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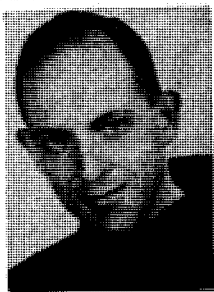
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A REVIEW EDITORIAL

Brother Earth

It will doubtless not come as a startlingly new revelation to the reader that the contemporary ecological crisis has profound, far-reaching historical and theological roots and implications. Most of us would, however, be hard put to articulate extensively, much less systematize an account of, these roots and implications. Still less, perhaps, would we be prepared to suggest a remedy designed to restore our theological balance. We therefore owe a great deal to H. Paul Santmire for his fine contribution toward the accomplishment of this vast task.¹

Brother Earth is a well written, unified, and cogent theological study that reveals its author's wide experience in the new area of ecological theology as well as his prowess as a writer steeped in the classical traditions both literary and theological.

As Mr. Santmire reads its history, American culture has always been beset by a tension between two opposed themes, the complex interactions of which he analyzes in fascinating detail: Nature vs. Civilization, and Civilization vs. Nature. This tension is still very much with us, not only in society as a whole, but in the Church as well—both in its relationship to the larger society and in its (often unarticulated) theological teachings.

The author's suggestion is that theologians try to regain a balance between the earlier over-emphasis on Nature and the contemporary exaggerated stress on history. God is to be found in both, and he works through both. Scripture is skillfully cited in the elaboration of a vision of Nature-History as God's kingdom: a vision permeated with the themes of unity and universality, in which there is no room for such spurious elements as Origen's notion of a cosmic fall.

¹ *Brother Earth: Nature, God, and Ecology in Time of Crisis*. By H. Paul Santmire. Camden, N.J.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1970. Pp. 236. Cloth, \$4.95.

In conformity with the best theological methodology, Mr. Santmire does not rest content with a statement of general themes, no matter how fundamental. He is well aware (as his sub-title indicates) that we live in a time of crisis; and he does not hesitate to discuss such apparently un-theological matters as Richard Nixon's 1971 budget. Thanks to the detailed literary, historical, and theological foundation he has so painstakingly laid beforehand, this treatment of urgent practical needs gains in cogency. But it also stands on its own as a thoughtful, if imperious, call to action.

Brother Earth is warmly recommended as must reading for every American. The Franciscan reader in particular will recognize in its pages some currents that appear quite prominently in his theological and spiritual tradition.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, OFM

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The Radically Committed Religious

Christopher F. Ruggeri, O. F. M.

In the summer of 1967 "committed radicals" appeared on the American scene from California to New York, dedicated to organizing a movement to stop the Viet Nam war. The movement's importance was seen not so much in terms of tight organization or permanence, as in its successful highlighting of injustice so prevalent, not only in the war, but in American political, social, and economic life as a whole. The young radicals felt that major decisions were being made by the military-industrial complex acting as a "power elite so as to maintain and extend American economic interests abroad (economic imperialism), opposing all left-wing governments that might threaten these interests in the developing nations (anti-Communists)."¹

They had an intense desire to inform America of their disgust with the traditional socio-political institutions both here and abroad. Neither traditional liberalism, nor Marxism of the old-left style, nor hard-hat conservatism was attractive to the young radicals. They felt the need to search out new systems, or at least make society aware that a changing culture demands new styles of socio-political systems and new styles of life. Traditional liberalism—for all its ranting and raving as the great liberator of the poor—had failed in its foreign policies and in its "inability to give dignity and power to the poor, the deprived, and the disadvantaged."² Marxism of the old left was unpalatable because of its inability to meet the real needs of human freedom

¹ Kenneth Keniston, *The Young Radicals* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 17.

² *Ibid.*

Father Christopher F. Ruggeri, O.F.M., is a former vocation director of Holy Name Province. He is presently serving as chaplain at Manhattanville College while pursuing studies in pastoral counseling at Iona College.

and its doctrinaire views of history and social change, not to mention its deplorable tactics. And that brand of conservatism which is apparently assimilated by those with "green power" could not attract the young radicals. New social and political institutions seemed needed, which would have the ability to respond to the needs of the people, especially the disadvantaged. These institutions must be local and decentralized and aim at making all men and women participate in the decisions that affect their own lives.

Radical commitment in these young people defies definition; it does not imply adherence to a fixed identity or ideology, but is an evolving process: a kind of "hang-loose" orientation with an openness to the future. Dedication to any given cause does not mean blind conformity, and it certainly excludes any basic compromise of one's individuality, personhood, and distinctiveness. For most of the peace workers, the movement was a profound growth-experience

and maturation process, and a means whereby they could express their idealism embodied in a set of fundamental moral principles: justice, decency, equality, responsibility, non-violence.

Religious life has not yet met the challenge of the young radicals, and one doubts that it ever can because of size, complexity of holdings, and institutional commitments. There was no religious community that committed itself in any way as a group to the anti-war movement, e. g., nor has any community as such taken a stand on social issues. Religious communities are walking with blinders on their collective eyes—talking to themselves about their "commitment to Christ" even as they hold fast to their security blankets, live off donations from the poor, and sell their collective souls to the politically and financially potent white, Irish-American Catholic elite.

Jean-François Revel, the distinguished French author, suggests that our country is in the process

of creating an entirely new model for world revolution.

Though he is not overly optimistic, Revel feels that no nation is as ready to confront the traditions and injustices of centuries as America; and that this confrontation has already begun in the struggles of the young, the blacks and other groups.³

Revel offers some controversial reflections on the nature of revolution. One might contest, e. g., his claim that it is by definition something that has never taken place before: a brand-new development with brand-new methods. But he is doubtless correct in seeing it as an all-encompassing social phenomenon, not essentially characterized by violence. Above all, revolution should be creative: not a quest for chaos, but a transformation into something better. So in this "second American revolution" the conditions are seen as something absolutely new. Consider, e. g., the widespread, aggressive freedom of communication:

Five fundamental conditions must be met before admitting that a revolutionary process exists:
—Widespread criticism of justice in a nation's economic, social and racial relationships.

Life-Styles on the Left

John C. Cooper calls attention to a distinction between "active" and "passive" life-styles in a passage which sheds added light on

—Widespread criticism of management and the concept of efficiency.

—Widespread criticism of the culture: morals, religion, beliefs, philosophy, literature, the arts.

—Widespread criticism of the old civilization because it stifles individual liberty.⁴

Although Revel seems generally to be right on target in his analysis of the second American Revolution, he seems mistaken in his selection of the hippie mystique as paradigm of a commitment neither to Marx nor to Jesus. The radically committed in the New Left are poles apart from the hippie mentality with its Manson type heroes and Woodstock gatherings. The latter represents negative dissent—dropping out—whereas the radically committed represent positive dissent: loyal dissent exercised on behalf of an America deeply loved and expressed as commitment to new structures and life-styles envisaged as viable solutions to real and neglected problems. The radically committed are certainly not Marxists; but they are in many cases far closer to Jesus and his gospel than either Revel or they themselves may realize.

what has just been said in criticism of Revel:

The active type of open personality is equivalent to the Dosto-

³ "The American Revolution II," *Atlas*, December, 1970.

⁴ *Ibid.*

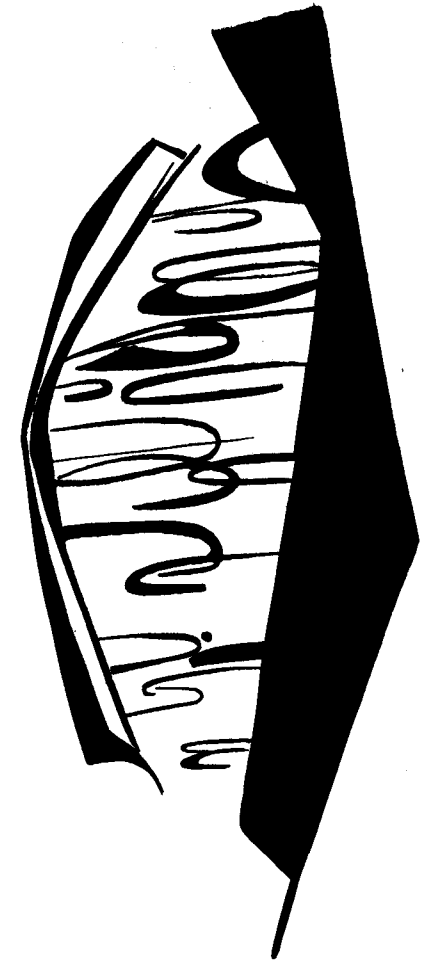
evskian revolutionary. This action-oriented, highly sensitive type of person feels the mistreatment of the poor, the humiliation and emasculation of the Negro, and the suffering of people in war directly, personally, in his own psyche. A 1968 article describing an interview with a Harvard honor student maintained that 25 per cent of the graduating seniors at Harvard were of this type. These students insisted that they would not take part in the Vietnam war, even if it meant they would have to go to prison for draft evasion or would have to leave the country and flee to Canada....

The passive life-style on the left is the gentle and rather pathetic attitude and behavior of what the mass media have named "the Flower Children." This passive, retiring, nonviolent life-style is well suited to draw our admiration and, perhaps, our envy in such troubled times.⁵

This distinction is of crucial importance for religious communities. Uncreative vocation directors who are always one step behind changing cultural phenomena, formation directors who try to fashion radical commitment in new "hot-houses" of religious growth, and bourgeois administrators of religious communities who are of necessity preservative and conservative—all these pourers of new wine in old skins, would do well to give serious attention to the turmoil on America's new left.

When the hippies appeared on the American scene searching for communes in the cities, for ex-

⁵ John Charles Cooper, *The New Mentality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 113-14.



ample, they chose Saint Francis as their patron saint. One Franciscan vocation director on the East Coast proceeded, apparently without reflective analysis, to gear his advertising jargon to the new phenomenon, proclaiming that "Saint Francis was the first hippie," and exhorting, "Don't kick the habit." His appeals were to the

Vocation directors and formation teams are at a loss to understand why so few Dostoevskian revolutionaries consider religious commitment.

psychologically insecure seeking a return to the fetal position in the security of religious structures. For too long this is exactly the type of psychological cripple religious communities have attracted. One needs only to visit any number of religious houses to see the predominance of passive-dependent, security-oriented over risk-oriented individuals—the prevalence of gentle and pathetic “flower types” who because of lack (or fear) of challenge find a haven in the womb of many present-day religious communities still living in the shadow of monolithic medieval regimina.

Vocation directors and formation teams are at a loss to understand why so few Dostoevskian revolutionaries consider religious commitment. They wonder why the radical campus reformer is unattracted to religious life by the seminarian or religious studying with him, dressing like him, and wearing his hair in the same fashion as he. They fail to see that the radically committed, open individual may judge such a seminarian or religious as a drop-out from the real gut issues of society. The young radical cannot dissociate his religion from his politics and is unlikely to be induced to do so by the cynicism of a Stewart Alsop. His sensitive social conscience makes it impossible for him to conceive of “religious for-

mation” without involvement in the burning socio-political issues.

All about us there is an erosion of myths and illusions — a rejection of external religious symbols and values devoid of real inner meaning. The individual sees himself as a member of the larger human community, and he cannot accept the religious community's self-imposed isolation from the mainstream of contemporary society with its problems.

The “passive life-style on the left” may, as Cooper puts it, “draw our... envy in such troubled times,” but for too long we have been plagued with this type of personality in our religious communities—especially among “lay” members of mixed communities. The Church has at least implicitly fostered passive-dependent personalities in religious life by the minutiae of legislation from which we are trying in vain to extricate ourselves. Our liberalizing reforms have not gone far enough nor quickly enough to permit religious communities to become a vital force in our society. Radical religious who want to get back to the roots of their baptismal commitment were probably not elected capitulars to serve as catalysts in rethinking the whole base of religious life. One wonders whether serious consideration was ever given to moving away from monolithic absolute commitments to all

male or female communities, to the community's opening up to the changing culture, to such radical changes in religious lifestyles as the acceptance of married people committed to the work and spiritual formation of the

community as full-fledged members. It is not with self-righteous condemnation, but with deep sadness and heavy heart that one is forced to call attention to the smell of death hovering over our pseudo-renewed communities.

Francis: A Radical in His Society

All religious have been urged by the Council Fathers to return to the spirit of their founders. If Franciscans were to do that, they would so radicalize their own life-style that they would become an active movement on the left of American life. Much publicity has been given to the failure of certain “small communities,” but little real analysis has been offered in explanation of this failure, which may well turn out, in many cases, to be due to insufficient prior formation or to inhibiting elements in the structure under which such communities have had to function. If really serious and radical planning were to be attempted—with or without the permission of preservative and conservative administrators—we might witness quite different results. And perhaps more publicity should be given to the many instances where (thanks to such intelligent planning) such small, gospel communities have succeeded. We might even discover that the whole present system should be discontinued. Was it really the

mind of Francis to institute a corporate organization? Aren't the very titles we use: general, provincial, definitor, opposed to Francis' ideal of *minoritas*? Or at least anachronistic to American youth? Francis, it will be recalled, gave up the leadership of those following after him in disgust over the controls and politicking of the *Frati*.

Francis' temperament and personality might be the best model in all history for integrating what we presently call active and passive life styles. Why? Because by leaving his father's house and donning the clothes of the common man he was writing his footnote to excessive affluence and triumphant clericalism. And by his radical conversion to Christ in response to his dream, he preached the gospel of peace and love—served man (even the most alienated) in the form of the leper—and, by his example of human concern, sparked the reform of the larger social fabric.

Francis of Assisi, poet, troubadour, and minstrel of the Great

King, was a man totally involved with Christ. He identified with Christ. The psychoanalyst who deals with dreams in man's unconscious could associate Francis' conscious choice for the literal imitation of Christ with that dream he had wherein he heard the voice ask him, "Is it better to serve an earthly lord or a Great King?" The theologian would say that Francis always followed the inspiration of grace. And both the theologian and the psychoanalyst could understand why Francis was a happy, joyful, psychologically and spiritually sound mystic.

Francis was a man for his time and for the culture in which he

lived. To say that he was a man for all times is to be bound to a mythological security blanket that fails to see how the spirit of that man must be interpreted anew in a time which has deep social change in common with his, but a different kind of social change with new elements unheard of in the thirteenth century. The facts of Francis' life certainly cannot be true for all times. What Franciscan could ever go back to Rivo Torto, or to "not handling money," or to begging for food and clothing? Preposterous!—for the changing culture of the world, and especially of the U. S., makes such a return impossible.

Francis: A Model for Life-Styles on the Left

Francis' personality was a happy combination of both the active and the passive life-styles of the New Left. His was a radical commitment. He was so radically committed to Christ and the gospel that he radicalized his Christian life-style. (Isn't it odd that Francis never had to become a Franciscan to become a radical Christian?) He was an individual who could not conform nor compromise his individuality. He could not fit in with the Benedictine monastic style of life nor the ideal of Dominic; nor did he want to compromise his vision for the suggestions of a hierarchy or papacy. Conservative authors who capitalize so heavily on his eventual reluctant submission to Rome seem conveniently to overlook the

limited options available to him in an age of feudal absolutism.

Francis differed from the young radicals of today in that his identity was fixed—fixed to Christ. But he was like them in that he did not allow that identification to tie him to the socio-political structures of his era, nor to real estate. He was an idealist and a pilgrim, always on the move. Like the young radicals, Francis was involved with the poor: the poor materially and spiritually—the deprived, the alienated, and the disadvantaged.

Like the passive drop-out of the New Left, Francis loved to retire from society and involvement, but not to freak-out on drugs and continue as a drop-out. He dropped out for periods of contempla-

tion to be turned on by the Spirit of Christ, so that he could re-enter society and serve it. Like the passive drop-out, he was peaceful and non-violent and loved to celebrate life. His God was in the air he breathed: in the forests and lakes, and most of all in the people he encountered. He was a personalist who enjoyed celebrating his humanity. His spontaneity and generosity, his freedom and mobility, his love of littleness and gaiety, and his sobriety in the face of human misery moved like a tornado through the forests and mountains of Assisi, into the valley of Umbria and Spoleto, through the hills of Tuscany to Saxony until it captured the men of his time and intoxicated them with that same spirit. But like all great men who have a sensitivity for their times, Francis lived to see his spirit captivated, harnessed, and shackled by a Church that almost killed the Brotherhood. His spirit was so repressed that the Church of his era caused a polarization in the Fraternity from which we are not even yet recovering fully—for even the Church of today apparently kills off the charism of equality of the Brotherhood. "Brothers in mixed communities cannot hold office," we have been told, "not because they lack the intelligence but because they lack the grace of priestly ordination and its concomitant jurisdiction."

Francis' radical commitment to Christ gave him a kind of "hang-loose" orientation and openness to the future, and he seems to have

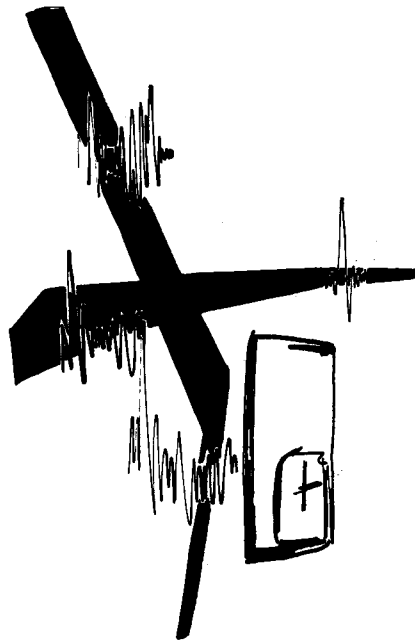
willed to his followers the same love for movement, personalism, freedom, and individuality. So the Franciscan who commits himself to the spirit of Francis should penetrate the marrow of the gospel and profess a life of community, fidelity, and charity. To profess this kind of commitment to a person-centered celibate community of service with a changing apostolic orientation, is to make one's Christianity and commitment to Christ the center of inclusion for all mankind.

For a community to permit each individual the liberty to profess this type of commitment without demanding that it be absolute, is to recognize the potential for growth in Christ within every individual and the freedom inherent in one's radical commitment to Christ. The community itself becomes open to the individual's religious creativity as professed at this time, in this cultural context. It becomes open to the future and is enabled to change with an ever-changing culture. Just as the individual becomes adaptable and flexible (like Francis), so too does the total community, which thus opens itself to greater possibilities: greater beauty and the pluralism of a pluralistic society.

Such an open community re-educates its members to the call of baptism, for every choice of a new life-style is a reaffirmation of baptism. It sheds its exclusivity and becomes inclusive of the total human community. Thus religious profession—radical commitment to the Franciscan movement—could

permit latitude to train people in Christian community who are fundamentally oriented to serving humanity as celibates in community, as celibates living alone and working at a profession but psychologically attached to the community, and as married couples living autonomously but participating in the spirit, formation, and works of the community.

For someone to answer (from within the present juridical structure) that all this is incompatible with tradition and, moreover, that provision is made in the "Third Order" for married couples, is to fail utterly to grasp either the radical character of the re-evaluation being proposed, or the very real problems with the tradition being challenged: its wasteful du-



plication of bureaucracies; fragmentation of what ought, ideally, to be a unified movement; and consequent weakening of apostolic work. It is even more superficial to raise questions about financial support even before considering the deeper issues involved here. Apart from the obvious retort evident in Francis' own example, such an objection is evidently symptomatic of a mentality almost totally security-oriented and centered on self rather than on that to which the self was allegedly committed in the first place.

One, on the other hand, who can profess his life in the fashion briefly described above—rather than to the canonical abstractions of poverty, chastity, and obedience which every Christian is called to live regardless of his life-style—would seem to profess radical commitment to Christ in a changing culture through what is frankly admitted to be a human institution. He can be formed for such a radical commitment by a community of men (and women) intent upon interpreting the gospel through **their** community. He can internalize Christian values in a secular society and implement them in a life of freedom and mobility really, and not merely nominally, reminiscent of that of Francis of Assisi.

For their part, the community co-ordinators might better understand their responsibility for forming persons, not for the sake of sustaining monolithic structures and filling slots within them; nor

even for the sake of supposedly "renewed" religious organizations they hope will be renowned for cafeteria-style meals and house chapters attended in secular clothing, but for the free acceptance of radical commitment to Christ fostered by a genuine communal ideal and by genuine friendship within the community. Our Franciscan communities would thus meet their responsibilities to a person committing himself to them. The hope would be, of course, that individuals would be moved by the spirit of such communities to remain within them. But it is equally important to give frank and explicit recognition to the primacy of the individual's commitment to the Lord himself, rather than to the community. When a given community fails to meet its responsibilities to the in-

dividual—either because of crippling members, or because of crippling structures, or because of mediocrity—one who has given his life to Christ in freedom does not lose that radical commitment when the voice of conscience calls him to another death and resurrection. As Bonhöffer says:

When Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciple who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call.... If we refuse to take up our cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, we forfeit our fellowship of the cross with Christ. The opposite of discipleship is to be ashamed of Christ and his cross.⁶

The Value System of Radically Committed Religious

When one understands the value-system of the radically committed, one is not upset by his or her exodus from myths, traditions, and symbols that now seem to such an individual anachronistic. In a way and to a degree difficult for many older religious to understand, this radically committed religious is impelled continually to come to grips with his value in a time which he sees as one of "culture break." He lives, as Eugene Kennedy says,

at the precise point of conflict between old norms and new aspirations, in the open place between the disintegrated cultural model of the past and the as yet undesigned styles of life for the future.... Sensitive persons, they have deep compassion for the human suffering that is inevitable at a time of culture break.... They are sensitive about all discussions centering on the human person, his need for freedom, and his longings for substantial faith, hope and love in his life.

The best of the personnel are in this position because in a cul-

⁶ Dietrich Bonhöffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, tr. R. H. Fuller and Irmgard Booth (rev. ed., New York: Macmillan, 1968), 99, 101.

ture break men must search anew for the values by which they will live. These deep values are the ones that center on man rather than on his institutions. The sensitive [religious] reaffirms his belief in and need for basic human values at a time when the transforming institutional Church [and communities], intent on self-preservation, finds it difficult to incorporate these fully into its philosophy of personnel operation. That is why there will be continued tension around the personal aspects of the life of the [religious]. And the one who will continue to suffer most is the sensitive, perceptive, and committed [religious].... The concern must be for a restructuring of the modes of service within the Church, not just to prevent resignations, but to make it possible for men and women to give their lives truly to the people who need their service so much.⁷

One ought not, therefore, to be upset by the urge of the radically committed religious to create new styles of religious living which are an outgrowth of his biblical vision of the future.⁸ He is cooperating with God in the divine act of creation (creating new styles of life), cooperating with God in the Exodus event (freely passing through the cities without encumbrances and liberating others from oppressive governments and injustices), and cooperating with God in the building

⁷ Eugene Kennedy, *The People Are the Church* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1969), 101-02.

⁸ I am indebted for much of the material in the following paragraphs to Robert Wegman, "The Catholic Clergy and Change: An Analysis," *Cross Currents* (Spring, 1969). Wegman calls the radically committed religious "post-modern" to distinguish him from the traditional and the renewed religious. I prefer the designation: religious radically committed to Christ.

of a community as at Mount Sinai.

His faith is not in creeds and dogmatic statements, in teachings of the popes, bishops, and heads of religious orders. It is more vague, less defined than that. It is composed largely of hope and openness to what the future may bring. The magisterium is sometimes not taken very seriously and, if irrelevant, is ignored. To the now religious, all of his life is religious: especially man, in whom he (like Francis) sees the only hope of sensing the depth which is God. He is attached to the Scriptures (interpreted in a demythologized way); but beyond this, he answers most theological questions with a shrug: who knows?

Government for him is a matter of consensus. Group identification is much less important than a deep sense of identification with the local community. Should he find himself unable to agree with the group on a basic issue, it is expected that rather than compromise his conscience he will withdraw, and this course carries with it no burden of shame. He desires a group with which he can communicate and work effectively; a community without real friendship is, to him, a contradiction in terms. Commu-

nity is something personal. Rather than a sense of enrollment in an organization, his basic experience is one of being an independent self relating with others. He is interested in small groups, and any tie to a larger body will be at best loose.

To the radically committed Franciscan, poverty is not a matter of a mystique and permissions, but is expressed in the creative use of money. Money is to be used for others; what counts is persons. Whether it is held in common, is a matter of whether such a course is practical or useful. Celibacy is an individual choice expressed within an ever-changing cultural context. The religious radically committed to his baptism in Christ feels that, since he pronounced this commitment through a human institution, he may choose it for a while even as he remains open to change. He does not attempt to deny interest in the opposite sex; and should the Spirit lead him to another death and resurrection in a new life-style, he is open to it without ever considering severing friendships with the group or ceasing to work with it, should this be practical.

The radically committed Franciscan does not pray the same way as we of another generation did. He is more given to reflective reading and sensitivity to persons and events. Mass every day may seem too frequent to foster deep appreciation of its personal meaning; a folk Mass once or twice during the week suf-

fices to express his Christianity and his search for God. He chooses his own tasks; he goes where he sees the need and believes he can meet it. He is bound, like the rest of society, by a contract he signs, not by obedience. He sees himself as a man for others, a pilgrim, someone on a personal search. He wants to be addressed as anyone else in society, to dress no differently. He does not think of himself as being in a "higher state of life," but he does seek to be more deeply human, warmer, more loving. He wants to accomplish something, but as the occasion demands he may move in and out of what might be considered "religious work."

The radically committed religious doesn't expect the group to take care of his future. He wants to take out the usual insurance, perhaps an annuity, and he pays his own social security. He is well aware of the traditionalist reproach to such an attitude; but what the objector sees as the ideal of docile dependence and trust in God, he regards as immaturity and presumption.

The difference between the radically committed friar and the traditional friar (or other religious) should be obvious, and the reader is doubtless also well aware of the difference between the radically committed religious and the individual who has come to be referred to as the "renewed" religious. The latter is one who attempts to reconcile the diametrically opposed traditionalists and

radicals—to introduce compromise at every juncture.

Faith may be expressed, for the “renewed” religious, in the theology of Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Baum, and MacKenzie. But temperamentally and psychologically he is unable to assimilate all they are saying about the “Christian of the diaspora” and other elements of their theological anthropology. His faith and theology are increasingly secular, but he is still a “religious” according to the legal distinctions of ecclesiastical jargon. The radically committed religious cannot tolerate the band-aid approach to newer life-styles adopted by the renewed religious. He cannot tolerate the latter’s “speaking with the forked tongue” telling traditionalists that nothing is really being changed, and pacifying progressives that this will solve the problems—this application of band-aids to a worn-out fabric. The radically committed religious knows, too, that the problems are larger than religious renewal, that they pervade the larger culture of which his life-style is a part.

One may refuse to recognize all of what has been described as “the religious life,” but that means nothing to younger men and women who, if they enter our communities at all in the next five to ten years, will do so with the intention of an open-ended commitment in an ever changing cultural context. It is so evidently the call of the Spirit to them, that this is how they feel they

must fashion their life and the future. If the Church authorities support them in this endeavor, fine—there is nothing they would want more. If not, they will try it anyway.

Just as Francis opened the gospel three times and was inspired to initiate a life-style new in his era, so the radically committed Franciscan opens the gospel and is inspired to live it as he interprets it for today. Just as Francis could not document beforehand what he was going to do because he first had to experience it, so the radically committed sees no need to document beforehand what he attempts to do with his life. After all, he says, you cannot prefabricate community with words on paper. Human beings with their aspirations and desires and how they wish to risk their lives come before the words on paper.

To the religious who has matured to a radical commitment to Christ through the spirit of Francis, one might well address in paraphrase the words of Saint Paul: Nothing can come between you and the love of Christ, even if you may be troubled or worried about the future, or by the loss of friends at those times when you cannot compromise your conscience but must live the call of Christ as honestly as you can—or when you are threatened or attacked by friends or a changing culture. These are trials through which all of us triumph, by the power of him who loves

us. For, even though we live with ambiguities and uncertainties, you can be sure of this: neither death nor life, nor angel nor prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between you and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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The Theology of Vocations

Richard Penaskovic, O. F. M. Conv.

The main difficulty in writing about the theology of vocations is that it is such a large question involving rather complicated and thorny issues. I have tried to meet this problem by limiting the scope of my paper.

I shall begin by searching the Scriptures for some clues. Then I shall handle the vocation to the religious life as such, omitting ex-

press treatment of the priesthood, and the brotherhood in particular, as well as of the specifically Franciscan vocation. I do hope, however, that in grappling with the theology of religious life I will shed some light on the Franciscan vocation. The final section, "Prospects for the Future," contains some remarks, mostly my own opinions, in regard to the future of vocations.

"Vocation" in Scripture

"Vocation" in the Old Testament means the temporal manifestation of an election already completed before time began (Jer. 1:5; Is. 46:10-11). A vocation and God's election proceed from God and find their "why" in God's unfathomable love. As opposed to the term "election," "vocation" lacks the element of a preference or selection from a whole (Deut. 4:37; Ps. 47:5; 78:68).¹ In no way does a man merit to be called by God. The call and selection of God first make a person worthy of that sign of love.

A vocation is dialogical in character (Gen. 3:9). When Jahweh called Samuel, e. g., Samuel answered by saying, "Here I am" (1 Sam. 3:3ff.). It may happen that an individual is laid hold of by God before he knows to which task God is calling him. Isaiah, e. g., volunteered to be God's messenger before he knew the contents of the message to be delivered (Is. 6:8).

The Prophets experience a vocation as a sign of God's strength. It is termed being "seized" by God's hand (Is. 8:11; Jer. 15:17).

¹ E. Neuhäusler, "Berufung," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 2, 280-81.

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The one called is swept off his feet by the power of God and becomes his property. The same thing may be expressed by saying that God calls a person by his name (Ex. 31:2; Is. 43:1; 45:3f.) or that the name of God is called out over a people (Deut. 28:10; Amos 9:12; Is. 63:19). In the case of Ezechiel, where the act of calling is considered in a visionary sort of way, the call of the prophet takes place through an appeal (Ezech. 1:3; 2:1ff.).

Deutero-Isaiah uses the term "vocation" for the vocation of the people of Israel, for the vocation of Abraham, and for that of the servant of God. Even here, the term retains its concrete character (Is. 41:25; 11:48). The one called enjoys God's care and special protection (Gen. 12:1-3; Ezech. 3:8f.). God's complete freedom in the act of calling is emphasized through such words as "I am the Lord and no one else is" (Is. 42:6ff.; 45:3; 48:12).

From Is. 45:5f., it is rather clear that the notion of a vocation is somehow connected with that of creation. God's calls are a partial fulfillment of the progressive manifestation of himself in the history which has begun with the creation of the world (Is. 42:5; 43:1; 44:22-28). The one called enters into a special relationship with God, becoming the "servant of God" (Is. 43:1; 49:3). From now on, the one called is a visible sign of God's desire to glorify himself (Is. 46:13; 49:3), and for the

execution of God's will in time and in history (Is. 46:10).²

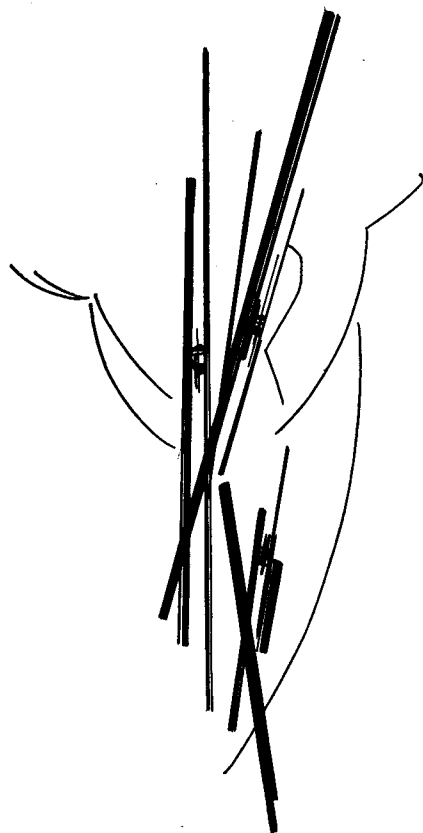
In the New Testament the verb "to call" (*kaleîn*) is a technical term for the process of salvation.³ In the parable about the marriage feast (Mt. 22:1-14) the call refers to God's redeeming call (cf. Rom. 4:17). According to the parable of the marriage feast, the Israelites were called to be God's people, but they did not heed God's call. God then collected, so to speak, all his previous calls in one great, final call. All previous calls led up to this final call in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Call of God in everything that he said and did. The call of God in Jesus Christ is handed down to us in a tradition which the Holy Spirit entrusts to the Church. The call of Christ now comes from the Church—from her hymns, prayers, doctrine, preaching, and the example of her members.

Happiness and bliss is sent our way in the call of God which goes out to us in Jesus Christ. This means that in God's call darkness fades and light comes (1 Pt. 2:9, 1 Jn. 2:8). That call illumines the lives of those who heed it (Ps. 119:105). Through enlightened men who heed the call, the world becomes bright.

God's call brings hope (Eph. 4:4). It announces to us the prospect opened for us in Christ's death and resurrection—and the prospect is the very glory of God as found on the forehead of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:14). Glory is

² *Ibid.*, 281.

³ *Ibid.*, 282.



called in the Lord, is a freedman of the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:22). Man is tempted to prove his own worth to God through the performance of (even pious) works. In the Pauline view freedom implies freedom from the Law, which tries to lead a person away from God by making salvation depend on one's own works rather than on God's grace.

Galatians 5:13 tells us that we're "called to freedom," i. e., to love God for his own sake and our neighbor for his own sake. Buoyed up by the call of God, which grounds our hope, we can come out of our shell and give ourselves over to the invitation of God, "for God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness (1 Thess. 4:7). Holiness is the completion of freedom. The man of holiness is just; in no way does he seek himself and his own way.

The call of God allows us to partake of joy. Saint Paul prays for the Christians in Rome that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). Because the Lord is near at hand for those who hear his call, they should "rejoice always in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4f.).

Many people do not answer the call of joy, which encompasses us, ever since the Lord is near. Others listen to it but are not aware that it is the offer of One who will greet those who come with the words, "Well done, good and faith-

the splendor of God manifested to us in Christ Jesus.⁴

The call of God gives us peace (Eph. 2:14). I relinquish all care and worry concerning my reputation because of the chance of fame and honor which God gives me repeatedly. Hence the barriers between men crumble, while peace begins to take root in the heart of man (cf. Col. 3:15).

The call of God first makes a person free. "A slave who has been

⁴ Most of the following section is taken from H. Schlier, *Besinnung auf das Neue Testament: Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge* 2, 219-26.

ful servant... enter into the joy of your master" (Mt. 25:21, 23).⁵

To heed the call demands faith. Take the case of Abraham. "By faith he who is called Abraham obeyed by going out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). The call of God is simply there and leads us along an unmarked path. We are to follow the call, not knowing in advance where it may take us. We are to trust the call blindly: to listen to it even at the risk of being "taken." (Not really...)

This is not possible without a fight. Throughout one's life there are so many other more promising calls. For this reason Paul admonishes his disciple, Timothy, to "fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on life eternal, to which you have been called" (1 Tim. 6:12).

Taken up with the call of Christ, one leaves everything else behind, because it is a definite hindrance. I can no longer remain

attentive to the calls of the world. I cannot avoid the call. The future of God calls me. So I plunge forward, until the day I meet the one who has called me. The call is a past, present, and future reality. It has gone out to me in the past, it continues to go out in the present, and it lies before me. Paul puts it this way: "Not that I have already obtained this, or already have been made perfect, but I press on hoping that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14).

In short, I find myself encircled by God's call. In a certain sense, I am no longer free. To heed God's call means to be on the way, from call to call, from light to light, from hope to hope, from joy to joy.

Toward a Theology of Religious Life

There are various ways of constructing a theology of religious life. I like to consider religious life as a dare. Let me explain.

A Phenomenology of Daring

When we speak of a daring feat or of a daring way of life, the emphasis is less on the possibil-

ity of failure than on the uniqueness of the accomplishment involved. Daring stems from a persistent determination to do something which other people do not do. The darer sets his sights on strange goals, and pursues them with a single-minded intensity. It is not simply a question of tough-

⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

ness, nor of unconventionality. Externally the darer may be the softest and most unprepossessing person around. But he is capable of totally concentrating on the steps which separately and together form his achievement.⁶

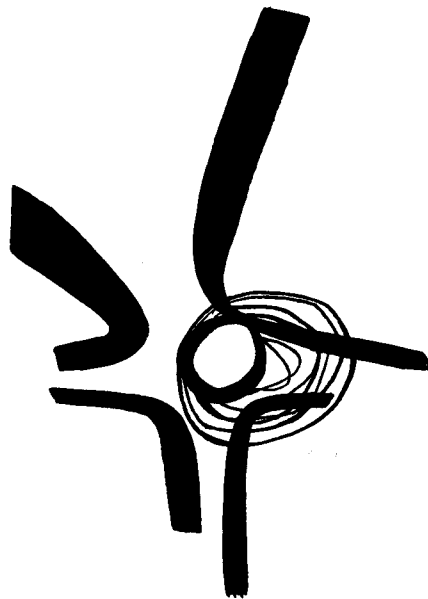
It seems to me that daring is its own justification. No amount of bewilderment or scepticism on the part of those who do not dare, can take away from the darder's achievement. The burden of proof is on the non-darer to show that daring is not justified. Perhaps the test of the human validity of a dare is the admiration it inspires in the observer.

It is my contention that Christ calls to religious life those who are daring types, that is, those who have in themselves, before any adult decision related to Christ, something which demands living a dare.

What Religious Dare to Do

Paradoxical as it may sound, religious dare the normal structures of Christian living. In the Decree of Vatican II on religious life, it says that the religious' special act of consecration "is deeply rooted in [their] baptismal consecration and provides an ampler manifestation of it." This baptismal consecration takes in the whole Christian commitment to form community with God and with one's fellow men by engaging in a life of authentic cult and sacramental

⁶ G. McCauley, S.J., "A Theological Image of Religious Life," *Review for Religious* 28:5 (Sept., 1969), 736. I am indebted to Father McCauley's fine discussion for much of what is contained in the present paper.



humanism. It is obviously a very broad type of commitment. How can one dare it? The Church has divided the baptismal commitment somewhat artificially into the less broad categories of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Religious center their dares in these areas.

Of course the normal Christian has a commitment in these areas by reason of his baptismal vows. He is directed to take a stand on material goods and possessions, on sexual and married love, and on his relationship of dependence on God and on others—all in the name of Christ. The religious takes these pre-existing structures of Christian commitment and treats them in a daring fashion.

I now propose to go through

the vows showing how they may be treated in a daring way. As far as poverty goes, religious still need to resist their tendency to weigh themselves down with paraphernalia, which trumpet their own importance. Religious should divest themselves of those layers of material goods which enable people to define themselves in terms of what they have instead of who they are. Religious bear witness that it is at the level of personhood that man most truly exists, and Christ most truly works. Sharing at the level of personhood is a very demanding kind of sharing. This type of sharing is most illustrative of the kind of redeemer Christ was and is.⁷

On the other hand, the problem with money today is not in the individual but in the social uses of the dollar, in the constructive political uses of money at the institutional, local, national, and international levels. Religious should be daring in these areas, questioning their investment of money and manpower in traditional institutions and apostolates, consolidating their houses of formation, avoiding reduplication that has no other justification than a desire to be true to the Founder, funding missionary work conjointly with other groups (and even other faiths), working

through civil institutions where these can do the job better. There is, in other words, always room to improve the quality of our dare.

As far as obedience is concerned, the hero in religious life is not the one who can keep the rules best. The greatest suffering comes in the religious' experience of dialogue. Today's religious probably have more experience in dialogue than any other large group of people in the world. In examining apostolic structures, in discussing community life, in various kinds of renewal talk, religious have discovered the real dimensions of their divisions.

Some communities have apparently been destroyed by this dialogue. Others have found their life less romantic, more stark, and seemingly loveless. The religious is finding out that he can and must break bread—at least the bread of Christ—with those with whom he differs, that he can and must work with others despite serious ideological differences, that he can and must love what is really not himself.⁸ The image of his religious community as a homogeneous unit has been shattered irreparably. If he does not find a new source of unity in the principle of dialogue, he is doomed.

The secular world needs this unity in diversity very badly.⁹ Re-

⁷ *Ibid.*, 742. For a different approach to religious life see H. Volk, "Christenstand-Ordensstand," in *Ordenskorrespondenz* 7 Jhrg., Heft 1, 1966; or K. Rahner, "Über die evangelischen Räte," in *Schriften zur Theologie* 8 (1968); or J. M. R. Tillard, "A Point of Departure," *Review for Religious*, May, 1967.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 743.

⁹ I. Sussman, "Organization Is Not the Essence of Community," *The Catholic World* (Dec., 1969), 115. For an inclusive criticism of the traditional theology of religious life see G. Tvard, "Freedom and Responsibility in the

religious communities might show the world how to solve the generation gap. Nothing could be more relevant for the Church, through its experience of dialogue, than to become the spokesman for dialogue in the contemporary world, to share with the world its bitter experience and yet the constructive healing found in dialogue. (In other words, we must emphasize what unites us, rather than what tears us apart.)

Religious communities are now feeling the pains of dialogue in the most intense way. On the parish level, dialogue has hardly begun. Given our cultural and religious background, it will only be through an "authoritative" command of bishops over a long period of time that parish-level dialogue will be triggered and sustained. In the meantime, religious communities will be asked to dare this dialogue structure of authority.

Chastity is required of every Christian by reason of his baptismal vows. The purpose of Christian chastity is this: that every Christian learn from Christ how to be an authentic human lover.¹⁰ This implies that when Christ is introduced into the heart of human love, that love is forced to become open to other people beyond the lovers themselves. The religious extends this principle of

Religious Life," *Continuum* (Winter, 1965). For some remarks critical of today's youth, cf. R. McNally, "Religious Vocations: A Crisis of Religion," *National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin*, 1967, 207-11.

¹⁰ McCauley, 744. Cf. Martin O'Keefe, "Clerical Celibacy," *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Oct., 1967, esp. 33-35.

openness in human love through Christ. By introducing Christ into the heart of his love, he opens himself out to more human contacts, to relationships of support and understanding with more people. The religious should give himself to as many as possible through Christ. In not giving himself to one woman in Christ, the religious finds that Christ makes of him a man for all men and women.

The vow of chastity does not blot out in the religious an awareness of his own capacity for married love. I would say that the more authentic his dare in this area, the more proximately ready he should be for married love.

Religious also serve those for whom human love between a man and a woman is a physical, economical, or psychological impossibility. In our affluent society, who sympathizes with the awkward, the ugly, the malproportioned? With people in whom love crouches like a deformed child? With those for whom their own sexuality is an embarrassment? With whom communication with the other sex is at best a halting dumb-show, and at worst a mockery? Measured by the standard of successful married love, these people are judged severely in society. We do our best to hide them or not to

discuss them because we secretly set up as an absolute standard of human dignity success in married love.¹¹

Religious can do much to dissipate this false assessment of human dignity. Sooner or later, some-

one is going to have to explain the religious who, while insisting on his own dignity, does not measure it using the standard of successful married love. Others, seeing the religious, can take hope in their own dignity.

Prospects for the Future

In this final section, I shall try to be as frank and as candid as possible. I believe that there will be a steady stream of departures from religious life. I cannot go in to what I feel are the reasons for such departures. There are as many reasons as there are individuals departing. Each case is unique and has to be handled as such.

There seems to be a large incidence of anomie in our communities. Anomie is a feeling of uprootedness, of apathy in the face of formerly rewarding, but now meaningless performance. It implies a loss of goal and direction because the old system and structures are disintegrating and won't work any more, while new and meaningful patterns have not yet emerged.

Anomie is not only a problem in religious houses. It is a huge problem in contemporary society. Rapid change, scientific advances, the knowledge explosion, and heightened awareness demand swift and constant adjustment.

This is difficult.¹² To offset this anomie in our communities, we need a heightened sense of community life. Our communities will best counteract this anomie by offering the friars a maximum degree of human support, a feeling of being buoyed up at close range by people who really make a difference.

Community life should be the source from which all else springs: prayer life, obedience, etc. Presently, the spirit in our houses is at ebb-tide. There appears to be an unwillingness to go into the requirements of community living in any depth. This makes it hard for a friary to be in the front lines in the universal efforts that are being made to arrive at unity in the Church and in the world. Yet by their very nature, our friaries should be striking out for unity, experimenting, on the move.

Concomitant with the steady stream of departures, will be the continuation of our present lack of vocations. In the future, the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 745.

¹² Sister Jane M. Richardson, "Sisters' Survey: Its Implications for Future Vocations," *National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin*, 1968, 189-95.

various Orders will (if I may extrapolate from what I have experienced in my own) be composed of a small, elite but dedicated group of friars. There exists, at present in the Church, a tension between certain ecclesiastical structures and evangelical values. As Congar has noted, there is a general dissatisfaction with everything that smacks of "institutionalism." The Church is loved in its prophetic aspect. In the measure that the Church acts prophetically, in that measure does it get people's attention. There's a search, then, for a prophetic community, for the creation of a new style of institution which will be more flexible, closer to life, more politically engaged.

I suggest that a good many religious communities ought to become communities of protest, signs of discontent with the wrong values that are visible in so many places—protesting against the lack of love and of real concern in the world, against promiscuity, and against the disunity among men.

Presently, religious life is too of-

ten mediocre, comfortable, middle-class life. The religious appears as a man bogged down by the institutional structures, closed in by authority, shut off from the world, restricted in his horizon. I'm not saying that all religious are this way. I am saying that this is the image which is too often projected among the youth the religious encounters.

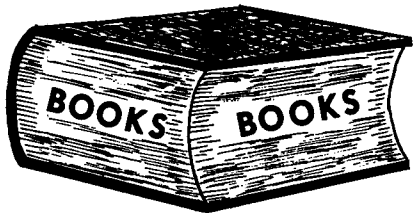
If we friars become satisfied in our work and routine, if we fail to be more flexible in our choice of apostolic works, if we do not experiment, we cannot expect many vocations. It is then that precious and necessary attitudes in the community such as loyal rebellion and the gifts of prophecy and enthusiasm, become suspect. As Father Hugh Bishop, the Superior of Mirfield, has written: "God knows that there is need for more loyal rebels in the Church today and it is the function of the religious communities to provide homes for them where their insights and efforts can be sanctified and used constructively to the glory of God and in the service of man."¹⁸

¹⁸ F. Cowper, "Taizé and the Renewal of Religious Life," *The Clergy Review*, Jan. 1969, 32.

Charity Is Patient

Love is long;
Love is not spent in momentous bliss.
Love is a thong
Binding the brush of a pin-pointed kiss.
Love is a lamp,
Not an explosion that fades in a flare.
Love is a stamp
Pressed in the heart like engraved silverware.
Love is large;
Love buys the beloved a fine gem or antique.
Love pays the charge:
Two dollars down and a dollar a week.

Robert J. Waywood, O. F. M.



The Man in the Sycamore Tree; The Good Times and Hard Life of Thomas Merton. An Entertainment by Edward Rice. New York: Doubleday, 1970. Pp. 160; 73 photographs. Cloth, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., a contemplative nun at Sancta Clara Monastery, Canton, Ohio. Sister Mary Seraphim's series on Saint Clare is appearing in the spring issues of THE CORD, and she is a contributor to several other religious periodicals.

If you pick up a book which claims to recount the "making of a beatnik, peacenik, Trappist, Buddhist monk," you swiftly deduce it must be the account of the life of that most amazing man, Thomas Merton. No other person would (or could) correspond to that description. Mr. Edward Rice, who so characterizes his friend Thomas Merton, in *The Man in the Sycamore Tree*, fully appreciates the uniqueness of his subject. Throughout the lively and revealing descriptions of his relationship with Thomas Merton (which began at Columbia before Merton's conversion and which continued uninterrupted until the day of Merton's death), Rice highlights

the contrasting and contradictory elements of Merton's personality.

By drawing on personal reminiscences, letters, published and unpublished memoirs of Merton, and sundry conversations with Merton himself, Rice draws a striking portrait of the man while his eloquent photographs provide another insight into his enigmatic personality. The early years of Thomas Merton's life are treated briefly but truthfully. The Columbia period is treated with a wealth of detail that reflects the "eye-witness" character of their recital. Many have been slightly mystified by Merton's reference to himself as a "great sinner" when his autobiography, *Seven Storey Mountain*, mentions only the reading of some risqué novels and a series of mild flirtations. Rice points out that before the book left the hands of the Order's censors, Merton was obliged to cut out and tone down considerable portions of the original manuscript. Rice adds, "One doesn't have to prove Merton was a bad boy as a teen-ager; he says he was, and obscures the details and that is enough." Rice, however, supplies a number of these missing "details" which serve to heighten the paradox of his eventual entry into the Trappists.

About Merton's conversion, Rice relies on Merton's own statements, while adding a few observations of Merton's acquaintances of that period. After his baptism, Merton began to change, gradually but visibly, until his friends could not fail to remark his loss of interest in earlier pleasures and a growing tendency to withdraw into himself.

About this time, 1941, he registered for the draft as a conscientious objector. After a refusal by the Franciscans, Merton came into contact with the Trappists in Kentucky. Before his friends realized what was afoot, Thomas Merton was swallowed up by the forbidding walls of the monastery.

To judge by Rice's rather sketchy treatment of Merton as a monk, we sense that he never fully understood why his friend chose such a life style. Although he casts no doubt on Merton's full sincerity in this choice, Rice himself was never able to penetrate beyond the surface details of the last twenty-seven years of his life. He speaks vaguely of "novitiate trials," "difficulties with the abbot," "poor health," and "unsympathetic censors"; but he never gets down to grips with what is (to me, at least) the real drama of Merton's life: the steady, dynamic growth of the inner man. I feel this is a real lack in Rice's book—one which makes me hope the advertising flyers are wrong when they state, "This book should immortalize Merton." If it does, it will immortalize only a portion of the man. When only a few facets of a diamond are held up to view, one is unable to envision the inner flame which is the ultimate splendor of the gem. Merton's character demands a much more penetrating study than Mr. Rice has given us here.

When Rice is on more familiar ground, however—dealing with Merton's writings on peace, racism, and Buddhism—he is superb, and I am grateful for his perceptive presentation. He hints at the continuing inner growth of the man and concludes his account by reporting the impression of several who said that Merton, during the last weeks and days of his life, seemed "transcended." The monks and mystics of the East seemed to consider Merton as "some kind of Buddha come to earth." Many, including his abbot, agreed that he appeared to have a

presentiment of his approaching death.

A profound mystical experience must have shaken Merton shortly before the end while he was in "retreat" with the Dzogtchen Buddhists in the Himalayas. While Rice refers to it as a decisive moment, he does not analyze it. He simply concludes that Merton, having reached the height of his spiritual ascent, was ready and ripe for death to "translate" him.

The 160-page book, with its pleasing layout of large type and double-columned pages is indeed an "entertainment" for all Merton lovers, even for \$7.95. Many others who had felt "turned off" by a Trappist monk will awaken to the marvelous contemporaneity of this man. Peace, love, war, violence, sex, and God—all were included in his wide-ranging interests. Rice has presented us with a sympathetic account of this widely-known personality which glitters with the unusual turn of phrase and, as well, with well substantiated fact.

A Path through Teilhard's Phenomenon. By W. Henry Kenney, S.J. Dayton: Pflaum Press, 1970. Pp. xii-284. Paper, \$2.95.

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

Father Kenney's trail-blazing through *The Phenomenon of Man* is obviously both a labor of love and a distinct service to the non-scientist student of Teilhard. Evidently he and I have had the same experience with this type of reader in classroom situations. My solution (since I have not taught courses expressly devoted to Teilhard) has been to recommend the reading of the more theological writings and of secondary sources. Father Kenney's is a far more useful and helpful response to the problem of dense un-

intelligibility confronted by such an admirer of Teilhard: he has marked out a path through the Phenomenon's labyrinth. The "Path" is not a close commentary, although the author does express the intention of publishing just such a "companion." It is a more general and global sort of exposition of Teilhard's aim, method, and teaching in his magnum opus.

Teilhard himself was rather ambivalent, as is well known, regarding the nature of his endeavor. To gain a sympathetic scientific audience, he minimized the divergence of his work from the scientific approach strictly so-called; and to arouse the interest of philosophers and theologians, he admitted that his vision was one shaped by the exigencies of faith and of a more than positivist analysis of evolutionary history. The problem he set out to illuminate is the fundamental question addressed by perennial philosophy; the reduction of ontological multiplicity to unity; and, in Teilhard's particular approach, also the unification of two apparently opposite attractions or "loves": the world's appeal as something good and desirable in itself, and the biblical invitation to seek God alone as supremely good and supreme desideratum. The author explains clearly and cogently Teilhard's subtle, tension-laden response to this challenge, which consists, not in a compromise, but rather in a true unification and interpenetration of his two "loves."

After a critical discussion of Teilhard's own summary of his work (the final part of the Phenomenon itself), Father Kenney furnishes excellent discussions of Teilhard's view of the evolutionary past, present, and future, with a separate chapter devoted to a discussion of the complex notion of Omega. The concluding chapter on Christogenesis as formative for "natural" evolution has the usual apologetic thrust in parts, but it is a fine summary and, in



timely, inspiring, and provocative . . .

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general, vindication of Teilhard's contribution to recent theological discussion. The author claims (and there is no reason to doubt) that the glossary he has furnished is the most "ample" available in English—it is excellent and should be a great help for readers without formal scientific training.

The book is written in an enthusiastic, engaging, and quite intelligible style, and it is well indexed. To use it with maximum profit, the reader should have a copy of the second (not the first) English edition of the Phenomenon itself—but this is not absolutely necessary. Followers of Teilhard will be delighted to welcome this important aid to the dissemination of his teaching; we certainly look forward with eager anticipation to the publication of the more detailed "companion" or commentary on that influential book on the human phenomenon.

Prayer and Modern Man. By Jacques Ellul. Trans. C. Edward Hopkin. New York: Seabury Press, 1970. Pp. xi-178. Cloth, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Richard Leo Heppler, O.F.M., chaplain at Holy Family Residence and a member of the faculty at Tombrock College, West Paterson, N.J.

"The man of our time does not know how to pray; but more than that, he has neither the desire nor the need to do so." This is the condition the author proposes to examine. The book, then, will not concern itself with those modern men who do pray. Rather, there will be a study of society's mistakes about prayer, the obstacles to prayer, and an explanation of how modern man can pray.

After exposing a number of false practices which pose as prayer, M. Ellul analyzes the twofold foundation of prayer, the human and the

supernatural; only to find both inadequate reasons for modern technological man to pray. This leads to an investigation of the sociological and the theological reasons for not praying. So compelling are these reasons that modern man finds easy justification for not praying.

So far the accent has been on non-prayer and the modern man. Now there is a shift. There is a reason for praying, and it is the only one. It is this: God has commanded man to pray. Man has the choice to accept or to reject the command. Obedience to the will of God is an act of freedom. Man is most a man when he prays.

But prayer is always the companion of faith. We do not find one without the other. Hence the failure of modern man to pray is really a failure of faith. Modern man no longer believes in spiritual realities: he is a victim of his own scientific progress and of consumer economics. Until modern man returns to faith he shall be unable to pray. But a return to faith involves a struggle.

So it is that prayer is viewed as a combat. Man's first struggle will be with himself. If man is to seek the cure of self-alienation through prayer he must avoid two traps. First he must skirt the error that prayer is the means of getting from God the consumer goods which a commercial society has convinced him he must have. Secondly, he must steer clear of the idea that God is an object of gratification to be consumed. Next man must enter into combat with God. This wrestling will demand total commitment to God.

Prayer as combat leads to the Act of Hope. As the Act of Hope becomes enduring, prayer takes on the nature of both final and realized eschatology.

The author is sensitive to the modern man he knows. Were such men to read this book they would derive profit and may even be led to try prayer. Theologians, sociologists, on-campus religious directors

may get some profitable insights. The absence of a Church which is holy, of the Sacraments—especially of the Eucharist—of our Lady, and of the saints constitute serious flaws for this reviewer.

Thoughts for Sowing: Reflections on the Liturgical Readings for Sundays and Holydays. By A. James Quinn and James A. Griffin. Staten Island, N. Y.: Alba House, 1970. Pp. xii-108. Paper, \$2.50.

The Word of God: Homilies. By Louis Evely. Trans. Sister Mary Agnes, O.P. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967. Paperback edition, 1970. Pp. 295. \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., Ph.D., Editor of this Review.

Both these books will be of inestimable value, not only to the preacher seeking fresh and incisive ideas for his homilies, but to every Christian who takes liturgical celebration seriously. The homilies in both books are, moreover, excellent literary developments of single themes. (This was not always the case with the earlier collections of homilies, some of which made use of awkward outlines, or offered a choice of several undeveloped topics.)

Little needs to be said here about Evely's prowess as a spiritual writer. The wonder of this volume, however, is that he was able to be so consistently effective through a gam-

ut of over sixty homilies. Most of the earlier collections like this were uneven in quality, but the only unevenness about these homilies is in their length. There is good, solid theology and abundant unction in each of them—which may account for the republication of the volume even though the texts are taken from the obsolete series of readings in use prior to the recent, revised lectionary. Evely's homilies, then, will be of more use for personal meditation than for the preacher's preparation, although the latter function cannot be ruled out, particularly where they deal with the historical sequence of saving events as the latter unfold during the Church year.

The homilies of Monsignor Quinn and Father Griffin (both canonists) are, by contrast, based on the new readings—specifically, those for the 1970-1971 liturgical year. Each homily has a catchy title—so striking, in fact, that it alone might suffice in some cases to suggest an entire homily for the preacher. The individual homilies are developed in an attractive, often colloquial style. Thus they are easy to read—easy to consult quickly and to skim for the crucial point, which generally comes through with admirable clarity and sharpness.

It scarcely needs to be said that these books are not substitutes for, but rather aids to the individual's own prayerful and reflective meditation on the Word of God. Each of them should be a powerful aid indeed.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Curran, Charles E., **Christian Morality Today.** Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1969 (6th printing). Pp. xx-138. Paper, \$2.45.

Curran, Charles E., **Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology.** Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1970. Pp. 272. Paper, \$1.50.

Curran, Charles E., **A New Look at Christian Morality.** Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1970. Pp. viii-255. Paper, \$1.50.

Evely, Louis, **The Gospels without Myth: A Dramatic New Interpretation of the Gospels and Christian Dogma.** Tr. J. F. Bernard; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 167. Cloth, \$4.95.

Kippley, John F., **Covenant, Christ, and Contraception.** Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1970. Pp. xxviii-160. Cloth, \$4.95.

McCormick, Rory, **Americans against Man.** New York: Corpus Books, 1970. Pp. viii-134. Cloth, \$6.95; paper, \$3.95.

McNaspy, C.J., **Worship and Witness: An Adult Religious Education Program.** New York: Bruce, 1970. Pp. 159. Paper, \$1.95.

Moran, Gabriel, **Design for Religion: Toward Ecumenical Education.** New York: Herder & Herder, 1971. Pp. 168. Cloth, \$4.95.

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