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A Marvellous Mystery

T IS NOT CORRECT, we told a skeptical looking class a few weeks back, to predicate either an integral part or an essential part of Christ's human nature directly of the divine Word. Thus the Word is not "hair," nor "soul," nor "flesh"; the Word is man. (Scripture, of course, is not a metaphysics textbook, and the poetic device of synecdoche well explains the Johannine usage.)

This is but one minor feature of a complex system of rules for the "predication of idioms"—rules safeguarding our thought and speech about the Lord from confusion and error. Of course we hear very little about such restrictive devices these days. We encourage one another (and our students) instead to express ourselves, to have a dialogue, and (starting from ground zero) come up with some really novel insights about our Faith.

It's time we realized, and proclaimed openly to all concerned, that this simply will not do as a serious approach to theology. It's time we re-examined the rationale of the newer "religious studies" departments and tried to determine what this new title has enabled them to be in some cases, that they could not be when they were called "theology" departments. We would be the last to question the importance of the sociological and the psychological study of religion—and surely least of all would we question the significance of the philosophical approach to religion. But none of these is *theology*; and isn't theology important enough, any longer, to be accorded departmental status in a college or university that retains some semblance of Catholic affiliation?

At any rate, our purpose here is not to call into doubt the value of what is being taught, so much as to insist that something else ought to be taught once again, which does not seem very evident on the academic scene: solid metaphysical theology along with responsible exegesis and authentic as well as enlightened theological morality.

"Metaphysical theology"! One may not like the name, but by any other a rose is still what it is. And the fragrant flower in this case is

a delicate, reverent inquiry into the objective nature of our religion's ultimate mysteries. It is not promethean reason, but the Holy Spirit who casts Light on those mysteries. And it is not by holding a meeting and setting up a committee that we discover the way those mysteries ought to be interpreted, but by a patient historical investigation of just what was said, when, where, and by whom. With all her very human and very real shortcomings, it has been the Church and no theologian that kept theological progress balanced and pure. But what was the use of winning all those hard-fought battles for orthodoxy, if it has come to the point where the mysteries mean in my case what I want them to mean; and in yours, what you want them to mean?

If this sheer relativism is not the answer, then there is no way out of doing "metaphysical" as well as positive theology. "A delicate, reverent inquiry," we just called it, "into the objective nature of our religion's ultimate mysteries." So the question is not, "What do I want the Incarnation to mean?" Nor is it, "How can I use poetry, or symbolism, or myth to evoke pleasant feelings about the Incarnation?" The question is, "How can we give verbal expression to what has really happened as the eternal and absolute Godhead was born into our world, ate, slept, walked around, was killed, and rose again for his glory and our salvation?"

To be sure, there is abundant merit in what sociologists and psychologists have done to trace many scriptural categories to the mythic accounts of contemporary cultures. Still, as Peter Berger (A Rumor of Angels) among others has shown, it's a relatively easy matter to retort the claim in favor of a position like that of Saint Justin Martyr or Saint Irenaeus: Pre-Christian history sees God active in the preparation of his Son's domain.

It may be too much to express the hope that Christians will once again, in the near future, run through the streets as they did at Ephesus shouting theological slogans. But earlier ages did know how to combine metaphysical clarity with devout piety, and this is a knack we should strive mightily to regain. For this Christmas season, it would enable us without blushing and without that quizzical look on our faces, to enunciate an antiphon like the one used for the Benedictus in the Christmas Day Little Office of the Blessed Virgin: "A marvellous mystery is revealed today: God becomes man and nature is redeemed. What he was, he still remains; what he was not, he now becomes without confusion or division."

Fr. Michael D. Mailand, ofm

BREAD — IMAGES

Marigwen Schumacher

BONAVENTURE, in a homily given at Città della Pieve—a small town north of Rome and near Perugia—on "Laetare Sunday," the fourth Sunday of Lent, 1269, develops the theme of "five loaves and two fish." The traditional Gospel passage for this Sunday was the account, in John 6:1-15, of the multiplication of the five barley loaves and two fish which, when blessed by the Lord and distributed to the people, fed more than five thousand. And still the disciples gathered up and filled twelve baskets with the fragments.

The manuscript of this homily notes that Bonaventure preached on that Sunday "coram populo"-i.e., to the ordinary congregation of the town-and "praesente provinciale totius Thusciae"-i.e., in the presence of the Provincial of Tuscany. Thus this homily is especially interesting as an example of Bonaventure's pastoral approach when outside the university milieu. By 1269 he had been Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor for over twelve years and had travelled almost ceaselessly throughout most of Europe. A man now in his early fifties, active in administration, scholarly and prayerful in his interests, Bonaventure was deeply pastoral in his orientation, and his travels must have thrust him into varied yet valuable contacts with ordinary folk such as those who were present at Mass in Città della Pieve this Sunday.

What were their needs? How were they to be fed, nourished, strengthened by Bread of Eucharist and by Bread of Scripture and homily? What homely truths of sustaining spiritual support could he give them for the days and burdens of the coming week? In his opening sentence, Bonaventure addresses his words to those "wishing to live-together with God" and states that the focus of his reflections is "moraliter." This is the word which Bonaventure always uses when he is reflecting upon Scripture as relevant to our Christian life here and now-emphasizing the transference from the historic Scriptural event to its viable impact upon each one of us. Just as Jesus used this miracle and others to prefigureto prepare—his followers and especially his disciples for his total giving of himself as Bread in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, using the common material element as sign and symbol of the transcendent reality, so too Bonaventure, in this homily, takes the familiar elements of the "five loaves and two fish" and accords them a rich variety of equation interpretation as sign and symbol of our transcendence.

In a manner most unfair to Bonaventure, who so deftly interweaves quotations from both Old and New Testament as support and clarification for his statements, I should like to abstract the series of image-metaphors which he presents in this homily and reflect upon some facets of them. The text as preserved for us in the manuscripts is, of course, only a "reporting" by Bonaventure's secretary. It is, however, in some ways a fairly full one. In fact I wonder if it might be Bonaventure's own outline as prepared for delivery. In the actual moment of preaching, certainly, he would emphasize some sections by voice and gesture and expand others through vivid vignettes and exempla. It is evident at once that Bonaventure is speaking in the accustomed manner of medieval preaching as expected at the university and yet kept flexible enough for use in parish churches. The fivefold and twofold divisions flow rhythmically, pulling intellect into thoughtful response. He accords place to others' insights (as in series "C" below, attributed to Bernard), as well as expanding upon his own. The intelligentsia present could not complain of not being challenged and nourished: the average Christian, too, could comprehend and be fed. The impact upon the congregation as series after series, wave after wave of image-equations were expressed must have been powerful. A parallel in our own day is seen in Paul Claudel's Tobias and Sara,² especially in the avalanching imagery of Act 2, scene 7. The effect is deliberate: the affect in each individual, however incalculable, is powerful. Each person gathers from the cascade that which strikes him most deeply—and yet feels the surge and impact of the totality.

Bonaventure includes the following series of interpretations of "five loaves and two fish":

- A. The five loaves are:
 - 1. bread of health-giving learning: sacred doctrine, not philosophy.
 - 2. bread of keen remorse: sincere repentance, not pretense.
 - 3. bread of faithful prayer: interior "lift-off," not earthly.
 - 4. bread of gospel perfection: a sacred, not worldly, completion.
 - bread of divine refreshment: the meal of the Holy Eucharist, not of human food.

The two fish with these five loaves are

- 1. faith in Divinity, and
- 2. faith in humanity.
- These season all our spiritual food.

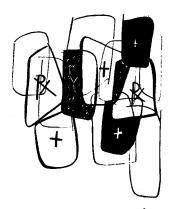
 B. The five loaves are five recreations of spirit arising from five
- reflections of mind:

 1. from reflection upon our in-
- dividual sinfulness arises the bread of remorse.
- from reflection upon the Passion of Christ arises the bread of suffering.
- from reflection upon our brothers' failures arises the bread of compassion.
- from reflection upon divine Judgment arises the bread of reverence.
- from reflection upon postponement of reward arises the bread of prayer.

¹The homily is found in St. Bonaventure, Opera Omnia (Quaracchi, 1902), vol. 9, pp. 234-35: Dom. IV in Quadragesima, sermo 2. See J. Guy Bougerol, O.F.M., Introduction to Bonaventure, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J., 1964), chronology, p. 176.

Miss Marigwen Schumacher, who teaches classics at the Emma Willard School, Troy, N.Y., has just published a translation and commentary on St. Bonaventure's Sermons: Bonaventure: Rooted in Faith (\$5.95, Franciscan Herald Press).

²Paul Claudel, *Tobias and Sara* (1942), is available in English translation in the Mermaid Dramabook #24, *Port-Royal and Other Plays*, edited by Richard Hayes, 1962.



The two fish with these loaves are 1. unconcern for the present, and

2. hope for the future.

C. The five loaves—according to Bernard—for the follower of God are:

1. cheap, coarse clothing

2. maturity of perception

3. economy of food

4. blameless words and conversations

5. careful management.

The two fish with these loaves are

1. reading (of scripture), and

2. prayer.

D. The five loaves are—and here I must give the stark Latin phrase beside my amplified translations—

1. speculatio radiosa— a gazing upon the radiance of God

2. affectio ignita—a response to God set afire by his Love

3. collatio sacra—a gathering together of self into his Oneness

 aemulatio sancta—a sacred and constant striving toward him.

transformatio pia—a total transformation into holiness in God.
 Their two fish are

Their two fish are

1. reverence for the divine Name, and

2. joyfulness of spirit.

E. The five Gospel loaves are

grace which cleanses
 truth which illuminates

3. joy which enkindles and warms

4. virtue which impregnates

5. holiness which makes beautiful.
Here the two fish are

1. beauty of charisma, and

2. the "God-forming" of virtues.

F. The five Gospel loaves are:

1. clear consciousness

2. straightforward life-style

good reputation
 true understanding

5. sound learning.

Here the two fish are:

1. a gazing upon eternity, and

2. a tasting of Divinity.

G. The five Gospel loaves are:

1. a spirit of poverty

2. a sense of humility

3. a love of piety

4. a progress in purity

5. a habit of honesty.

Their two fish are:

1. desire to imitate Christ, and

2. longing to reach him.

SUCH A BOLD, bare analysis startles somehow, but it enables us to "see" some threads and patterns which are only felt subliminally when the full homily is heard. What is Bonaventure attempting to do in and through such an extended series of interpretations of the five loaves and two fish? Certainly it is not a shallow parade of learning nor a mere "scholastic exercise" in theme and variation. In many ways it is an ordinary listing of Christian values and virtues. But there is something more that forces its way through the complexity of images which circle like ripples in a pond.

Part of it is in the sheer avalanching of the seven possibilities offered. Part of it, too, comes from Bonaventure's precise, forceful, vibrant choice of modifiers—mostly adjectives and present participles in his Latin—which dynamize and infuse creative life into these well known Christian aims. There are many pregnant phrases such as "laetitia refocillans"—"joy which enkindles and warms"; "speculatio

radiosa"—"a gazing upon the radiance of God"; "religio pulcrificans' -"holiness which makes beautiful." This exactness of life-giving wordchoice so characteristic of Bonaventure bespeaks more than a careful articulation of doctrinal idea. It strikes very deeply into the immensity of his metaphysics which sees directly through symbol to God. "Speculatio" is "radiosa" because we are totally absorbed in looking at the direct vision of God, who radiates light. "Holiness" "makes beautiful" because God is Beauty, and as we grow in holiness we grow in God-beauty. Joyfulness of spirit "refocillans" because "I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete" (Jn. 15:11). And that joy warms us unto life eternal: "... and that joy no one shall take from you" (In. 16:22).

There are numerous facets of these varied equation-images which could be explored in considerable detail both by themselves and in their relation to each other. The note of quiet pragmatism in the last series contrasts sharply with the intensity of the two preceding groups. The involved rhythm of series A and B is noticeably different from the crisp staccato effects of the rest. Although some of this may be due only to the note-taking skill of his secretary, it seems to me doubtful that it does not also reflect Bonaventure's deliberate rhythm variation. There is an enticing call to study or analyze the "fish" joined with each group of "loaves," which "season" or round out the menu. But such attempts could rapidly reach unmanageable proportions. Instead, then, of moving

further in that direction, I should like to probe a little deeper into Bonaventure's thinking behind the whole homily. Why and how do these varied interpretations—spiritually interesting as they are-relate to the essence of the Gospel passage, i.e., that these few loaves, when blessed by Jesus, fed the crowds? And how does this prefigure—prepare—us as bread of Eucharist to be broken and used in feeding hungry multitudes? Recalling that Bonaventure presents these as considerations moraliteri.e., as relevant to each of us in our Christian life-how is he feeding us? A possible key is found in the expansion which follows the listing of series A. Each "loaf" is explained as "being broken" under certain conditions:

The bread of health-giving learning is broken only for those embracing Christian wisdom. The bread of keen remorse is broken only for those panting after perfect repentance. The bread of faithful prayer is broken only for those vearning for divine grace. The bread of Gospel perfection is broken only for those wishing to imitate the life-style of the apostles. The bread of divine refreshment is broken only for those receiving the Holy Eucharist becomingly.

Would that we had the parallel "being broken" explanations for the other series! But I wonder if they would differ much? To me it seems that the sequence—and I do feel it is a sequence, a progression from "embracing" to "panting after" to "yearning" to "wishing" to "receiving becomingly"—includes the categories and is the pathway for every Christian. In a similar way, most of the series form a crescendo from (1) to (5) as progression through life towards God. In A, for example,

we move from "health-giving learning" to "keen remorse" to "faithful prayer" to "gospel perfection" to "divine refreshment." In D the movement from speculatio radiosa climaxes in transformatio vial

Bonaventure concludes his homily by stressing that if we wish to have these "loaves" we must be—or become—like the child in the passage who had the loaves with him and thus was able to give them to be blessed and multiplied. To accomplish this, we must have qualities of "humble obedience, simplicity, sincerity, integrity, and serenity."

It seems, then, that these "loaves" as used in the different series of this homily are both qualities which we need as Christians and also progressions of our spiritual development. In subtle intermingling of factual statement and evocative summoning, Bonaventure has broken these loaves for his listeners as he encouraged them to provide themselves with such loaves for Jesus' need. Compare, for example, the flat pragmatism of series G with the intensity of series B. Note that I am deliberately ignoring series C (the one attributed to Bernard), because it really does not fit into Bonaventure's own developing pattern. Perhaps there was some reason known to his congregation, but since lost to us, which made its inclusion meaningful; or again, perhaps Bonaventure used it to keep the balance and climax from being too serene and thus quiescent.

Some confirmation that Bonaventure is deliberately interpreting "loaves" as qualities with which each of us must take care to be provided comes from a tiny schema preserved of another homily preached by Bonaventure. This one, so far undated, is listed as being preached "in the friary at Tours" on the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.³ The Scripture theme was the text from Mark 8:6 on the "seven loaves and a few small fish." Here is all we have of his treatment (the references are included for his Scriptural quotations).

These seven loaves are symbols which Jesus "broke" by his own example and by his teaching and "handed" to teachers and preachers to "distribute" to the world for salvation and to nourish every soul.

The first leaf is a God-like exertion (Eccles. 9:7).

The second is a careful awareness (1 Kgs, 21:4).

The third is prudent discernment (Deut. 8:3-4).

The fourth is a courageous life-style (Ps. 104:15).

The fifth is a character of good repute (Is. 58:7).

The sixth is speech proclaiming the Good News (Is. 33:16).

The seventh is repeated recollection of life everlasting (Wis. 16:20).

The "few small fish" seasoning and flavoring these "loaves" are:
an uninterrupted gaze at the example of the Word Incarnate,

a glowing longing for paradise, a deep sorrowing before the cross of Christ, and

a steadfast resolution to persevere in grace.

Loaves as symbols broken by Jesus and handed to his disciples and to us, to distribute to the world to nourish every individual. Bread-Images.... What "loaves" do we have in hand for the Lord and for our world?

Science, Poetry, and Biblical Inquiry after Positivism: Help from Elizabeth Sewell's "The Orphic Voice"

Leland J. White

In the midst of our recurrent theological dis-ease with contemporary culture Edinburgh's Professor Thomas F. Torrance insists that today "Christian theology finds itself in the throes of a new scientific culture which is not antithetical to it." Torrance, who has demonstrated his personal grasp of post-Einsteinian science in his magisterial Theological Science, may evoke surprise inasmuch as this appraisal of science is linked to a

call for a return to the Greek Fathers, a rather high Christology, and even more to a new concentration on the biblical word as a whole. Such a combination of Fathers, Christology, and Bible should alert us to the fact that what Torrance means by "contemporary scientific culture" will bear little if any resemblance to the scientific construct assumed by many another theologian wrestling with the problem of relevance. I will

⁸St. Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, loc. cit., p. 381: Dom. VI post Pentecosten, sermo 3.

¹ T. F. Torrance, "The Church in an Era of Scientific Change," The Month 6:4 (April 1973), p. 137.

² T. F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

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argue here that Elizabeth Sewell's The Orphic Voice³ bespeaks a method of inquiry into reality via word and story that is most helpful as a paradigm for biblical inquiry. But, perhaps more importantly, hers is a work in the spirit of that scientific culture which Torrance would call post-Positivist. As such The Orphic Voice shows some of the ground of Torrance's hopeful assessment.

Biblical Positivism's Effects

Torrance would argue that we should have expected our present modes of biblical inquiry to be Positivist in tone for, at least, two reasons. First, there is the regular tendency of churchmen to operate within the paradigms of the community as a whole, this tendency being exalted today to the status of a basic principle for communication of the gospel by churchmen anxious about religion's status in the world. Second, there is a general cultural tendency to resist the conversion experience called for by scientific discoveries so novel as to be unassimilable by existing thought structures. This explains how it is that, even if the death-blow to that scientific spirit we call Positivism is widely felt, it still remains scarcely recognized.4

In a nutshell, Positivism made such a distinction between reality and phenomenon that the word that man would use to describe his world has but a vague relationship to it. So obscure, indeed, is the connection that the major portion of the intellectual enterprise must be devoted alternately to establishing the connection or to the critical analysis of ever more discrete segments of the word. That we no longer trust the speech of our politicians, teachers, or churchmen in the final analysis may be shown to be but part of a larger pattern in which we have ceased to trust the power of the word at

In a Positivist framework, then, the word, man's power of speech has become an obstacle to be overcome, if not to be bypassed. Little wonder that the Judaeo-Christian experience of the word of God has become scarcely imaginable. Renewing power in the biblical word was promised in the liturgical, catechetical, and theological programmes of the last decade or so. Not only has this failed to materialize, but this * possibility has instead given way to a view of the word in scripture itself as an obstacle to be overcome. Not a little of the religious uncertainty so palpable today,

far from being reducible to the truism that faith is not vison, is to be grounded in our own doubt or denial of the possibility of powerful words. In Eliot's phrase, we have made ours, perhaps by default, the age of "the Word without a word." 5

Totally to bypass the Word. even in its finite biblical expression, is indeed an option so extreme as to be seriously considered only on the fringes of the Christian community. But it may vet be auestioned whether even at the core of that community it has become clear to us that there is heresy in treating the word so matter-of-factly as an obstacle and stumbling block. For such an approach means that we do not in fact believe that God could have come to man in word. A new Arianism bedevils us with the impossibility that words enflesh the Word himself. Thus we wrestle anew with how God might be made available to man, obscuring in the process the fact that he has come and speaks.

As evidence of our Positivism, whatever its fad or form, theology takes its cue from the project of demythologization, possibly little understanding Rudolf Bultmann in the process. For whether conservative or revolutionary, the theologian is set to translate the Christian message, to find a language new or old that will



convey the message anew. Biblical scholarship, probing the texts with ever more sophisticated historio-critical tools, follows by providing ever better translations for what more and more appear to be somewhat fragmentary docu-

³ Elizabeth Sewell, The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural History (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971).

⁴ T. F. Torrance, "The Church in an Era of Scientific Change," pp. 137-38.

⁵ T. S. Eliot, "Ash Wednesday," Part V.

ments of a remote past. The liturgists divide, some to provide another literature altogether. others to offer simplified commentary, all as one, however, in focusing worship on some point or theme of their own devising. Theologically, biblically, liturgically, the word is not trusted, not believed to be powerful in itself — at least not for the people.

If the value and necessity of all these projects need not be denied, yet our tascination with them is questionable. For they are secondary issues. Moreover, the question that needs to be raised is all the more urgent because we are confronted with signals of the emergence of a new fundamentalism that would deny rather than build upon the critical gains a now obsolescent scientific spirit permitted us to make. Pentecostalism, the Jesus movement, sensitivity as a cult, and now even witchcraft and the occult⁸—these aberrations and probably more in the offing threaten ready relief for the frustrating experience our people have had of a word whose liberating power we have failed to make felt. These romantic calls for a return to childhood in religion demand that we take our predicament seriously.

seriousness so largely responsible for reducing us to our present straits must first be admitted. Those limits are implied in Sewell's presentation of Orpheus. Not a methodology for interpretation, nor again a set of rules for thinking, but rather in her presentation does Orpheus appear as a guide in what amounts to a workbook by which we might trace out the patterns and power of our thinking with words and story. Her presentation corresponds to Bernard Lonergan's description of his own Insight7 as "a five-finger exercise in the appropriation of one's rational self-consciousness." For though it is in a dark and indirect way. Orpheus makes clear that it is our consciousness that has been split. Part of us is systematically lost to the other part. That this need not be the case, this Sewell insinuates by telling the story of Orpheus and then telling the story of those who told that story. beginning with Bacon and Shakespeare, all unable finally to betray the integration of poetry and natural history, word and reality that is embodied in Orpheus.

It is commonplace to point to our consciousness as disintegrated, admittedly our legacy

from Descartes in large part. We are quick to take offense at such a comment as was recently appended by a psychology professor to a student paper that had combined a Buberian discussion of the I-Thou with clinical analysis. That comment read: "While your clinical analysis is first-rate. the highly personal, poetic and metaphysical prologue has no place in a rational treatment of the problem." Certainly, to a point we do follow the logic of the maps of consciousness provided by Lonergan, grounded as they are in conversion experiences. And we are sensitive to the elaboration of the "personal" dimension of knowing plotted out in Michael Polanyi's Personal Knowledge.8 In a minimal way, at least, we wish theoretically to include what the professor excluded or separated. But must it not be admitted that, against the intention of Lonergan and Polanyi, the personal/poetic largely comes to be included by juxtaposition to what is seen to be more objective/scientific? From this implied dichotomy, how many of our efforts at explaining the story become in fact efforts that explain it away!

After Positivism—Post-Logic

Perhaps only such a story as Orpheus' would be sufficient to

convert us from our mental habit of explaining stories away, our Positivism. In Sewell, it is the story of Orpheus that is central. Briefly to recount it, Orpheus makes the rocks and trees move. and subdues the beasts by his voice. After the death of his wife he goes to the underworld to find her through his poetic powers. but loses his prize by looking back at her. Finally, torn to pieces by the Maenads, his head yet floats down the river singing until it comes to rest in a cave to prophesy day and night until silenced by Apollo. But even then his lyre is taken up into the heavens to become one of the constellations.

Orpheus' story, Sewell says, is a statement about the power of poetry, but it is a statement leading to questions about the sort of power poetry holds. And she insists that "to these questions only the story itself can make an answer. The myth turns back upon itself because it is a question that figures its own reply The myth of Orpheus is statement, question and method, at one and the same time. This is true of every myth."9

This threefold function of myth as statement, question, and method of inquiry brings into high relief that tacit thought Polanyi considers so indis-

pp. 254-57.

But the limits of that form of ⁶ Cf. Douglas D. McFerran, "Religion and the Occult," America 126:10,

⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (3rd ed.: New York: Philosophical Library, 1970).

⁸ Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964).

⁹ Sewell, p. 4.

pensable to all knowing and speech. As he would insist that "we can know more than we can tell,"10 so Sewell argues that an attempt to interpret the story directly cannot tell us what the story itself would tell us by involving us in its own retelling. Thus, Polanyi speaks of "postcritical philosophy," Sewell of "post-logic," but both to much the same effect. It must be insisted that neither means to regress to a non-cognitive aesthetic grasp of reality, for such would place the "knower" in possession of only his own feelings, and they both insist that the knower knows. It is rather that both insist on the richness of the factors involved in knowing, a richness tacitly held, yet for that reason at once not quite explicable and also constantly available as a resource and a power. Postlogic emerges in the triumph, so often concealed or tacit, of "mything" over the logical narrative or flat description that we have come to regard as the ideal and terminal point in our knowing. Though she is indeed pointing to much else besides this, when Sewell speaks of "mything" she is essentially aware of the "reflexive" (in Polanyi's term, the "personal") character of speech. For myth is what the speaker does in figuring out the world in which he lives.

of which he is a part, and thus already knows most intimately. So the myth always points back reflexively to the tacitly held understandings of the mythmaker. Thus, far from myth embodying the but dimly known and esoteric, once our appreciation of the ways of knowing is deepened it is rather the case that the opaque character of myth is understood to arise from the intimacy of the involvement of the knower and the known.

That intimacy and involvement of speaker and reality is attested when language is seen as hieroglyphic, and tends to be denied when it is seen as cipher. As hieroglyphic, Sewell insists, language will have a significance all its own. We do not decode such a symbol when we say what it stands for, for it remains in fact reflective of all the shaping power of its author, and we are left with the mystery of all that shaping, unresolved and only embodied in the hieroglyph itself. The cipher, in contrast, merely substitutes. It is reducible to another statement.

When Orpheus appears in Bacon, Bacon's double mind, now inclining to cipher, then again to hieroglyphic, becomes evident. For Bacon, in so many ways father to modern scientific logic as we yet experience it in our Positivist bias, clearly distin-

guishes domains of poetry and science, He would like to use myth by reducing it to moral, political, or natural allegories. But however much he would thus reduce it to cipher, Sewell finds, he cannot prevent himself from treating it also as hieroglyphic. Despite his intentions, the myths become "figures for exploring his own method, and this keeps them alive, for this is what myths are for. His Orpheus insists on being a dark poetry and not just philosophy in the clear light of reason."11

Orpheus' own power thus breaks through Bacon's predilection for language as encoded knowledge. Bacon is sensitive that myth obscures, that it bears a dark underside, and so must be attended to for more than what it makes clear or illuminates. Already he is caught indeed in the mind-body split that affects us all. He is not quite willing to call knowledge what comes of this mything activity, the functions of consciousness which cannot clearly be distinguished in the material world. Properly to make his ideas clear and distinct, to gain critical distance from them, he would like to exclude or relegate to a subordinate position what he knows with such intimate involvement that distance is impossible. But Bacon still hesitates. For he is fascinated by Orpheus. He cannot do as he

would like and reduce this myth to mere allegory. So Orpheus, against the intention of Bacon telling his story, remains hieroglyphic and stands as mirror to Bacon's own spirit. And Orpheus' retelling by Bacon reveals in its obscurity the dark underside that lies in Bacon himself. What happens in Bacon, this Sewell shows to happen again and again in the Orpheus figure as it recurs in a series of authors down to Rilke.

Is Sewell merely making another version of the poetry-hasa-place argument? Such argument would make room for the ventilation of personal appreciation, but at the same time would set such appreciation apart from scientific thought, probably insisting that what is said from the personal/poetic viewpoint is to be immune to judgment of truth or falsity from a "scientific" standpoint. So to construe Sewell is to miss the point of her use of Bacon, the scientist, to deny also the insight into natural history that she accords all her Orphic voices. Orpheus appears in Darwin and Linnaeus and in the nature they describe. If Orpheus moves nature in song, triumphs over life and death and comes to rest in the stars. in sum, if nature bears the Orphic imprint, then the language that speaks of it most effectively will be inherently poetic and the best scien-

¹⁰ Polanyi, The Tacit Dimension (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), p. 4.

¹¹ Sewell, p. 84.

tific account will in fact be inherently poetic, for science is meant to mirror the very shapes of the natural world. Man, the knower. the poet-scientist. speaks from within the world that he shapes in speech, precisely because he has already been shaped himself by the words whose forms he would discover. What Sewell wishes to make clear is that there are not two separate ways of knowing different things, but a common activity rooted in man's place in the world. Science is possible because it is a form of of that poetry by which man expresses his grasp of the real that is grounded in his being grasped by it.

Recovery of Indirect Discourse

Quite parallel to Sewell's postlogic in Orpheus is the argument about the character and necessity of indirect discourse made by Soren Kierkegaard. It is often enough said today that theology must adopt a more modest manner of speech, perhaps making its point only by indirect means. Not infrequently this counsel reflects little more than a failure of theological nerve or reaction to past theological excess. Such a brief for indirect speech, reflecting as it does our Positivist bias against the word's possibility of shaping reality, contradicts that indirect character of speech to which Kierkegaard would draw our attention. If such is the case,

then we may perhaps have to wonder whether our rationale for the indirect must stem from the silence of God-a theme to which attention might be paid as a value in itself-or from God's inability to speak—a notion that may involve a range of heresies from Arianism to Deism! Our brief for the indirect might begin with the impoverishment of the words of man. But even here, following Kierkegaard, we should perhaps not be too eager to surrender the human possibilities of language, for not only are they all that we have, but indeed our poverty may be the opportunity for God's enrichment, something not to be precluded.

Whatever may once have been the case, some things about ourselves are no longer easily said directly. We should not be surprised that a language shaped by a generation of lesser Skinners to explain each human reaction in terms of particular stimuli will not be immediately equipped to explain complex human decision, and a fortiori religious commitment—at least not as whole. realities. But it was a rather similar problem that confronted Kierkegaard. He tried to reassert the importance of the existential decision, something for which we generally give him credit. But he also linked this to the distinct character of the Christian gospel, a point transcending the turn to subjectivity as our Cartesian

sensibilities perceive subjec-Hvity, thus also a point we generally obscure in Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's immediate issue was that the identification of Christianity with Christendom involved a great confusion. Language, in short, has been poisoned so that one was taken to mean the other. But Kierkegaard was perceptive enough to see that the difficulty would not be cleared up in a redefinition, something that we who have passed through the decade of post-Vatican II definitions may now be beginning to notice. The problem is rather our perception of the relationship between speaker and reality, man and world, or as Kierkegaard focuses it, between subject and object. He moved to indirect discourse to lay bare that problematic relationship. Moreover, the move was meant to be therapeutic.

Consider Kierkegaard's statement through Author A on the subject of tragedy, where we face the issue: Who am I? or Who is Antigone? How or where would Antigone exist, not die, or live as one already entombed? His answer emerges indirectly. For it lies neither with the classic Antigone, nor the modern one, hor again on some middle ground between these two figures, for such ground would exist only in

the critic's mind so as to ground perhaps another figure. These figures must, then, be taken for what they are: set before us dramatically, yet somehow also arising as from within a drama internal to us all. In Sewell's sense, Kierkegaard is "mything." He is contriving both classic and modern Antigones as mirrors to the same self. Through them we see ourselves as subject and object of our own discourse, for the only way we might make sense of them is if we experience them as simultaneous moments of our own consciousness.

To demonstrate this last point, it is clear that Antigone does not herself live in either figure's moment. Equally clear that we could not do so either. Kierkegaard ascribes the sorrow of her ancient death wholly to the spectator. He says of this sorrow that it "is so infinitely deep. It is not an individual who goes down, it is a small world, it is an objective sorrow, which released now, advances in its own terrible consistency, like a force of nature...a fateful necessity."13 Only the audience holds the secret of her death, death being explained by life-death forces beyond the reflective powers of the subject.

In contrast, for the modern Antigone these forces are at the

¹² Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, vol. 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), 137-62.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.



very forefront of consciousness. She is characterized by reflection. In her case the probability is infinitely high that "no tears be shed" by any other, making the modern Antigone grateful to the gods for having been selected as instrument of a grief so reflective that "it does not occur to Antigone to wish that anyone should understand her pain."14 Possessed of her incommunicable secret, she is never able to identify the speaker of her inscrutable "I." at least not so that another might know it. So, as the ancient Antigone is bound to the speech of others, her signature being only the latest of endorsements of an unchanging inarticulate decree. the latter-day Antigone bears a signature never to be risked in

use. In the truest sense, Kierkegaard makes it clear as irony can make it that neither Antigone lives.

Consider carefully what Kierkegaard has done. Two direct idioms of speech have been pushed to their limit to be held up as speech to those "living as though already entombed."15 Direct discourse has broken down as clearly in this case as when Kierkegaard confronts the issue of what it means to be Christian when everyone is called Christian, when the gospel is taken to be the rationale for the world as it is. So indeed, Kierkegaard moves to irony, to indirect statement. But how he does so is crucial.

First, Kierkegaard does not despair of speaking at all. He writes indeed with a ferocious productivity. Secondly, he does not even seem to hint that a new language might be created. For he is more getting at a view of language than at language formation itself. Aside from his own gifted aesthetic sense, there is nothing in the description of tragedy that another critic might not have said. What is different is the way he situates the common idiom in such a way as to reawaken understanding of the reality it may convey. What essentially he does is to retell the

story in such a way that the story begins to retell itself from its own inner resources, resources springing from human consciousness transcending the world by shaping it and speaking of it, yet never losing contact with that, which in its otherness, is vet its own bedrock. Antigone herself would come to life as though in rebellion against the interpretations the classic and modern mind would impose on her story. Thus, when at another point. Kierkegaard would speak of faith as at once indispensably personal decision and the hearing of a word from God, the direct statements need not bear the burden alone but only as an indirect statement makes its power also felt. For there also, Kierkegaard turns to the story of Abraham. so to retell it that we have with him a common figure—yes, of mystery, but also of understanding.

Story: Ground or Field of Understanding

Just as Torrance maintains that observationalist and analytical science came to an impasse in the electro-magnetic field that will require its own demise and a reintegration of structure and substance, form and being, to show the ground or field of particular phenomena¹⁶—so language will break down until it recovers its ground or field in story. The

message of Kierkegaard and Sewell is that words do not function because they have been taken out of the stories of which they are parts. They have been removed from man's world and man's history, given a disembodied existence in purely subjective experience or in objects removed from man's world. Thus Richard Nixon is able to speak of "peace." indeed of a full generation of peace. without telling the story of its construction in an arms race. Is it any wonder that people conclude that whatever it is that he is talking about exists only in his mind? Or, alternately, is it not natural that he would see this word or any word as only the name of some external object. in this case the idealist object of the absence of declared war? In such a climate, can the priest who leads people to pray for peace avoid the confusion such a disembodied term must have?

Likewise, "God" is said to exist or to be dead. Does it make any difference which is asserted? One "God" resisted death, for Dr. Billy Graham will say that he talked with him this morning. The "God" of the private conversation of the inner man may be the one who lies behind the Jesus movement and the various claims for religious revival in America today. But even if he is, it is just as clear at least that

¹⁶ Torrance, "The Church in an Era of Scientific Change," p. 141.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁵ Cf. ibid., p. 450, n. 1, for discussion of the meaning of the Symparanekromenoi to whom this discourse is addressed.

this "God" lacks general significance. It was another "God" who prompted the obituary, for the death-of-God phenomenon responded to the liberals' "God" whose significance had become so general, so at one with all that is, that we may conclude that all that is, stands rather well without its "Ground of Being." Reduced to an idea that would explain everything, "God" died as men sought more particular explanations.

That all this happened among the people who are heir to, and even read at times, the biblical text should astound us. The word "God"— for that matter, "man" — has been taken out of a story. The biblical scholars tell us all the forms the words have taken. At least they make us aware of the many historical circumstances in which the words have been used. But the word is no longer really illumined by the story. It is rather interpreted in terms of lexical connections in what passes for an intellectual history in the mind of the scholar. The theologian sets himself to the task of defining the isolated words, maybe abstractly so that "God" exhausts the range of human intelligence, maybe concretely to relate "God" to this man here. But it is all to the same effect, for "God" is removed from the concrete story in which he occurs. Inevitably the definition breaks down, and this man here loses his own meaning when his whole world depends on his defining it.

To return to Orpheus, as a cipher, as substitute for this or that idea of a series of authors. we would always be unsure of whatever might have been on the mind of the different authors when they said "Orpheus." As cipher, it would have been quite absurd for them to use an old figure unless they were sure, and this would be beyond them to determine, of their agreement with one another. On the other hand, as hieroglyph, figure in a story which they knew beyond ever their telling of it, Sewell shows, Orpheus was the means by which they said a great deal more than they might have been able to make explicit. In fact, his story was the method by which they uncovered for themselves what they already knew.

Survival of Critical Thought

If Sewell attests that Orpheus has survived in his story the tortuous path from pre-Newtonian to post-Einsteinian man, we may take this to mean that if a radical shift in the presuppositions of science, thinking, and speech is called for, still much out of that critical past remains quite valid. It would no longer perhaps be valid had men been able to blot from their experience altogether the fields in which they perceived objects, the stories from which

their conclusions were drawn. But the driest conclusions they drew from residues of experience more fluid than they themselves were able to say, but which they indirectly attested. Logic and criticism lived somewhat unconsciously off of post-logic and post-criticism. For that reason neither the replacement of reason with experience nor any other sort of fundamentalism is called for, but rather a new awareness of what we know in terms of its wholeness.

Contemporary scientific culture, as Torrance understands it, post-logic with its integration of poetry and science, both indicate a new spirit for biblical inquiry that would situate the historio-critical enterprise today without restricting our hearing of the word to the narrow range of questions we have come to impose on the test, questions we have come to impose perhaps because of the relative clarity of the judgments they involve. Such critical questions and their answers remain quite important. but they become secondary to a new relationship in which the text or the story in its complete unfolding and retelling is permitted to stand as the critical context for itself.

To put the matter in a nutshell, the movement we now need will not be of the sort so endemic to the present situation where in the discovery of the limits of our churches, schools, ourselves, we replace one tradition with another. So it will not be one of the variants of the antiintellectual replacing classroom exegesis with instant inspiration in the prayer-meeting. The movement that seems called for is a step-by step reorientation that will be open to where the text leads us, but will begin from where we are. This, especially from where we are as critics of the questions we have been accustomed to ask.



To begin with, for example, there is the critical view that the New Testament is a post-Easter account of Jesus' life. So to put the matter does great service in laying to rest the fundamentalist perspective that the Gospels are biography. But we may now have to ask ourselves if we have begun

to lose our sense of the story that is recounted, focusing on its formulation in the post-Easter context. Is it not symptomatic that the much-heralded new quest for the historical Jesus attempted only to lay out the main lines of Jesus' preaching, and further that even this quest has now largely been abandoned? If we concede critically that we cannot and should not construct the sort of life imagined by nineteenth-century would-be biographers, is there not an impoverishment when we so largely stop telling the story of the whole public ministry, passion, and death, merely because we have them only in a retrospective form? Has not the time come for us to focus less on the problem of the resurrection to discern more the character of the Risen Lord through the story told of him? This means, for instance, that whatever historical problem we might have with the story of the Magi would be less likely to make us nervously omit the story altogether, for even if the historical data on which it is based are of a totally different sort from what history means today, and even if its literary source was quite different from that used for the passion account, still, as description of who it was who died and rose, such a story is part of the wider story. As such, apart from historicity, it lends concreteness and meaning.

Such concreteness may be even more helpful to theologians than to exegetes, and perhaps as a bonus some of the chasm that has opened between theologians and scripture scholars could be bridged. For the theologian to set himself anew to speaking of the concrete realities of a revelation in history, in Israel, in Jesus, and in the Church need not mean a return to salvation history, a history modelled on secular history and parallel to it. But it also would mean that he would abandon the notion that there is some central idea or essence of Christianity that he has to unfold and apply to all of life. Concretely done, theology would begin to reflect stage by stage on the One whose figure emerges on the pages of history, law, poetry, and prophecy. How free God and man are in the history of Israel would be a conclusion for theologians to draw in the course of reading a story. It might emerge quite different from an abstract consideration of whether freedom is possible. There may indeed be exceedingly murky elements in the story, but if the story is told and remains the focus, it might at least hold up as one way of speaking about the ambiguous life men know.

In relating theology to contemporary life the ambiguity of life and history that emerges from more and more completely told stories might begin to be more

ithfully reflected. We have poked on our past theology as a teries of opinions, propositions to he arranged according to subject matter. But each statement lives within a much more inclusive story line, sometimes only implied. There is a whole mythical framework involved in Augustine's position on original sin. To decipher his meaning with the help of some propositions about his historical and philosophical context is indeed help-All. But beyond that, we must listen to him as he recounts and indeed reshapes—the Genesis story; and we must take that story as what he means, something that may or may not be reducible to some existentialist propositions. We will probably find that there are few doctrinal statements that are equivalents for one another, that Aquinas and Schillebeeckx on the Eucharist do not match, but involve different stories accounting for the Bucharistic experience. In such a process we would begin to realize that the development of doctrine does not so much involve a series of revisions, in which past errors re to be deleted and obscuities clarified, but rather diferent stories having their center a continuing Christian exerience.

Such a view does more than gitimate a pluralism of theologes. It begins to recover common round between Catholic theo-

logy and the Reformation at a fundamental level. For the issue between us has always been the status of the Word. It is quite superficial to think that we have divided over a problem of interpretation. The fundamental issue is that the Reformation insisted on the priority of the word. That it did so at precisely that point in time when modernity's intellectual surgery was beginning to cut the tissues that bound the word to the world of man and nature—this was a fateful choice. for nominalism was dangerous ground for the Reformation's Word-based faith. But that choice was made in part as protest against the culture-religion symbolized by Catholic natural theology. For the fact is, whatever its merits, a natural theology will always imply the possibility that the word be a secondary matter since a nature disclosing the reality of God can be substituted for the Word that would say what the disclosure means. But now, on the ground of a fresh appreciation of the interpenetration of word and nature afforded by Sewell's post-logical view, because that interpenetration is one arising from a story retaining all the particularity of stories and so not asserting an abstract generality, even Reformation faith may begin to relate to the natural world as locus of the divine word. At the same time, Catholics may make a less ambiguous affirmation that within the world of nature and man there arises a concrete word, the Word, that has priority.

At the practical level, for preaching is the testing ground of biblical scholarship and theology, we will also move from the abstractions that would reduce the whole biblical story to simple principles, like God is love, not law. We must ask ourselves if this can be understood without reference to the whole story beginning with Abraham and illustrated in detail from the life of Iesus in all its concreteness. We might begin by asking why it is that we show so little enthusiasm for the historical readings from the Old Testament, why indeed the lectionary is weighted in favor of wisdom writings and the more moralistic material. We might begin to wonder if all the exhortations we make for people to love one another as brothers have failed partly because they are not grounded in stories by which they could have been given a common memory, a community identity, and thus emabled to see one another as brothers, to know that they have common words with which to address one another.

Together we can hear the word again, and it may be able to awaken in us a new boldness, if we know it in stories that

spring from and create our common life with one another and with our world. As Elizabeth Sewell concludes her work, she notes, "The Orphic voice attests a tradition and a method of thinking If the tradition means anything, it means that here is a marvelously adapted instrument for ordinary people to use in understanding their universe and themselves."17 Might the emphasis placed on ordinary people recall to us that the Church has always shunned the gnostic and controlled the mystic? It may be part of an insistence that hers is a story no less accessible than the poetic tradition of which Sewell speaks. If we now seem caught between romantic and pedantic ways of hearing the biblical word, we may find that attending to its extraordinary story as though cut from the ordinary cloth of human speech and story will be better than seeing its power. It might convince us of the availability of that power. It could be that whatever darkness or obscurity we now experience will be shown to be not just the beginning of a night, but of a night of celebration. That is, if we should ask a question like, Why is this night like no other night? and then answer the question by retelling the story, that story would indeed tell us of our call as free men.

BRIDGES ARE ENTICING:

They span turbulent waters to permit safe passage for man's vehicles.

They permit the artist to ponder at leisure the gift of a gurgling stream.

They provide safety to scouts who ramble along mountain passes.

They ensure safety to busses conveying eager tourists to vacation-land.

They link island to island for the busy New Yorker on his way to work.

They permit cattle and mountain goats to search for greener pastures.

They portray the magnificence of man's ingenious sense of mechanics.

They eliminate burdensome fords which pioneers used to convey their meager belongings to safety.

They delight the mathematician with multitudinous angles, triangles, and quadrangles.

They encourage trust in man's adroitness and in God's sustaining providence.

They please the naturalist who wanders across dreamily to browse in marshes and meadowland.

They permit avid fishermen to loiter hour after hour for a nibble that may never come.

They furnish endless delight to children who never tire of the sound of rippling water in the river bed below them.

They stimulate the pulse of a biologist whose keen eye has spotted a rare species on the other side of a creek.

Bridges are the product of man's labor

PRAISE GOD FOR BRIDGES.

Sister M. Dolores Ahles, O.S.F.



¹⁷ Sewell, p. 404.



The Fragile Presence: Transcendence in Modern Literature. By John Killinger. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973. Pp. x-166. Paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Vianney M. ✓ Devlin, O.F.M., Ph. D. (English, University of London), Associate Professor of English at Siena College.

"Artists are the antennae of the race," the late Ezra Pound wrote many years ago. Sensitive and articulate, they perceive the problems of their time; they feel before the rest of us the atmospheric changes which will affect us all a little later and they strive to communicate these to us in memorable structures of words, pigments, or sounds. Vatican II recognized this too and in its "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" stated:

Literature and the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. For they strive to probe the unique nature of man, his problems, and his experiences as he struggles to know and perfect both himself and the world. They are preoccupied with revealing man's place in history and in the world, with illustrating his miseries and joys, his needs and strengths, and with foreshadowing a better life for him. Thus they are able to elevate human life as it is expressed in manifold forms, depending on time and place[§62].

New questions and, sometimes, answers are usually presented first

in the arts, most frequently in literature. Many modern writers are now debating theological issues that will be continued by theologians for vears to come. One thinks, for example, of the enormous attention now being paid to the work of Hermann Hesse which first appeared in the '30s.

John Killinger, Professor of Preaching and Literature at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University, addresses himself to an investigation of modern literature, now filled with strong religious imagination, to ask what possibilities this literature has to offer the theologian who seeks to penetrate beneath the surface of "confusion, hurt, despair, sadness, betrayal, nihilism" (p. 10) in order to understand the unique problems and experiences of man in the latter half of the 20th century. In this book he searches for what Karl Rahner calls "the anonymous God" in and through "the materialities of human existence" (p. 5) and the content of modern literature.

This is no easy task. The theologian must not assume that because he knows theology he, therefore, can treat the artist as if he were a theologian. The theologian visà vis a work of art must first reverence it for what it is: a structure (of words, pigments, tones) created to give disinterested pleasure to the beholder. Having done this, then the theologian can point out theological implications contained within that unique structure and even assist the artist in understanding what the artist himself has done. Killinger has performed this task quite well, although not as penetratingly as Father William F. Lynch, S.J., in some of his books.

The first three chapters are devoted to three primary themes in

modern literature: anguish, absurdity, and sensuality. Killinger explores these themes as manifested in the works of such writers as Camus, Kafka, Beckett, Artaud, Pinter. Genet, Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Wallace Stevens. He offers some interesting insights into the works of these authors and at times a startlingly new interpretation of them. Some literary critics and scholars may cavil at some of these interpretations; but I do not think, on the whole, such interpretations will mislead the general reader. His final chapter: "Reaping the Whirlwind: God in the Literature of the Black Experience," is, perhaps, the most interesting in the entire book since it explores at some length and analyzes—though not to the same depth—the significance of religious themes in the work of Baldwin, Ellison, LeRoi Jones, Richard Wright, and others. This chapter incorporates all three of the previous chapters' subjects and offers us new and vigorous meanings of some significant black artists.

Not a book for the specialist, this study of the theme of transcendence in modern literature might urge the general reader to pursue the same theme as explored by other, more penetrating theologian-critics.

Bread in the Desert: Prayers for Private and Public Worship, By Pierre Talec. Trans. by Edmond Bonin. Paramus, N.J.: Newman Press, 1973. Pp. vi-216. Paper. \$3.95.

Reviewed by Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F., a member of the Spiritual Life Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, serving on the staff of St. Anthony Hospital. Pendleton, Oregon.

In the preface of this book Robert Gantoy speaks of prayer as "the easiest and simplest of human attitudes-or just the opposite" (p. 1). To make prayer simpler and easier, Pierre Talec helps us to listen to the Lord in the celebration of the Mass. Taking the prayers contained in the Mass, he provides simple responses of a person or a community to a loving God for his goodness and generosity. Originally written for the parish of St. Severin in Paris where the author serves as priest, the poetic phrases are "like runways from which prayer may freely take flight" (p. 7).

The author has attempted to make our pilgrimage a little more refreshing by supplying "bread" which can be relished and shared. He realizes that "each of us carries a desert within, to be crossed in dryness of faith" (p. 83). There are some who long for the familiar Latin of the Liturgy and the changeless dry routine of the ceremony, but most of the faithful are grateful for the changes which enable them to make the Liturgy a part of their living and their living a continuation of the Liturgy. Pierre Talec helps to bring this about through many of his phrases, as, e.g., in the following passage: "O God of encounters. may each of us in his desert detect a sign of your presence. With you. may each of us be for his brothers a traveling companion in the fellowship of the Father and the Spirit" (p. 100).

The book has a Liturgical Index which lists those prayers suitable for the different seasons of the year and feasts with scriptural references. It also contains a Thematic Index listing 147 themes with references to the pages on which these themes

are treated.

Bread in the Desert is truly a treasure for those who long to satisfy their hunger for the bread of life and for those who wish to help others who seek spiritual nourishment. "The bread of men/ the bread of God/ the same bread.... The coarse bread of suffering/ the tender bread of love,/ the same bread.... The bread of every morning/ the bread of every Mass" (p. 127). For a Christian who wishes to make the Mass more meaningful in his life, for a community who wishes to participate more fully in the Liturgy, for a priest who wishes to bring his people closer together in union with their Father and Christ their Brother-this book should be a great help.

The Persistence of Religion. Concilium, new series, vol. I, n. 9
New York: Herder & Herder, 1973.
Pp. 160. Paper, no price supplied.

Reviewed by Father Richard I. Mucowski, O.F.M., M.A. (Theology, Augustinian College, Washington, D.C.), M.A. (Sociology and Anthropology, University of Notre Dame), M.S. (Counseling, Niagara University), Instructor in Sociology at Siena College.

The editors of this survey claim that its function "is not to persuade theologians that religion persists [so much] as to point out the multiplicity and complexity of religious persistence" (p. 7). This reviewer will hold them to that promise and attempt to highlight any shortcomings which may interfere with the fulfillment of their promise.

In keeping with their intention, Greeley and Baum have selected a wide range of articles which have some significance for the Sociology of Religion. Besides the lead off articles by the editors themselves,

this volume contains material from such people as Joyce Brothers, William and Nancy McCready, John Shea, Eugene Kennedy, and David Tracy, just to name a few.

The book is divided into two parts: "Articles" and "Bulletin." The editors have not explained the reason for this division, but it does seem that the strictly sociological articles are in the first part. Due praise must be accorded the editors' aim of bringing together articles which offer a challenge to readers wanting to review questions ranging along a secularization-sacralization continuum in the area of religious studies.

Many of the individual contributions can be questioned, however, because of generalizations made without the needed specific proof or documentation. For instance, Gregory Baum says, "The religious experience of man's vocation is closely related to the creation of small communities ... These communities wish to become matrices for more liberated human life.... The small communities in fact facilitate and support the religious orientation towards solidarity and man's common calling" (p. 22). Baum offers no proof for this statement, which then seems to be used by Greeley as introductory basis for his chapter entitled "The Persistence of Community". Greeley takes this quest for community and suggests that it "represents at first implicitly and then explicitly ... the quest for a common faith to share" (p. 31). Even though Greeley is not writing, here, for a scientific sociological journal, one would have hoped for more responsible statements than this in Concilium.

An interesting article which offers some food for thought is the one written by William and Nancy McCready on "Socialization and the Persistence of Religion." This couple did some homework. They hypothesize that there is a strong connection between the sex role socialization of children and the process of religious socialization, and that both these phenomena depend on the external manifestation of their father's faith.

The book is, in general, worthwhile for the average reader, and especially for those whose interest in religion is on the popular level. It represents substantial time and effort as well as a good deal of competence on the part of the editors and contributors. Even though it contains nothing by way of original progress in the field, however, for the sake of the readers to whom it is addressed, an index should have been provided. In brief, this volume of the Concilium series is recommended to all who have an interest in the institution of religion today.

Christ in the Classroom. By F. J. Sheed. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1973. Pp. 96. Paper, \$1.45.

Reviewed by Mrs. Margaret E. Clarke, B.S. (State University of New York at Potsdam). A housewife and mother, Mrs. Clarke has done graduate work at Syracuse University and SUNY Oswego; she has participated in numerous workshops and conferences at Religious Education at the local, regional, and national levels and now serves as Directress of Religious Education at St. Edward's Parish, Elnora, N.Y.

This concise book, designed to help teachers of Religion bring their students to a closer intimacy with Christ through his teachings in the Gospels, is divided into four chapters. Each chapter conveys a quite different message of importance to teachers and reads so deceptively simply that it requires re-reading for one to digest the wealth of information it contains.

The first chapter, "A Sort of Survey," discusses the importance and influence of a teacher's personality in a class of Religion—how it affects the attitudes of the students regarding their faith, convictions, love of God, and genuine interest in matters religious. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to the importance of striving continuously to make the spirit "conceivable" to the student, in contrast to the physical body.

The second chapter, "The Jesus of the Gospels," gets to the heart of the book, the contention that teachers of Religion should be most familiar with the four Gospels—not only that they should be knowledgeable about the Scriptures, but that they should also be able to use the gospel approach to teaching the mysteries of Faith so as to help students grow in intimacy with Jesus. One can know the Christ of today only by knowing what He himself revealed regarding the truths of the Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, eternal life, the Church, religious doctrine, the Sacraments, and Morality. At every point, what Christ says in the Gospels is the root. With a better understanding of Jesus as God-man, the students would find the great mysteries of Faith more "conceivable" and hence more easily acceptable.

Woven throughout this chapter are scriptural quotations exemplifying this approach. Readers must be impressed with the author's extensive biblical knowledge and must see great merit in this method of teaching, particularly at the uppergrade levels where students are so likely to doubt and question the validity of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

In the third chapter, "Man's Life as Iesus Sees It," Mr. Sheed deals with the two lives of man: natural life which comes to the end of a road, and supernatural life which continues on after the death of the body. He continues to develop this theme of man's eternal life as Jesus taught it by touching authoritatively on the life-giving Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist and on the restoration of life through the Sacrament of Penance. A teacher could well gain new insights into the teaching of the supernatural life through the sacramental approach which he advocates.

This chapter is also richly sprinkled with biblical references. Moreover, it reflects a compelling conviction of the authority of the Church even as it gives theologians their rightful exploratory position.

The last and shortest chapter, "What the World Can Do to the Faith," states in the second line a simply worded yet profound summation of what most of us who have taken up the apostolic work of religious education think it's all about: "Religious education is a preparation for life with Christ." The remainder of the chapter delves into the worldly influences (divided into five categories by the author) which weaken attachment to Christ: money. sex, suffering, the hiddenness of God, and the Church herself. He then proceeds to suggest how the religion classes might help prepare students to face these influences.

I find this book timely in the light of the emphasis in recent years on the use of Scripture in teaching both young students and adults. Moreover, the book's ideas suggest

a method of implementing the guidelines of the official documents of catechetical teaching: The Catechetical Directory, released by the Holy See on April 11, 1971, under the auspices of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, and Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education, proposed by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States, issued on January 11, 1973. In my opinion, this refreshing consistency with the official documents would alone merit rating this book as a worthwhile handbook for teachers of Religion.

Caring: A Biblical Theology of Community. By Thomas Dubay, S.M. Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1973. Pp. 276. Cloth, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Raphael D. Bonanno, O.F.M., a missionary in Central Brazil for the last ten years and pastor and superior in Ceres, Goiás.

I don't want to begin too glibly by expressing a desire to do some "sharing about caring," but I really would like to share with you some thoughts that crossed my mind while reading this book, Caring. First of all, the author Thomas Dubay intends to discover what the Scriptures say about the much-discussed, much lived, and less-researched topic of community. His effort is important. If we want community so urgently in the Church and in religious life. a good question is, "What does the Word of God tell us about community?" What does God want us to do with community? What did the first Christians think of themselves and their togetherness? The questions are basic for those of us today who are responsible in one way or another for constructing community in a parish, in a convent, in a family, or in a Christian commune. Even "construct a community" does not sound right—as if you could do it alone, without the cooperation of the free human beings involved and the abiding presence of God's love in his grace.

Anyway, Father Dubay has set himself a valid goal and offers his biblical theology of community in eleven chapters on such relevant topics as shared vision, Word of God, Spirit-presence and prayer, freedom and structures, communal simplicity, healing a brother, criticism in community, evening and dawn (an interesting chapter on old age in community), and, finally, an appendix on communication in community. He prefers the term "Caring" to the over-worked word "love." In discussing "shared vision," he stresses that unity is always primary, and differences secondary. His chapter on "Caring" is worthy of note as he discovers the Bible's very concrete expressions of love in terms of endearment, hospitality, greetings and farewells (for example. in Paul's epistles), and in cheerful giving. The Word of God should be the fountain of community, should be the living source of the God-experience and of the brotherexperience. On freedom and structures, he takes a balanced stance in a controversial area. On healing the brother, he touches a sensitive area that perhaps needs more developed discussion than he was able to give it here. Surely the early Christians had enough experience with fraternal healing to resolve their personality conflicts and differences over apostolic methods! The chapter on old age looks at the problem from a faith-perspective, which is different. So many treat it from the Medicare.

or Social Security, or psychological, or living-dead viewpoints. But really, the aged are beginners in the eternal life.

At times, I thought the author seemed to have before him on his desk a good analytical subject-index from the back of his Bible on the term "community" and was fleshing out each biblical reference one by one. Whatever the explanation, his presentation does seem fragmented rather than well integrated. He does not seem to give us a deep, rounded vision of community in the Old and New Testaments. Also, his literary style at times sounds sloganish: short, pithy thoughts that almost stand by themselves abound and become notable quotables for banners or posters in Church or in a collegian's room. This seems to add to the impression of fragmentation and superficiality that I drew from the book.

The book is worth reading—don't misunderstand me. I learned a lot of things from it. I just hope that it is not the last attempt at a truly profound and unified biblical theology of community.

The Mystery of Suffering and Death. Edited by Michael J. Taylor, S.J. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1973. Pp. xi-203. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Megan McKenna, Editorial Director of Celebration and Assistant Director of Communications for the National Catholic Reporter. Miss McKenna, recently Editor at the Franciscan Communications Center, Los Angeles, holds degrees in theology, philosophy, and English literature.

This collection of essays is an attempt to cope with the mysterious question that has haunted mankind and each individual throughout his-

tory: "Why is man both born with a taste for 'living forever' and so brutally confronted with the reality of death?"

The book is split in two, with one section dealing with the issue of suffering, man's misadventures in life: and the other with death, the incomprehensible end of man. While the book is splintered in its approach, two things hold it tightly together: the reality of the man-God Iesus who saves us from despair, and the reality of freedom that rules any situation, even physical suffering and death. None of the writers even begins to answer our questions, but each has an insight to contribute as to how we ask our questions on these two matters in the future. Each adds reflections from science, philosophy, psychology, scripture, and theology to some of the traditional inadequacies of approaching the problems. And there is something for everyone: the essays range from a scholarly classical piece by Albert Outler to penetrating pictures of Iesus and how he faced and accepted suffering and death in his own flesh, drawn by Leonard Johnston and John L. McKenzie, to individual portraits dealing with the Teilhardian view, Rahner's stance and Boros' understanding of the question examined in fresh ways.

Death is seen as an event of nature, a personal event, an option, a "transition/transformation from the level of existence—community—to the level of being—communion. And a failure to choose communion is a refusal to grow." It is seen too as "our ultimate assertion of our alienation from the living God"—the outward mark of what it entails to be human.

But more than anything else, this book is full of hope. "The only thing I can boast about is the cross

of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6: 14). After we recover from the stunned realization that our religion celebrates a hanging, a torn brokenness in us, we can move on into the promise of resurrection that Jesus brings along with his death. We are redeemed, saved people. We are saved from sin, from separateness among men, from separateness between God and man, and from the split within ourselves. The opposite of death is birth and together they give us the pattern and meaning of life. Finally, it is faith that makes us whole and freedom to die consciously in communion that makes us like the God-man Jesus. It is he who teaches man how to live, and he teaches us too how to die.

This book is written by men who, like Zorba the Greek, cry out to his friend, each in his own tormented way: "Why does anyman die? What good does all your literature do if it can't answer that?" And it is written too by men who answer: "I don't know why, but I read to know how to cope with the agony of men with questions like yours." The fact of death makes us all human, all one, and this book intimates that death may in the end make us all more like God who made us in his image and whole

The Mystery of Suffering and Death is a good addition to any library and will speak as much to a class on eschatology or existentialism as to an individual seeking to absorb the fact of death within himself gracefully. In any case, it should be taken in short doses, for it is literally overwhelming in some of its insights. It makes the "displacement of ourselves by God" a bit easier to bear and gives an inkling of understanding as to why we live to die at the last.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Achtmeier, Elizabeth, The Old Testament and Proclamation of the Gospel. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973. Pp. 224. Cloth, \$7.50.
- Alberione, James, Father Alberione's Prayerbook, tr. Daughters of St. Paul. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1973. Pp. 320. Plastic leatherette, \$4.00.
- Dunne, John S., Time and Myth: A Meditation on Storytelling as an Exploration of Life and Death. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973. Pp. 129. Cloth, \$5.95.
- Geissler, Eugene S., comp., The Spirit Bible: A Compilation of All Scriptural Passages Mentioning the Spirit. With concordance-index. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1973. Pp. 272. Paper, \$2.25.
- Greeley, Andrew M. The New Agenda: A Proposal for a New Approach to Fundamental Religious Issues in Contemporary Terms. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973. Pp. 312. Cloth. \$6.95.
- Quoist, Michel, I've Met Jesus Christ, tr. J. F. Bernard. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973. Pp. 168. Cloth, \$4.95.

LITURGICAL RESOURCE MATERIALS

received for review from North American Liturgy Resources, 300 E. McMillan St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45219:

Dallen, James, Praising His Mercy. Pp. 103. Paper, \$2.95.

Dallen, James, Worship in a New World. Pp. 110. Paper, \$1.95.

Elia, Tim, The Toronto Mass. LP Disc, \$4.95.

Garza, Sister Juliana, O.P., Communion Muse. LP Disc, \$4.95.

Kolesar, John, Ministers of Life: The Role of Lay Ministers of the Eucharist. Pp. 75. Paper, \$1.45.

Landry, Carey, and Carol Jean Kinghorn, Hi God! An ecumenical religious education program. Boxed set containing 2 LP discs, Teacher-Parent Book, Music (melody) Book, and Poster Set, \$16.95.

Sylvester, Erich, The Best Is Yet to Come. LP Disc, \$4.95.

Wise, Joe, The Body at Liturgy. Pp. 135. Paper, \$4.95.

Zsigray, Joe, Arise, Come Sing. LP Disc, \$4.95.

Zsigray, Joe, Berakah. LP Disc, \$4.95.

The following liturgical resource materials were received for review from Fontaine House (same address as above):

Wise, Joe; Dave Duffin, and John Pell, Songprints. LP Disc and book, \$6.95.

Wise, Joe, Watch with Me. LP Disc, \$4.95.

Wise, Joe, Welcome in. LP Disc, \$4.95.