COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for the March issue of THE CORD were drawn by Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A., a contemplative nun at Sancta Clara Monastery, Canton, Ohio, whose art has graced such periodicals as the *Franciscan Herald* and the *Queen of All Hearts.*

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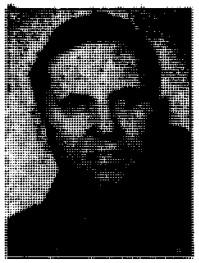

Grace and Truth

It is of the essence of religious life to be a shared following of the evangelical counsels, an attempt with others to draw closer to God. Formation to community—even if at times it has been over-formation—has ever been the concern of followers of Francis as well as of all religious groups. The predominant model or image used to explain the communal idea has been that of a family, a warm, co-operative group of persons directed by an exemplary father or mother. Post-formation experience made many a religious aware of a gap between that ideal and reality, a gap that pre-Vatican II religious could live with, if only painfully.

Since that Council, the family model of religious life has been questioned, particularly with regard to the notion of religious superior as father or mother, and religious as children. While the old paternalism has certainly gone, the hue and cry for "leadership" strikes me as a plea for the direction and inspiration that "the head of the family" should supply. The realization that a religious community is a voluntary association of adults, a fraternity, a brotherhood, is nonetheless sheer gain; for a family is after all something one grows *out of*, whereas a fraternity is something you grow *into*.

Some critics of the family model challenge the qualifiers more than the model itself. The religious community, in their approach, would still be seen as a family, but a "new-fashioned" one, as it were: one where common meals are a rarity, where common tasks do not exist, where common prayer is an impossibility (because of the generation gap), where common recreation is uncommon. Proponents of this view forget that this new-style "family" is rocked by profound problems of alienation, of disunity—problems which may well be generated by the precise style envisaged as normative.

Regardless of where it is in family life, in religious life it is evident that abandonment of community prayers, meals, work, recreation (more and more religious seek it outside the community) is not at all bringing persons together for God. On the contrary, the altered model of the religious "family" is slowly turning religious houses into boarding houses—even *empty* boarding houses.

The substitution of the "team" for the "family" model is not an answer to the confusion about community. The notion of "team" expresses one feature of religious life: that people work together toward a common goal. But religious have to be for one another in a way far more real than members of a team have to. And religious service has to be rendered in a way that looks beyond immediate rewards and punishments. In this way it differs quite radically from teamwork.

Even the notion of "fraternity" has its shortcomings. The outstanding fault of this model is that a fraternity is something you join for what you can *get*, rather than for what you can contribute. Your needs measure the limit of your association with a fraternity, not its needs; and hence your membership may be ephemeral—tenuous. The fact that many religious today are inclined to view their commitment to the community in these terms is no justification of such a perspective. Quite the opposite; we may at least ask whether the bitter fruit is not revealing the nature of the tree which has borne it.

In my judgment the religious community is a unique reality, and one not understood adequately if portrayed as limited by any one model or image. What is vital to religious life is a shared life of prayer, work, play, meals, life-style. Community is *built* by free responses of persons to and with other persons in these areas. The argument, "I don't get anything out of community prayers (meals, etc.)," is irrelevant. Others do benefit from such an individual's presence, whether or not he is aware of the fact—or such, at any rate, has been my experience. And others have a right to expect that presence, for they did not come to a secular institute, much less to a corporation, but to a *religious order* or *congregation* which guaranteed them support in their search for God by their following of the gospel counsels.

A note of caution may be in order. The notion of "shared life" has to be different in larger communities (of, say, more than fifteen members) than in the more intimate groups. The commitment of every individual to every aspect of community life: work, prayer, meals, recreation, is impossible in the larger communities, and this is no cause for alarm. The size of such communities makes possible degrees of involvement and allows those whose perception of "sharing" differs from others' to grow. (Praying together once a day is regarded by many as generous, by some as minimal, by others as insignificant.) But the occasion for growth may also be an occasion for stagnation, and what has to be guarded against both on the part of individuals and on that of their overseers, is a patterning which eliminates over a length of time any sharing of prayer, work, play, or meals. If brotherhood means loving one another, and love means wanting to be present to each other, then brotherhoods that want to survive had better be together often.

The Call to Franciscan Life

Lawrence Landini, O. F. M.

I would like to do three things in this article. First, I want to say something about the meaning of vocation in general and Franciscan vocation in particular. Second, I shall present some of the theological underpinnings of vocation promotion. And finally, I intend to discuss the means of fostering vocations to Franciscan life on the basis of the responses coming from the vocation offices of the English Speaking provinces and custodies.

The Meaning of Vocation

K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler offer a definition of a vocation in their theological dictionary: "The recognition by an individual that a particular career (mode of life) corresponds to God's permissive or jussive will for him and is the life's work in which he can gain his eternal salvation."[1] This generic description of the word "vocation" could cover Christian life itself as well as any particular mode of living out one's baptismal commitment or unique way of serving the Christian community. Whether we consider vocation in this generic way to apply to Christian life itself or to a particular style of life, we can distinguish some important aspects common to the notion of vocation itself.

There is, first of all, human judgment involved. A man or woman opts for the Christian life or any distinct way of living it, for example, as a celibate, a religious, a priest, a married person. The human judgment here touches on the believer's deepest hope, that the way he chooses to live out the rhythm of dying and rising with Christ corresponds to the will of the Father for him. Each of us hopes that we are led by the Spirit to live out our baptismal commitment in the particular mode, state of life, and/or career we have chosen.

The human judgment that is made, hopefully under divine inspiration, is, of course, subject to

[1] K. Rahner & H. Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary (New York, 1965), p. 483.

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the critical eye of the Christian community. One of the principal purposes of the catechumenate in the early Church was to provide a context in which the personal conversion experience of a catechumen could be brought into focus and into public scrutiny. Only after the person exhibited signs of inner conversion, only after there was sufficient evidence that this person had mastered the faith activities of the Christian community and thus had already died with Christ, was he judged ready to celebrate baptism and his resurrection with Christ. The time of the catechumenate was above all a time of proving a vocation to the Christian life.

Implicit in our discussion of a Christian vocation is the role of the Spirit on which I have briefly touched. The call to inner conversion, the call to Christian vocation, is predicated above all else on the role of the Spirit of Jesus who alone draws a man to the Father. The scriptures abound with references to the truth that it is God who chooses, God who elects, God who invites: "Follow me" (Mk. 1:17). "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (Jn. 15:16).

Because of the human judgment involved in discerning whether or not I or another man is called by the Spirit, the Christian community is involved. The charism of a Christian vocation itself is to be tested. There are some other important aspects of a Christian vocation that we need mention so as to shed light on the meaning of a Franciscan vocation; for indeed, a Franciscan life must be seen within the context of the vocation to Christian discipleship.

Karl Hermann Schelkle, in his book **Discipleship and Priesthood, A Biblical Interpretation**, offers the following earmarks of Christian discipleship:[2]

1. The call to discipleship depends completely on the vocation by God. The decisive element in the vocation and in the following is not the performance of the disciple, but God's preceding act of electing and creating.

2. To follow Jesus is to take on the fortunes and life of the master. Following Christ means following him in his suffering and to his cross. Whosoever declares himself for the Messiah ought to know that he is risking his life.

3. Jesus' followers are prophets, i.e., spokesmen for another, God himself. As Jesus himself based his authority only on the Father whom he revealed, so also his disciples renounce any objective establishment of their own authority. What is involved, moreover, is not a commitment to an outstanding platform but commitment to a person. The disciple always remains a disciple, as Jesus says, "for my sake" (Mt. 10:39).

4. Closely related to this last point is the characteristic of the true disciple which reflects the kenotic attitude of Christ Jesus. It is the attitude of not having any thought for one's own honor or one's own good, but emptying oneself, as Christ did when he sacrificed himself, becoming obedient unto death. So important is this kenotic characteristic of Jesus and those who follow him that deep thinkers and scholars, like Raymond E. Brown, reflect upon the present identity problem among priests today in terms of it. Father Brown writes:

> I mentioned that some of the "identity crisis" among priests today may be related to different conceptions of priestly activity; but on a deeper level I would think that the only identity crisis truly worthy of the name occurs when, amidst the legitimate differences in priestly work, the priest begins to forget that it is Jesus Christ to whom he is bearing witness.[3]

In other words, the kenotic attitude demands of the Christian disciple, whether he be priest, layman, or religious, that he always know that he is someone else's ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20), that he is a steward and minister of mysteries that are God's (1 Cor. 4:1).

There is at least one other aspect of Christian vocation that Schelkle draws from his New Testament studies: permanency of commitment.[4] Christian vocation is irrevocable: "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). The disciple who follows Jesus leaves everything behind (Mk. 10:28). Following Jesus means a radical decision that does away with all other circumstances of a

man's life. The "following" no longer even allows one to go off to bury a dead father (Lk. 9:59-62).

Process is also involved in vocation. As a dynamic process, one's Christian vocation may be seen as a lifelong progressive developmental process in which a human being strives to integrate into the needs and demands of his everyday life the ideals of the gospel incarnated in Christ Jesus. In this process, he is helped with his vocation by other committed men. Together they respond to the demands of the changing space-time continuum in the light of the

[2] Karl Hermann Schelkle, **Discipleship and Priesthood: A Biblical Interpretation** (New York, 1965), pp. 9-32.

[3] Raymond E. Brown, **Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections** (New York, 1970), p. 45.

[4] Schelkle, pp. 18ff.

gospel and thus, together, maintain their identity, their unity, their continuity with the Christ who is yesterday, today, and forever.

Christian discipleship is integral to the Franciscan vocation. And this is only to be expected, since Franciscan life is a radical, literal following of the kenotic, obedient, and celibate Christ of the gospels; much of what has been said about Christian vocation therefore applies to Franciscan vocation. What remains to be seen, very briefly, is that Francis saw the connection and insisted upon these aspects of Christian vocation for his way of life. Rather than take each aspect of Christian vocation or discipleship, however, I would like to limit myself to two aspects: the call of the Spirit, and the permanency of commitment.

One of the overriding convictions of Francis' life was that no one showed him how to live "but the Most High Himself made it clear ...[to] live the life of the Gospel."[5] We learn from Celano that Francis was prepared to go the way of gospel life all alone after he heard the scriptures about how the disciples of the Lord went about without staff and cloak and preached the gospel from town to town.[6] But, Celano adds, the Lord had mercy on Francis and sent him Bernard, because Francis needed a faithful friend.[7] Here and elsewhere, Francis frequently recalled that it was the Lord who sent him brothers.

The coming of many brothers into the new order is described in Celano as the work of the Spirit creating great wonder and joy among the people of God:

> There was indeed at that time a great rejoicing and a singular joy among St. Francis and his brothers whenever one of the faithful, no matter who he might be or of what quality, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, despised or valued, prudent or simple, cleric or unlettered or lay, led on by the spirit of God, came to put on the habit of holy religion.[8]

The **legendae**, too, cite instances of Francis basing his acceptance or non-acceptance of men into the order on whether or not they were led by the Spirit of the Lord.[9] The importance of stressing the role of the Spirit in a Franciscan vocation should be obvious. It is the Spirit who gathers men into our brotherhood—not gimmicks or promotional techniques.

In the second chapter of our Rule we read, "It is absolutely forbidden to leave the Order, as his holiness the Pope has laid down. For the Gospel tells us, 'No one, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Lk. 9:62).[10] This irrevocable decision to live the gospel life in obedience, without property and in chastity was concretized in medieval society by Francis' insistence that those who came after him would have to divest themselves of all things. According to the holy gospel, "'they shall go and sell all that belongs to them and endeavor to give it to the poor'" (Mt. 19: 21).[11] Again, in the Legend of the Three Companions, we hear Francis telling Brother John:

> If you want to be of our company, it is necessary that you divest yourself of all belongings of yours that you can claim without scandal and give them to the poor ... according to the Holy Gospel and because that is what brothers of mine, who were able, have done.[12]

In the light of these two considerations: the call of the Spirit and permanency of commitment, Franciscan vocation is seen to be, like Christian vocation, a life-long process of progressive development in which a man constantly responds to the call of God. "Brothers," Francis would say, "let us begin to do good, for up to now we have done little." What a man tries to do under divine insipiration is continually to integrate into the needs and demands of his particular life situation the ideals, the values of Franciscan life. Hopefully, the ideals are incarnated in the fraternity where other men may be found striving to integrate Franciscan values or ideals into their personal lives, so that together the friars may have a sense of their identity, unity and continuity and an ever-deepening relationship with God.

Such a dynamic understanding of vocation presumes that there are core values or ideals possessed within the Franciscan fraternity which a friar can, with the help of the Spirit, integrate into his personal life with all its complexities. I submit that our order is in possession of such values and ideals. Among them are these:

1. The following of Christ and the gospel in joy and simplicity of heart.

2. A growing knowledge and deepening love of the gospel closely related to the ever-deepening understanding the Church gains of herself (a mystery) and of her mission to the world.

3. A commitment primarily to a way of life rather than to any particular work or apostolate—a gospel way of life lived in fraternity which is powered by faith, hope and charity and manifests itself by a permanent commitment to celibate love, a sharing of goods and an ordered fraternal cooperation.

4. A spirit of minority which manifests itself by seeking a lowly place in God's Church, preaching the gospel to the poor, accepting duties that are distasteful, and

[5] Saint Francis, **Testament**, in Placid Hermann & Benen Fahy, eds., **The Writings of St. Francis** (Chicago, 1964), p. 68.

[6] 1 Celano 22.

[7] 1 Celano 24.

[8] 1 Celano 31.

[9] For example, R. Brooke, ed. & tr., **The Writings of Leo, Rufino, and Angelo, Companions of St. Francis** (Oxford, 1970), n. 28, pp. 138ff.

[10] Saint Francis, **Rule of 1223**, Hermann & Fahy, p. 58.

[11] **Ibid.**

[12] Brooke, p. 121.

striving not for security but rather glorying in the insecurity that will bind us to the Lord and our brothers.

Fidelity to this Franciscan vocation, this process of integrating such ideals into our concrete lives, under the influence of the Spirit, is quite relative to the question of vocation promotion. It is quite relative to the maintenance of our own identity, unity and continuity in a rapidly changing world. Our awareness of this is reflected in the responses received from many provinces which said in so many words that the problem with vocations today is our lack of identity or the presence of many inauthentic friars in our brotherhood.

Vocation Promotion

At this point I would like to take up the question of Vocation Promotion, rather than deal with the identity problem and the breakdown of continual metanoia in the lives of our brothers. This is something for each one of us to consider ourselves; let us be sure of our ideals and values; let us be sure of our effort, with God's help, to integrate these values into our contemporary situation in a way that enables us to maintain continuity with our past, unity in the present, and a sense of continuity as we go forward into the unknown.

To come to grips with the meaning of vocation promotion we would have to take our cues once more from the gospel. What the gospel seems to tell us is this: Values and ideals are not imposed; men are invited to accept them.

Frequently the Gospels mention that Jesus spoke with authority. The authority with which he spoke is distinct from coercive power. His authority would be more like exhortation, the wisdom emanating from the bald and grey-haired senator of Rome during the classical period, rather than the fiery threats of a despotic emperor. Men are invited to accept the gospel: the good news; they are not constrained to follow Christ. The inner beauty of the ideal, of the value, especially as they are incarnated in the person proclaiming them, is meant to move, modify, direct, constrain and influence other men.

This approach is reflected in the New Apologetic described by Gregory Baum in his book, **Man Becoming**. Rather than an approach which says, "Listen, this is the message of the Gospel and here is the proof that it is of divine origin," we hear: "Listen, this is the message of the Gospel. It tells you the wonderful things that have happened in your life."[13] In contrast to the older or what Blondel called the apologetics of the threshold which implicitly threatens those who do not believe, we have in the newer apologetic an invitation to come and see... see if something doesn't ring true in your own life and in the lives of other committed people.

If by vocational promotion one understands such promotion to be invitational, I doubt if anyone can have difficulty accepting the concept of promotion. If such an invitation may go forth from the Church to the world, why can it not go forth from a family within the Church? The problem is, however, whether or not we friars minor can utter a convincing invitation to the contemporary world.

If by vocational promotion, one understands an invitation which runs an honest competition to the values of the world (in the Johannine sense), I doubt if anyone can have difficulty accepting the concept of promotion. Even an invitation which competes with the beauty of Christian married life, as for example the beauty of celibate love in community, a love which reaches out to many, cannot be questioned. The real problem is, Can we utter a persuasive invitation to the life of the Friars Minor in the Modern World?

The persuasiveness of such an invitation depends, no doubt, on the correspondence between what is offered and what is possessed. We can give of ourselves only to the extent that we ourselves possess ourselves. We cannot share this life with others unless there is something beautiful in our lives which people see worth sharing with us.

Perhaps the invitation to join our way of life would be more convincing, more persuasive, if the values and ideals incarnated in the lives of friars were in sharp contrast to the phony values of modern society. Youth today, in increasing numbers, finds itself rebelling against a debased value system in a bankrupt society. Theodore Roszak, in his book, **The Making of a Counter Culture**, has drawn attention to Toynbee's insight that Christianity has proved itself most virile in its long history when it has been more concerned with absurdity rather than with relevancy; that is to say, when it has stood in sharp contrast to the corrupt society in which it found itself.[14]

At this point, I would not want to make the mistake of projecting vocational promotion problems on the whole Church: a tactic which gets us off the hook a bit too easily. There is certainly room for each one of us, each province, each friary in our order, to face the kind of questions which should put Franciscans in sharp contradiction to the society in which they find themselves. Are we collapsing under the weight of our own affluence? The soft life? The mediocre stand on racism, war? Are we perhaps ourselves violent men who can hate because of the color of another man's skin or the cut of his hair? Do the kinds of weaknesses we have individually and collectively raise the question as to

[13] Gregory Baum, Man Becoming: God in Secular Language (New York, 1970), pp. 19-20.

[14] Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), pp. 42ff.

whether or not we should be baptized, let alone be in religious profession?

Perhaps our renewal thus far has been more organizational than personal. Perhaps we have been too concerned with big business techniques, management designs, better organization and structures to keep things running smoothly. Vatican II reminds us that "changes made on behalf of contemporary needs will fail of their purpose unless a renewal of spirit gives life to them."[15] We need not, of course, subject that question to endless debate; nor need we engage in prolonged breast-beating; for now is always the acceptable time to begin if, up to now, we have done little.

Fostering Vocations

For the most part, I would generally indicate the present situation of vocation recruitment in the English Speaking Provinces. Then I would point out some of the difficulties encountered in vocation promotion. Finally, I would raise some questions about the future of fostering vocations to Franciscan life.

Five of six American provinces are operating a high school or minor seminary. The other province maintains something like a minor seminary. The English and Irish provinces do not have minor seminaries. This indicates, together with the other data submitted by the provinces, that a good bit of time, money, and manpower is spent on the recruitment of grammar-school boys for our way of life, particularly for the priesthood. Talks in schools, advertising, personal contacts by provincial and local vocation directors are the usual means of reaching these young men.

Nearly all the provinces indicated that they are actively pursuing candidates from the high school (13-18 years) and college (18-22) levels. But again, the **de facto** commitment to recruitment of young men at these levels in terms of manpower, money and time falls far short of the theoretical commitment to reach out for young men during their late teens and early twenties. In other words, while there is an increasing desire among the American provinces to reach out to older young men which corresponds to an increasing skepticism with regard to the minor seminary, very little is being done to reach college-age men.

Nearly all the provinces, and especially those with highly developed provincial offices for vocation promotion, spoke of the need of involving friars from the grass roots in vocation promotion. I suspect, however, that the problems of vocation promotion and the means of fostering vocations go much deeper than personnel, whether at local or provincial levels, designated to recruit. Here are some of the deeper problems that surfaced quite often in the provincial responses to the questionnaire on vocation recruitment:

1. Identity and role problems with regard to Franciscan life and priestly ministry.
2. Lack of deep love and commitment of many friars for their way of life.
3. Growing skepticism with regard to the feasibility of continuing a high school or minor seminary.
4. Lack of confidence in the formation programs of the province on the part of men in the field.
5 General confusion, anomie, and ennui among the professed friars; internal dissension and dissatisfaction. These problems are related to those mentioned first above: identity and role problems with regard to life and apostolate, the loss of identity, sense of community, and continuity with the past.

A common denominator here seems to be the individual friar himself, rather than external features which might be remedied by some gimmick or promotion technique.

In my opinion, the future of fostering vocations to Franciscan life is contingent upon our grappling with some fundamental questions about ourselves and our way of life in the time of renewal. Some examples follow.

1. Are we, perhaps, the victims of our own virtues? In other words, in our quest for adaptation to the modern world, our desire for relevancy, our desire for authenticity or the correspondence of ideal and reality lacking a sober realism? Have we lost a sense of balance between doing nothing, copping out, freaking out, selling out, washing out—and, the other extreme, frantically trying to pull off the kingdom of God ourselves? Can we even talk about, laugh about ourselves caught somewhere between these two extremes?

2. How much plurality can we sustain before we lose our communal identity, unity, and sense of continuity? What are the core values, ideals, "givens" in our way of life which must be presupposed if we ever hope to bring about an integration of something or other in our lives? Are we discriminating about such values? Perhaps our values stem from a kind of classical rationalism which presumes a division between the world of reality and some higher order of the "really real." Or perhaps we have ditched all our values for

[15] Vatican Council II, **Perfectae Caritatis**, §2e (ed. Abbott-Gallagher, p. 469).

personal preference, the needs, feelings of now. Perhaps our values have been reduced to actual likings and enjoyments, with anything that here and now affords satisfaction.[16]

3. What kinds of new institutions are needed to free us for the task of affirming our core values and ideals and helping us in the process of integrating our ideals into the particular needs of our life? What these new institutions could do is provide us with a process to enable each of us to do the kind of integration that is called for. I think we need structures or means other than General Constitutions, encyclical letters of Father General, however helpful these things might be, to provide us with a model of how to go about the process of integrating our values and ideals into the contemporary situation of the English Speaking world.

It would be difficult, in this context, to overestimate the importance of communication. At this point in history, at least humanly speaking, there does not seem to be any other road leading to a full, human, Christian and Franciscan life than the way of active, ongoing participation in a genuinely shared enterprise.[17] Such a process of communication is needed within our provinces and among our provinces.

4. Perhaps what is needed is a common meeting ground to deal with our vocation problems, our Franciscan life problems. Every province, for example, has experienced much anguish over the maintenance of seminaries. And yet it is in these seminaries and other formation centers that Franciscan ideals are kept alive and that the attempt to integrate these ideals into modern life goes on. At present, many of us are confused and uncertain. Isn't there some merit in closing ranks, in strength of number, in pooling together the resources we friars of the English Speaking provinces possess? I suggest earnestly that we think of pulling together, in terms of our buildings and manpower, at a time when there is much criticism (especially in America) of the large buildings, many of them half emtpy, that we still possess.

5. Finally, I would ask the very delicate question: To what age group should most of our time and talents be directed in the recruitment of vocations; and for what are we recruiting?

At present, in my province, a projected five to eight percent of all grammar school boys entering the minor seminary will reach ordination to the priesthood. At the same time, the number of post high school young men seeking our way of life as Brothers increases. This fact has forced us to give equal time to the recruitment of young men to the Franciscan way of life as Brothers.

[16] Robert O. Johann, "Law, Order, and the Self-Renewing Community," Continuum 6:3 (1968), pp. 374-88.

[17] Ibid.

The recruitment of young boys from grammar schools as well as of older men not yet through with college has meant for many provinces the maintenance of schools for educational and technical-skill purposes. Very often the mingling of Franciscan and priestly formation properly so called and such academic or technical education has meant much cost and heartache.

The presence of high school and college age young men in our internal schools raises the question: Are such internal schools themselves good means of fostering vocations to the Franciscan life? In other words, are we at all capable of providing such young men with an ambience in which they can achieve a sense of responsibility and a level of psycho-social development demanded for today's world? Do we have the will to provide for such a development in these young men and make the sacrifices in time, cost, and manpower that such a commitment calls for today? And if so, shouldn't we be engaging in such a formidable venture with greater collaboration, at least at the college, novitiate, and post-novitiate levels?

The questions of vocation promotion and means of fostering vocations are very complex and involve nothing less than our own commitment to a way of life that possesses some sense of identity, cohesion, and continuity. If anything, the grappling with these problems demands a greater collaboration on the part of the English Speaking provinces.

Putting Faith into Focus

Robert J. Waywood, O.F.M.

Throughout Christianity's history many an individual has survived or succumbed to a personal crisis of faith. But today the crisis looks epidemic, and the institution seems to be shaken to its foundations. When times are critical, it is time for a critique. When issues grow crucial, we should get down to the crux of the matter. If wise men head for the cellar in a tornado, we religious must return to the basics of belief during today's theological turbulence. In this month's conference I propose to uncover and underscore what I consider the elemental facets of our faith. The result of my efforts will be a rough, skeleton outline, if you will, of what a Christian's creed is all about. Like all rough things my analysis will probably be ragged, but I hope it proves rugged as well. And if my approach to orthodoxy seems a bit unorthodox and, like a skeleton, weird, I can only counter that a little dose of the fantastic is the best remedy for that familiarity which breeds oblivion as well as contempt. A fresh and fundamental look at the subject reveals three paradoxical features of Christian faith: faith is an encounter but one that exacts surrender; it implies confidence but along with precaution; and it seeks out the transcendent but only in the ordinary. (These headings hardly sound exciting or even enlightening, but they are the most accurate generalizations I could come up with.) Let us explore these paradoxes in an attempt to put our faith into focus and batten down our belief.

If some anthropoid from the Dog Star constellation were to collar a Christian and ask him what he believed, he would be barking up the wrong tree. It might be appropriate to ask a theosophist to air his airy tenets or to have a Hindu disclose his labyrinth of doctrines or to prod a Mohammedan into confessing the simple and healthy creed embodied in his Koran. But the only telling question to pose to a Christian is not "What?" but "Whom do you believe?"

Obviously, Jesus reiterated divine truths from the Old Testament and revealed new data about the supernatural. But real faith is more than acknowledging and assenting to these truths; it is first and foremost meeting and receiving the person called Jesus. For Jesus was more of a toucher than a teacher, more of a redeemer than a reformer: "The Son of Man has come to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk.10:45). If Jesus were essentially just a prophet delivering doctrines, his words are disappointingly brief: you could copy out his utterances from a red-letter edition of St. Mark's Gospel onto about ten sheets of notebook paper. Explicit revelations concerning the spiritual universe and the afterlife are few and figurative, most of them merely refinements of Old Testament theology. If Jesus were principally a reformer, his ethical exhortations, though richly suggestive, are exasperatingly meager in detail, especially in the light of what were ultimately to become burning moral issues such as racism, war, marital discord, birth control, usury, crime and punishment, drug abuse, clerical celibacy, and environmental pollution. The primary concern of his three public years and his three empassioned hours was to show us that he was a divine person who loved humanity to death. After they had undergone their freshman year in the Apostolic College, the final exam question Jesus posed to the Twelve was not, "How is Original Sin transmitted?" or even "Which is the greatest of the Commandments?" but, "Who do you say that I am?" The Samaritan woman did not run into town shouting doctrines about efficacious grace or counsels on where to worship: she did spread the faith, though, by yelling, "Come and see a man who has told me all that I have ever done" (Jn. 4:29). Even when Jesus was professedly engaged in teaching, as when he commented upon the Scriptures in the synagogue, what really made the congregation sit up and take notice, evidently, was not his sublimation of the Law and the Prophets but his personal projection: "He taught them as one who has authority, and not as a scribe" (Mk. 1:22). The Master once and for all laid to rest the idea that faith is simply an intellectual nod to a theological notion when he raised Lazarus from the dead. His short but sweet debate with Martha before her brother was resurrected (Jn. 11:21-27) offers a marvelous insight into the uniquely personal character of Christian faith. Like a well trained Sabbath-School student, Martha had recited—and with conviction—an important tenet of her Jewish faith: "I know that he will rise at the resurrection, on the last day." But Jesus hastened to correct her: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" Instantly Martha became aware of this deeper dimension of faith; for instead of answering, "Yes, I'll assent to this new flourish to our eschatological doctrine," she blurted out, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world."

To concede that what Jesus de-

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clared about the things of God is true is important, but only secondarily; and to do so, supernaturally speaking, is possible only after one discovers that Jesus is the truth: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). Now, some may object that all this talk about faith being an encounter with the person of Jesus is understandable as applied to his contemporaries but that we who are removed thousands of miles and years from the historical Christ have small occasion to bump into the object of our profession. Yet is it not possible, even on a natural level, to know someone well from afar? Most hero-worshippers would protest that they are intimately acquainted with their favorite though an actual encounter with him might give them heart-failure. One need not read many of the recorded words and deeds of the Savior to catch the core of his character. Furthermore, if you look closely at the definition of faith sculptured by the Fathers of the First Vatican Council—a definition that is not so cold and impersonal in the final analysis—you will see that anyone can come into a certain ontological contact with Jesus. They taught that faith is "a supernatural virtue whereby, with **God inspiring** and **grace helping**, we give assent to truths revealed by him ... who can neither deceive nor be deceived." Jesus is alive and well, and sends his love in the form of illuminating and enlivening graces through the Holy Spirit: "But when the Advocate has come, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me ... And when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth ... he will glorify me because he will receive of what is mine and declare it to you" (Jn. 15:26; 16:13-14).

Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the twentieth-century believer can advance from encounter to acquaintance to fast friendship with Jesus by the inner dialogue of prayer and meditation. So what does it matter if another authentic Gospel (like certain Epistles of St. Paul's) had been written but was lost? What does it matter if the Master's words were scanty, cumbered with Aramaic idioms, or conditioned by long-ago events in an inconsequential oriental country? To the believer Jesus is "the same yesterday, today, yes, and forever": a God-man whom prayer and grace render closer than one's spouse or alter ego. If I have dwelt long on this first facet of faith, it is because it is the most central, the most crucial, especially in these days of doctrinal crisis.

"Encounter" is a good word to designate this primary facet of faith since its first dictionary meaning is "to meet unexpectedly"; but since nobody can meet Jesus in faith and remain unchanged, "encounter" is just the right word, for its second dictionary meaning is "to meet in battle." To know Jesus, as opposed to knowing about him, is to fall beneath his spell, to be enthralled by him and made his vassal. Jesus demands nothing less than surrender. To put it more

graphically, the Lord does not simply ask of you, as would any mere moralist or reformer, that you run your life more on the straight and narrow; he bids you to put him in the driver's seat.

If you were to flip through the pages of the Synoptics, you would receive the distinct impression that Jesus "flipped" over just one situation—that is, that over this one situation his heartbeat quickened, his face flushed with joy, his life seemed worthwhile. And that was encountering a person at his wits' end, a desperate soul who seemed to have gravitated to the Master as a last resort. Think of the man whose epileptic youngster kept throwing himself into the fireplace every time his parents turned their back; the sinful woman who slinked into Simon's supper and gave Jesus' feet a rub-down with her lovely tresses; the blind men on the way to Jericho who practically burst their lungs shouting for the itinerant preacher to touch them; the Centurion, Jairus, the hemorrhaging woman, the importunate Samaritan lady. Their number is legion: the whole crowd of first-generation converts to Christianity, it would seem, were people in dire need, people with problems, people who were desperate. Jesus rejoiced to meet such as these because they were disposed to surrender themselves to his all-pervasive influence. And throughout the annals of Christendom the seed of faith has taken fastest root amid the debris of personal failure and watered with the tears of a crying need. Francis Thompson, for example, remembering the days when as a penniless drug-addict he slept under newspapers in Hyde Park, poetically recorded the formula for faith:

But when so sad, thou canst not sadder,
Cry, and upon thy so-sore loss,
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my soul, my daughter,
Cry, clinging Heaven by the hems.
And lo! Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth but Thames.

Many who admire Jesus but have not come to him with their own resources for coping with life exhausted have never gone "all the way" and have thus far only signed a truce with Christ the King. One of three obstacles may be blocking the way to the surrender implicit in genuine faith. The first and commonest is the fear that they will get hurt. Their reserved faith is like that of the Prince of Wales in the following episode. Back at the turn of the century, when George V of England was the Prince of Wales, he paid a visit to Canada while a famous French aerialist was performing there. When the Prince heard the high-wire artist claim that he could push a wheelbarrow across the Canadian Falls, he registered disbelief. But true to his boast, the Frenchman succeeded in inching the conveyance to the farther bank, where the Prince looked on in amazement. "Now do you believe

me?" queried the performer. "Quite!" replied the dignitary. "Then get into the wheelbarrow, and I'll push you back to the other side," challenged the aerialist. "But I don't believe you that much!" was the Prince's reply. So say many of the "faithful" to Jesus who would direct their lives.

Others "of little faith" feel squeamish about depending on another person so thoroughly. Imbued with the Western, particularly the Emersonian-American, attitude of self-reliance, they consider such wholehearted commitment as servile and pusillanimous or as foolish as infatuation. Their motto is, "I'd rather do it myself!" They do not yet understand the Scriptures which say, "My ways are not your ways." Still others with wavering faith regard themselves as too unworthy to invite the Lord all the way into their life and are more inclined to echo the response of the sweaty, swearing, swaggering trawler, "Sir, depart from me, for I am a sinful man." These forget that one trysts with Jesus on a come-as-you-are basis. As the Jesuit spiritual writer Fr. Bernard Basset demonstrates with copious quotes, the Lord constantly, almost embarrassingly, addressed the "heart" of his hearers and virtually closed every public sermon with the words, "Son, give me your heart." And the "heart" is the person at his core, not the ideal ego, not the public image one projects, not even the shifting construct of what one thinks he is, for better or for worse—but the pock-marked, piebald, gap-toothed soul that each of us really is. This is what Jesus wants, what he can work with. It is this heart-of-heart tenement (with its basement and attic, slop-closets and suites) that Jesus desires to inhabit. Jesus, remember, grew really excited when he came across a self-confessed moral "slob"; for he forthwith laid hold of Peter: "Come follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men." These three obstacles—fear, self-reliance, and self-disgust—once removed, the encounter of faith can become a surrender for life.

The second feature of genuine faith, I say, is confidence and caution, but not in the sense of the words you probably assume I intend. For I do not mean to imply that the Christian's hope and optimism are qualified, conditional, or hedged. No, there are no **confer** footnotes in the Book called Good or retractions appendixed to the biography entitled The Good News. I will explain just what I mean by "caution" shortly, after enlarging on the categorical confidence that faith entails.

If our anthropoid from the Dog Star constellation were to scan the Gospels for the first time, he would probably react to them like a typical earthling, like, say, a Pharisee: "This Good News is too good to be true." Such a reaction would be entirely human, reasonable, and realistic—but wrong. The Gospels not only promise but applaud great expectations on the part of believers, individually and corporately. And even if you were not a believer but simply a philosopher who had reasoned to God's existence and labeled him "The Other," as philosophers have, might you not conclude that God's management of the future, your own and the world's, would unspeakably transcend human hopes? In the face of successive acts of the human tragedy that is history, in the knowledge of innumerable acts of self-disappointment, in the world-wide atmosphere of "business as usual," in the cold light of worldly wisdom that counsels survival of the fittest and the **quid-pro-quo** mentality, it is all but impossible to take a person like Jesus, with a pocketful of miracles, at his word. It is much easier to subscribe to the beatitude the Master did not coin "Blessed are those who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed." Before advancing in faith, we must all recognize and vigorously shake off this earth-bound attitude. Perhaps the man of the following anecdote is a caricature; even so, there is a bit of him in each of us.

A fellow was out driving one Sunday evening, when his rear tire blew out. He reached into the glove compartment for his flashlight but mused, "Oh, I forgot—Johnny took it on his camping trip." After lifting the spare tire from his trunk, he felt around for his auto jack—but to no avail. "Son of a gun," he thought, "I lent it to Jones Saturday morning." It seemed to him he was in the middle of nowhere, but as he strolled a short way up the hill, he spied a farmhouse nearby. "Dollars to doughnuts, they don't own a jack," he mumbled under his breath. But catching a glimpse of a fender on the further side of the house, he reasoned, "They'll probably charge this city-slicker a five-spot to rent the thing." By the time he reached the entrance walk, the house lights went out. "They'll be dead to the world in seconds," he thought. Finding no bell, he rapped on the door, little hoping to rouse the occupants from their second-storey bedrooms. A night-capped oldster leaned out from a second-floor window and called down, "Who is it?" "You can keep your galdarned jack!" shouted our hero, and he stomped off in disgust.

His outlook on life painfully lacked the uplook Jesus took great pains to inculcate. Permit me to paraphrase here Luke 11:11-13, to bring home the point. Jesus very likely was addressing dock-workers and fishermen near Lake Gennesareth and said to them: "If your kids ask you for a bun, do you give them a boulder? If they beg you for an egg, what do you do, hand them a scorpion? When they reach for a sardine, do you pass them a snake? Of course you don't. And if you, who are really nothing but a bunch of bozos, at least know how to give your kids a treat, don't you think that your Father in Heaven is going to give you the best gift you ever got in your life, the Good Spirit?" Just listen to the promises: rewards in good measure, shaken down (unlike a bag of potato chips), and brimming over; phenomenal growth that starts as small as a mustard seed which a sparrow could gobble up a dozen at a time and issues in a bush big enough for a flock to nest in; a new life not only initiated but also nurtured to abundant perfection by the Almighty's hand; all other things than God that you need—suits, hamburg, fuel—thrown into the bargain; dreams and visions whispered into your mind by the Holy Spirit who never speaks in jest; an indwelling voice of God that prays to God in your every good intention with unutterable groanings; bodies that will eventually shine like stars; citizenship in a bejeweled metropolis where every tear will be dried and every sigh assuaged; good things, in short, that no mortal eye has ever beheld or human ear has ever heard.

The point though is, do we, in spite of temporal appearances, believe it all? Do we habitually behave as if we were heirs to a fortune, winners of a sweepstake, recipients of a windfall—children of God? Saint Francis of Assisi did. It is reported that his fellow friars could send him into an ecstasy almost at will just by whispering the word "Heaven" to the man. Prescinding from congenital sad dispositions or transitory bouts with the blues, and occasional moral aberrations, there is something radically amiss with the faith of that Christian who regards life pessimistically, glumly, negatively, cynically, skeptically, even realistically; for such an attitude belies the Good News.

Genuine faith is unconditionally confident, is sure; but it is not cocksure. It comes with no strings attached, but it is not all sewed up. A twofold precaution is called for: openness of soul so that God can work his will in us, and openmindedness so that we can acknowledge his work in the souls of others.

A bird's eye view of Old Testament history reveals a certain dialectic of God's dealings with his Chosen People. At times he had to bring in his sheep lest they jump the fence and land amid the encircling polytheism. At others he was obliged to scatter the sheep inasmuch as they had turned tail to the Shepherd and gazed fixedly at one another in catatonic complacency. The constant threat to monotheism was simple and discernible: the periodic peril of institutionalism was subtle and insidious. The former may have misled the Israelites into worshipping strange gods; the latter certainly tended to replace worship with patriotism and the divinity with ritual. Whenever the Chosen People grew satisfied that they had adequately placated Yahweh and could get on with more serious matters, Yahweh pulled the rug from beneath them, usually in the form of a degrading exile. The institutional Christian faces a similar hazard. He can hide behind his neat creed, code, and cult from the living God and can rationalize away the intrusive promptings of the Holy Spirit. He can contribute to St. Peter's Pence and ignore a sick aunt. He can come to fisticuffs in defense of the Mass and secularize his Sunday. He can recite the Lord's Prayer daily and throw a fit over his wife's car accident. But the man of faith is more imaginative and more flexible than that. He scrutinizes all misfortunes, from a coronary thrombosis to a pimple on the nose, and asks, "What is it God means by this visitation of his Providence?" He prays over his financial predicaments. Like Tobias he foregoes his supper occasionally to bury the dead—or a grudge. He cracks the family Bible with regularity, knowing that "all Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for instructing in justice" (2 Tim. 3:16). He is not greatly upset when his plans are upset. He moves on to another vocation if prayer and Providence so dictate as expeditely as Saint Paul or Saint Francis shook the dust from their feet outside of fruitless mission fields. He makes a vigil, a retreat, a donation when some problems persistently bedevils him. He is alert to see the Lord's lesser brethren in drunks and drop-outs, in the helpless and the hopeless. In brief, he is, as far as his sanity will foreseeably allow, available to the Master. And his watchword is, "Speak, Lord, your servant hears." If God is to work miracles in our lives, we must not bind his hands or deny the ongoing dynamics of his providence and inspiration.

We must also cultivate openmindedness in regard to the spirituality, though not the creed, of those outside the Church. Jesus and Saint Paul not only tolerated people of other persuasions, they also toasted every evidence of the Holy Spirit in them. When John boasted to Jesus that he had tried to stifle a non-Christian who was exorcising in the neighborhood, Jesus put down the "beloved" disciple thus: "Do not forbid him ... for he who is not against you is for you." Jesus also reminded his followers that the "other sheep" not of the fold are, nevertheless, "his sheep." Saint Paul's finger-pointing apology for the Jews in Romans 11 and powerful appeal for forbearance towards those with partial faith in Romans 14 are too lengthy to analyze here; but these passages are a sure cure for triumphalism. In this conection, I

cannot help mentioning Saint Paul's treatment of the Athenians. To savor the episode fully, we must realize that Paul was anything but a flaming liberal or addle-headed relativist about the faith and that the then-present populace of Athens were philosophical dilettantes and notoriously unspiritual. Paul started his sermon with a joke about their scrupulous polytheism which, if it was no compliment to their religious sensitivity, was one to their sense of humor. Then he condescended to quote a Greek poet of their acquaintance and went so far as to concede to them —many of them dirty, old men— that God was not far off from any one of them. Surely, then, the faithful must be alert not to break the reed of another's crooked faith or to blow out the smoldering spark of spirituality in those outside the Church.

The third paradoxical feature of faith is that it seeks out the transcendental but only in the ordinary. It may be belaboring the obvious (as one tends to do in emphasizing basics), but the object of faith is invisible reality, that is, God and his grace, the soul and its immortal destiny: "Our hearts, O Lord, were made for thee and shall not rest until they rest in thee," Saint Augustine put it. Essentially, faith has nothing to do with many other noble values and constructive enterprises that terminate in man and on earth, such as public welfare, mental and physical health, or art and science. But, oddly enough, these uplifting endeavors, if they are not easily substituted for the supernatural, are often made the measuring stick for the relevancy of religion. And so to put the believer at his ease on this score, I want to shed some scriptural light on these temporal matters.

If Jesus Christ were the superstar of the indigent masses, he certainly passed up golden opportunities to shine in their eyes. Precisely when the poor and hungry thought they had found a likely candidate for a king who would dole out bread and sermons, Jesus slipped behind the curtains. He repeatedly cautioned the populace about the snare of brimming barns, sumptuous feasts, and soft garments. He spoke of gaining a world and losing a soul. He cured the sick, but not all of them, nor at one, fell swoop. His miracles were chaste and economical: all were calculated primarily to win faith in his divinity and entry to the soul. He deftly evaded political commentary by telling the Roman soldiers merely to refrain from plundering, making false accusation, and grumbling over their pay and by counselling the citizenry simply to pay their taxes and do their civic duty. He was little impressed with pagentry, found theological hair-splitting otiose, and exposed the arrogance and hypocrisy behind ceremonial decorum and upper-class etiquette. His interests, in short, were in the world but not of it.

Saint Paul, too, was not exactly afire to clear the slums, recommend diets, demolish depression, write plays, or further philosophy. His digression on charity in the first Epistle to the Corinthians should be studied for more than its eloquence. For in it he makes an unsettling revelation which forever distinguishes supernatural concern from even the most sacrificial altruism: "And if I distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have charity, it profits me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3). The tentmaker from Tarsus was hardly a hermit or Puritan in regard to the civilized world; but still he knew in his bones that the Crucified Christ he preached would always be a scandal to the politically ambitious and a stumbling block to sophisticates.

Health, welfare, and culture are not inconsequential affairs; but they are in the world and of it. This is not to say that they do not impinge upon religion. We live in an age of unprecedented problems, many of which we have a serious moral duty to address. The obligation rises variously: from the dictates of justice and charity to the demands of talents and destiny. Our society is neurotic and by turns paranoid and schizophrenic: hence the need for therapeutic personalism. Racial, economic, and environmental imbalances call for active involvement. Knowledge explosions and culture-shocks call for scientists and poets to harness and harmonize. However, none of these endeavors should be allowed to overshadow or encroach upon the pursuit of the supernatural, much less replace it. Not on bread or brotherhood, books or beauty alone does man live.

Though faith tells us to find the transcendent God, it also directs us to find him in our own backyard. In his day Jesus moved between roughly two religious factions—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The former were traditionalists who divinized the past; the latter, liberals who either toyed with the latest spiritual fad or anticipated a new and shining Zion.. For both camps his words must have fallen like a bombshell: "The Kingdom of God is in your midst." This is to say, the will of God and our sanctification lie not in the miracle-studded past or spectacular future, but under our nose. By his

every parable and prayer, his every sacrament and statute, Jesus apotheosized the near and the now, the common and the commonplace. His prophecies may have been couched in typically cosmic language, but his ascetics at all levels might be aptly labelled "Holiness in the Humdrum." Proximity to God, he measured in terms of a cup of cold water, a closeted prayer, a widow's mite, a visit to the sick, a lent cloak, a beggar's dole, a grace at table, an edified child, a leper's gratitude, a daily cross, and a memorial supper. Not only to the woman at the well, but to every believer and wherever he is "at," Jesus whispers: "If thou didst know the gift of God..."

To quest for God and the will of God elsewhere than under one's nose is to follow, at best, a disappointing and, at worst, a pernicious will-o'-the-wisp. Dabbling in the occult, the bizarre, the novel, and the sensational may be a harmless pastime. But all too many sophisticated and independent spirits have squandered heart and mind and body in the serious but futile hope of experiencing God in the extraordinary. They have pinned their faith on exotic trinities like LSD or ESP or UFO. They look for epiphanies in Zen, astrology, yoga, necromancy. They reach for preternatural powers in witchcraft, demon-worship, psychocybernetics. To all of these anxious searchers, God shouts, "Be still, and know that I am God." But I would address a word of warning, too, to my fellow faithful who habitually hanker after the sensational and experimental in religion—with their soup-kitchens and soap-boxes, their sensitivity retreats and leavened Mass-bread, their chain novenas and bleeding statues: "Thou art busy about many things; one thing is necessary."

This, then, concludes my efforts at putting faith into focus. It should be obvious by now that I in no way attempted to outline or explain the articles of the Creed. My objective was simply to clear the air in regard to the general atmosphere of Christian faith, since I thought it did need clearing. Faith is the important virtue, and all nature conspires to teach its primacy. As Father John Bannister Tabb reflected during one night of insomnia while awaiting the dawn:

In every seed, to breathe
the flower,
In every drop of dew—
To reverence the cloistered star
Within the distant blue;

To await the promise of the bow
Despite the cloud between—
Is faith, the fervid evidence
Of loveliness unseen.

Compline: Responsory

**Faith is for the morning*
When all things wait to be revealed.
Love is the name of noontide
Striking fullness of the day.
But hope belongs to nightfall
When everything is done.

Lord, let me venture on the day
With faith that waits for sure delight
Somehow, some moment to appear
And make Deific sense of all that is.

**Faith is for the morning*
When all things wait to be revealed.

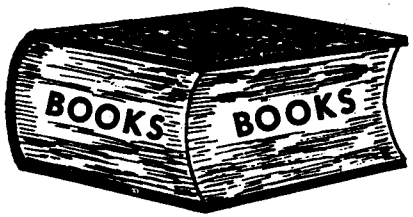
Break me Your strength to sweat at noon
When love's a fire I will not flee
For cooler places and remote
That never knew a spendthrift's glee.

***Love is the name of noontide*
Striking fullness of the day.

But at the nightfall when the dark
Exclaims in stars that light is far
Past reach of realness, make blindfold
Upon my heart my dearest thing.

****But hope belongs to nightfall*
When everything is done.

**Faith is for the morning*
When all things wait to be revealed
And Glory be to Father is the tune.
Love is the name of noontide
Striking fullness of the Day
With Glory be to Son in victory.
But hope belongs to nightfall
When everything is done
And only Glory be to Spirit is.



New Dimensions in Religious Experience. Edited by George Devine. New York: Alba House, 1971. Pp. xii-317. Paper, $3.95.

Reviewed by Sister M. Jane Kopas, O.S.F., a doctoral student in philosophical theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., formerly engaged in formation work at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse, Allegany, N.Y.

The total appeal of a collection of articles, like a product of culinary skill, depends upon a number of factors: the work of the editor, the ingredients at hand, and the needs and tastes of the readers. So it is with this volume which comprises the proceedings of the College Theology Society for 1970.

The first section offers considerations on religious experience in relation to society, the Church, revelation, and theology. The second section presents articles on the religious dimensions of experience in eastern religions, Judaism, Christianity, and atheism. Together they provide an adequate presentation of the disciplines and religions through which one may view this topic. Because of this presentation and the consequent lack of philosophical emphasis, one senses the need for further dialogue between philosophy and theology. Whether articulated or not, a philosophical attitude or world-view is implied in any discipline. Attention to underlying attitudes can shed light on problems stemming from dualistic inheritances and can help to assess better the possibilities for an adequate metaphysics. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of viewing experience in a variety of contexts, this volume covers much useful ground.

The last half, particularly the third section, weakens the book. The need for a radical examination of the "Catholic" experience through a grasp of the present situation is not met by the two articles on infallibility and three on Newman. Here lie possibilities for studies in liturgical experience and pentecostalism, to mention just two areas. The fourth section, uneven in its assessment of the student's experience, closes with a polemic requiring theology of all in the Catholic university or college, a stance that falls short of responding to students' present interest in the study of religion.

Reviewing a collection of articles such as this often involves venturing another cook's suggestion. It seems to this reviewer that fuller attention to philosophical considerations would have served to focus attention on more central problems of religious experience. But this is not the major shortcoming of the book. Failure to come to terms with the meaning of self-experience in the Catholic community of faith accents an aspect of Christian life that has been neglected for some time. The book does the Christian community a service by challenging theologians to apply the skill demonstrated in analytic articles toward the further nourishment of those for whom they labor, through understanding and practical concern.

Aspects of the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin. By Francis J. Klauder, S.D.B. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1971. Pp. 151. Cloth, $4.95.

Reviewed by Father Richard Weber, O.C.S.O., professed monk of the Abbey of Gethesemani, principal collaborator for the Bulletin de spiritualité monastique, *and contributor to numerous periodicals, including* Thought, Review for Religious, *and* Collectanea Cisterciensia.

This interesting volume of essays on various aspects of the thought of Teilhard de Chardin had its origin in a series of seminars conducted by the author. A few of these have already appeared as articles in scholarly journals, but for the most part the material in this book is new and deals with Teilhard's nine major works. Arranged in no particular chronological order, each essay is a unit in itself.

The author has some interesting things to say about Teilhard's method in connection with that employed by Thomas Aquinas. He points out that the two are similar in over-all method, in approach, and in goal. This is not to suggest a coincidence of content between the writings of the two thinkers; and yet certain basic themes in Teilhard are closely allied with Thomistic thought. The outlook of both Aquinas and Teilhard simultaneously combine certainties derived from science, philosophy, and faith.

Klauder then develops the idea of a "world in evolution." This great insight of Teilhard builds upon the claim of Saint Thomas "that the world, though **real** (or "being"), is not pure being but **changing** being, which he explains through act and potency. Reality not only **is**; but it is active: it **becomes**. The more we come to know its capacity (potency) for change, the better we will understand it" (pp. 20-21).

In the chapter on "The Method of Teilhard," the author sums up his previous chapters on Teilhard's thought as it resembles the Thomistic school, the Franciscan school, and the modern schools of thought. It would seem that such a combination is possible, and springs from a method which has its roots in the well known Anselmian formula: **fides quaerens intellectum** (faith seeking understanding). Teilhard knew by faith that Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the very center of the universe, in whom all things hold together. Teilhard, moreover, accepted a world in evolution—a universe moving forward. Cosmogenesis was the first phase of evolution. The second phase or critical point of evolution was biogenesis. The next critical point was the greatest of all. Out of the quiet labyrinth of time came a self-reflecting being. To facilitate a better understanding of Teilhard's method, Klauder has woven a fine selection of citations from Teilhard's major works amid his own explanations and commentary.

For those who might be disconcerted by the special Teilhardian vocabulary, a "Glossary of Interrelated Terms" has been included (pp. 133-50), which presents some basic concepts of Teilhard in relation to other thinkers, especially Saint Thomas, and compares Teilhard's terms and views on solving basic philosophical problems with those of other thinkers. Disciples and admirers of Teilhard will find that Klauder has written a book comparable in value to de Lubac's and has provided a major source for a better understanding of the renowned Jesuit's thought.

New Trends in Moral Theology. By George M. Regan, C.M. New York: Newman Press, 1971. Pp. 213. Cloth, $6.50; paper, $3.75.

Reviewed by Father Michael O'Callaghan, O.F.M., a former member of the faculty of Siena College, now serving as an assistant pastor at St. Francis Church, New York City.

This is a textbook for a course in the fundamental principles of moral theology which the author offers at the Seminary of Our Lady of the Angels near Albany, New York.

Many years ago when I was a student in a similar course the professor discussed the folowing topics: Human Acts, Conscience, Law, Sin, and Virtue. While Father Regan's conclusions do not seem to be all that radical, it is certainly a radical book

he has written in its approach, because it places Jesus and His law of love in the first place as the root and source of everything else. This was our Lord's approach too, but we often treated love as one more item among many that we talk about in moral theology. In this treatment it is pivotal. **New Trends in Moral Theology** makes an excellent effort to give good reasons for the faith that is ours.

Since the older manuals were written for men who were to be confessors, it was natural that they would set the minimum standards a confessor could demand of a penitent. These manuals were not such that you would recommend them to the laity who might be interested in the moral life. Casuistry, necessary as it was for the confessor, was hardly healthy as an approach to one's own spiritual life.

"Moral theology studies in a scientific and organized fashion God's revelation of himself to man in Christ as an invitation which demands man's response by his free behavior" (p. 4). With such a definition of his purpose, it is clear the author is not going to be content with setting out minimum standards. He is embarked, evidently, on a much more positive endeavor to characterize the moral or spiritual life.

After an introductory study of the nature of moral theology there follows an historical survey of the field. The central chapters are those three entitled "Sons in the Son" (about following and imitating Christ), "God Calls—Man Responds" (on God's covenant with us), and "Free to Love." The other topics have more traditional names: "Virtues, Norms and the Great Commandment," "Natural Law in the Christian Life," "Christian Conscience," and "Christian Responsibility."

My own contemporaries have serious doubts about reducing everything in moral theology to love. In chapter seven this very problem is analyzed at some length, and four different positions are presented illustrating the state of the argument at present. There is (1) pure act agapism, (2) modified act agapism, (3) pure rule agapism, and (4) a combination of act agapism and rule agapism. Regan writes, "Past tendencies in Catholic moral theology have led to an overextension of such general rules... Current effects [efforts?] to update moral theology, however, show reactive tendencies in the opposite direction, that is, toward pure act-agapism or summary rule-agapism. In this situation, a balanced approach is needed, but difficult to maintain" (p. 111).

I wish he had gone into more detail, given more examples possibly, to illustrate his teaching on the non-infallible teachings of the Church. "This second position envisions more readily than the obedience-centered approach the possibility of responsible dissent from official teachings of the papal or episcopal magisterium. Serious evidence evaluated by many honest and competent Christians may, by way of exception, found a contrary view. An obligation to follow one's personal conscience on the issue involved, rather than follow the official teaching, may obtain" (p. 141). The illustrative example for this is usually contraception. But does it apply if, e.g., in South Africa, many honest and competent Christians do not believe in civil rights for blacks? Who is competent? While the author does not discuss the outdated or defunct systems of probabilism, the question from that time still applies: who is competent? Does one have to study the question as much as the pope or a theologian to be competent ... or does it mean many laymen are competent? This is new to many of us and I would have enjoyed seeing its application to some other moral issues.

Confessors should ponder well a statement: "The twinge of a guilty conscience which men sometimes experience from supposedly sinful conduct actually stems at times from a pre-human level of instinct" (p. 146). Scrupulous people often seem to be certain of sinning because they say they knew what they were doing and they knew it was wrong and went ahead and did it nonetheless. I think this statement of Father Regan will suggest to the confessor that despite what they think, they are not guilty of sin.

The bibliography is especially helpful. At the end of each chapter there is a listing of books but even more helpful is the shorter list with specific page references, included right in the text itself. I found that following up these references was a great addition to the understanding of the book.

New Trends in Moral Theology requires some philosophical and biblical training to be read with profit. It was written for seminarians who have such a background, and I think it would be disastrous to use it as a text for high school or, possibly, a college course in theology. For priests, wanting to renew themselves, it will make profitable but possibly difficult reading. The three central chapters on Jesus and the Law of Love will change your thinking, your confessional work, and your preaching. They ought to be studied by every priest.

Christianity and Evolution. By Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. Foreword by N. M. Wildiers; trans. by René Hague. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. Pp. 255. Cloth, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father Robert Hale, O.S.B.Cam., Associate Editor of Vita Monastica, *and a Doctoral Candidate in Theology at Fordham University.*

For the student of Teilhard, each new publication of his works in English translation is an occasion for joy. But this latest volume should also attract the attention of every serious theologian, for it gathers together nineteen of Teilhard's essays on specifically theological topics, eighteen of which have not appeared before. The essays, dating from 1920 to 1953, treat of a wide range of theological issues, including particularly original sin, Christology, soteriology, and Christian cosmology.

Throughout these essays Teilhard is wrestling with key issues which very much confront Christian theologians today: how to construct models for Christology, for theological anthropology and cosmology, which fully respect the modern, evolutionary perspective of creation and yet which vindicate God's active presence in the world, Christ's central place to it. Teilhard argues, of course, for a universe that is organically unified, dynamically convergent; and this universe, he insists, is created in Christ, shaped for Christ. The parallels between Teilhard's vision and the great Franciscan, Scotist perspectives are very much in evidence in these essays.

Of course Teilhard's essays carry many implications not only for technical theology but also for Christian spirituality in general. And the faithful who are seeking insight into the ways of Christ's presence in a modern, technological world will find much to nourish the spiritual life in these pages.

Christianity and Evolution includes a thoughtful introductory essay by the Dutch theologian, N. M. Wildiers, who relates Teilhard's thought to the contemporary secularity discussions; Wildiers notes the very significant impact Teilhard has had on recent theology and lists the more important theological studies of his thought. The book is well translated by René Hague (although one should go to the French for more serious study of these essays) and includes a helpful index. It is certainly an indispensable volume for the theologian interested in Christology or Christian cosmol-

ogy, as well as for the Christian who finds Teilhard's vision a support for contemporary spiritual life.

The Dreamer Not the Dream. By Sebastian Moore & Kevin Maguire. New York: Newman Press, 1971. Pp. 159. Cloth, $4.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, C.F.M., Associate Editor of this Review.

This short, profound, and puzzling book is composed of twenty brief prose chapters by Father Moore, thirty-one numbered sentences and five "illustrations" (four poetic forms and one allegory) by Father Maguire. I see a thesis like this in the first section: changes in man's awareness of himself, particularly his discovery of the unconscious, together with the crumbling of structures in society which nourished the unconscious life and feelings of medieval man, make it necessary to embrace the concept of a bi-polar Church, a Church with visible and invisible elements, structured and unstructured reality. Vatican II is not to be looked on as making a demand, that the Church do a better job than the post-Tridentine Church did, but demanding something entirely different. In the concrete, the demand comes down to accepting as Church most of what I style avant-garde theological (sic!) thought, e.g., that the non-celibate counselor is priest, that Confession is more a matter of attitudes than of accounts of deviations from norms, that personal prayer is recognizing feelings and letting the unconscious work out a problem. Not that the author calls for the jettisoning of anything; he just feels that the new developments are the Spirit speaking, and that the uni-polar Church of yesterday is no longer a real possibility (or a real necessity) since the cultural reinforcements of faith have long since crumbled, and the "global village" in which we live is pluriform.

Father Moore states the thesis in his seventh sentence: "The Church is not an institution but a happening. It is not two things—sign and reality—but the flow of energy between these two poles" (p. 115). This flow of energy somehow unites conscious and unconscious in a man, and church and humanity, even church and universe, on a wider level. What this "flow of energy" is, isn't spelled out any more. I could hazard the guess that it is the Holy Spirit.

The Dreamer Not the Dream is a puzzling book. For a book about the Church it says precious little about Jesus; in fact it seems to suggest that the Church is just doing the same job that all religions are doing. The obvious canonization of the unconscious seems to neglect the wound of sin as the description of sin as an attempt at growth seems to deny the reality of personal sin. One might even get the impression that loyalty to the Eucharist is merely a personal option of the author rather than an essential of the Church. (In a "Church" embracing all churches, that stance is a logical one.)

I leave to the poetically inclined the evaluation of Father Maguire's poetry and the prose fable "Heliophant," which I feel may be saying something against what I love dearly as a gift of Christ, his visible Church (but I may be very wrong).

Mechanically, the book is well set and presentable. Although a variety of topics were covered, the brief chapters seemed underdeveloped. If I have read it right, **The Dreamer Not the Dream** is not only a pipe dream, but another instance of the pernicious reductionism of our day which makes theology identical with anthropology or psychology.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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Nouwen, Henri J. M., **With Open Hands.** Photos by Ron P. van den Bosch and Theo Robert. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1972. Pp. 160. Paper, $1.95.

Padovano, Anthony, **Free to be Faithful.** Paramus, N.J.: Paulist Press Pastoral Educational Services, 1972. Pp. 95 (33 full or double page illustrations in color). Cloth, $4.95 the single copy (quantity discounts available).

Runes, Dagobert D., **Handbook of Reason.** New York: Philosophical Library, 1972. Pp. 200. Cloth, $6.00.