# The COKU March, 1968 Vol. XVIII No. 3

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#### **COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS**

This month's cover and all the illustrations were drawn by Sister Marie Monica, O.S.F., of St. Stephen's Mission, St. Stephen's, Wyoming. The cover depicts the basic truth that all the technical knowledge (upper left), all the joys made possible by American creativity (upper right), and all the elements and stages in evolution leading to man and his culture (lower left) are so many roads (center) leading to Christ. To witness to this truth is the primary mission of the American religious.

#### A REVIEW EDITORIAL

#### New Light on Karl Rahner's Thought



George A. Lindbeck, the noted Protestant theologian, has called Karl Rahner a "man who in comprehensiveness and sheer intellectual quality can, alone among contemporary Catholics, be ranged alongside of Barth and Tillich, and who in terms of balance is perhaps the greatest of the three." Until comparatively recently, however, Rahner's work was inaccessible to any but the most professionally trained English-speaking theologians.

Within the space of a relatively few years, though, a broad spectrum of the great theologian's teachings has become accessible in translations of such works as The Christian Commitment (Sheed & Ward), several monographs in the Quaestiones disputates series (Herder & Herder), the lighter reflections and meditations in Encounters with Silence and Belief Today (Sheed & Ward), and especially the now completed five-volume Theological Investigations (Helicon). Book-length expositions of Rahner's thought heretofore available in English were but two in number: H. Vorgrimler's Karl Rahner and D. Gelpi's Life and Light.

It is a distinct pleasure, therefore, to welcome to the English-speaking market two new books from Herder & Herder which will do much to further understanding and appreciation of Rahner's work. The first of these is Rahner's own major philosophical opus, Spirit in the World; and the second is The Achievement of Karl Rahner, a study by Louis Roberts which bears the stamp of Rahner's own approval in a Foreword introducing the work.<sup>2</sup>

(Continued on page 88)

## Religious Renewal and American Culture

Donald L. Gelpi, S.J.

The problems of religious renewal in this country are extremely complex. Hence what follows should be understood simply as a series of random personal reflections on limited aspects of a complicated but vitally important movement within the American Church. I can, moreover, only apologize for the personal limitations which preclude a more comprehensive treatment of the pertinent issues.

One of the difficulties with renewal in America is that everyone seems to have his own personal definition of what renewal really means. I recall an incident which took place shortly after the first session of the Council. One of our bishops who had just returned from Rome was addressing his priests at the annual diocesan clergy conference. He told them that he really didn't understand very much about this "liturgy business," but that he felt that "it" was the mind of the Church.

And if it was the mind of the Church, it was his mind; and if it was his mind, it was going to be the mind of his priests as well. This was one man's approach to liturgical renewal; but one wonders if it really was what Pope John and the Council fathers had in mind.

Everyone seems to agree that religious renewal involves an inner renewal, a renewal of spirit, and that renewal of spirit involves in turn commitment to the Church and to Christ. But when one tries to translate this inner renewal into the terms of legislation for a particular religious community, the matter becomes much more complicated. We do have certain guidelines as well as explicit and warm encouragement from the Council fathers; but the guidelines tend to be only that. They leave us with the very real problem of what, concretely, renewal means for our particular order or community.

Father Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., holds licentiate degrees in philosophy and theology from St. Louis University. He has taught languages and speech at the Jesuit High School in New Orleans and done Newman Club work at Kansas State University. In addition to his two books, Functional Asceticism and Life and Light, Father Gelpi has contributed articles to Thought and The Modern Schoolman and previously worked for two years with the staff of Theology Digest. This article was presented as a paper before the Holy Name Province Renewal Workshop at Lafayette, N.J., last November and has been revised for publication by the author.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf. George A. Lindbeck, "The Thought of Karl Rahner, S.J.," Christianity and Crisis 25 (1965), 211-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Spirit in the World. By Karl Rahner, S.J. Trans. William Dych, S.J. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Pp. xxxii-416. Cloth, \$9.50.

The Achievement of Karl Rahner. By Louis Roberts. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967. Pp. viii-312. Cloth, \$6.50.

Pope Paul has insisted again and again that we must return to our beginnings — to the historical origins of our institutions in order to preserve our special spirit and identity. This again is an important guideline; but it still leaves most of the concrete issues unresolved. It fails to tell us what "updating the order" or "updating the Church" means in terms of the country and culture in which we work and function apostolically. Thus everyone today seems to

agree that we should be "relevant." But relevant to what? to whom?

Where do we find the criterion for judging what is or is not "relevant"? We certainly cannot just take twentieth-century America as our criterion. Many of the values which motivate our contemporaries are, at best, dubious. To say without qualification that we have to conform our order or our Church to those values is preposterous.

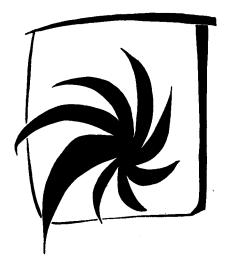
#### Tensions in the American Church

I think that what has happened to us — at least to judge from my own limited experience - is this. American Catholics have, as a result of Vatican II, come to experience their relationship to American culture, to the value system in which we live and function as Americans, differently from the way in which we experienced them prior to the Council. Our attitude before Vatican II tended by and large to be one of defensiveness in a Protestant environment that was frequently suspicious, sometimes hostile. Repeatedly, we found it necessary to oppose our Catholic tradition to that environment; and in doing so we maintained both a sense of identity and a certain esprit de corps as Catholics. At the same time, precisely because of the hostility we encountered, we were often preoccupied with trying to prove to this Protestant culture that we had as much right to be `mericans as anyone else.

The Council has introduced two significant tactical shifts into this situation. First, the Decree on Religious Liberty has largely put an end to the formerly prevalent charges of narrow-mindedness and bigotry which prior to the Council had been frequently levelled against the Church, Secondly, the ecumenical movement and the documents on ecumenism now tell us that we ourselves must change our defensive attitude toward Protestant Churches and begin not only to seek reunion but to utilize their insights to determine what we should be doing within the Catholic Church. As a result, one whole dimension of our former relationship to the American Protestant tradition has been seriously undermined, and with it there has ensued a certain disintegration of our sense of identity as a specifically Catholic community in a shifting, pluralistic culture. One of the clichés of renewal. in fact, is that this generation of

merican Catholics is simultaneously American and Catholic. Initially, this was put forth as a sort of battle-cry of the liberals; but if we try to probe its meaning, we see that we are indeed committed even more explicitly than before, to two separate value-systems. We are committed to the traditional values which have come to us out of our Catholic tradition in this country; and we are committed to traditional American values. Moreover, we seem to have begun to realize much more consciously than before that these two sets of values may not be altogether compatible, and we find ourselves confronted with the problem of reconciling these conflicting cultural values both with the spirit of Christianity and with the institute of which we are members.

Traditional Catholic insistence, for instance, that our Church is the one true Church to which God intends all men ultimately to belong, competes in our own minds for allegiance with basically uncriticized values of religious tolerance in the pluralistic sense in which this has been traditionally interpreted in this country. One may urge that there is no fundamental conflict here, but both positions need some qualification if they are going to be reconciled into a coherent moral viewpoint. We have, in the Catholic tradition, insisted on the infallibility of the teaching Church; yet we find daily more and more appealing the traditional American in-



sistence upon the basic fallibility of man and of human reason. To be sure, the Catholic notion of infallibility is a theological one; and the American concept of fallibilism is a logical one. But again, mutual qualification will be necessary if the two values are to be reconciled. The pragmatic as opposed to the traditionally Catholic view of morality is another source of serious conflict: and it is significant, I believe, that in one way or another all of these issues are undergoing serious re-examination in Catholic theological circles. What do we mean by the one, true Church? What, really, is the salvific relation existing between the Catholic Church and those who are unbaptized? What do we mean by infallibility? What do we mean. by the Natural Law? These are all serious questions now under discussion; and a completely adequate response to any of them has, I believe, yet to emerge.

#### Tensions among American Religious

These general problems within American Catholicism at large have their counterparts in the religious life of American religious. The very existence of a distinctly American culture has been seriously questioned. But I personally believe not only that it does exist but that in its best aspects it differs considerably from the materialism so often ascribed to Americans. A careful reading of American literature and philosophy shows the existence from the very beginning of this nation, of a highly articulate idealist current of thought clearly opposed to the materialistic caricature so often attributed to us. One need only point, for instance, to Benjamin Franklin, to Thomas Jefferson, to the whole nineteenth-century Transcendentalist movement (this last being an explicit protest against both the materialistic commercialism of American society and the sterile formalism and hypocrisv of the established Churches), to the pragmatists (who were often idealistic people trying to salvage cultural and religious values from a fragmented and materialistic world), in order to realize that these idealists were the voices of the better half of the American genius.

Several values have come down to us from this idealist tradition, values which still mean very much to us as Americans. I would like to call attention to three of them in particular: first, the ideal of democratic flexibility, by

which I mean moral commitment to the notion that it is we ourselves who have made our government, that it exists for us and that it must be fashioned in such a way as to meet the needs of those it is intended to serve; secondly, creativity, which is an all too frequent theme in American literature and philosophy, where it usually appears as a protest against the stifling of creativity which is the result of benighted money-grubbing; and thirdly, a sense of the religious significance of the material universe.

Often these basically American values are closely linked to one another. If, for instance, we combine democratic flexibility and creativity, the result is something very like what Dewey writes about in his Liberalism: Old and New: viz., a vision of society in which each person contributes spontaneously what is best in himself, to the betterment of the group, in such a way that each individual in genuinely dedicated to the growing value of the whole of human society. Moreover, negatively humanistic ideals like these involve a more or less conscious rejection of what is least tenable in the American Calvinistic tradition: its formalism, moral rigidity, and humanly destructive mysticism. Positively, they re-affirm flexibility and the radical goodness of the material world. For by and large, American idealists are people who are convinced that man belongs in this world, fits into it, is meant

to live and prosper here, and that if man is to find any meaning and fulfillment in his life, he will have to do so in and through his involvement in the world and the society in which he lives.

Opposing these values, which I believe run deep in the American tradition, are other values which are just as deeply rooted in the American Catholic ascetical tradition. That tradition has been very much an authority-oriented one. I, at least, was certainly brought up in religion to believe that for a religious the rule is an embodiment of the will of God precisely because it has been sanctioned by the authority of his Church, and that sanctity is therefore to be sought in and through conformity to that rule. There is, of course, a certain truth in this notion; but it can be and sometimes is exaggerated or dangerously oversimplified in its consequences. When this occurs, there is an appalling dander of stifling the most legitimate forms of human creativity among religious. There is the danger of imposing a rigid uniformity among the members of any order or congregation. The rule becomes a levelling rather than a sustaining force; and imagination or deviation from the common norm is subtly or even officially stifled.

It is evident how a real conflict inevitably arises when these two sets of values begin to clash within the confines of a single religious order or community. But it is precisely this sort of conflict which we must learn to resolve if we are to get through the process of renewal with a certain amount of peace, harmony, and mutual understanding. When a community is radically split in its value structure, no individual can long resist the need to throw his lot in with one faction or another.

#### The Complexity of Renewal

Granting the validity of this schematic description of two existing and conflicting value-schemes within religious communities in this country, the complexity of the problem of renewal begins to emerge as soon as one realizes that neither set of values can be accepted without serious qualification. As Catholics we are in desperate need of a radical re-examination and re-evaluation of the basic values that motivate us as Americans; as Catholics and

Americans we must likewise begin some radical re-thinking about the ascetical traditions which have informed our entire approach to the religious life up to now.

If you examine this whole idealistic American tradition of which I have spoken, with its emphasis on democratic flexibility, you will, I believe, discover in it a recurring tendency to degenerate into the delusion that personal integrity demands that, if existing social structures do not for any reason

come up to one's individual expectations, then one is justified in dissociating himself from society as a whole. The Beats and the Hippies, with all their faults and virtues, are marked by this radical rule can lead to all kinds of kind of social discontent.

Similarly, there is a tendency in this country to identify the ideal of creativity with a naive commitment to total spontaneity which seeks to bypass the rigors of creative discipline. I have a moral obligation, I am told, to be completely spontaneous, completely myself; otherwise I am being "phony," not really authentic — as if any son of Adam could really make himself authentic.

The American feeling of the goodness of the things of this world, easily degenerates into a kind of naturalism, an exclusive concern with becoming more and more involved in the present order of things, to the neglect of any consideration whatever about a world to come. Unless we are careful, our values and motives as religious can easily degenerate into the sort of naturalistic values so clearly and incisively articulated by a man like Dewey. Our practical Christianity can, unless we become much more reflective than we give present evidence of being, easily be transformed into a species of agnostic humanism; and our concern for men could easily become limited to an exclusive concern for their problems in this world.

At the same time, it seems to me that there has been enough evidence to show that the ascet-

American orders and congregations are in a similar need of serious criticism. Any sort of rigid insistence on conformity to the rule can lead to all kinds of spiritual problems, unnecessary rigidity, a kind of legalistic pharisaism, an inner dryness, an indifference to other people. This has been the case too often in the past, and it remains a very real danger today. I do not want to imply that this attitude is characteristic of all religious; its prevalence differs in degree from order to order and from house to house. But it has been prevalent enough to cause us serious concern. I am inclined to think that fundamentally it is the result of a false posing of the distinction between the secular and the sacred; and there is no doubt in my mind that it is an attitude of soul which has in large measure been nourished by the type of asceticism in which we have been formed as religious.

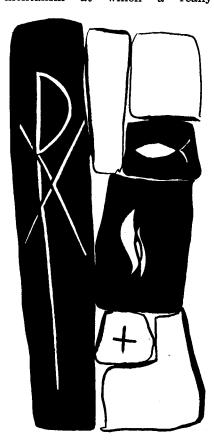
What, then, do we need to do? For a start we might begin by criticizing a lot of the presuppositions of our traditional ascetical thinking. This was one of my main concerns in writing Functional Asceticism. When I began the book I was deeply concerned over the so-called "generation gap" among religious. I think that there is a clear gap in many religious communities in this country; but it seems to me to be more accurately described as a gap between mentalities rather than between generations. Moreover, it seemed to

me that if American religious were going to get together, to actually work together, to solve the problems which we are attempting to face in the wake of the Council, the wrangling between the "liberal" and "conservative" factions had to be moved back a step. It seemed to me that we had to stop talking about specifics. such as whether or not we should wear habits or whether we should do this particular work rather than another, and begin discussing the presuppositions motivating the conflict of two apparently irreconcilable viewpoints. Until that was done, I felt, any discussion of particulars was doomed to become a dialogue of the deaf. I am also quite conscious that the issues raised in the book need a more thorough theological treatment. even though the general position it assumes remains, I believe, a sound one.

I remain convinced that the basic logic which many religious have brought to bear on their ascetical problems has all too frequently been the logic of a late medieval and somewhat decadent scholastic theology. This logic, the logic of positive theology, inclines the uncritical to seek to ground logical truth in an appeal to authority while simultaneously prescinding from the all-important question of the meaning of the sanctioned rule or proposition under consideration. Thus, when the positive theologian is confronted with an ascetical problem, his first reaction is to "go to the sources," i. e., to the sanctioned

documents, and to verify in them what he ought to do; his last tendency, if it comes at all, is to get the facts.

In the second place, we must begin to reflect on the limitations as well as the advantages of the whole American experimental mentality. A large precentage of young American religious are, I suspect, pragmatists at heart, with all of the advantages and disadvantages that that implies. Unfortunately, however, many tend to espouse a crude form of uncritical experimentalism at which a really



thorough pragmatic logician like Peirce would not condescend to look twice. But the problem cannot be confined to the young. The basic pattern of thought of most American religious, when it is not of positive theology, is in all likelihood informed by the values inherent in pragmatic method. And this anomaly is, I believe, at the base of many contradictions in our living of the religious life.

#### The Dynamics of Poverty

But where do these reflections leave us? Up to now I have been concerned to outline the general problem which confronts us rather than to suggest specific solutions. We may, however, be able to make these reflections a bit more concrete if we focus on a specific problem: e. g., that of religious poverty. Poverty is, I believe, a serious preoccupation of all religious groups today. What, we ask ourselves, is poverty supposed to mean in this twentieth century? We have traditionally defined it as detachment from the things of this world. Practically, this involves my renunciation of personal possessions; hence, logically, poverty has been identified traditionally with non-possession or with possession-with-permission. In other words, the "poor religious" should be one who is content not to have things or to have things only with permission. The notion of authority as a control factor in matters of religious poverty is, I believe, an important one. But unfortunately the tendency of our traditional asceticism is to reduce poverty to static terms. Our poverty is detachment from the world, not a particular kind of involve-

ment in it. It is non-possession, or passive possession with the permission of someone else.

By contrast, the biblical notion of poverty is a much more dynamic one. It is less a flight from the material world and more a way of actually using the goods of this life in such a way that one remains open in their use to the transcendent reality of God and to the person of Christ present to us in those with whom we live, especially in those who are in greatest need. But it is the active reconciliation of men with one another in faith and love which becomes the norm of precisely how I am to use the material blessings of this life so as to remain one of God's anawim, his "little ones."

What is of importance here is, in my opinion, the dynamic emphasis, the emphasis on use. I have the distinct impression in reading the scriptures, that at a lived existential level Christian poverty is in the first instance Christian sharing; and that sharing is truly Christian when it is non-exclusive, selfless, and gratuitous. Non-possession is not the purpose of poverty; it is, rather, one of the unavoidable side effects

of a sharing which is the expression of a loving concern for the material needs of others in the name of Christ. That is to say, Christian sharing involves the willingness to take the risk that many of my own material needs will not be met as a result of my efforts to share what I do possess with those who have less than I or even nothing. It is by giving up the things which I need so as to meet their need, that I ultimately put myself in the position of the poor man of the Old Testament who had nothing to rely on but God himself. This willingness to cast one's care upon the Lord becomes one's lived profession of faith; but its precondition is the willingness to share actively and unstintingly with the needy.

If we approach poverty in these dynamic terms, as sharing rather than as simple non-possession, then we can, I think, begin to incorporate into our thinking about problems of poverty many of the positive human values embodied in American culture and tradition. We can, for instance, begin to criticize the de facto disposal of our material goods with much greater experimental flexibility. We shall be more inclined to utilize the professional and scientific help we need to discover precisely what are the major social and economic problems in the geographical areas we are supposed to serve. which are the actual resources at our disposal within our order and outside it to find a solution to those needs. And we might be more inclined to examine our consciences more

effectively in order to discover just how much of what we do have is wasted for the apostolate through our own self-indulgence and attachment to the comforts of middle-class living.

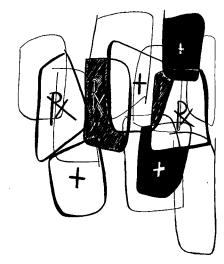
In a word, our poverty would become more than the symbolic gesture of getting permission to use things which by a previous symbolic gesture we had renounced; it will still be a poverty which involves real renunciation. But it will be a renunciation whose purpose is to alleviate the needs of the truly indigent, a renunciation whose real symbolic value is at least in part a function of its social effectiveness. During the two years I spent in Europe, I sometimes had the feeling that when religious there spoke of poverty they did so largely in terms of a somewhat poetic, ritualistic, public gesture. Renunciation of possessions was to be a means of identifying with the poor. But if all we do is identify with them without simultaneously seeking to help them to help themselves escape from the misery of poverty, then our public gesture is not only fruitless but must inevitably smack of a certain condescension. I think that in America the truly poor religious will have to be much closer to a Father Groppi than to the image sometimes projected by the European worker-priest, who at times communicated a sincere desire to live and suffer with the poor but with little apparent hope of actually ameliorating their condition. In the context of American culture with its dynamic values and modes of thought, the living sacrifice which comes through constant, active, social and even political involvement in bettering the lot of the poorer classes seems to me indispensable if we are to inform our living of a dynamic poverty with real witness value.

By assuming such an approach to the living of poverty, we would be better able, I believe, to mobilize the human potential and creativity of religious themselves in order to meet the particular social problems which confront us. Together with a more creative approach to the solving of real problems would come an openness to the sort of administrative flexibility we need in order to cope with the fluid structures of a democratic social order. This combination of really professional expertise with a truly selfless concern for the poor would also enable us to reaffirm in a formally Christian context the true value of the material things of this world. For when I spend all my personal and financial resources in order to effect a more equitable social sharing of the material goods of this life, then I truly affirm the radical goodness of the things I seek to share. At the same time the degree of my willingness to sacrifice my own comforts for the sake of that enterprise becomes the measure of my affirmation of a reality beyond this world and of my trust in a faithful God who will make up to me whatever I may suffer in the service of his poor.

Not only poverty, but the other vows of religion as well can be conceived in a manner which is truly dynamic rather than authoritarian and static. But the limits of time and space prevent in their case even the hasty sort of treatment we have given to the vow of poverty. In all of our efforts to re-think the ideals of religious living, we should, however, be in search of new heuristic structures rooted in the Christian tradition which are capable of salvaging all that is positive and real in the American experience. Otherwise we are all too likely to remain, as we are now, religious frequently divided in our allegiance to two different and dubiously compatible value systems.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Valens Waldschmidt, O.F.M.



# The Seven Sacraments

Signs of Christ, the Trinity, and the Church

After viewing the signs of the natural world as sacraments or symbols of the invisible world and after considering all sacraments as signs of the very interior Life of God, it is our purpose in this meditation, to further consider the seven sacraments as the actions of Christ, of the Blessed Trinity, and of the Mystical Body of Christ. As Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, so his activity through the sacramental signs ushers us into the external acts of the Blessed Trinity itself. To realize this, we must become more fully acquainted with the extent of the effects of the sacraments, which draw the soul closer to God and produce in it a loving conformity to Christ, the Church, and the Holy Trinity.

Father Valens Waldschmidt, O.F.M., an experienced retreat-master stationed at St. Anthony's Friary, Streator, Illinois, here completes the introductory set of conferences on the Sacraments in general. In subsequent issues of this review, Father Valens will discuss each of the Sacraments in particular as means to increased participation in Christ's own life.

#### The Scriptural Setting

It is not by coincidence that, at the Baptism of Christ, the three divine Persons manifested themselves. It was simply a revelation of divine reality that the Father's voice was heard and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. Are not the sacraments also the work of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? In this light, the account of our blessed Lord's Baptism is doubly instructive. Monsignor Knox harmonizes the incident from the four Gospels in the following manner. "Then John gave way to him. So Jesus was baptized, and came straight up out of the water, and stood there praying. Suddenly heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit came down upon him in bodily form, like a dove, and a voice came from heaven which said. 'You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased." 1 Is not the voice of the Father and the presence of the Holy Spirit a sign of a special divine presence in the soul of Christ? What then must be said of every soul in the reception of a sacrament?

#### The Doctrinal Basis

The answer in the child's catechism that the sacraments are outward signs instituted by Christ to signify and confer grace is really not a child's definition. It is short, concise; but filled with implications that no child's mind could possibly suspect. Three ideas serving our purpose suggest themselves in this definition. The first is that Christ not only instituted the sacraments but acts through them, now, as well. Secondly, through the sacraments, the Blessed Trinity likewise acts in the soul. Thirdly, the Church acts in and through the sacraments.

Franciscan thought has always emphasized Christ and no less his power in the sacraments. Christ was the center of Saint Francis' life, and Christ became the center of the spirituality that he inspired and left to us as a heritage. The only way to God is Christ; and the most direct way to Christ is through the sacraments. As theologians point out, today Christ still uses his human nature to communicate grace to us: at least, this is taught about communication of through the sacraments.

Secondly, if it is the purpose of the sacraments to conform us to Christ, it is also true that the sacraments create in us the image and likeness of the Trinity. Must not this image in our souls reflect the inter-relationship of the three divine Persons with one another? The Son is the perfect image of the Father. He is like the spoken word of the Father. The Holy Spirit is the union of the Father and the Son. He is like a flame of love between the Father and the Son. This life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is shared in some created way with man; and this conformity between God and man is the result of the sacraments.

Nor would we say that the divine action works only in an invisible manner. Christ is the visible expression of God upon earth. In turn, Christ stamps the visible expression of himself and his union with men on a visible Church. Does it not follow then that the sacraments, which are the signs of Christ, are also the signs of the Mystical Body of Christ? — for the Church is the visible means of Christ's activity on earth. Is it not said that, when the sacraments are administered, the intention of the minister is "to do what the

#### Present-Day Needs

We are living in a scientific world, tottering on the brink of what some scientists might call "the ultimate discovery," beyond which there is no mystery. The mathematical formula will contain all answers. Life will cease to be a riddle and become a sure-fire equation. Even the formula will be handed out by a mechanical hand as it comes off the rolling wheels of the automatic computer.

If such a solution came to pass, still one thing will not come about. No x-plus-y solution will quiet the urging impulse of the human heart for mystery. Paraphrasing Father Walter Farrell's thought in the Companion to the Summa, we say: Man must have his mystery or he will bootleg it. Mathematicians beware! Destroy all mystery and you will probably be shot at dawn. No questions asked.

From time to time, also the religious must ask himself: what de-

sire do I still have for mystery? Have disappointments, sieges of self-pity, or indifference hardened my mind and heart with a coat of self-centeredness? Am I content to treasure only the interest of the passing moment, lost in a maze of amusements, sports, or inane activities? As a Franciscan priest — brother — sister do I treasure as my strongest actions the pulsating mysteries of the sacraments as they flow from Christ?

#### Benefits in Daily Life

Man, left to his own devices, has a tendency to make himself the sole ruler of the universe. This was the fault of Adam, who thought that by taking thought he could add a little more to his stature; he would become a little more than a man. He had a strong desire to create a world of his own and have full charge of it. He would rule all things; he would even make his own sacraments.

The religious, although he is in the Mystical Body of Christ and in a religious community, has a similar tendency to forget that his sufficiency comes, not from himself, but from God. He may concentrate too much on human power and strength, and fail to remember that his greatest asset is conformity to God, growth in the image and likeness of God, which is best accomplished in the sacramental mystery. Holding to the Absolute Primacy of Christ, Franciscan thought has always reserved a special position for the sacraments.

<sup>1</sup> The Gospel Story (Sheed & Ward), 32f.

#### Resolutions

(1) In the scale of spiritual values, rate the sacraments high. Never forget their effectiveness, and let no human means overshadow their importance. Some human ills are cured only by the sacraments; and existence itself in the supernatural life is attained only through the sacraments. (2) As a religious, look to the sacraments as the chief means of participating in the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, As a priest, administer the sacraments with the realization that, in this way, Christ and the Most Holy Trinity touch the bodies and souls of men.

#### Prayer

Touch me, O Lord, with your grace and love. Some day, touch my eyes, my ears, my lips, my hands, my feet with your healing oil. Over my head, frequently pronounce the words of forgiveness; nourish my soul with your Body and Blood. Perfect it with the mark of Confirmation. Keep alive in my members the dedication of my Baptism. Bring to completion the mark of my priesthood; and thus bring to eternal fruition your grace, the seed of everlasting glory. Amen.

#### LOVE'S EMBRACE

Sister M. J. de Chantal, S.S.N.D.

Gentle as a whispering breeze, Delicate as the breath of a new-born babe. Fragrant as the rose unpetaled Tenderer than a Mother's love 'Tis Thee, my God-LOVE'S EMBRACE.

Calm,

Silent,

Penetrating,

Dark as night, yet certain as the sunlight, Deep as the ocean depths,

Strong as the rock of the canyon, Sudden and swift as lightning,

'Tis Thee, my God— has caught the soul in LOVE'S EMBRACE.

# I-Thou

# Marginals on Community

Kenneth Lovasik, O. F. M.

There is much talk today of unrest and ferment within the Church and the religious life. There seems to be a very real and painful dichotomy between young religious and not-so-young religious. When one hears of various incidents indicative of such a situation, or even experiences them. he begins to wonder, "What's it all about? Have I not come here to find peace and to radiate this peace to others? Why have I come here? Why must it be so difficult at times? Why?" This can be a frustrating situation for all concerned, since discontent born of discord can spread like wildfire and destroy much of the initiative and potentiality in our communities. Religious profession is substantially a promise to love, and the courage of truly committed man is needed to actually live this love. But it must be lived!

There is much enthusiasm today about renewal, adaptation, and aggiornamento in religious communities. Many are turning to their major superiors, to their Provincial and General Chapters for answers to these pressing questions. And without a doubt, there

is much that must be bought up to date and much that has already been updated within the last few months. Could it be that thinking that legislation can solve the internal problems that haunt and taunt the individual religious and challenge him to face them is purely and simply a pipe dream, if not an outright delusion? Can a simpler, more liturgical and scriptural common prayer life facilitate a more fulfilled common life for him? Can it obviate or play down those differences of personality which, while accounting for individuality, can sometimes become seemingly insurmountable obstacles to harmonious living? Where, then, is he to look? To whom shall he go? Is there an answer?

A solution — the solution, in many cases — lies, surprisingly enough, dormant where it is least expected to be found: within each individual. At most, legislation can provide only a direction, can only point out the way as far as internal life is concerned.

> The Order of Friars Minor. which preserves the bond of unity through charitable obe-

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dience, exists "whenever the brothers are together and meet one another." It is personal relationships especially that make the community...

.. Each one in his own way must contribute to the proper building up of the community. Within the framework of this community, he will find a place in which to live out his own vocation.<sup>1</sup>

Note carefully, however, that the above passage is not obligatory legislation. Rather than impose a law, it seeks only to instill and enkindle a spirit — a spirit which, when all is said and done, is the sine qua non of Franciscan living. Any organization, if it is to function efficiently and effectively, must establish policies regulating the external observances and practices of its members, but it can never legislate their convictions and attitudes; in short, it can never legislate brotherhood.

And brotherhood, that precious something which makes the dif-

ference between a moving witness of intense Christian living and a mere sterile, physical juxtaposition of men, is an attitude, a conviction that has deeply personal roots. "It is personal relationships especially that make the community."2 Personal relationships... especially .... It is simply not enough to live side by side with other men, whether they number four or sixty, and be "nice" to them by not offending them. Our life has much more positive implications than that. If it is brotherhood that the friar seeks, then he must be willing to walk that extra mile with each man - and sometimes that mile can be tiresome and tedious! But the true follower of Christ and Francis will walk it willingly and generously. Today, more than ever, the accent is on the personal — personal freedom balanced with personal responsibility. So much depends on each individual; each has something to give; each one does matter.

#### Two Philosophers: an Insight

Two "existentialist" philosophers: Martin Buber, a Jew; and Gabriel Marcel, a Christian, can offer us a profound insight when the conclusions of their metaphysical probings are correlated. Buber, you will recall, concerned himself with interpersonal relationships, both vertical and horizontal. The statement, "Theodicy is atheism," is attributed to Marcel. At first glance,

it may seem that the thought of these men is poles apart, but upon closer examination, there is a surprising similarity which begets an insight of great relevance to the common life we lead as Franciscans. ø

Every truly human interpersonal relationship is an I-Thou relationship. "Thou" is not simply a person about whom we speak as

we would about a thing, but another human person, another unique "world" in himself, just as I am. When "I" and "Thou" encounter each other, something magnificent happens: two unique worlds meet, interact, and an interpersonal relationship is born. "Thou," however, can only exist in this type of relationship. For when he is not present, he is spoken of. He must, of necessity. be spoken of as an absent third person - an "It." God, however, is the eternal Thou: he can never be an "It" because he is everpresent. The moment he is spoken of, if we are to take Marcel at his word, the moment a rational explanation of his existence is attempted, his presence is denied. The logical conclusion of Marcel's statement is that man's talk about God is tantamount to an insult.

Those who are religious in the Church have committed themselves in a special way to a lifelong quest for God, and they speak of him often, so Marcel's words should merit serious consideration on their part. Are they, however, to take him literally?

God's existence and presence are things that must be experienced, and experience, especially of this type, simply escapes the grasp of words. If a friar really lives the implications of Buber's I-Thou concept with each of his brothers, would the need to prove God's existence present itself? Would there be a need to speak of him? It seems to me that the example of such a friar's life would be more potent than any words he could utter, no matter how beautifully. Did not Christ himself promise that whenever two or three are gathered in his name, he would be right there among them? If friars are not gathered in his name, in whose name are they gathered? Why is it that these words are seldom taken seriously, but more often than not nonchalantly?

#### The Expression of Love in Community

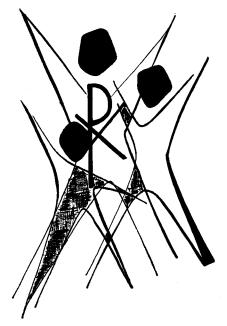
God is present among us, and in a particular way: in every person we encounter. When this is fully realized, then some realistic steps can be taken toward the solution of many of the problems in community. Though this is something that is repeated almost every year by retreat masters and is substantially "worn out," it merits repetition because it cannot be avoided — it is something very

real, it is the key to many of our problems. "Personal relationships especially..." What I am describing here, to be honest with ourselves, is an ideal situation, but is it not worth striving for? It is only through loving other men that one can learn to love God. Imagine the faith that is the lover's!

How, then, is this love to be expressed? Certainly it is not a sen-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Renewal of the Order of Friars Minor (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., 11.



timental, emotional love, which when the flicker of infatuation is snuffed, passes. It is a strong, stable, manly concern for "the other guy." The beauty, and indeed the power, of this love is that its expression must be an action and not a word. Its basis is conviction, and not mere emotion, so that it does not waver as emotions fluctuate. It has a way of popping up in the most inconspicuous ways, and at times, apparently the most insignificant ways.

In speaking of this love, however, there is a risk that it might be seen bathed in rose-colored light and this is an illusion. There are times when its expression demands much sacrifice — walking that extra mile — tightening lips to hold in check a tongue poised to lash out in response to an unpleasant or hurting remark; a smile concealing a knawing hurt deep inside; being the first to attempt to patch up a misunder standing when indifference presents a much more comfortable course of action to take. This is love, not the glamorous type, but sincere and deep.

Because the members of the Order are called **brothers** and really ought to be brothers, in their fraternal living they are to anticipate one another as a mark of respect — carrying one another's burdens, always careful to preserve unity of spirit in the bond of peace.<sup>3</sup>

Despite its elusiveness, I would attempt to define brotherhood as an expressed conviction permeating every aspect of the common life. The "how" of brotherhood can be answered only by each individual for himself. Each individual expresses himself in his own unique way. Because of the variety of temperaments to be found in our Franciscan Brotherhood, many actions and gestures, apparently very different, can be expressions of the same spirit of brotherhood. The individual temperament that gives color to an expression matters little, for the love and concern expressed are universal. So, it is important to be aware and perceptive of another's individuality, and not to misread his actions.

#### Lack of Love: a Stunt to Growth

It is amazing, and appalling, that religious can sometimes become so wrapped up in their own little worlds that they can go on for days, sometimes even weeks and months, without ever reflecting on their purpose and goal as religious. They can live with other men day in and day out, and yet forget the intimate bond of brotherhood that they voluntarily promised to share with them. Sometimes life in our houses, if we are not vigilant, differs very little from the daily procedure in an ordinary office of the business world. Our relations with those whom we call brothers can be so superficial! We exchange pleasantries, but how often do we take time out to spend a few moments with someone who may need an understanding ear or who would simply enjoy the companionship we have to offer? To give of one's time, indeed of one's very self, demands sensitivity. And sensitivity, at least for the majority of men, does not come naturally. It must be cultivated, and cultivated sometimes at a very high price: one's own comfort. Human nature shies away from this sort of self-giving, for it fears that it might be left defenseless in the face of possible hurt. This is the risk of self-giving that springs from sensitivity.

It is a known fact that many persons today are leaving religious life because, they argue, it is "irrelevant and meaningless." I often wonder if these people arrived at

their conclusions because of the lack of sensitivity they may have experienced among their confreres. They came to religious life, seeking to give themselves (and many had much to give) and to share what others had to give. Could it be that some of these people were of that very sensitive type who could not cope with the lack of response they received in return for the gift of themselves? Could it be that this lack of response drove them into their innermost selves where hurt could not penetrate and eventually stunted them in their spiritual and psychological growth? Could it be that this lack of response ultimately sapped the meaning and relevance from their religious life?

"I am leaving because I have found no love here." Sometimes it takes a statement like this to shock a religious into the realization of the role he plays in the life of others. It shocks him into an admission that perhaps just a bit more sensitivity on his part to the other's needs might have given to that person's religious life just the catalyst it needed for its healthy development. It's a sobering thought.

Community does not just "happen" because a group of men wear the same habit, observe the same Rule, share the same house, and work towards the same ultimate goal. Community is born and flourishes when a group of

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 19.

men find themselves mutually overflowing into the lives of one another. Such a community is the

most effective and expressive witness of Christianity and Franciscanism; for truly, God is there.

#### Friendship in the Context of Community

I spoke earlier of personal relationships as the building blocks of community. These relationships, especially among young religious in formation, have been the subject of much discussion. In recent years, thinking on this subject has considerably. Formerly such relationships were not encouraged because it was feared on the basis of past experiences that they could easily develop into cliques and pose a serious threat to genuine common life. Today, however, they are looked upon more favorably and are seen to be beneficial, if there is proper control and direction, to a person's growth and development. Of course, I am speaking here of a normal, natural relationship between two well-adjusted people.

Can we speak of a distinction between brotherhood and friendship? A friar has promised to live the Franciscan life, which is essentially a life of brotherhood. And brotherhood, if it be genuine, is expressed in a deep, realistic concern for each member of the community — a willingness to share in each person's joys and sorrows, successes and failures, hopes and fears. It presupposes an intimate bond.

Friendship and brotherhood are not necessarily and must never be incompatible. If they are in any way distinct, it is in this: that while brotherhood is indiscriminate, friendship is selective. While one loves all his confreres, there are certain men to whom he is attracted more than the others for any number of reasons. It may be that they share common interests or that their personalities are mutually complementary. I feel, however, that friendship, in the community situation, is an intensification of brotherhood.

In this age of subjectivism and personalism, there is sometimes a tendency to go to the extreme and glorify personal relationships to the point where one is forced to conclude that everyone must have a friend. This is dangerous, for it tends to destroy the very spontaneity of which true friendship is born. Friendship, of its very nature, is not something studied or consciously planned; nor can it be something hidden or secret. Father Eugene Kennedy, M. M., put it quite succinctly when he said: "Friendship, if it is real, must be able to stand the fresh air and sunshine. You and I both know what grows where there is no fresh air or sunshine!"4

If friendship is truly Christian in its orientation, it provides a springboard to increased sensitivity. In this sense, it can provide a tremendous impetus to communal life. If one's regard for his friend becomes his criterion for all community relationships, then his concern for everyone cannot help being a source of genuine growth in community. Friendship, seen in this light, certainly occupies a valuable place in the context of community, and it can serve as a stimulus for an even closer-knit religious family.

#### The Task of Renewal

Church's history when she, and the Franciscan family within her, re-examines herself and seeks newer and more effective ways of carrying out Christ's mandate to teach all nations, certainly every friar must also re-examine his own life and seek out new and fresh ways and means of becoming a more effective and convincing witness, and more, mirror of Christ, Renewal, however, can take root only in each individual. It cannot be imposed, but it must flow forth from each man. Before a man can turn his attention to active apostolates, he must be acutely aware of his apostolate in his own community, his commitment to the common life. It is among his brothers that he must find the support and encouragement he needs to be an effective apostle. Otherwise he will lack the fraternity which is the very foundation of the Franciscan way he has embraced.

What friar has not, after reading about Saint Francis, wished that he had been a contemporary of his, if only to experience the vibrancy of that personality who

At this crucial era in the has so captured man's imagination for the past seven centuries? And yet, Francis lives! He can never die as long as he occupies a place in the minds and hearts of men. He lives - and yet how many have failed to meet him! He seeks to live among his brothers just as he did at the Portiuncula and at Rivo Torto - if only he be given the chance. Wherever the spirit of peace and joy, which he bequeathed to his "dearly beloved brethren and ever-blessed children" is alive and glowing, there can Francis be found. In a community where men know and live brotherhood by sharing intimately in the lives of each other, his spirit pervades every square inch of the house.

> When, and only when, the sons of Francis have learned from him the full import and implication of their legacy from him, can they begin to obviate the problems and conflicts which cause the unrest and ferment which we are witnessing today. In the spirit of our renewed and rejuvenated Church, and in the name of the everyouthful Francis, let us begin again!

<sup>4</sup> From a talk delivered by Father Kennedy at the Northeastern Seminary Conference's meeting in Albany, N.Y., during the summer of 1966.

#### NEW LIGHT ON RAHNER'S THOUGHT

(continued from page 66)

#### Spirit in the World

Karl Rahner's doctoral dissertation in philosophy, one of the most profound, detailed, and formidable works ever written on St. Thomas' theory of knowledge, was first published in 1939. Johannes Baptist Metz published a revised and augmented edition of the work in 1957, and the present translation is based on a still later revision published in 1964. In no sense, then, can Spirit in the World be said to be an "early work" of Rahner, in which we can expect to see only "seeds" of his later development. It is a mature and comprehensive study which enlightens the reader on the philosophical presuppositions of Karl Rahner's theology.

The book is a unified commentary on St. Thomas' Summa Theologica, I, 84, 7. Text and translation are given, together with a brief explanation, in Part I. Part II, which comprises most of the book, is the systematic working out of what is implied by the "inner dynamism" of St. Thomas' thought in the above mentioned passage. And Part III is a very brief synthesis of the conclusions already reached, in which Rahner's understanding of metaphysics is set forth.

This is not a book for the casual reader who may be attracted by the engaging title and the prestigious author. It is professional and esoteric scholarship intended only for the serious scholar. Fortunately, however, its once radical insights into St. Thomas' genuine thought have for the most part been incorporated, by now, into many of the more popular presentations and textbooks.

The title conveys admirably the thrust of the book: "Man is essentially ambivalent. He is always exiled in the world and is always

already beyond it" (Part III, §iv). Among the important points Rahner makes, the following seem to stand out: (1) a stress on the unity of the human knower according to St. Thomas, (2) an incorporation of the genuinely valid Kantian emphasis on the a priori elements in both sensation and intellection. (3) a rejection of Kant's further claim that metaphysics deals with empty and ungrounded "Ideals of Reason," (4) a lucid reduction of efficient causality to material and formal causality. used to cast light on the mysterious union of subject and object in sensation, and (5) an insistence on the priority of metaphysical reflection in all human knowing. Knowing, according to Rahner, is essentially being itself, and being, to the extent that it is truly being, is being-present-to-itself. Thus knowledge is actus - act in the technical sense of perfection of being itself - rather than actio, a transient action which would unite a previously separated "subject" and "object." Man is essentially spirit, but the kind of spirit which must "give itself over" to the other. His power of sensation is not primordial, but flows from his properly spiritual nature: as spirit, he extends himself in sensation so as to embrace the other, but only in order to return to himself and attain the (metaphysical) fulfillment of his nature. And simultaneously with his first knowledge of a sensible object, he has already transcended that object and grasped (though he is aware of this only through transcendental reflection) the horizon of being itself.

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Rahner is heavily indebted to Heidegger, though he seems to give no credit to his former teacher by any sort of documentation. Maréchal, his other major source, does receive frequent acknowledgement. Kant, surprisingly, is hardly even mentioned, although he supplied a large part of Maréchal's original inspiration. Other references are to a few rather obscure authors and, of course, to just about every page of St. Thomas' writings that can be said to be in the slightest way relevant.

To understand the author's constant and often annoying preoccupation with demonstrating that everything he says is properly Thomistic, the reader must bear in mind two facts. First, this book was a dissertation in which Rahner sought to conform to the requirements of his traditionalist mentor, Martin Honecker (who eventually rejected it anyway because he considered it too radical!). And secondly, there can be little doubt that Rahner himself is convinced of the perennial validity of St. Thomas' ideas. He certainly does not, of course, intend to repeat, purely and simply, what Aquinas said; nor does he seek to defend the Angelic Doctor at any cost. Rather, he explicitly sets out, and in this aim he succeeds admirably. to let the inner dynamism of Thomas' ideas develop in confrontation with the insights of post-medieval philosophy.

Some word seems necessary on the translation. Certainly the scholarly world owes Father Dych an immense debt of gratitude for what is, on the whole, a prodigious labor of love quite competently achieved. By way of minor criticism, however, one might question some particular renditions as well as some general stylistic features. Among the former

lines" for "broad outline," "just when" for "as soon as," and "suffer" for "be acted upon." And among the latter, there are such faults as the use of the conditional "would" in the protasis of many conditional sentences, a consistent misplacing of the word "only," and the extensive inclusion of the original German terms where the sense is perfectly evident from an exact English translation. A more general objection may be made to the translator's insistence on retaining Rahner's cumbersome German style. Certainly Vorgrimler, among others, has tried valiantly to justify this style by pointing to the balance of meaning attainable by grammatical subordination. But this argument is not wholly convincing.

might be listed the use of "large

Spirit in the World is a classic — an indispensable source for the teacher as well as the scholar. Rahner has, in our opinion, amply demonstrated the genuinely Thomistic origins of his intricate yet coherent and attractive portrayal of man as the incarnate spirit who places all being, even himself, in question. The academic question of whether St. Thomas himself "actually saw so much" is really quite inconsequential. Of more importance, however, is the one large question which is left in the balance; for all its undeniable consistency and profundity, does the Thomistic (and Rahnerian) vision contain categories adequate to the expression of modern man's understanding of himself and his milieu? We cannot see that Rahner has given a compelling answer in the affirmative.

#### The Achievement of Karl Rahner

Dr. Roberts' book, written by a long-time student of Rahner, is the first full-length study in English to accord due emphasis to the transcendental method in elucidating Rahner's theological teachings. In many places it is as difficult to read as

Rahner himself, and, though we are not convinced this intricacy of expression is totally unavoidable, we are more than willing to pay this price as a condition for receiving the systematic illumination of Rahner's thought offered by Dr. Roberts.

The book is divided into eight chapters, each with a brief statement of the question, an outline of what is to come in the chapter, and a development of the major themes involved. Chapter one is a dense but by no means "stuffy" (the author's word; p. 52!) explanation of Rahner's transcendental method, his philosophical appreach in general, and his understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology. The chapter's value lies not so much in originality as in the synthetic power with which it makes accessible a systematic presentation of Rahner's philosophical presuppositions. A careful reading of this chapter should make it evident to many readers of Rahner why the great theologian is always so concerned with "a priori conditions for the possibility" of a given reality or doctrine — e. g., Christ's immediate vision of God during his life on earth (cf. pp. 102-07).

The remaining chapters are a well integrated exposition of major themes in Rahner's theology. The second, e. g., is on the development of doctrine and contains much prac-

tical, pastoral material. The third, on salvation history, explains Rahner's magisterial vision of Christ as primary in God's creative plan and man as finding his meaning in and through Christ. A whole chapter is devoted to explaining that difficult but pivotal notion of Rahner's, the "supernatural existential." Creation and redemption are clearly set forth as moments in a genuine theological anthropology (chapters 5 and 6). And the two concluding chapters are on the Church and a phenomenology of religion, respectively.

Dr. Roberts' fidelity to Rahner's thought is attested, as has been pointed out, by Rahner's own approval and commendation of the book. Paradoxically, perhaps, the author seems to appreciate the Heideggerian influence on Rahner better than Rahner himself does (cf. p. viii). The book is unequivocally recommended to the reader trained in philosophy and theology; others may derive a good deal of insight from certain parts but should find it most difficult to grasp most of the material.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, ofm

## **Book Reviews**

The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing. By William Johnston. New York: Desclee, 1967. Pp. xvi-285. Cloth, \$5.50.

Reviewed by Father Nicholas Lohkamp, O.F.M., S.T.D. Professor of moral and spiritual theology at St. Leonard College, Dayton, Ohio, Father Nicholas has conducted Sisters' Rededication Programs and served as Master of Clerics.

The Cloud of the Unknowing is a very important work of mystical theology by an English author of the fourteenth century. Fr. Johnston, in this book, gives us an extended and detailed study of this treatise on contemplation. His study has special merit in that he makes great effort to understand the meaning of The Cloud in the light of the author's background in philosophy, theology, and mysticism. Fr. Johnston also studies The Cloud in the light of other works by the same author, other Christian mystics, and some reference to oriental mysticism.

The book is divided into four parts, dealing with the aspects of knowl-

edge, love, purification, and union. The study of these aspects is generally well done, consistently clear, and quite informative. It does not appear either necessary or expedient to discuss here the author's treatment of these four aspects of contemplative life. For one interested in mystical theology, the book is definitely recommended.

In a number of ways this is a timely book. For example, there is a growing interest today in the writings of the mystics, and these writings are readily available, even in paperback. So, the danger of misunderstanding—a danger ever stressed by the mystical writers themselves— is enhanced. Merely to read the works of the mystics is not enough. It is necessary also to know the author, as well as the society, culture, and traditions which influenced him in his ideas and writings. Here Fr. Johnston's book provides a real service.

In addition, The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing not only provides us with an enlightening study of one particular mystic and his writings. It also brings to our attention a number of fundamental aspects and problems involved in our Christian vocation - aspects and problems to which we, today, must give serious attention. Thus, for example, there is the question of the place and value of contemplation in Christian life. Precisely what is contemplation? Is the contemplative life a special vocation for only a few? Should every Christian life include the contemplative aspect? What is the social value of contemplative life in the Church? Further, how are we to understand or reconcile the utter insistence in mystical treatises on complete renunciation of creatures, even of every thought of, desire and love for creatures in themselves, in the light of the great stress today on the incarnational and personalistic approach to created reality? Finally, what is the true and balanced understanding of the reality and effects of sin on our milieu and personality; and accordingly, how must we understand the purification of the senses and spirit so essential in our growing union with God? What is concupiscence, in the theological sense? What are its effects on a person? How must it be "remedied" in order for us to grow in union with God, especially in the contemplative life?

These and other questions are inevitably raised when one reads such a book as The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing. In this sense, such a book can be disconcerting. If one simply accepts the ideas of this fourteenth century mystic as the total truth, the last word, such a book can be misleading. For we must be aware that life in the Church, and our understanding of that life, particularly in its contemplative dimension, has moved on and grown in the last five hundred years. Still, there is continuity. And there is real value, therefore, in such a work as this, not only as a historical monument from the past, but as presenting some of the perennial aspects of man's call to union with God, particularly some aspects that some Christians today are inclined to minimize because of a preoccupation with subjectivity, personalism, and self-fulfillment.

In conclusion, The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing is a book worth reading and pondering; it is recommended especially for those who are living the contemplative life, and for those who are interested in understanding the strictly contemplative life as a form of Christian life.

Christ and Moral Theology. By Bertrand Gillon. Staten Island: Alba House, 1967. Pp. 144. Cloth, \$2.95.

Reviewed by Brother Loren Connell, O.F.M., a student of theology at Saint Leonard College, Dayton, Ohio. Brother Loren received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Duns Scotus College, Detroit, in 1966.

Christ and Moral Theology is its author's attempt to understand what

is really new in what he terms "the However, Jesus Christ is the ful.illfamous new tendencies" in moral theology. What is new, the author states, is references, whether explicit or implicit, to the philosophy of Max Scheler: the fact that that philosophy may already be outmoded is of no consequence. The appeal of Scheler and personalist philosophies in general to many moral theologians today stems from the extreme casuistry into which traditional Alphonsian moral theology has declined. Gillon admits the insufficiency of the old moral theology for a positive Christian life, although he says that a theology of sin, validity, and censure is still very important for confessors (one hopes he does not mean that this is all there is to the sacrament of penance!). Gillon's solution to this insufficiency, however, is Aquinas, not Scheler: only the Common Doctor can provide that foundation for moral theology which both Saint Alphonsus and Max Scheler have missed.

Christ is the norm of the moral life, not only in an axiological sense but, as Aquinas and all orthodox theologians tell us, even in an ontological one. This is the one important thrust of Christ and Moral Theology. and it cannot be minimized. Scheler may be dead, but many others still exist today who would reduce Christ to a hero. According to Gillon, only Saint Thomas can rescue him.

There are personalist theologies, the author says, which posit as the absolute foundation of the moral life. before any moral act, before any recognition of value, before any obedience or rejection, the affirmation of love towards a person. This means that a Christian cannot morally act until he surrenders himself to Jesus Christ, and then his life is to be lived in imitation of the Master. Saint Thomas, on the other hand, posits the experience of the natural law immediately binding the individual conscience as the basic moral principle. For him, the fundamental option of life is based not on a Person but on a precept: viz, the good is to be done.

ment of the law, and the Holy Spirit is its binding force. Imitation theology is enriched in this perspective, for man is made in the image of God, he is called to walk with God, and Christ in his charity is his exempla: Only the Christian life- adherence to Christ through faith, hope, and love— can give strength to Scheler's Nachfolge.

Gillon concludes that Catholic moral theology must be integrated into Christology, for the Christian life is participation in the plenitude of Christ. And Saint Thomas, of course, showed just these truths, seven hundred years ago ... more authentically, one suspects, than some of his would-be defenders today. To quote from Gillon's conclusion: "Will a scientific moral theology be obliged to break loose from Scholasticism in order to follow in the train of the philosophy in vogue? Yesterday Blondel or Scheler, today existentialism, tomorrow, who knows what? It is very doubtful that it succeed."

The reviewer found it difficult to read this book impartially. It reeks of Thomistic triumphalism; and when the author must speak of the legitimate problems raised by later philosophy and theology, he does so condescendingly. His whole mindset seems to be of a past era. He admittedly does not care whether the problem to which he addresses himself is any longer relevant. He can see today's needs only through the eyes of the Summa. Try though he may to eliminate it, he is committed to a departmentalized theology. But for all that, he does have something to say. He writes of Christ and moral theology. And Christ is still important. And, by association, so is Saint Thomas.

The Power at Work among Us: Meditations for Lent. By D. T. Niles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967. Pp. 151, Paper, \$1.65.

Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., editor of this review and

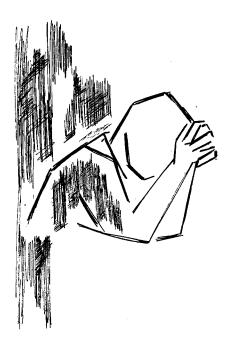
a doctoral student in philosophy at Fordham University.

This is a fine series of meditations for each day in Lent. Each week has a distinct theme, and the meditation for each day is a specific application of that theme based on a well chosen biblical text.

Dr. Niles, a former staff-member of the World Council of Churches evinces a good deal of fruitful pastoral experience, an impressive technical competence in biblical interpretation, and above all, a lively and mature faith in God's Word. Much of his material is familiar enough, which is of course to be expected in a volume of meditations designed to get the reader to reflect on the perennial truths of Christian faith and life. But the theology - traditional as it is, is quite up to date: Dr. Niles even insists on the secular character of the entire "gospelevent," not only in its historical aspects but especially in the death and resurrection of Christ as cosmically redemptive (pp. 60-65).

Pervading the entire book is the author's sensitive and articulate appreciation of the Church as a family or community. This centrally important truth would seem to need stressing during Lent particularly. which has so long been regarded by many people as a time for withdrawal and intensification of the self-God relationship. This is of course not to be repudiated, but our relation to God our Father is strengthened and enhanced by precisely the sort of communal awareness which Dr. Niles seeks to foster. After some introductory meditations for the days between Ash Wednesday and the following Saturday, the great themes are taken up one by one: Our life with God, Our life together. Our life in the world, Our way with (i. e., behavior toward) one another, God's way with us - and, for the last week, "The Way back Home."

The Power at Work among Us cannot be too highly recommended as a truly contemporary aid to Lenten spirituality; the author has placed the serious Christian very much in his debt for these inspiring and practical meditations.



Man's Intervention in Nature. By Owen Garrigan, New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967. Pp. 192, Cloth, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Robert T. Francoeur. assistant professor of embryology at Fairleigh Dickenson University, Madison, N.J. Dr. Francoeur, who also teaches bio-anthropology, is the author of Perspectives in Evolution and the forthcoming Man and Evolution (both Helicon Press), and a founding director of the American Teilhard de Chardin Association.

Countless Catholics, and perhaps the majority of our hierarchy including the Holy Father, are still puzzling over the morality of man's intervention in procreation via the birth control pill. While Catholics fret over "the pill," a problem resolved in other circles a decade ago, the biological and medical sciences have led the man of 1968 into a fantastic Brave New World in which our ability to control and manipulate nature, even our own biological, genetic, reproductive and psychological nature, has reduced the question of "the pill" to the proportion of asking whether or not I should take an aspirin.

Owen Garrigan, associate professor of biochemistry at Seton Hall University and a diocesan priest, takes us beyond "the pill" to the real world of 1968 and 1984. He exposes us to a world populated by bio-engineers who are fast approaching the point where in the years to come we will use battery-charged "pace-makers," dacron blood vessels. plastic heart valves and pumps, as well as the transplanting of various organs including the brain, much as we have matter-of-factly used aspirin and cough drops in our past interventions in nature.

Around the world, in a growing number of biomedical engineering departments of universities and research laboratories, scientists are working on an artificial womb that will allow an embryo to be raised to full term outside the mother's body, thus eliminating any of the many dangers and unpredictables that accompany a "normal" pregnancy. Geneticists are probing deep into the basic biochemical nature and structure of the chromosomes and genes that underlie our hereditary traits. The biochemist is creating life in the test tube, witness the recent major step in this direction by Arthur Kornberg. All of this means that Catholic thinkers, both among the laity and among the clergy whether expert or not in the field of ethics and moral theology — will have to face the realities discussed by the author.

Both the advantages and disadvantages of these developments are explored. They can, as Fr. Garrigan so nicely points out, lead us to the further control and conquest of disease as we carry out the divine command of Genesis to subdue and make our own this world; or they may create a monstrous Brave New World masterminded by fascist demagogues and dictators.

In raising these basic issues, in facing the realities of new developments, and in asking the pertinent and urgent moral questions, the author has played a pioneering role for several years. Along with this reviewer and one or two other American Catholics versed in science and theology, he has tried repeatedly to call our attention to the crucial problems of life today and tomorrow. His book is far from an answer to these problems. It is, on some points, sketchy. Some very important developments in the field of experimental embryology, e. g., are hardly mentioned, and certainly not explored in the detail they deserve. The question of psychogenic drugs, tranquilizers, energizers, LSD 25, etc., are not discussed in any length. And while his explanation of the genetic code and the biochemistry of heredity is well done, diagrams and line drawings would have helped the reader immensely in grasping the picture bet-

This book is nevertheless an interesting, readable, and helpful introduction to the world we live in. Man today lives in a technological culture, in an environment he himself can control. Let us hope more Catholics will become aware of this world through Fr. Garrigan's book.

St. Francis of Assisi. By E. M. Almedingen. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967. Pp. ix-229-ix. Cloth, \$4.50.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., a doctoral candidate in philosophy at Fordham University and a frequent contributor to our pages.

It is difficult to write a life of St. Francis without appearing at least to have an axe to grind. Or should I say it is difficult for a Franciscan to read a life of St. Francis without finding a particular slant in the text? E. M. Almedingen's St. Francis of Assisi is a readable life of Francis, marred, I believe, by one of the neurotic faults of contemporary writers; the passionate desire to expose human ignorance, negligence, and malice perhaps with the hope that exposition is expiation. The author's strictures on the men and women of Francis' day, lay and ecclesiastical, Franciscan and otherwise, makes one grateful that Christ, not a mere mortal, will be our judge.



In her reconstruction of the life of Francis and 13th-century Christendom, she does a generally excellent job (with the exception noted above), and has found her way into the personality of the Poverello. She has accurately portrayed the utterly Catholic loyalties of Francis, and the reality of supernatural interventions into his life. She is more critical of him than most biographers, accusing him of lack of justice and charity (not merely of prudence) for admitting learned men into the order and yet being so resolutely anti-intellectual all his life. Undoubtedly she overemphasizes Francis' opposition to learning (she rejects the letter to St. Anthony which Jörgensen, e. g., had no difficulty in accepting), and she appears to contradict herself (on pp. 136 and 225) in the matter of friars and higher studies.

Though it was a compromise rule, I see, as do most commentators, far more of Francis in the final rule of 1223 than does the author. And I

think that if there is any theme running through Francis' Testament, it is not the primacy of conscience and its freedom to follow Christ's inspirations, but rather the dire need of lovalty to the priesthood and the Pope. The subsequent quarrels (whether or not they did culminate in the murder of Caesar of Speyer as Miss Almedingen suggests, repeating some medieval gossip, I believe) were deplorable, but they deserve more sympathetic understanding than they receive here. (The Testament must have been an agony to the literal-minded: did they have to pick up every piece of printed paper that had the name of God on it, or really have to carry off in chains to the Cardinal Protector a friar who wouldn't stop at the asterisk?)

In the genre of belles-lettres St. Francis of Assisi ranks high; it ranks somewhat lower in the realm of authentic interpretation of Francis and Franciscans. It is a good catalyst — you won't read it without some reaction.

A Modern Scriptural Approach to the Spiritual Exercises. By David M. Stanley, S.J. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967. Pp. 358. Cloth, \$7.50.

Reviewed by Maury Smith, O.F.M., a member of the Sacred Heart Province who is pursuing advanced studies in religious education at the Divine Word International Center, London, Ontario.

Father Stanley tells us in his preface that the contents of this book is a retreat he gave to the Jesuit scholastics. The conferences have been rewritten for publication and are offered as "a concrete illustration of how the new approach to Sacred Scripture might be profitably employed in giving an Ignatian retreat." Father has done extremely well in what he intended to do. Often one discerns a pattern in the chapters: a theme is introduced, the Old and New Testament exegesis is

given, and then the meaning for the Christian today is presented. These chapters are the best in the book from the viewpoint of the spiritual life and its relation to the scriptures. I only wish Fr. Stanley had kept this pattern throughout the book.

From the viewpoint of scripture the book covers most of the themes of the Old and the New Testament; especially those which are of current interest: e. g., covenant, Genesis, infancy narratives, and paschal mystery. Some of his practical applications for contemporary Christian life are that a person accept himself (p. 37), the human dilemma of either joining the human race or resigning from it (p. 51), that modern man finds his preference in Pauline and Johannine spirituality (p. 88), that Christians should pray to the contemporary Christ living today (p. 92), and the triple challenge of the Christian life (p. 144).

Fr. Stanley's book is undoubtedly a superb source book for any preacher who wishes to use the scriptures and use them well. One drawback, of course, for non-Jesuits, is that the format follows the procedure for the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. It has a scriptural and a general index, however, which serve to make its contents readily accessible for use in other formats.

Although the author does make some practical applications of the scriptural themes to contemporary spiritual needs, I think the preacher will find he has to make such applications himself in many instances.

In a future book, perhaps Fr. Stanley may give us the spirituality of the scriptures with more emphasis on how they help us in our spiritual life today. There is a great need today for such a book. What Father has given us in this book is certainly a help, however, toward a better understanding of biblical spirituality for which many readers (especially preachers) will be grateful.

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