown what theology can be when it is treated as an activity rather than a system, as a father always in search of understanding rather than a final interpretation of truth."

- Kilian Gaughan, O.F.M.

Mysticism and Ecumenism By Robley E. Whitson. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966. Pp. xv-209. Cloth, \$4.95.

Mysticism and ecumenism are both attractive subjects very topical at this moment; a book combining the two could be most interesting. Unfortunately the work under review has two major faults which make it far less useful than it might have been.

The first is its style. The author's thought is wrapped up in a mass of verbiage, some of it all but incomprehensible. What is one to make of such expressions as "mysticism as the subjective confrontation-state of the mystic" or "the role of the sign in the extra-rational process has been discussed in reference to its function as a nexus between the self-conscious and selfless-conscious states experienced"? Further, the author is over-fond of modern jargon; for example the word commitment occurs no fewer than fourteen times on the first five pages of the Introduction and eight times on three quarters of a later page (109)! To say nothing of involvement, existential, structure, dynamics, ultimate reality, and the rest.

An even more serious fault of this avowedly "ecumenical" book is the total absence of the mysticism of the Greek Church. The chapter entitled "The Christian Writings" comprises the First Letter of Saint John, Saint Augustine, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and Saint John of the Cross, but not a word of Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius Ponticus, pseudo-Dionysius, to say nothing of such outstanding later mystics of the Eastern Church as Simeon the New Theologian or Gregory Palamas. It is also strange that the First Letter of Saint John should be taken "as representative of the apostolic mystical tradition" to the exclusion of Saint Paul, Besides, the mysticism of the Mendicant Orders is left out altogether; neither the Dominican Master Eckhart nor the Franciscan Saint Bonaventure is mentioned.

A further criticism to be made is that the selection of texts (why

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these are all printed as verse whereas most of them are from prose writings I cannot imagine) contains almost nothing but snippets out of context, from which it is impossible to gather the real mystical teaching of their authors; for example in the selection from Saint Augustine there are only two lines from his extremely important De Genesi ad Litteram.

The sections on the non-Christian forms of mysticism are equally unsatisfactory and for the same reasons: very superficial and verbose introductions and collections of bits and pieces that will hardly enlighten the reader on this extremely difficult subject.

It is a great pity that the author should not have spent more thought and research on a topic so vital for our time. As it stands, the book serves neither the cause of mysticism nor that of ecumenism, though the reader unacquainted with either may find in it material to stimulate his interest.

- Hilda Graef

The Church as Mission. By Eugene Hillman, C. S. Sp. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. Pp. 144. Cloth, \$3.75.

On November 9, 1964, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen addressed Vatican II concerning the Missions. "In the Body of Christ," he said, "there are no 'new churches', there are no 'old churches,' for we are all living cells in that Body, dependent on one another. It is souls, not territories, which make the missions. The missions must not be the one aspect of the life of the Church which admits of no aggiornamento." Father Eugene Hillman, in "The Church as Mission," seeks to refute this guideline for modern missiology, calling for a return to the traditional understanding of missions as "tribes and tongues and peoples who have not vet known Christ" (p. 20), and eliminating any alternative use of that term.

In this task, both the argumentation and the rhetoric of the author fail. As in so many deep discussions, the difficulty degenerates into a problem of semantics — the meaning of the word mission. The word and the concept behind it admit of a broad interpretation (as in Chapter I of De Ecclesia) and of a narrow interpretation (as the territorial jurisdiction of the Propaganda Fidei). Unfortunately, Father Hillman chose the latter as the meaning allowing no variation of content. His position is understandable, prejudiced as he is by his years of service to the peoples of Tanzania. Still, his narrowness of vision is unjustifiable.

However, this is not to condemn the entire work at hand. The three final chapters provide a soothing ointment and a saving oil for the instruction and edification of every reader. The author's treatment of the complexus of divine saving events in time, called Salvation History, is nothing short of superb. In a remarkably readable style, Father Hillman digests, synopsizes, condenses, and presents to his reader the best analysis of modern theological speculation on this topic that this reviewer has yet discovered. He proves his worth as a scholar, as a theologian, as a wellread intellectual, and as a dedicated, zealous priest of God.

"The Church as Mission" is bound to produce many mixed emotions on the current scene. Perhaps the author should have remained closer to his title rather than delving into the missions of the Church. The two terms are neither synonymous nor co-extensive. The latter denotes a beginning, a seed from which the former, an eternal entity, may grow, flourish, and be brought to fruition. Neither aspect of mission theology should be cast aside, for they are complements in the saving work of Christ — not to be completed until all creation is eternally reunited to the Father.

In short, this book is recommended reading for any serious Christian interested in the spirituality and structure of our pilgrim Church. If the reader is able to plough through its opening chapters, a rich reward will be his in its closing pages.

- Richard L. Bory

In the Beginning... Genesis I-III-By Jean Daniélou, S. J. Trans. Julien L. Randolf; Baltimore: Helicon, 1965. Pp. 106. Paper, \$1.25.

The scope of this study (originally published as Au Commencement — Paris, 1962) is "the theology of nations and cultures and the insertion of God's plan into the very structure of human history" (p. 94). In his Introduction, Fr. Daniélou states his intention to investigate the creation of the world and of man, since this subject is relevant to the problems of our time.

Before delving into the theological themes of the first chapters of Genesis, the author discusses the liturgy genre of these chapters. The six chapters which follow present the theology of creation, the biblical doctrine of man, the mystery of sin, the Adam-Christ typology, the peoples of the earth, and the tower of Babel.

Each of these subjects is handled in the framework of modern bib-

lical theology. From these chapters it is clear that the salvation history contained in Genesis is to be understood in the perspective of the New Testament revelation, and in particular of the Person of Christ.

This most recent work of Fr. Daniélou inculcates an appreciation for the Word of God; an understanding of the theology of Gen. I-III creates a desire to continue to study the theology contained in the Word of God. And knowledge of God's Word will foster an appreciation of the liturgy. The Appendix to this fine book contains the CCD translation of the first three chapters of Genesis.

— Cassian Corcoran, O.F.M.

Religious Life: a Living Liturgy. By Paul Hinnebusch, O.P. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965. Pp. viii-280, Cloth, \$5.00

It is probably safe to say that no generation has been more liturgy-conscious than our own. Vatican

OUR REVIEWERS

Father Method C. Billy, O.F.M. Conv., who holds a doctorate in sacred theology and has taught at St. Anthony-on-Hudson, Catholic University, and St. Joseph's College (N.M.), is now teaching at Maria Regina College, Syracuse, N.Y.

Father Kilian Gaughan, O.F.M., was ordained to the priesthood June 11; he is scheduled to pursue graduate studies in doctrinal theology in September.

Miss Hilda Graef earned her doctorate in theology from the University of London and has taught Scripture, English, and German, in Berlin. She is the author of The Story of Mysticism, The Way of the Mystics, The Scholar and the Cross, Mystics of Our Times, and many other books on Christian doctrine and spirituality.

Mr. Richard L. Bory is a student of theology at Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

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Father Richard Leo Heppler, O.F.M., has taught English composition and literature at St. Joseph's Seminary, Callicoon, N.Y., and St. Francis College, Rye Beach, N.H.; he is now Guardian of St. Raphael's Friary and Novitiate, Lafayette, N.J.

Mr. Richard L. Leskovar, former engineer and staff announcer at Station WRNY, Rome, N.Y., is presently a student of theology and student director of sacred music at Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

II has provided us with a splendid manifesto on the sacred liturgy, and enthusiasm has been widely enkindled to put off being spectators at the Church's public worship and enter into its action and its mystery. It is too bad that in some quarters action is stressed at the expense of mystery, that, in fact, mystery is renounced for action and even occasionally denounced in favor of action.

If a very active participation in the sacred liturgy is understood as participating in the renewal of the mysteries of our Redemption, the great sacrificial act, it can never be overstressed, never exaggerated. We cannot become too involved in the greatest of mysteries wherein we receive both the word of God and God Himself, and give ourselves to Him in a totality of commitment. However, unless this aspect of "living giving," as Father Hinnebusch calls it, is appreciated and accepted, all the stately processions, all the vernacular praying, all the rousing hymn singing in the world will not

Liturgical action must spring out of the mystery of God's covenant with His people, and be understood as a continuance of the covenant. or it will be essentially "unsprung." It seems to me that the author's articulateness in relating mystery to reality and showing the very practical face of the sacrificial action is the great merit of Father Hinnebusch's book. It is altogether satisfying to discover his gift of writing very poetically of hard practicalities, and being so very practical in his poetic insight. Thus, the theme of Christ as the "signet ring" of the Father, and the religious as the signet ring of Christ. is presented in the most appealing poetic language but with nothing of the abstract about it.

The activities of a religious are considered not merely as an expression of her love for Christ but as an expression of Christ's love for the world, and this tremendous concept is presented clearly and simply, without recourse to a show of pedantry. It is brought to a splendid conclusion on page 218: "Charity in

action, then - not only the supreme charity of laying down our life in martyrdom, but all our daily selfsacrifice for one another in the love of God — is the witness to the truth of the Gospel. Nothing manifests the truth of the Gospel — the good news of God's love - more clearly than does the charity of the faithful." All conclusions are drawn with the ease of a writer who is too erudite to resort to a display of erudition, too obviously a man of deeply interior life himself to have to employ the complexities of the theoretician.

The book is full of freshness in areas where we may be getting a bit stuffy. For example, Father Hinnebusch has this to say on page 160: "The gift of one's will to God is not the killing of the will, in the sense of reducing it to inactivity. The perfect gift of self is rather the ceaseless, perfect activity of the will in its fullest freedom and spontaneity of love, ever giving self to God joyously and willingly For example, when a religious obeys her superior, she exercises her personality and freedom not by arguing with the superior over every point of obedience, but by lovingly and intelligently giving herself to the divine will, which, in living faith she sees expressed in the will of the superior This is not the destruction of freedom, but its supreme use: for we possess ourselves in freedom only that we might give ourselves to God in love's free gift." This may seem an oversimplification in the face of the very real problem of so many of our religious who feel caught on the horns of a dilemma, but this would be a false assessment attributable to the reviewer's having lifted a valid conclusion out of full context. But one cannot quote the whole book. however great the temptation. It is only to be hoped that this book will be widely read so that its total validity will stand forth beyond dispute.

We have quite a confusion of voices in the Church at this time. This may be a good thing, if it forces us to think clearly and sort out ideas instead of accepting them

RECORD REVIEW

Demonstration English Mass. By Dennis Fitzpatrick (Friends of the English Liturgy, 749 Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611).

The Demonstration English Mass was published by the Friends of the English Liturgy, a group of lay people interested in seeing a complete vernacular restoration of the liturgy. The Mass itself was composed before the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; it does not purport to be an approved version, but simply an experiment. The purpose of the record is to present a concrete demonstration of a vernacular sung Mass as might be used for a parish Sunday Mass.

The music heard on the recording was directed by its composer and represents an authentic interpretation of his music. Although the laymen used for the celebrant, readers, homilist, chanters, and choir are professionals in their respective fields the congregation was made up of volunteer men, women, and children. The greater part of the congregation rehearsed the Mass one-half hour before the recording. This point is stressed since the results indicate the ease with which a typical Sunday congregation could learn to sing the Mass.

The Mass is based on simple chant-like settings which retain the beauty of the Latin chant but at the same time are written for those who are to sing it, namely the congregation, choir and ministers. In the past the major difficulty with chant was the high degree of technical ability needed to perform it well. Since the average parish does not consist of trained Gregorian singers, a similar yet simple mode of expression had to be composed. Mr. Fitzpatrick's Mass has met this challenge: it is written entirely for the English language, adhering to the English accentuation. It is not a reworked Latin Gregorian Mass, but one fully fitted to our modern mode of expression (without being

completely alienated from Latin chant).

In the recording the organ was not used to accompany the Mass in order to demonstrate the closeness of the English to the Latin chant. The entire Canon of the Mass may be sung by the priest; for this three tones are available to him which range from a most elaborate setting (used on the recording) to an almost completely recited Canon for those less musically inclined. This innovation would be readily acceptable to many of the clergy who are unsure of their musical ability.

The reforms implemented in the Mass are those generally advocated by most liturgists and are largely contained in Father H. A. Reinhold's book, Bringing the Mass to the People (Helicon Press, 1960). The basic structure follows our presently approved English liturgy with the following notable exceptions: there is an added Old Testament passage within the Liturgy of the Word preceding the present reading of the Epistle; the Creed used is the Apostles' Creed rather than the Nicene Creed because of the former's directness, simplicity, and brevity. The Lord's prayer is a modern translation, making it more meaningful by rendering the archaic forms of expression, found in the traditional form, in modern porlance; Communion is received under both species (intinction). Other revisions proposed at the time of composing this Mass have either been included in our new Liturgy or at least tried experimentally to the extent that it seems unnecessary to point them out.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has indeed made a valuable contribution to the English liturgy. Whether or not a completely revised English Mass will follow this particular structure is a matter of conjecture, but Mr. Fitzpatrick's music will certainly continue to play an important role in our liturgical revival.

- Richard J. Leskovar

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