COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Our January cover, drawn by Father Francis X. Miles, O.F.M., emphasizes the reparative effect of silence, one of many themes discussed by Father Moens in his superb treatment of religious silence. Drawn by the power of the Cross from the jangling bustle of discordant noise, the Christian finds at the foot of that Cross the peace and harmony he craves. The illustrations for this issue were also drawn by Father Francis.

the CORD

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CONTENTS

THE FUTURE OF BELIEF 2
Editorial

RELIGIOUS SILENCE 4
G. R. Moens, O.P.

STOP WITHIN 14
Patrick Slattery

MARGINALS ON *PERFECTAE CARITATIS* — V 15
Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

HUMAN— AND MORE THAN HUMAN 22
Msgr. Ralph M. Miller

RIPOSTE 25
Readers' Correspondence

BOOK REVIEWS 26

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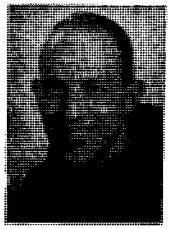
The Future of Belief



The aftermath of modernism was a stance, on the Church's part, of tenacious reiteration and clinging to the hard won formulas of past ages. Anathemas rang through the air, and, at least for the decades which preceded Vatican II, "orthodoxy" was safe. We do not think this can ever happen again.

It is true that modernism was shot through with errors, as were past condemned heresies; it is likewise true that in the future erroneous doctrines will have to be rejected by thinking Christians. Our decade, however, has seen a revolution that has had few parallels in the past: within the history of Christendom we can see only two developments prior to this which can seriously be classified with it. The first of these was the Platonic Hellenization of Christianity between the apostolic age and Saint Augustine; the second, its recasting by Scholasticism, especially Saint Thomas, in an Aristotelian mould. If these two developments were necessary and legitimate for the cultural expression and evolution of Christianity, they nevertheless formed a departure from the genuinely historical perspective of biblical revelation. Our re-discovery of the paramount significance of history and of the comprehensive role of evolution leads us to rethink all that has happened to the Christian Faith since the apostolic age.

This rethinking, sparked by Pope John XXIII, will never lead us to deplore the past, especially where, as was the case with the vast preponderance of Catholic teaching, doctrine developed in a form which genuinely served a given age. We shall never lightly question the legitimacy of Hellenistic Christianity for the past; but by the same token we can never accept it for the present.

Leslie Dewart, the widely respected philosopher and theologian from St. Michael's College, Toronto, has written an undoubtedly epoch-making book[1] which explores the defects of contemporary Christian theology and makes extremely fruitful suggestions for the future. It was Teilhard, actually, who gave the final impetus for theologians like Dewart to probe the possibilities raised for theology and religion by modern scientific thought. But unlike Teilhard's works, which burst at the seams with mystical and visionary vistas, *The Future of Belief* is an extremely cautious, closely reasoned essay written wholly from the viewpoint of a trained, expert speculative theologian. It cannot, of course, be read by everyone; but its message deserves to be proclaimed by others— shouted from every housetop: man is coming of age, and his God can no longer be conceived as Prime Mover, as Supreme Idea, as Infinite Being, or as Supreme Being. The God of Christianity must be conceived, in startlingly biblical fashion, as Presence to History— as the One who makes all things possible to man as he forges his future and that of the cosmos. Rational proofs for God's "existence," so confidently asserted by Hellenized Christianity, are useless, because the awareness of the absent-present God is a matter of experience (though experience of the *inevident*, of course). We cannot go on maintaining our credulous absolute theism, by which we believe in God-whatever-he-is, but must cultivate a healthy jealousy for the Truth, which seeks constantly to transcend past formulations for more accurate ones, more worthy both of God and of ourselves. Dewart has pointed out the way in a book which should turn out to be the single most important contribution in many decades to the radical renewal of Christianity.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, ofm

[1] **The Future of Belief** (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), pp. 223; Cloth, $4.95.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Christian Life Calendar. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1966. Single copy, $1.25; five or more, $1.00 each. Contains liturgical significance, spiritual significance, and Mass and Office rubrics for each day from November 27, 1966 through December 31, 1967.

Paul-Marie de la Croix, O.C.D. **The Biblical Spirituality of St. John**. Trans. John Clarke, O.C.D.; New York: Alba House, 1966. Pp. 425. Cloth, $7.50.

Raymond, Fr. M., O.C.S.O., **The Silent Spire Speaks**. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1966. Pp. vii-194. Cloth, $4.95.

Religious Silence

G. R. Moens, O.P.

Translated by Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M.

Silence is an essential form of all religious life. That is why all monastic rules recommend it. The old constitutions of the Dominicans speak of it as a "beautiful ceremony"; and today it is prescribed as a "most holy law." Is this shift of emphasis from ceremony to law perhaps indicative of a progressive evolution in the application of silence: formerly interpreted by holy friars as a spontaneous and sacred act, has it come to be looked upon as a strict obligation devoid of positive value? In any case, the transgression of the law of silence is an ever-repeated matter of confession at the chapter of faults of every religious community; and we rather frequently hear the older religious reproach the younger generation for being more talkative than they were.

Surely, all is not negative in this relative indifference regarding silence; there is something positive about it. It comes, no doubt, from the keen aspiration of young religious to be sincere and genuine. Revolting against affectedness, formalism, and imposed discipline, they can endure silence only as the authentic expression of true interior recollection. If they are to make their own the traditional observance of silence, then, they must see it, not as a constraining convention which leads to dissimulation and lack of genuineness, but as the natural result of their inward experience of the spiritual life.

On the other hand, however, there is a grave danger of not recognizing the value of silence precisely as an observance, as an external atmosphere, as an imposed obligation. We would like, therefore, to offer a few suggestions here on the meaning and significance of silence. These few elucidations will surely help many profoundly sincere religious in their effort to become more aware of the supernatural value of silence.

Some reflections on silence from the standpoint of general human psychology should form a fruitful approach to a grasp of its importance in religious life. A common phenomenon among men, silence becomes, in the religious life, a humanly visible expression of the supernatural life of grace.

An Eloquent Silence

In human life silence always signifies a return to calm. In his habitual behavior, man is not quiet. He is everlastingly in action, always headed toward an objective, intent on some goal. Objects distract him, the world fascinates him, the tumult of life absorbs him. As a result he is never present to himself, for he runs away from himself in the pure exteriority of constant diversion. This agitation of our contemporaries is, moreover, characterized by superficiality and egoism. It is not the same thing as that other type of emergence from self — that other openness to the world and to others which is love. Love is decentralization; it makes the hearth of someone else's life the center of one's own life. It is the gift of self; it is not self-seeking. Its approach toward another person is not utilitarian, not content with a superficial meeting, not a quasi-instinctive reaction on the level of possession. The superficial and external meeting, on the contrary, does not affect a man in his person; it leaves no personal gift of self.

Only the man of silence is capable of sacrificial love; for by becoming inwardly recollected, he has broken the vital current of his passions and has become himself. Man must be silent before things and within himself. Silence enables him to stop and to take his mind off a life of pleasure which seeks only self. It empowers him to gain access to freedom and to the depths of the life of the spirit. Only by attaining the world of the spirit and of the person can one meet another human being in a soul-to-soul dialogue. It is by first looking into his own heart that a man must discover that secret access to intimacy with others. The word that springs from this silence is dialogue, encounter, inviting love and not vain chatter, empty words, and cutting criticisms.

These brief reflections point up the value of the negative aspect of imposed silence. Words are the cause of so many evils. They are not always the authentic manifestation in the world of what is within us, in the depths of our spirit. They are often, instead, a mask, a lie, a pretense. In the banal meeting, words are often the instrument of unfettered passions. One man then feels himself under the ascendancy of another. He feels himself "used" as a means, an object of the other's egoism. So often words are vehicles of contempt, of destructive judgments.

Words issuing from silence, on the other hand, well up from personal interiority in order to welcome the other person. In the bodily encounter that then takes place, each becomes present to the other through the sacrament of the body with a view to a reciprocal participation in the life of the spirit. Friendship is a shared interiority. True dialogue which rises from the depths of silence, is the exteriorization of a community of life, the epiphany of a reciprocal love that offers itself and gives itself. When one person finds himself before another in this relation of dialogue, of mutual welcome and purely sacrificial love,

even light-hearted pleasantries and banter — such as take place at recreation in religious life — do not degenerate into vain babbling, but become the expression of common participation in the personal joy of living, the joy of the children of God.

But even in the ideal personal relation of dialogue, speech must on occasion yield to silence. For speech ever remains relative, a testimony of the inexpressible, the unspeakable. The riches of reality defy adequate expression. The tongue suggests, expresses the depths of the soul, but it surrenders so very little of it. Speech is not only a means of communication in inter-subjective relations; it can also estrange people, widen the distance between them, isolate them. Silence can do all this too, but in a much more profound and more subtle way. If it can erect a wall of indifference or of odious contempt, it can also signify loving and speechless nearness to the person one loves. It can, in fact, be so pregnant with meaning that the least word seems a sacrilege.

The eloquence of silence contains all words; and this eloquence cannot be equalled. The loving communion of two lovers, intimately present one to the other in the world of silence, needs no words. Silence itself speaks and expresses the mutual solicitude, full of respect and modesty, that characterizes lovers. "I am satisfied to know that you are here," Gabriel Marcel has one of his lovers say. And according to Gorter's sonnet on friendship: "The music of words is silent, but the understanding is like a sound."

Silent Contemplation

How is this talking silence, this fertile soil of the soul, created? It is born in reflection, concentration, self-examination.

The man who never returns within himself, but is content to fritter his life away in a sheer and unrelieved exteriorization of himself, comes to realize, in time, his lack of enthusiasm and of stimulating momentum. He comes to feel keenly his emptiness and loneliness. The peaceful man, on the other hand, the man who is capable of recollection, comes to know himself only in the silence of **reflection**. To reflect is, in fact, "to be near to." It is to go before the world and men as they are in their objective manifestation and not in a utilitarian mentality, seeking "what's in it for me?"

Reflection makes man present. He enters into contemplative contact with reality. He becomes receptive to the inner resonance of things. The silent man discovers in reflection the profound dimension of objects, their transparency, the sign of another world which comes to us through exteriority . . . if we listen with the ears of the spirit. The man who shatters the dubious motivation of practical advantage and looks within himself in silence comes to experience a genuine and disinterested wonder as he contemplates the being of things. He is captivated by an existential wonderment, too, at his own existence: **admiratio!** Only the man who bears this questioning astonishment in his heart can enter God's presence. For he is detached from himself, and life has

taken on a different meaning for him. He has discovered the creative presence of God behind the multi-colored attire of objects, the sacramental expression of his omnipresence.

In this wordless silence, the religious succeeds in opening his heart to prayer. God is a hidden God. He does not appear to us as the sun does as it rises on a beautiful spring morning. He is never next to something or someone. He is always "beneath" and within his creatures as their Ground: "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). God speaks to us in his creation, but we can discover and encounter him there only if we "watch," only if we maintain the sharpness of our religious "sensibility."

We find God only by looking into ourselves, for as Saint Augustine says, "God is closer to us than we are to ourselves." And it is by **silent contemplation** that we keep ourselves before God. The apparent void that we experience in silence is the elusive and subtle word, the self-revelation of the living God who beckons to man and draws him by his grace. Silence orients man toward God: he finds himself before him in an attitude of esteem, of profound respect and love. To pray is to hold a dialogue with God. And, just as the disappearance of respect and love makes dialogue impossible between people, so the presence of God fades simultaneously with respect for God. But with the man of silence, the chill of fear with regard to the divine never quite disappears. He is ever receptive to the mystery hidden

behind everything; he is ever responsive to the meaning latent in every event, for he sees therein a "greeting" from God, who, not being of this world, calls attention to himself by a thousand attentions full of love.

Reflection therefore becomes for the religious a prayerful contemplation, an experience of God's presence, guarded in silence as in a precious jewel-case where the Holy One is present. In this the man of silence follows the example of the mother of all contemplatives, Mary, who "kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19).

Sacred Silence

Such is the deepest meaning of silence: we find ourselves completely alone before God. The world of silence is the world of prayer. Only silence renders man capable of welcoming God and conversing with him; for he is present to us only in silence. The word came to Elias, we read in 3 Kings 19:11:13:

> to go out and stand there in the Lord's presence; the Lord God

himself would pass by. A wind there was, rude and boisterous, that shook the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, the whisper of a gentle breeze. Elias, when he heard it, wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out to stand at the cave door.[1]

Yahweh had passed by. And in the Apocalypse we read that when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, "There was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour" (8: 1). It was in silence, too, that the Word of God came down to earth: "When a profound stillness compassed everything and the night in its swift course was half spent, your all-powerful word, O Lord, bounded from heaven's royal throne."[2]

The silence of the monk is a sacred, religious silence because it is sacramental: it is the manifestation of God's presence to the monk and of the monk's presence to God. This silence is a figure of the soul disappearing in the hidden God, an expression of inner enthusiasm for God, of ecstasy in God, of possession by the divine plenitude. So keenly does man value this divine presence that he becomes silent, enraptured by it. His joy culminates in recollection. That is why religious silence is not a void, a wasteland, a passivity, but the highest activity and receptivity. Just as two kindred souls are perfectly content — calm, silent and happy — in each other's presence, so the man filled with God's awesome and silent presence comes to value and esteem sacred silence. This explains why monastic silence could be called a "beautiful ceremony." But it also accounts for the duty encumbent on the religious to welcome God's initiative and, when necessary, to seek out the hidden God.

The inner source of exterior silence is therefore an interest in God, a quest for God. That is why religious silence is always a silence imposed on self-love. It comes from outside to strengthen the man who is conscious of his inability to do anything except receive. It comes as a witness to grace. The Israelites were forbidden to pronounce the name of Yahweh, for with them the name was closely bound up with the reality itself. To call someone by his right name was to take possession of him, to have a "hold" on him. In pronouncing the name of God, man had so to speak a "hold" on God. Their roles were thereby reversed. Man assumed an attitude of pride toward God whereas, in fact, he can do nothing without God. It is God who has a "hold" on man, and not vice versa.

[1] This passage is cited in the translation of Msgr. Ronald Knox, copyright 1950, Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York. Used with the kind permission of His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

[2] Introit of the Mass for the Sunday after Christmas.

Silence, then, is essentially an expression of humility toward God, of man's complete disponibility toward God.[3] The inwardly recollected man discovers himself and all else "seized upon" by God. "I can love in myself," wrote Lavelle, "only what is the very source of being and of life." This intimate presence of God to us is the reason why it is so difficult for us to find God. He is closer to us than our own heart is.

Religious silence is essentially a silence of prayer. Yet is it not always formal prayer, and still less is it meditation. It is the sacred ground of prayer. It is silent intimacy with God. It is life in his presence. It is like the play of a child under the gaze of his mother (cf. Prov. 8:31).

As the expression of our inability to do anything without God, of our total dependence on him, as well as of our awe in the face of his holiness, religious silence is also a **silence of respect,** the same silence man observes toward the sacred in general. Confronted with death, for example, man experiences contact with the absolute. He is silent. And this silence signifies respect for whatever is majestic and sacred. It extinguishes in man all worldly activity, even that of speaking. Man becomes, as it were, the spectator of a reality that takes place outside him, or within him, without being "of" him.

This respect toward the transcendent is an attitude characteristic of human behavior, which thus becomes "symmetrical," whereas it was unsymmetrical in its normal context of human intercourse. Ordinarily a certain personal independence and freedom expresses itself spontaneously before others, through which man can seek to make the most of himself. But in his encounter with the sacred, with the absolute, with God, man knows himself to be totally dependent, and he senses the impropriety of the spontaneous relaxation of his respectful demeanor. He gives himself a "symmetrical" attitude through which he recognizes himself present in respect and submission. He even becomes aware that there is nothing else for him to do, after all, but simply **be there.**

The liturgical attitude and the attitude of individual prayer are, therefore, both instances of a "symmetrical" posture in which we establish our presence before God. In each of these cases we suppress whatever there is in us of the profane, and we place ourselves in God's presence in a respectful silence.

Our religious silence is indeed something very positive. It is a silence full of respect, of sacred reverence which, far from inducing a morbid preoccupation with self, actually sets up a dimension of depth in which man lets the breath of God play undisturbed on the harp of his spirit.

[3] "Disponibility" is a transliteration from the French, used because of the richness it has acquired in the thought of Gabriel Marcel. No English equivalent exists as yet which connotes as effectively "openness, release, abandonment, welcoming, surrender, readiness to respond." See K. Gallagher, **The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel** (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 26 (tr. note).

The Silence of Repentance

A religious community is not an assembly of saints, but a community of men who must strive for sanctity. That is why all of them do not spontaneously look upon silence as a "beautiful ceremony," but rather as a "law," a law imposed upon them from outside. It is obvious that religious silence is not in every case the expression of an interior and affective ecstasy in God. A love of God so intense as to compel spontaneous rapture can be experienced as a more or less permanent state of soul only by mystics; it manifests itself only sporadically in the spiritual life of the ordinary religious.

Nevertheless, every religious is obliged by his constitutions to observe a continuous silence. What conceivable meaning can we discover in such an observance, in a silence which manifestly does not bespeak a very deep intimacy with God? Perhaps we can clarify the meaning of such an obligation by beginning with the general human perspective, to which the religious context will then add a completely original meaning.

We have already spoken of the situation in which the presence of love renders words absolutely superfluous. Reciprocal spiritual love can be so intense, in fact, as actually to disrupt a man's physical make-up. Similar psychological experiences with a repercussion in the body are normal in human life. A death, a deep sorrow, the anticipation of an examination can take away one's appetite. And an unexpected joy leaves a man speechless.

All these phenomena, in which spiritual experiences have bodily repercussions, only manifest the deep union in man of the soul and the body. But the opposite effect is also verifiable. The physical separation of two good friends induces a spiritual affliction. Physical suffering can be transformed into profound spiritual suffering. Good or bad digestion can make a man happy or cantankerous.

Now, the point is, this body-soul interaction has important implications for silence. Viewed positively, silence is the bodily expression of a spiritual concentration, of true contemplation, or of some religious experience. Negatively, it represents a physical effort to attain inner spiritual calm.

Thus a student puts his head between his hands and shields himself from all outside distraction so that he can concentrate. He has not yet succeeded, but by persevering in his physical effort, he will. The religious also knows the value of this effort to adapt one's physical environment or atmosphere to his spiritual needs, desires, or requirements. A venerable procession of anchorites, hermits, monks, and religious crosses the history of the Church. All of them withdrew into the desert, into solitary hermitages, into silent forests or into mountainous regions in order to find inner silence and lead a deeper spiritual life.

He who becomes externally silent, then, will also gradually become inwardly silent as well. The external demeanor, which would normally be the effect of the interior disposition, thus becomes a means deliberately employed to attain the corresponding spiritual state. Just as a man forces himself to fast so as to school his soul in an attitude which spontaneously moderates his appetite, so he can force himself to keep silent in order to attain that state of soul which, in itself, makes him spontaneously calm. Such is the general psychological law which forms the basis for mortification and penance. Viewed negatively, Christian asceticism manifests man's intentions to reach that interior state where he relishes God more and for that purpose voluntarily puts himself in an external situation which in itself is but the spontaneous expression of an exalted love of God. The penitent is magnanimous. Full of confidence in God, he outdistances himself. He shows his good will by sincere love, and his external penance then becomes a symbolic act through which he calls upon God to help him — to lead him spiritually to the very goal which his mortification visibly expresses.

Religious silence is likewise a negative form of penance, but it is also a prayer of supplication in which the deliberate, generous, and loving choice of silence tries to obtain from God's mercy the grace to love him fully. Like the child who climbs a dangerous stairway with rash confidence, knowing that his mother will come down to meet him and take him in her arms, the religious chooses to keep silence, progressing with an unshakeable confidence in the irresistible love of God who comes to meet him.

But religious silence becomes an even more direct expression of penance when it becomes a silence of repentance. Mortal sin can completely unsettle a man; and remorse, by stirring up shame, can drive him to a silent solitude. "A fugitive and a wanderer shall you be on the earth," God said to Cain after he had killed his brother (Gen. 4:12). The sinner flees from men, flees conversation for fear that his speech will betray him. His silence testifies to his culpability. This fundamental religious experience of sin felt deep down as a disorder not only of the soul but likewise of the body will induce the repentant sinner, even if he feels this experience less strongly, to maintain a voluntary silence of repentance for his own sins; and it will thereby strengthen his awareness of the sin and of his culpability. Religious silence then expresses the repentance of the sinner and at the same time an impetuous desire for a life of greater love.

But man can also make expiation for the sins of others and ask for the grace of their conversion. By voluntarily taking upon himself the disorder consequent upon sin, the religious will expiate

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This article appeared in La Vie Spirituelle, August-September, 1964. The editors of that review have generously agreed, in view of the subject's importance, to our publishing this translation by Father Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M., chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital, West Palm Beach, Florida.

the sins of others by this silence of repentance. He then imitates the expiatory sufferings of Christ.

> Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,
> our suffering that he endured,
> While we thought of him as stricken,
> as one smitten by God and afflicted.
> But he was pierced for our offenses,
> crushed for our sins.
> Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
> by his stripes we were healed (Is. 53:4-5).

Silent Love

The serious danger of formalism — of a fossilized and dead observance of religious silence — would be lessened if that silence were explicitly linked to love and seen as intimately bound up in the communal nature of religious life. Even from the merely philosophical point of view, human life must be considered as an original "being with." Man is essentially a social being, and there is nothing in him that completely escapes this dimension. Thus, for example, human corporeity is the phenomenal expression of his basic sociability. Corporeity, in fact, makes sense only in the light of, and for the sake of, co-corporeity. But it is more deeply and especially as a **person** that man is by nature social. As a spiritual person, man has no private zone totally isolated from the community in which he finds himself. He can attain his complete fulfillment only in that community. But as a free person, he experiences his social obligations as both task and invitation. He is called to manifest in his life a justice and a love that will give rise to true community — to a shared human life and love.

Man is equally social in the religious domain. He cannot set up a relationship with God unless he includes other men in that relationship. "They think they love God," wrote Péguy regarding bigots, "because they love no one." To love God without loving one's neighbor is a lie. This does not mean that the individual's relationship to God is suppressed; it is very real, but it is **precisely this relationship that has social dimensions.** The more personal man's relationship is with God, in fact, the more intimate will be his relationship with his neighbor.

Religious life is pre-eminently the experience of Christian love. By reason of their common vocation, religious form a "common unity", a unity common to all. And it is their nearness to God that makes them so close to one another and confers on all their actions such a deep communal dimension. Now, religious silence is a powerful stimulant of the communal life, and, conversely, violating this silence can be a sin against Christian love. That the so-called jovial type is the most social is simply false. The sociability of a voluble and jovial individual is a sociability of temperament and of natural dispositions. An authentically religious "communal sense" is of another — spiritual order. A religious can evince a greater communal spirit by keeping silence than by speaking or showing signs of friendship to everyone. The atmosphere

of real presence, of the authentic gift, of the true social being, is silence. The most profoundly social acts transpire in silence. Religious silence is a hidden form of prayer, a sacred silence, so potent that it can be a major force in building up a community. When we pray for one another, after all, we are more closely present to one another than in our daily encounters. Every communion in love — every gift of self in friendship — places us in the presence of God.

Religious silence exerts a profound social influence from the negative viewpoint as well; we have already pointed out how many evils it can divert. This is especially applicable to religious houses. The religious community is like a pool. Just as the individual who skims the surface of the water agitates the whole pool, so the vibrations of a broken silence extend to the entire community.

In many cases, silence is better than speaking; this is evident if we consider the essential relativity of the spoken word. Especially when we talk about others, our words are of dubious value. If we are hardly qualified to talk about ourselves, how can we speak the truth about our neighbor? People are not static objects, but living persons. Our words touch only upon certain modes of acting, certain traits of the other person, never the center of his spiritual personality. For there is more to a person than his external actions; as the old saying goes, "a man is always better than his actions." Since the best we can ever do is reach "something" of the other person, our words can convey only a part of the truth about him. Silence, on the other hand, retains an infinity of possibilities for ourselves and for others which words can never express. The man who knows how to keep quiet in the presence of another enables that other person in very truth to stand before him as "a being of possibility."

Silence, therefore, even considered negatively, also expresses respect for others. Each religious has a private sphere which we must respect. We have already said that this private zone is not in conflict with the community. The latter is not a mass, but a communion of persons. The less a person participates in the mass, the more is he worthy of being a member of the community.

Man becomes himself especially in his presence before God. Prayer, considered as contact with God, gives each religious an inviolable personality. He who disturbs another on this level attains the deepest strata of that other's being in a kind of sacrilege. But he who respects others on this level by maintaining silence fulfills a responsibility that is eminently communal. Thus silence is not merely a question of social love, but of justice as well. Others have a right to our silence, and when we violate this sacred right the words of the evangelist are applicable to us: "Of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment" (Mt. 12:36).

Religious silence is, then, extremely rich in meaning. It draws its significance and value from personal experience, which is by nature dynamic. It evolves, fluc-

tuates, gives rise to multiple interpretations. According to circumstances and personal adaptation, it becomes the visible expression of numerous inward attitudes. It never degenerates into dead formalism or barren observance for the man who is animated with a great love of God and with a charity of service. Silence is the instrument of creative love which always finds new possibilities. In accordance with the inmost dynamism of all positive asceticism, silence must become the visible manifestation of our love of Christ in our life.

Religious silence, for each and every one of us, can only signify a waiting, in ever-increasing disponibility, for the irruption of the love of Christ in our heart that is so full of desires but still so shrivelled. This expectation is not a dead passivity. It is our opening, our gateway, to the possibility of Love. "It is good to hope in silence" (Lam. 3:26).

Stop Within

Patrick Slattery

Now . . . again, I stop within—alone
To be apart from the edifying critique of
Time —

People running from-to, buying and selling
Themselves . . . and Him, with profound
Profanity.

Quoting stock phrases, pronouncing the black
Printed clichés—justifying existence by
Scraping the bleached sidewalk of
Time.

Craving the simple . . . abhoring the
Purity of the grey fused cement of
Morality, I must walk alone on the
Soft ground of real earth . . .

To give meaning to my found existence —
To know the purpose of each step without
Time . . .

Through the puddles of reflection to
Him —
. . . and when his chapel is found so am
I.

Marginals on

Perfectae Caritatis — V

Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.

That chastity is not something which claps padlocks on the heart is made very clear in the first number devoted to this subject in "Perfectae Caritatis." For too long and in too many quarters the chastity proper to the religious state has been approached from a negative viewpoint. It has frequently been presented and accepted more as a giving up than as a giving. #12 of P. C. reminds us that it is not only definitely a giving, but that it is first a gift from God to us before it is a gift from us to God.

"An outstanding gift of grace" is Vatican II's description of the chastity which religious profess. In this compact expression is the answer to those who are not so much a part of that social contingent sincerely concerned over the question of celibacy as of a mob agitation over an over-popularized problem. Actually, celibacy itself is not "a problem," although it is certainly true that perseverance in celibacy may present problems and even acute problems to the individual celibate. This is merely one instance of the manipulation of terms at which certain modern writers are so adept. Even without any literary exposé of the spurious logic endemic to such writing, we might harbor some fleeting doubts about the "sans reproche" crusading spirit of the supposedly tortured ex-priest for his fellow sufferers when he invites the reporters and

cameramen to catch him with his guitar before the new crib in the living-room. A genuine agony of conscience does not commonly request that cameras be set up.

When the "outstanding gift of grace" which is religious chastity has not been given by God, there are certainly going to be multiple problems for the one who professes celibacy. There may well be problems also for the celibate who has received this gift of grace, but to say this is to be far indeed from saying that celibacy itself is a problem. "He that can take it, let him take it," was our Savior's terse conclusion in this matter. To whom the outstanding gift of grace is given, let them respond with the gift of an undivided heart. For such, celibacy is not a problem but "the most suitable means" (P. C. #12) of dedication to God and his Church.

For anything, however, which requires a surrender of something so radical to human nature as its sexual instincts and the fulfilment of its reproductive urges, a force beyond and above nature will be needed. One of the most important duties of superiors in screening applicants to the religious life and in evaluating them within the context of community life in the formation period will be to try to discover whether this force is present, that is, whether this "outstanding gift of grace" has been given to this person. Its presence will happily betray itself in many ways. Its absence can, at least in many cases, be noted in behavioral patterns we shall try to describe in this marginal.

Most young people entering religious life today have inescapably been exposed to the sensation-barrage of modern living. They know more about "life" than those who have preceded them into religion by twenty or perhaps even ten years. "Life" is served up to them on drugstore bookracks whose wares though unsampled retain their powers of visual assault. It is thrown at them from billboards and projected on movie screens. "Life" is droned at them in dentists' waiting rooms by radioed sopranos who can at least be commended for their valor in singing when apparently afflicted with acute sinusitis. Yet, these same prematurely wise young people often know nothing-minus about that form of life which is most pertinent to them: their own. It is imperative that they be educated in the science of human behavior and particularly, in the case of young women, of typical feminine responses to persons, situations and circumstances.

Experience indicates, for example, that it is vital in the formation period of a young religious that she be helped to understand the recurring emotional cycles which are concurrent with physical cycles, and to deal with them as a responsible adult. Such instruction could cast out the bewilderment, the fears, and the discouragement which often plague novices and junior Sisters, stunting their spiritual growth and hindering that full flowering of love which should characterize the virginally consecrated religious. As P. C. points out in #12, the chastity proper to the religious life is not meant to constrict the heart but to "free the heart in a unique fashion so that it may be more inflamed with love for God and for all men."

A woman with stunted powers of loving is among the most pitiable of all creatures. For love is really the meaning of woman. It is her supreme motivation and itself her apostolate. And it always calls for expression in surrender. As the married woman has the privilege to surrender herself to another person in a very special fashion, so does the religious woman enjoy the privilege of surrendering her heart's whole affection to God in the unique manner of the vow of chastity. We do not vow chastity to something but to Someone. The religious woman delivers her entire power and expression of loving back to the God who gave them to her. It is not an "incredibly bad theology," deplored by Michael Novak in his recent **Post** article, which suggests a wedding ring for her finger as sign of such a giving, but a theology taught by the credibly good theologians who have stated clearly in P. C. that "In this way (by the vow of chastity) they recall to the minds of all the faithful that wondrous marriage decreed by God and which is to be fully revealed in the future age in which the Church takes Christ as its only spouse." It indicates a sturdy practical-mindedness that some wear a ring as part of this "recalling."

A woman can give her time and her energy to a cause. She can give herself only to a person. The bridal relationship of each soul to God, the feminine aspect of the whole people of God before his gaze in all salvation history, is strikingly imaged in the virginally consecrated religious woman. If some Orders and Congregations desire to "recall to the minds of all the faithful that wondrous marriage decreed by God" by robing postulants in bridal attire at their investiture which precedes the making of vows within the community, they may possibly have a very sound idea there. There is room for discussion as to whether the spiritual significance is not sometimes in these circumstances obscured by a plethora of details more proper to the social aspects of an earthly wedding ceremony. But some testimony to that bridal relationship of the Church with Christ to which the religious woman bears striking witness should be rendered in every profession or pre-profession ceremony. Whether it be the bridal dress, ritual or prayers, is for each Order to decide when sorting out traditions in this marvelous era of updating. It must, however, be made clear that a girl entering into the full community life of an Order is not joining an organization but surrendering herself to God that she may be utterly committed to his Church. It is significant that "Perfectae Caritatis" couples in a single sentence the giving of oneself to God and to the works of one's religious apostolate, and sets down religious chastity as the most suitable means for doing both.

It is also not without significance that the Council Fathers show themselves less naive than many an avant-garde in this matter of religious chastity. They are practical-minded men who do not believe that precaution is non-

relevant to a technological age. After that lyric passage about the wondrous marriage in which the Church takes Christ as her spouse, the draftsmen of P. C. turn with the ease of theologians whose feet are as firmly on earth as their heads are above the clouds, to some no-nonsense counselling. Religious who are striving faithfully to observe the chastity they have professed, the Fathers remind us, "should not overestimate their own strength but practice mortification and custody of the senses." And that such homely, old-fashioned practices as self-abnegation and discipline of the senses are conducive to clear thinking is urged by them when they immediately go on to say: "As a result they will not be influenced by those false doctrines which scorn perfect continence as being impossible or harmful to human development and they will repudiate by a certain spiritual instinct everything which endangers chastity." Maybe we need to ponder the converse of that. It would read: "If religious striving to observe chastity overestimate their own strength and do not practice mortification or custody of the senses, they will be highly vulnerable to and influenced by those false doctrines which scorn perfect continence as being impossible or harmful to human development. Neither will they repudiate by a certain spiritual instinct everything which endangers chastity, for they will have blunted that instinct by disuse."

Religious are asked by Vatican II not to "neglect the natural means which promote health of mind and body" and superiors especially are urged to remember that "chastity is guarded more securely when true brotherly love flourishes in the common life of the community." If this is true for all religious, it wants to be underscored for religious women. If expressed sisterly love has been sometimes tolerated, sometimes suspected, it has definitely not everywhere flourished. To flourish, to flower — is it not to put out petals which can be seen, appreciated, enjoyed? Sisterly love as a nebulous concept has always been highly acceptable, of course. As something both warmly atmospheric and practically expressed, however, it has not always been so enthusiastically welcomed. To be so occupied with brooming particular friendships out of the community as to create a prophylactic atmosphere in the convent would certainly not be to show forth the spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Clare. They would have none of this.

We recall how the seraphic father's particularly loved son, Brother Juniper, found the earth quite barren when his special friend, Brother Amazialbene, left it. That he testified to the tenderness of his affection for his departed friend by expressing the desire to make himself a soup plate and cup out of the two halves of Amazialbene's skull which he longed to divide for this purpose, may not exactly set our lips quivering with sympathy for the plan, but Juniper foresaw the limitations of more conventional men. "They would not understand," he remarked sadly. So Amazialbene's skull remained in place on his skeleton, but Juniper

continued to bewail the separation from his great friend.

Saint Clare encouraged true friendship to the extent of making it a point of her Rule. "If a mother love and nurture her daughter according to the flesh, how much more ought a sister to love and nurture her sister according to the spirit." We do not nurture one another with clichés but with compassion and affection.

True, it is important to remember that affection in religious life has a different expression than affection outside religious life. It obviously cannot be a matter of endearments or caresses, nor may it be a spiritual intrusion. But it is just as warm and human and vital, and even more so because it is ennobled by that unaffected dignity and sweet reserve which we expect virginal consecration to produce, and rooted in a common self-donation to Christ.

If chastity is more securely guarded in an atmosphere of flourishing love, we may go forward from that point and maintain that chastity itself flourishes in such an environment. For chastity, as remarked at the beginning of this marginal, is not just something to be guarded, not material for padlocks. It is, in fact, much more related to a greenhouse than to a safety deposit vault. Love, like goodness, is diffusive of itself. It seeks its own expression. What we need to do is to encourage its appropriate expressions in religious life, not to abort them.

That Sisters be interested in one another's families, aware of family illnesses, employment problems, and the like, and concerned about them to the extent that they express the concern, can be one among hundreds of manifestations of normal affection in community life. There are occasions for giving spontaneous assistance to a sister who looks unusually tired. There are ways of exhibiting compassion, sympathy, appreciation, which in no measure disrupt silence, not even that more comprehensive silence proper to a cloister, but rather charge silence with warmth and vitality. Women have always been ingenious at devising means to express their love. Religious women should perfect this native expertness, not blunt it. There is also the art of praise which can play so important a part in healthy psychological living in the convent. However intent we are on doing things for God alone, we react positively to the expressed appreciation of others if we are normal. It is well to remember that other normal persons react in this same way to our sincere praise and appreciation. It is important in a community that each Sister makes the others aware that she knows they are alive, that she is interested in them and affected by them.

A woman's talent for seeing everything can be directed down one of two paths in religious life. Either she can spotlight every defect in her companions, or she can train her batteries on the good in her Sisters which sometimes needs and even desperately needs just such highlighting to establish itself as radical in the development of "person." The

trouble about spotlighting defects in others, of course, is that it throws into obscurity the lighter's own defects. At that point and according to the degree of the obscurity, her own development as a spiritual person ceases.

The old idea of divorcing similar interests also needs to be hauled before the tribunal of renewal. Why should not Sisters with human interests, natural talents, cultural tastes in common be allowed on suitable occasions to share these? At the recent Colettine Poor Clares' Institute in religious formation and related areas, a number of the abbesses and mistresses stressed this point. While the danger of chipping up community recreation into hobby groups to the detriment of full familial involvement is a real one, it is not really formidable if a community is functioning with easy love and not chugging with frustration and strain. There are occasions of extra recreation when such sharings could easily be made without detriment to the full-circle joy of the ordinary community recreation.

There is, as a matter of fact, danger in everything. There is danger in eating. You might choke on a fishbone. It is perilous to walk down the stairs. Lots of people have broken a hip that way. Part of the whole happy wave of renewal may be the de-emphasizing of danger and an underlining of positive factors. There will always be extremists and immature faddists who disclaim the existence of danger. Against these, Vatican II warns us, and specifically in #12 of P. C. However, it is quite possible to be aware of hazards and take precautions against them without being paralyzed in the face of hazards. Thus, encouraging a sharing of common interests among religious in a community may lead to exclusivism. But the thing to work with will not be the sharing of interests but the religious who are too immature to share and so can only devour. The fault will not lie with the opportunity but with persons not equipped to use it properly.

Given a community atmosphere where warm human affection, reinforced by and rooted in a true spiritual ideal flourishes, young religious preparing to make a vow of chastity and older ones already dedicated to God and Church in this singular way, should be testifying to the community their growth in love. How? Perhaps primarily by an increasing necessity to give, give of their energy, their interest, their affection, their sympathy. The urge to surrender herself and to spend herself which is basic to woman and which is exercised in marriage and family life in a special manner, will also be apparent in the virginally consecrated religious woman if her vow of chastity is really operative in her and will find increasing ways to exercise itself in healthy community life.

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Conjugal love is only one expression of love. Sisterly love, spiritually maternal love for souls, are expressions just as valid. Sacrifice and self-donation are charracteristic of all genuine love. If they do not appear and develop in a religious, then there is something malfunctioning in either her concept of religious chastity, her training in religious life, or perhaps the structures of her community life which in some cases could militate against such manifestation and development. "They should be so instructed as to be able to undertake the celibacy which binds them to God in a way which will benefit their entire personality" (P. C. #12).

If a religious is steadily growing in compassion, if she has a zest for her duties and exhibits real generosity, if the vitality of her interests is apparent, and if she is increasingly better able to handle herself, her emotions and her moods, we can take all these manifestations of maturity as signs of an operative vow of chastity also. On the other hand, either a severity toward others or a clinging attachment to others, apathy for duties and niggardliness in community enterprises, general lethargy, and a diminishing ability to take herself and her moods in hand and establish better emotional balance could well be signs that religious chastity is either not understood or has not been educated. It might even be a sign that God's "outstanding gift of grace" is not present.

P. C. #12 urges that candidates for the vow of chastity must show themselves "to possess the required psychological and emotional maturity" to make it. While this certainly does not mean that only psychologically and emotionally finished human products are eligible to make the vow, it does direct us to look for development. It need not be cause for alarm that young religious act immaturely and often let their emotions gallop away with them. If, however, these young religious are not gradually growing in the realization of their immaturity, it may be time to question their suitability for a celibate life. They may not always be able to apply the reins on the unbroken horses riding their emotional range, but they should be able to recognize that reins are indicated. This is part of that undivided giving to God which is intrinsic to religious chastity. Such an individed giving to him will inevitably flow back upon the giver, sanctified by Him for sharing with others.

It is only love which really releases all the potential of a human heart, a human being. Thus it is important that religious be educated in the vow of chastity which is their expression of love both to God and to souls. And they have a right to expect in religious life the kind of atmosphere conducive to their development as persons. Given God's gift, proper instruction, and appropriate context, it will be each individual's choice as to how vital a womanly force she will be in the life of her community and thus in the life of the Church.

Human — and More Than Human

Msgr. Ralph M. Miller

It is said that no one in history has come closer in imitating Christ than St. Francis of Assisi. That is the main reason why we are members of the Third Order of St. Francis, so that in trying to pattern our lives according to the rule of St. Francis, we can come closer to Christ. We hope that during our deliberations these days we can accomplish this purpose.

The parable of the Scripture reading last Sunday told us about the need of the wedding garment — in other words, we must put on Christ.

But what does this mean in the modern world? How does the Franciscan Third Order fit into modern life? It is a truism to say "A Christian is another Christ." Vague, some will call it. Distressingly pious, others will say. Yes, maybe it is — that is, unless you realize just what Christ is.

There are two sides to Christ. Christ our Lord was, first, fully human; and second, more than human. On that Sacred Scripture is quite uncompromising; he was like us in all things, sin alone excepted. There was nothing eccentric about Christ. He did not live, like Diogenes, in a tub; nor on a pillar like Simon Stylites. He was a Jew of his time, a Jew of Palestine. He was born of a Jewish maiden and he died five miles away from the manger in which he was born. In fact, to quote his own words from the Gospel of St. Matthew, "The Son of man came eating and drinking" (Matt. 11, 19). He came to Cana for a wedding, he came to Bethany for a funeral. He ate with respectable people like Martha and Lazarus; with outcasts like Matthew, a tax-gatherer. He felt at home with everyone: not only with Peter's mother-in-law, but with the Mary who had seven devils and the Samaritan woman who had five husbands. Children curled up in his arms and climbed all over him; grown men like Nicodemus talked far into the night with him.

He could grow angry, angry enough to whip traffickers from a temple. But he could show great sympathy too: with a widow who had lost her son to God, with a young man who had lost his inheritance in the fleshpot of a foreign country. He looked on a rich young man and loved him; he looked on a poor young man and raised him from the dead. And twice it is recorded that he wept: over Jerusalem and over Lazarus; over his city and his friend.

He knew the thoughts of shepherds and farmers and fishermen. He spoke the language of his people. He spoke of sparrows and lilies, of war and peace. He attended wedding feasts, religious festivals, sick-beds, burials. He worked with his hands. He felt the pangs of hunger and of thirst. He was tired enough to sleep out a storm in an open boat. He knew what it meant to flee for his life, to be cursed and spat upon. And he left the cross as he had come to the crib: naked, and all but alone.

This is the text of a sermon delivered by Msgr. Miller at the Third Order Convention last year in Baltimore.

No, there was nothing eccentric about Christ. He was like us in all things: he was fully human. And yet Christ was more than human. Not simply because he was God. His life is a living proof that human life can be thoroughly human and yet be lived on a level above the human. In his every action — whether it was eating or drinking, or preaching and praying, living or dying — in his every action there shone a love that was not born of man. His life was a living lesson in his own "two great commandments": love God with your whole heart, love your fellow man as you love yourself. His life, human as it was, was one long act of love that found its consummation in crucifixion; crucifixion for the objects of his love — crucifixion for every human being who has ever come or ever will come into this world. "Greater love no man has than a man lay down his life for his friend."

What follows from this? Christ was a living, breathing question mark, an inescapable challenge. In his public life Christ could not be disregarded. He intended it to be so. He intended that every human being who touched the hem of his garment or looked into his eyes or caught the music or thunder of his voice should put a question to himself: "Is this for me? Is this the way human life was meant to be lived? Is this fascinating union of the human and the more-than-human — is this what is lacking to my life?"

There is our vocation as members of the Third Order of St. Francis. It is our challenge too. If we want to be other Christs in the modern world, we must be,

first, fully human, and then, secondly, more than human. We must be fully human and completely Christian.

We must be fully human. You see, a member of the Third Order is not necessarily — indeed, should not be — odd. He is not necessarily ill at ease in his environment. He cannot merely look on and live life as it was lived in the Middle Ages, or even as we lived it fifteen years ago. Often that is the mistake that we make. All of us must be as much at ease in our world of today as Christ our Lord was in his world. And I think that we are. We live now the life of a man, a twentieth-century American, as naturally as Christ lived the life of a first-century Palestinian. We work and we dance, we eat and we sleep, we sorrow and we laugh, we are moved to anger and to pity, we are quick to be hurt and somewhat slower to forgive, we marry or we don't, we vote as we please, and statistics show very little difference between us and our fellow men.

And yet we are different. We must be different. Why? Because our lives, human as they are, must be more than human. Each act of ours, so much like any other man's act, is transformed by love that is not born of man, a love of God above all else and a love of men as God's images on earth. Our lives are familiar and mysterious at the same time. Familiar, because they are so similar to other men's lives. Mysterious, because they are so dissimilar. There is a lilt to our laughter and a joy at the inmost core of our sorrow that is intelligible only in terms of love, a love that is literally "out of this world." We have God in our hearts and our hearts are restless until he rests in every man's heart. We must be different because men must say of us what they said of the first Christians: "Look, how they love." Look how they love God — how they love one another — how they love us.

Fully human and completely Christian. That is the challenge of the Third Order. What follows from this? We are question marks that cannot be avoided... living, breathing, constant challenges to the little world in which we live. Why? Because we are the same and yet different. Both are necessary. Our lives must be fully human, else men will say "This life is too different from my own to have any meaning for me." It must be more than human, thoroughly Christian, else men will say "This life is not different enough from my own to pose a problem for me." Then, and only then, will our lives, like the life of Christ, prove a problem, an inescapable challenge, to all who come into contact with us. Then, and only then, will they be compelled to ask: "Is this for me?" Here is a life thoroughly human, and yet more than human; here is a familiar life, and still it is mysterious. I understand it, and it puzzles me. Is this the way human life was meant to be lived?

Let us ask the Christ who was Himself so fully human and yet more than human, to complete in us the work that Baptism began, to make us day by day more fully human, more completely Christian, true followers of St. Francis.

Riposte:

Demythologizing No Answer

I'm very grateful for the review of my booklet **Updating Franciscan Communities** in the October issue of THE CORD. Fr. John F. Claro, O.F.M., gave it vigorous approval. One point in his review upset me. He disagreed with my dismissal of demythologizing in a paragraph exactly as long as the one in the booklet. It left two impressions: first, that I am an obscurantist; secondly, that I know nothing about Bultmann.

I'd like to set the record straight. I have taught Sacred Scripture since 1952, and naturally have given a great deal of attention to demythologizing of the Scriptures. Since the booklet dealt with the subject of Franciscanism I could not cope with Bultmann at length. But I had to refer to it, since, in my own opinion, a growing atheism within the Christian Church is an apalling problem. I hope to make my position clear and to document it in a book that may be published next fall by Alba House, entitled **The Prophetic History of the West.**

Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M.

West Chicago, Ill.

Stop Self-Scrutiny

One of the faults that sincere religious people are open to is excessive soul-searching. Self-knowledge is, of course, essential to spiritual growth, but it is not the cause of it, but rather a concomitant effect. The painful awareness of our own weaknesses does not eliminate them. In fact over-awareness often leads to discouragement. I feel that many in the Church today are dissipating their efforts in scrutiny of the Church's institutions, customs, and formulations of doctrine. In particular I think there is much unnecessary and fruitless worry about making Christ's teachings "relevant" to our day and age. Why? Because Christ himself, and his successors and followers, were regarded by large segments of their social milieu as "irrelevant." When Christ stopped at Geresa and drove the devils into the swine — who promptly rushed off into the sea, causing a financial setback to their owners — the people there were eager to have him move on. They couldn't see that a man who cast out devils might have a message for them. St. Paul launched an apostolate to the intellectuals at Athens, and those who didn't sneer at him told him they would hear him again some time — a time it seems never came. Paul told the judge Felix about Jesus, but when he touched on the topics of justice, and chastity, and a judgment-to-come, Felix lost interest. And the "bread and circuses" crowd who gawked at the animals tearing Christians to bits generally did not take the gospel message to heart.

The point of these examples is obvious. Christ and St. Paul and the Christian martyrs failed to make a dent in certain people, not because what they preached wasn't relevant or because it wasn't preached relevantly, but because of the dispositions of their hearers. In fact it was precisely because the gospel was relevant to their personal lives — their financial and sex lives — that many rejected Christ and Paul. And it is precisely for the same

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reason that they will reject you and me.

Jesus Christ has redeemed mankind and offered it a way of salvation through the Church and the Sacraments. The gospel is objectively relevant. Of course we must try to present it in a way that its relevance will be realized by our contemporaries. But let us preach the "Good News" with confidence. Let us not torture ourselves with self-scrutiny like teen-agers looking for blackheads, thinking their face must be the reason why they aren't popular. Some people just don't want any news at all, even as some don't want any new friends. But there are plenty of people who do want the "Good News," if we can stop staring into the mirror and go out and meet them.

Julian Davies, O.F.M.

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Book Reviews

The Theology of Saint John. By Joseph Crehan. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966. Pp. 160. Cloth, $3.50.

This is essentially a popular work intended for the non-specialist in search of a good general introduction to the Johannine writings. Beginning with the critical question of authorship, Fr. Crehan goes on to discuss in subsequent chapters important aspects of John's Gospel, his first epistle and the Apocalypse. His method is to take basic concepts like **Truth, Light, Life, Kosmos** or **Agape** and to examine them in such a way as to introduce the reader into John's world of thought. When such vital key words and ideas are understood, the reader is well on the way to an appreciation of the writings and the theology of the fourth Evangelist.

In view of C. H. Dodd's monumental work **The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel** it is difficult to accept the author's contention that while no one can deny that the Apocalypse is dominated by groupings of sevens, "nothing like this can be found in the Gospel." To Dodd it would appear that the very heart of the fourth Gospel is a studied presentation of **seven signs** that Jesus wrought. These are so developed as to furnish the reader of good will with a basis for his belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of men.

Not everything can go into a single book, yet it is regrettable that the author did not give a summary, no matter how brief, of the evolution of the Johannine Gospel. As it now stands in the New Testament it is radically the witness of John but it is also the work of others (or at least of **another**) who have edited John's writing, adding bits and pieces of tradition and perhaps, here and there, even rearranging the text. That there appear to be dislocations and faulty sequences in the fourth Gospel is a common critical assertion, and it is precisely these things which suggest that the words of John have been redacted by his disciples and so transmitted to the Church.

To anyone interested in a readable and reliable introduction to the study of the works of St. John the Evangelist this little work is warmly recommended.

— Robert Scharf, O.F.M.

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From Anathema to Dialogue: a Marxist Challenge to the Christian Churches. By Roger Garaudy. Introd. by Leslie Dewart; trans. Luke O'Neill. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966. Pp. 124. Cloth, $3.95.

This is a fascinating and, I think, highly successful attempt by the leading French Marxist philosopher of our day, to appraise the current status and future prospects of the Marxist-Christian dialogue. That such a thing exists will doubtless come as a surprise to many readers, for the whole matter has been largely ignored by a Catholic press dedicated to the proposition that "they are wrong" — nay, an instrument of the devil; and by a secular press incapable of distinguishing a barbarous political act from an evolving ideology. All the more reason why this book should be publicized, read, and mulled over by thoughtful Americans.

M. Garaudy begins along the same lines already laid down by Mr. Dewart in his introduction, insisting on the urgent need and very evident possibility of dialogue between the Marxists and the Christians. It is in this short first chapter that attempts at dialogue already begun are brought to light and all too summarily evaluated. The second, and longer, chapter (on "The Realization of What is Basic by Christians") reveals the author's wide and not at all shallow grasp of contemporary Christian theology. Much of this chapter will make painful reading for Christians so long convinced that the Church's hands have been lily-white in matters social, economic, and political. Good; may a contrite contemplation of our huge failures in these areas stimulate a speedy, radical, and salutary reappraisal of our "traditional" thinking and activity! The third, and longest, chapter (on "The Realization of What is Basic by Marxists") makes rather difficult reading for one untrained in the technical terminology and conceptual framework of Marxist philosophy. The central point, however, is made clearly enough: Marxism is every bit as open to doctrinal development as

Christianity is, and the two have much more in common than most poeple would think.

This "realization of what is basic" is crucial to the author's entire thesis. Marxists and Christians cannot possibly begin to work together until each side has clearly grasped what is essential to it and therefore cannot become the subject of compromise. True dialogue (which even includes formal co-operation!) can and must embrace the possibility of change and adaptation in every other matter save this essential core. Thus we can speak meaningfully of co-operation on the political level — working together for human progress — and on the ideological level, meaning, if I understand the author correctly, the conceptual expression of our world views. Only the inmost core, the level of faith — the individual's religious stance — need separate us. The most urgent need, it would seem, for us Christians is to realize that Marx has some important and valid insights to offer us. Marxists do — despite the incantations of the popular press — gratefully acknowledge and accept what is noblest and best (from their point of view, a humanistic one) in genuine Christianity. A lion's share of the credit for making this possible, on the Christian side, must go to Teilhard de Chardin, who has done so much to bring out Christianity's humanistic values.

The book is, as I have said, fascinating reading; the translation is excellent. My only criticisms are basically editorial: Mr. Dewart's bibliography should have been combined with the references in the author's text and notes, and printed as an appendix, rather than in an inaccessible footnote. And the book should have been indexed, its brevity notwithstanding; it is an important book, which should be made as useful as possible for reference.

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

Judaism. By Rabbi Stuart E. Rosenberg. Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966. Pp. 159. Paper, $.95.

The writing of this book is a truly welcome signpost on the ecumenical scene after centuries of Jewish persecutions by Christian peoples — a real sin of matricide. It is ironic that in our century the worst ravages against humanity in general and the Jewish people in particular as well as two world wars have originated on soil that called itself Christian and on a continent which laid claim to the title of Mother of Western civilization, only to show the world that neither civilization nor Christianity were deeply rooted in their soil. It is too utopian to suggest, or even to think, that if dialogue were more in vogue before the coming of the modern age and if Christians were more conscious of their Christianity, and had a better understanding and knowledge of their Jewish brothers, perhaps the tragedy of Hitler and Nazism might never have occurred. What a verdict against our century of "progress"!

Judaism has many qualities which recommend it as important reading for Catholics in general and for anyone who would truly make an effort to obtain a deeper understanding of that faith and culture from whose womb Providence saw fit to bring forth Christianity.

Its author, in a smooth and flowing style, but without the use of footnotes and overly technical terms, presents a scholarly and well-written exposition of his subject. His book is a neat, simple and brief work which gives an honest, frank, and non-polemic explanation of Jewish teachings. Added to this is the author's excellent and broad knowledge of Christianity. All these are qualities which commend this book as reading for those who would like to become better acquainted with their Jewish neighbors.

The work is divided into three parts which review the most important aspects of Judaism, and is supplemented at the end with a helpful glossary containing those words and terms more commonly used in Jewish life and worship. Part One is an historical survey of Judaism's growth; Part Two reviews Jewish worship in the context of its liturgical year; Part Three explains the life of the devout Jew "from cradle to grave."

This useful little volume will help its Christian readers understand themselves better by revealing to them the roots from which they have sprung. They will not only become more conscious of their Jewish brothers, but will become more aware of their own identity.

After reading this book every Christian should better appreciate Christ's words to the Samaritan woman, "... salvation is from the Jews" (Jn. 4:22).

— John F. Claro, O.F.M.

Change and the Catholic Church. By. Jeremiah Newman. Baltimore-Dublin: Helicon, 1966, Pp. 349. Cloth, $5.95.

Change — change the channel, a change in the weather, change your brand, change the diaper, change of a dollar. What a frequently used and often bandied about word! In each different context there lies a particular shadow of meaning, a distinguishing nuance. Yet underlying each separate usage there rests the notion of passage from one state or condition into another. In this reference, **Change and the Catholic Church,** the word highlights many passages from many states and bespeaks the notion of a Church adapting to numerous different states and situations.

The author, Father Jeremiah Newman, takes us through a study of the Church's structure examining as would seem apparent those elements which are mutable and those which are not. He is not making the point that the Church can change, or should or must adapt, but that the Church has consistently changed and adapted throughout her long, matriarchal career. He does not de-

cry an institution which has refused to orient itself to new situations but seems to lament a Church which has over-adapted to the methods of Madison Avenue while not adapting sufficiently to those of, shall we say, Cristie Street.

Among others, the question of private property is employed to illustrate ecclesiastical ability to adapt. In each of three encyclicals, **Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno,** and **Mater et Magistra,** private property is viewed in respect to differing situations: first, defended against the onslaught of Socialism, then stretched out to fulfill social obligations, and finally, not permitted to obstruct attainment of the common good. At the same time, man's basic right to "legitimate human liberty" is championed in each of the Papal writings.

Something might be said of the generally colorless prose and lack of style in this work. Yet, Father Newman's purpose is not to inspire but to inform. And inform he does with a wealth of exhibited information in many fields which is perhaps dampened by an annoying superabundance of theological name dropping. Each chapter is superbly documented at its termination with a plethora of annotation indicative of a great deal of study and research on the author's part.

The real "bite" of this book comes in its final chapters with a call to "moderate liberalism," a call felt necessary for the implementation of those changes designated by the most recent Vatican Council and the continual ecclesial adaptations which lie ahead. This is a liberalism tempered by "conscious conservatism" and devoid of those extremes which render it fruitless and destructive.

For a person interested merely in skimming cream from atop the milk-vat of ecclesiological scholarship, this essay is worth at least an initial reading. Whether it deserves a second or even penetrating study must be left to the discernment of the individual reader.

— William F. Early

Functional Asceticism: A Guideline for American Religious. By Donald L. Gelpi, S.J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966. Pp. 191. Cloth, $3.95.

Cardinal Suenens' **Nun in the World** brought relief and joy to many American religious by upholding their conviction that the ideals of religious life could be compatible with the values of the modern world. Now, as we flounder in the choppy wake of Vatican II trying to establish concrete norms for adaptation, Father Gelpi assures us that the pragmatic approach to life instinctive to most Americans is in fact a legitimate foundation for religious spirituality. Alleluia, shouts the new breed; woe is me, cries the old. And this is the beauty of the book: while **Functional Asceticism** may be used as just another shibboleth to distinguish liberal from conservative, it may also be used as a basis for discussion and communication because it draws the battle line so clearly and describes the positions of the opponents in such detail. The functionalist sees religious life as an instrument of apostolic service, while the "nominalist" views it as the more perfect way whose customs and rituals are good in themselves. Either the vows, community exercises and customs are merely means to an end, or they are intrinsically more than this. The question of essentials must be settled before any meaningful modification of religious life can be made.

Father admits that a functional interpretation of religious life is not the only possibility open to us today, but he insists that it is legitimate and would be particularly beneficial in this country at this time. Indeed, once his definition of a religious as one who is dedicated to community service in the Church is accepted, his conclusion seems inevitable: all facts of religious life are directed toward the community apostolate as means to an end. This view would certainly facilitate adaptation and renewal, since the good of the apostolate would be the only absolute to be considered.

At any rate, the book clearly expresses the tension between "nominalist" novitiate theory and functional apostolic practice felt by a growing number of religious in this country, who themselves may not be able to locate precisely the cause of their dissatisfaction with the traditional formulations of spirituality. Father Gelpi has done it for them. In doing so he has assured them that they are not alone, that the problem isn't just with them.

A spirituality based on this functional interpretation of religious life still remains to be developed, as well as an explicit theological and philosophical base for it. But Father has directed the discussion of renewal toward what promises to be a fruitful direction. We may yet see active religious congregations whose spirituality is consistent with their apostolate, whose structure and practices are logically deducible from that spirituality and whose effectiveness is a result of that same spirituality. **Functional Asceticism** could be the beginning.

— Sister Cecilia Marie Andrews, S.M.I.C.

Spiritual Insights of a Practicing Psychiatrist. By Henri Samson, S.J. Staten Island: Alba House, 1966. Pp. 200. Cloth, $4.95.

No doubt the use of the word "psychiatrist" in this small volume will attract many an eye and raise many an expectation. However, the reader will be sorely disappointed if he expects the current, popular psychological discussions about the difficulties man encounters in life. Fr. Samson does not completely avoid a psychological approach. He has, for example, a long section on the relation between our earthly father and God our Father. Nonetheless, the stress in the book is decidedly spiritual. It is an outgrowth of the collective prayer of Catholic Canadian psychiatrists who come together for a day of mind-lifting prayer, and "raise their minds and their hearts in an assiduous contemplation of one mystery of their ever-living Savior, the Ascension of Christ into Heaven."

One might be inclined to classify the book as an "old-time" spiritual reading book. Yet it does have something new to contribute. The use of the Ascension of Christ as a focal point around which the Christian life can integrate is interesting. It becomes even more so when it gradually develops into a plea for looking beyond what is static and depressing towards a more hopeful state of mind based on Christ ris-

ing above earthly and human forces. One is not surprised that the book ends by quoting some of the joyful passages that pervade Teilhard de Chardin's works.

Since it is so prayer-oriented, "Spiritual Insights" had best be read slowly and in small segments. It is a bit unusual having such a prayerful book come out in such an action-oriented world. I suspect that it will not be too popular although the suggestion of psychology in the title might help sales.

— **Kevin Hargadon, F.S.C.**

Ignatius Loyola and Francis de Sales: Two Masters, One Spirituality. By F. Charmot, S.J. Trans. Sr. M. Renelle, S.S.N.D. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1966. Pp. x-251. Cloth, $4.75.

In this book F. Charmot demonstrates the parallelism and necessary relationship between Ignatian and Salesian spiritualities. One cannot, he contends, fully understand or appreciate Ignatius' spirituality without constant light from Francis' elucidation and interpretation. Charmot indicates how Francis consciously added concrete value to Ignatius' abstract rules of spirituality by his explanations, comparisons, examples, and practical counsels for every type of individual. In illustrating this relationship Charmot's aim is devotion, not scholarship.

If, however, the author's presentation is accurate, the reader must shudder at his matter-of-fact statement that the constitutions and practices of the majority of religious institutes founded since the sixteenth century are based on the Salesian interpretation of Ignatian spirituality. For Fr. Charmot only convinces his readers of the Church's need for solid aggiornamento in its spiritual teaching, as well as in its religious institutes.

A few examples, with which this work is overburdened, is sufficient to illustrate this remark:

1. Fr. Charmot expects Ignatius' frightening and didactic rigor, his obscure and equivocal texts on religious government and blind obedience, and his extremely narrow concept of the liturgical role in spirituality to be more relevant to a Christian of the last third of the twentieth century by Francis' "clearness, significance, adaptation to souls, charm, unction and savor."

2. Although Francis is as stringent as Ignatius on obedience, "the virtue characteristic of religious life," he more attractively presents it "with a smiling countenance."

3. When a person experiences difficulty in prayer, he should follow Francis' advice by clutching a crucifix to his breast and say repeatedly "O sweet Jesus, mercy."

4. With his hand on the pulse of the contemporary mentality a counselor can satisfactorily bring comfort to a man beset with doubts of faith by exhorting him to cry aloud: "Traitor! Wretch! Get behind me, Satan, for it has been written: 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Thus, evangelical spirituality! As the author explains, "our duty is to adore the incomprehensible Godhead, not plumb it."

In this age of liturgical renewal and of Vatican II this poor investment leaves the reader with the hope that Fr. Charmot has failed — for most religious, at least — to be more devotional than scholarly.

— **Kilian Gaughan, O.F.M.**