

# **ENCOUNTER**

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RELIGIOUS FORMATION MEETING

A Magazine for discussion of pastoral, educational and  
spiritual problems.

Published by the  
MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

*For Private Circulation Only.*

# FOLKLORE

By B. Baldwin, M.S.C.

Will it be another Congo? Will it be another Viet Nam? Can you cram the lessons of 2,000 years of history into a primitive society, and bring them to a civilised level in 50 years? Can a polyglot people with three hundred mother tongues, and no common culture or national sense become a nation?

The questions are teasy but irrelevant. But the problem they expose, is going to be the inevitable concern of all of us for a long time, whether we like it or not. Any aid to our thinking should be welcome.

Looking for a similar case, already advanced on the road that New Guinea must go, we can hardly do better than take Kenya. It does have roughly the same sort of people, with the same sort of recent history, living in much the same sort of climate and conditions, with the same kind of tribal organisation and religion. The nearest to the common denominator as it were for Kenya could well be the Gikuyu, and they would be very near the common denominator for New Guinea.

The head of 1,000,000 Gikuyu Jomo Kenyatta, who was jailed for eight years as a rebel, for his political activities, and credited with master-minding the Mau Mau uprising, is now president of Kenya. He is a mission schooled pagan. He is also articulate in our idiom, and his written a book, "Facing Mount Kenya." It is just such a book, as a few Papuans could have written about Papua, but none have. In fact among all the books, that have been printed on New Guinea, how singularly scarce is the voice of the Papuan? Yet their ideas must crystallise and take a form recognisably their own, or the words that should shape their national destiny, will be passed over as foreign. This is one reason why we can applaud the arrival of such a book, as "Facing Mount Kenya." The experts dogmatising from their scientific Cathedra in the temple of "We Agnostics," served their turn, when they produced Kenyatta. He has the courage to lay bare his own personal convictions. "I know, I must offend those professional friends of the African, who are prepared to maintain their friendship for eternity as a sacred duty, provided only, that the African will continue to play the part of an ignorant savage, so they can monopolise the office of interpreting his mind, and speaking for him."

The attitude of mind of the pagan Kenyatta is stalwartly religious. His paganism is coloured, its lines deepened, perhaps unbeknown to himself, by the challenge of, and contact with Christianity. "As far as religion was concerned the African was regarded (by the incoming missionaries) as a clean slate, on which anything could be written. He was supposed to take wholeheartedly all religious dogmas of the whiteman, and keep them

sacred and unchallenged, no matter how alien to the African mode of life. The Europeans based their assumption on the conviction, that everything the African did or thought was evil. They set out to uproot the African body and soul from his customs and beliefs."

Kenyatta has given a lot of time and thought to the problem of how to show, that much that the primitive does and thinks is good, and particularly in that aspect of his living, which is religious. This primitive religion is a very small thing. Its horizon is closed in. Relatives, and relatives of relatives, friends, and friends of friends dwell in its light, the rest is wilderness and the night. But just because it is small, they hold it very close. It is all they have. Because it is all they have, their communion with the dead is almost as important as with the living. Because their window on religion is only one and is so small, they are always at it. The only figures they can see from it, apart from the living, take on the aura of patron saint, guardian angel, tutelary deity, or awesome tyrant. God, if they have any idea of him, is very vague and remote, a sort of counterpart to the living head of the headmen, whoever he may be. Their gate to the hereafter is a peak or an island, set against the sunset. They make of their greatest problem, the death of their nearest and dearest an apotheosis by their greatest cultural endeavour, the institution of the song and dance.

Upon this small hinge many things turn, some of them unpredictable. I strongly suspect, that Kenyatta in his revulsion from the missionary's pharisaism, and reversion to his primitive mystique, still took away more of Christianity than he knew. After all what the missionary was trying to give him, and what he himself sensed the need of, facing the problems of his country, was the same thing. What the Mau Mau oath itself, and all their hideous practice was trying to supply, was again the same thing, — the spiritual substance that it takes to make a nation. That some manifestations of this spiritual stir, should pivot on love's corollary hate, should not surprise us. Whether it be voodoo, a Buddhist monk or nun suiciding with petrol, the presumption of the cargo cult, or the despair of the Vailima madness, or human sacrifice anywhere in the world, any time in history, ingredients in the agony on this level, are a vision of hope, and a struggle with lack of faith.

Kenyatta has been for thirty years in the vortex of Kenya's stir, and to those who cluster about him, and support him, he gives great strength. His own strength is in this, that he has clarified his thought, and given it formal expression. He gives self respect to his fellow Gikuyu's, when he publishes this to the world, and when he tells them, that they are not just rude savages, that they have their own legitimate form of a liberal education; that each Gikuyu child forms an "indelible mental picture of this from the vivid way in which stories are told and their incidents acted out before his eyes." Going along with him, believing his expressed reverence for the purity of the innocent, his own humility and

shame in having lost it, and sharing with him the glow of glory that surrounds the performance of "their magic, and traditional ceremonies in undisturbed serenity, facing Mount Kenya," they can feel, that they are holding on to the best of what there is, for the national unity of Kenya. Each Kenyan can say to himself "he is my man."

After all they have to be themselves. They cannot be grafted on to some European or other stock, which does not want them. They have as a nation to live off their own roots. But Kenyatta would, I think, be dismayed, if he realised how little of the glow of glory there was for others, about so much that fills his book. Having made the reference to the "vivid way in which stories are told and their incidents acted out," he never comes back to them. His concern is rather with magic, and the rituals of primitive piety, and the glow of glory in these is only for those who have grown up in them, in their familiar form of society. The detribalised can never re-enter, no converts are ever made, and that for the very good reason, that their expression is only for themselves, like the intimate understanding of Lovers. Facing a wider circle, even the magician is tongue-tied.

The stories and their acting out, is an entirely different matter. The homeric spirit of these is something for all the world. Kenyatta does not know us, or is not thinking, when he says, "the African is conditioned by cultural and social institutions of centuries, to a freedom of which Europe has little conception. "What Kenyatta has in mind surely, is the spirit of myth and legend, the ark of his people's cultural inheritance. In this, men of all the tribes of all the world can meet and find common ground and understanding. This is the largest area of coherent thought that tribes have. It has even a literary style, poetic patterns of expression, a polish and sophistication, like that of the world's great literatures, because like language itself, it is in a way, a product of all the people of all preceding generations.

Turning to New Guinea, there seems to be a neglect in this department, that is curious and disturbing. Polynesia, smaller, more scattered, and contacted earlier, was served a notably better deal. The result, a world-wide esteem. But the myths and legends of Melanesia, and those of Polynesia come off the same stem. Each can enhance the other. It is not that the studies were not made. Because the myths and legends provide the firmest ground there is, no missionary compiling a vocabulary, or a grammar, making a translation, or merely preparing lessons in the mother tongue, has neglected to write down, or at least to listen to the tribal classics. But perhaps this is no age for humanities. But if only as much has been done in the South West Pacific generally, as has been done in Melanesian Papua, there must be enough material, written down, lost, or at least coming within the cognisance of some competent person, to fill a bus.

This epic tradition is a stepping stone for the missionary. He welcomes this time honoured address to the problems of life and

death, suffering and guilt, mystery and cult. He finds in it a training to culture, an exercise in recognition of the good, the true, and the beautiful. In its range, from cosmogony to birds and insects, from table manners to the life hereafter, repeated over and over in these people and in those, a recognisable folk instinct, a distinct suggestion of a remaining glow of the primeval revelation. All this is foundation ready laid. He no more wants to fight or be rid of it, than Christianity was at issue with the epic tradition of Greece and Rome; any more than Moses, under inspiration despised the myths of creation, the flood, or Melchisedech; any more than others later, despised the patience of Job.

It is outside the context of divine worship. Papuans would endorse in relation to pigs, what Kenyatta says about the Kenyan offerings to the spirits. "The gifts which an elder gives to the ancestor's spirits, as when a sheep is sacrificed to them, and which perhaps seem to an outsider, to be prayers directed to the ancestors, are nothing but the tributes symbolising the gifts, which the departed elders would be have received, had they been alive, and which the living elders now receive." It is religious and strong with deep sentiments of natural, familiar piety, the virtue that made great the ancient Romans. It is no more wrong, or to be uprooted than flowers on a grave, or Anzac Day.

There are times, and there are individuals who pervert these fond associations with necromance, and none is more alive to this, than the neophyte, in the first fervour of his new found faith. He will be the first perhaps, and the most forthright to condemn. But if the missionary follows him, on the assumption that he must know, he may get himself into the position complained of by Kenyatta. It sets many good things in train, if the missionary knows his people's culture, and gives it due honour and recognition. Parochially, most missionaries are doing this. But a wider diffusion is overdue.

# PRIEST-TEACHERS

By J. F. McMahon, M.S.C.

In his article "M.S.C. Apostolate of Teaching" (ENCOUNTER, April 1965) Father Prentice begins by posing a question: how do we as priests derive personal satisfaction from teaching merely secular subjects? It seem to me that this question is only partly answered in his article. Father Pentice gives a very helpful and comprehensive account of the opportunities for priestly ministry both within a College (teaching of Christian Doctrine, administration of the Sacraments, pastoral counselling) and outside (supply work, retreats to religious, ecumenical contacts). One is tempted to conclude that almost exclusively the personal satisfaction comes rather from doing eminently priestly things than from teaching secular subjects. Hence I propose to go a step further and pose a second question: how can one who has been ordained to offer sacrifice, whose mandate is to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, derive personal satisfaction from a situation in which he is obliged to spend the greater part of his time imparting secular knowledge?

We do not really find an answer to this by pointing out that many priests in parishes or in the Missions are obliged to undertake works that are not strictly priestly. By force of circumstances they have to be builders and bursars, they have to organise social functions, they have to raise funds for parish or school. It could be said of them perhaps that these activities are detrimental to their priestly apostolate just as the teaching of secular subjects militates against the true apostolate of a priest-teacher. It might be said of all priests that the ideal would be for Religious and laity to take over all the non-priestly activities of the priest to leave him free to devote himself to strictly priestly duties. This may seem rather fanciful to anyone who has both feet on the ground and is in the thick of the fray, but at least it gets to the root of the problem; if we can find some solution for the priest-teacher it may well be applied to all those other priests who are engaged in works that are apparently non-sacerdotal.

Is the work of education compatible with the priesthood? As Fr. M. J. O'Connell, S.J. puts it: "Have groups of priests engaged in education simply become prisoners of the work they started, unable to escape the inner logic of expansion, its ever-growing demands for further commitments as the realms of important human knowledge grow broader and more detailed?" (1)

## A PRACTICAL PROBLEM

There is no need to stress the practical importance of this problem for our own schools. To-day when just about everything is queried and there is much confusion caused by the restless questioning of all established traditions, the priest assigned to

teaching may have his moments of doubt, especially if he is deeply conscious of his priesthood and of the ideals set before him in the seminary regarding the importance of priestly functions. The teacher who is not dedicated to the task of teaching is not only a loss to a school in manpower, he upsets its smooth running and can ruin the future prospects of his pupils. And it is difficult to be dedicated to the task of teaching if one has a divided mind on the whole question of priests teaching. The situation is worse still if one thinks he is badly treated by being assigned to teaching when he would prefer to be doing what would seem to be more priestly work.

#### A REVALUATION?

It is clear, of course, that those who argue against the priest as a teacher of secular subjects cannot claim the support of Canon Law or the practice of the Church. Canon Law may debar the priest from certain activities, but education is not one of them. The centuries' old practice of the Church is historic fact. If the Church, speaking through Bishops and Religious Superiors, requires diocesan and religious priests to take part in education, those who owe obedience to the Church are undoubtedly doing something which is at least extrinsically sacerdotal. But, because of changing conditions, it is being suggested that the Church might do well to have another look at the practice of commissioning priests for this particular apostolate. Thus Rev. Harold Thompson (2) C.S.V. in a well-reasoned and moderate article maintains that the time has come for a revaluation of the whole situation. Among the reasons he brings forward are: the urgent need for greater missionary effort, the shortage of priestly vocations, the present availability of Catholic lay-teachers to take the place of priests, the impossible task set the priest of specialising in education, the need for a more total dedication to priestly studies. Professor J. M. Lee, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Notre Dame (3) is more dogmatic: "Class-room teaching of non-catechetical subjects should not be undertaken by priests because it falls outside of the sacerdotal ministry. Certainly the priestly power is too valuable a resource to squander in an activity which a layman can do equally well or better." These two opinions are not isolated examples but are typical of a school of thought that is becoming more vocal, especially in France. It is a minority opinion at this stage and there is no shortage of supporters for the long-accepted tradition of the priest-teacher. But we cannot altogether ignore the arguments used (4).

#### TIMES HAVE CHANGED

The argument, familiar to us since the days of Pope John, for the need of renewal in the Church to keep pace with the changing conditions in our world, finds its echo in this context. To understand just how it applies here it may be necessary to go a little further afield than the priest-teacher situation.

In general, so the argument goes, there is no longer the same need for the Church, let alone priests, to be directly engaged

in education. In the past the Church has entered this field because of a particular crisis: the Benedictines to cope with the illiteracy that followed on the barbarian invasions; the Jesuits to counteract the new pagan humanism and the Protestant revolt; numerous orders of men and women in recent centuries to help the Church preserve its teaching and traditions during a time of siege that lasted until the present century. Because these crises have disappeared, so the argument concludes, there is no longer the need there was for the Church to put so much time and energy into education.

## THE NEW CRISES

The 'times-have-changed' argument can be taken too far. It is true that widespread illiteracy is not a problem that the Church has to solve; the divisive force of Protestantism is not so strong; bigotry has largely disappeared; the state of siege is over and Catholics are expected to follow a policy of 'infiltration' (in the non-pejorative sense) of society rather than one of keeping it at bay. But let us not be blind to the dangers of this new approach a danger which apparently proved too much for the priest-workers when the infiltrators lost contact with headquarters. The new crisis, as I see it, is more subtle than any in the past and may be found in a widespread de-Christianisation and secularisation of society. Catholics are a minority in this pluralist society and have to be careful that instead of influencing it they become absorbed by it. Indeed one might go so far as to say that there is a greater need today than ever before for a Catholic Education system that will provide a wider and deeper understanding of the Church's teaching (5). It is true that there is a general revival of interest in religion in the world at large. How long it will last is difficult to say since this revival runs counter to a more general tendency to ignore religion altogether in daily life. But for the present at any rate statements by Catholic and Protestant theologians make news; theological matters are discussed intelligently; secular universities are establishing chairs of theology; the "separated brethren" are coming closer together and presenting a united (?) front to the materialism of the age. But it would be wishful thinking to maintain that religion is permanently "in". Our society is interested in religion on ITS OWN TERMS. And the danger for the Churches, to quote Fr. Crane, S.J., is that they will try to come to terms with secular society instead of coming to grips with it. Thus an Episcopalian leader in America abandons the doctrine of the Trinity because it is not acceptable to modern man. Bishop 'honest-to-God' Robinson in England asserts that our presentation of God as a person is not convincing in our age and we should define him rather as the 'basis of the absolute'; he suggests that our attitude to heaven and hell should be that of a muted agnosticism since these doctrines can no longer have any force for the modern mind; in place of the Ten Commandments as an objective norm of morality, he would urge us to make all our actions into acts



of love. In other words the Churches are expected to accommodate themselves to modern society and as long as they are careful to do this they will be accepted by the secularists. Even some avant-garde Catholics want the Church to change its teaching on celibacy, censorship and contraception.

Hence a certain caution is not out of place when we hear the argument that "times have changed;" as though the golden age has arrived and we can afford to dispense with many things that were considered essential to the Church's survival in the past. The Church might well be facing the greatest crisis in its history — all the more dangerous because not so obvious — and the situation needs to be examined very carefully before any drastic departures are made from the methods and techniques that have proved themselves in the past.

### IS THE PRIEST-TEACHER STILL NEEDED?

In the light of what has been said above we may assume that the Church will not abandon the field of education. But we may ask, is it necessary for the priest to remain in this work? Has the situation changed to such an extent that he can be dispensed with and released for other forms of the apostolate? The answer to this must depend to a large extent on the circumstances of the Church in a particular country at a particular time. "The priesthood is essentially unchanging. In every year of every shifting age the priest is the teacher of the ways of life, offering to God for the people and uniting nations and God in the bonds of prayer . . . Yet in every age this genus of the priesthood is modified by a specific difference. The priest to-day differs in his specialised functions from the priest in former times of problem and peril. The priest's specific difference is determined by the needs and heresies of the age and by his efforts to answer them." (6)

It would be vain to try to prophesy what the "needs and heresies" of the future will be. But Fr. Thompson, C.S.V. (see above) suggests some of the needs of the present which in his opinion call for a reevaluation of the way the priest is at present used. The most convincing argument is the one that calls for more missionary effort and some readjustment may well be advised and necessary. The Church has faced this same dilemma in the past; in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when she was trying to cope with the aftermath of the Reformation and the new paganism by means of a new education system spearheaded by the Society of Jesus. India, China, Japan, South America and South Africa were virtually untouched. Yet this was the age of great missionary endeavour as well as educational effort. Perhaps it was true then as now that not all priests are missionary material as not all are meant to be scholars and educators. Similarly the need for priests to be more totally dedicated to theological and biblical studies is not something entirely new in the Church. Before the introduction of the Tridentine system of seminary education it was even more urgent that it is today.

It is suggested, then, that the pressures that exist to-day and are used to argue for the release of priests from teaching in order to do other work, are not just peculiar to our age but have existed in the past. It is important that a balance be struck; a drastic solution of one problem may create further problems (7).

#### IS TEACHING COMPATIBLE WITH THE PRIESTHOOD?

This is the vital question. It seems to me that those who claim that the two are incompatible take a very narrow view of what a priest is. While the primary work of the priest is the official worship of God, the administration of the Sacraments and the preaching of the good news, this is not the full story. The priest is the official witness of the Church in all the areas in which the Church tries to re-Christianise society.

Nobody would deny that the teaching of Christian Doctrine is a priestly work; that a priest is ordained for this among other things and that nobody strictly speaking can substitute for him in this. In practice others may prove more successful in imparting knowledge because their technique is better, because by their training they are better able to understand the mentality of their pupils and to communicate in language more suited to them. But if the priest is well trained in the technical side of Catechetics, he is in theory the best teacher of Christian Doctrine. As Fr. Prentice makes clear in the article already referred to, the teaching of Christian Doctrine is not by any means the sum total of what a Catholic College has to offer by way of Religious Education. The priest in the Catholic School is not just a teacher but a Father, Physician and Counsellor as well — all priestly roles.

#### AND SECULAR SUBJECTS?

Although the most important subject in the Catholic School is Christian Doctrine (if it may be called a 'subject'), the priest-teacher spends the greater part of his time teaching secular subjects. Is he to be seen as a substitute in this until such time as he can be replaced by a Religious or a lay Catholic? Or is there a sense in which this can be understood as priestly work, apart from the fact that, because he is so commissioned by the Church, it is extrinsically a priestly work?

As far as I know theologians have not examined this aspect of the priesthood in depth, but Fr. M. O'Connell, S.J. in an article (8) in *Theological Studies* lays the foundation for some mature study of the priest in the class-room as an official witness of the Church. After examining the notion of 'priest' in the Old and New Testaments he argues for a "larger view of the priesthood" which some have restricted to a purely cultic function. He then proceeds to make the following points: the priest's function is to be a minister of the word and an official witness of the redemptive will of God for man and his world; there is a hierarchy of activities for the priest, primacy in this belonging to the direct preaching of the gospel with its call for faith and conversion; a hierarchy of activities (in terms of need) does not change the fact that there are

other ways in which a priest may bear witness to the redemptive love of God, "and some of these ways, I would venture to say, must always be travelled if the Church is not to absent itself from key areas in the life of man whom it summons to conversion and (9) salvation;" there is need of priest-scientists . . . of priest-literateurs, priest-philosophers, priest-theologians; there is need of priest-poets and priest-artists; the Church must have an official presence in these areas, because the great and fundamental human value, knowledge, is always threatened by the innate tendencies of fallen man. It needs to have the word of its redemption spoken to it, not in abstract statement, but in the concrete form of its exercise by the Church in the latter's official as well as unofficial witness.

In addition to his influence as a person who practices Christian virtues and as a man of prayer, the priest in the class-room is (10) an official representative of the Church. His pupils see him as one who celebrates Mass, preaches, hears Confessions; they understand he is not his own master but is subject to the Church. He is an image of the Church and in his authority over and care for his pupils he embodies characteristics typical of the Church in its attitude towards the members of the Mystical Body. Their reaction of respect and confidence is a reaction not just to a person but to a priest and through the priest to the Church. Surely here the priest is a minister of the word in a "key area," especially when we realise how important for the future of the Church is the formation of the youth of today (11).

There is another point of view that cannot be neglected. The priest-teacher has that authority in the eyes of the young that helps to put into true perspective the independent and questioning attitude of the adolescent. They see one well versed in secular knowledge and yet totally committed to a higher reality, a mediator between two worlds. The example of a consecrated life shows that it is practicable to integrate the secular and religious. In so far as reverence for authority and a check on intellectual pride disposes the soul for a reception of divine grace and the increase of faith, the priest-teacher, in common with all Catholic teachers, is doing something which is sacerdotal in the broad sense; but being an official minister of the Church the priest does it 'eminetiori modo.' (12).

Moreover it is becoming increasingly clear that a priest has to become a leader in education if he is to retain the respect and confidence not only of Catholics but of a secular society that makes education a top priority. Generally speaking the priest has lost his once unique position as an educated man: "the priest is no longer among the few who are educated, he is among the many; and the mainstream of education does not parallel his own but diverges from it." Very often he no longer talks the same language as his education-conscious people. (13)

But to justify the position of a priest teaching secular subjects he has to be seen as a priest in every way. He can destroy

the image of the Church in the eyes of the young by showing himself to be something less than the ideal; by coming down to the level of his pupils rather than raising them up to his; and sometimes by going below their level in being unfair or vindictive or losing his temper or acting from inferior motives or depending too much on corporal punishment.

## PRIEST-TEACHER AND MISSIONARY OF THE SACRED HEART

What I have said above concerns priest-teachers in general. As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart there are other influences on our Apostolate that cannot be ignored. Our Constitutions, for instance, when speaking of those who are appointed to the work of educating youth, stress a total dedication to this work of both "adorning minds of pupils with knowledge" and "instilling-into their hearts faith, piety and virtue." This will be done by good teaching and by being the sort of person a Missionary of the Sacred Heart should be. We have the "Statutes for Colleges" drawn up at the Provincial Chapter of 1958, "MSC Aims and Ideals in Education" by Fr. T. Kelly, M.S.C., "Religious Formation and Pastoral Care in our Colleges" by Fr. F. Fletcher, M.S.C. All these help us to build up a tradition in education which has a distinctive MSC spirit. At the same time we see the teaching Apostolate within the context of the Society as a whole. At the last General Chapter it was stressed that 'de facto', work in the Missions takes pride of place in the Society as our primary work. We are aware, too, that while educators are forming the young with a view to the future of the Church, those in Parishes and on the Mission are continuing a work that the School only begins and to them is given the task of bringing about the renewal of Catholic adult life that has been stressed by Vatican Council II. Finally, we cannot forget that if all these works are to flourish more vocations are essential. As things are in Australia, it is not easy to make contact with likely recruits except in our own Schools and Parishes. At present there are some fifty Professed members of the Society who are ex-students of our own Schools. It could well be that we shall become increasingly dependent on our own Colleges for vocations and this is something which rests to some extent with each member of the staff.

## CONCLUSION

We have entered the field of education in a small way and it is a form of the Apostolate for which some have received a mandate from the Society and the Church.

Given such a mandate, this is extrinsically a priest's work and in given circumstances one engaged in such work is doing the only work that is compatible with his priesthood.

As priests and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart we can make our work more priestly by being true pastors of the souls with whom we have personal contact, by the way we teach Christian Doctrine, by the manner in which we bear witness to

Our Lord and His redemptive love and are to our pupils an image of the Church and true mediators between the secular and spiritual elements in the world.

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#### NOTES:

1. *Theological Studies*, March 1965; "The Priest in Education: Apostolate or Anomaly" by Matthew J. O'Connell, S.J., p. 78.
2. *Review for Religious*, January 1964; "The Priest-Teacher and Secular Subjects" by Harold Thompson, C.S.V.
3. *Seminary Education in a Time of Change*, 1965, ed. J. M. Lee and L. I. Putz, C.S.C., p. 367.
4. *Voces Rommanae*, MSC International Scholasticate, Rome 1963. In an article by Fr. T. Wilson, M.S.C., "The Priest Teacher," opinions for and against the idea of a priest-teacher of secular subjects are quoted.
5. Hence the vital weakness in the argument of those who would be content to see Catholic children educated in State Schools in Australia with a visiting Catechist supplying their religious instruction. Anyone who has tried to draw up a curriculum or follow a syllabus in Christian Doctrine must realise the futility of trying to cover the ground in one or two classes a week even with graded classes. And this leaves out altogether the important character formation and counselling that are inseparable from a complete Catholic education. See *Issue*, Autumn 1965, published by the Committee for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in the University of Sydney. An article by J. E. Bromley, "Father of the Man," p. 9 develops this idea more fully.
6. "The Changing Priesthood" by Daniel A. Lord, S.J., in *Meeting the Vocational Crisis*, ed. L. Kane, 1956, p. 104.
7. The argument that Catholic lay-teachers are now available to release the priest from teaching rings somewhat hollow in Australia, at any rate, where the shortage of personnel and of finance for wages is so critical.
8. See note 2.
9. M. J. O'Connell, S.J., op. cit. p. 83.
10. "Boys will respect a man of high principle, they will learn from a fine teacher, they will even admire a man of penance; but unless he be a close companion of Jesus, no teacher will ever produce that influence on the heart and soul of the pupil that will make him too a friend and lover of Jesus; one might even say that unless someone else is at prayer on his behalf, he will not even make him a good Catholic" *Difficulties in Mental Prayer*, E. Boylan.
11. *Issue*, Autumn 1965 (see note 5) has an article by Fr. J. Casey, S.J. entitled "Has the Church School a Future?" of which the concluding paragraph is pertinent here: "The fact is that the contact which the School has with its pupils is more embracing, its influence more profound than is the case

with either parents or church. Church and parents are wise if they realise this and regard their Church Schools 'System' as indispensable, and are ready to make all necessary sacrifices to maintain it.

12. See *Voces Romanae* (note 4) where the idea is further developed.
13. *Review for Religious*, July 1961: "The Priest in the Modern World," by Michael Novak, p. 267.

## RELIGIOUS FORMATION MEETING

### in Christmas Holidays

With permission, plans go forward for a 2-3 day Meeting on Religious Formation of boys in our Colleges.

**TOPICS:** Catechetics, Counselling, Sodalities, Vocations etc. (We hope to get some "outside experts" to attend certain sessions).

**ATTENDANCE** — a special invitation to Directors of Religious Formation in each College, and others interested in this work.

**LOCATION AND TIME** — yet to be decided. If you hope to attend, please NOTIFY FR. FLETCHER, CHEVALIER, by NOVEMBER 15th, so that a time acceptable to the majority can be found.

**AFTERWARDS** — it is hoped to hand on the fruits of the discussions to the Theologian Scholastics.

# A SIGN OR NOT?

By W. J. Ryan, M.S.C.

Theologians have carefully stated the nature of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as devotion to Christ's glorified human heart of flesh as the symbol of his love, or as devotion to the love of Christ as symbolized in his glorified human heart, or they have given some other definition like these, accurate as far as it goes.

But it must be remembered that a speculative Theologian can be a poor psychologist, especially when defining dogmatically something which is almost completely psychological, as is an act of devotion. He can fail to examine the psychology of the act and so fail to appreciate the complexity of the concrete reality which he is attempting to define.

I am not satisfied with the above examples of definition, and think they make poor psychology or rather that the psychology they imply or suppose is an unreal one.

First, as a general criticism, in both definitions the pride of place in the definition is given to a thing, and not to Christ himself. The first definition gives pride of place to the glorified heart, the second to the love of Christ. I find the first unbearable, the second unreal. I cannot bear to read any statements that would draw my attention to the physical heart of Christ as a thing in itself, and I cannot believe that anyone has a devotion to the love of Christ, stated simply as that.

Theologians will hasten to point out that the first definition says that the devotion is to Christ's heart as a symbol of his love, not to the heart in itself. My objection still stands. The statement places the heart in the forefront, at the focal point of attention, and makes Christ subordinate to it. It implies or at least suggests that the act of devotion must go first to the physical heart and through it as a symbol to the love of Christ. I do not think this is at all necessary, nor do I think that it is the usual approach of devotees.

Hence, as a particular criticism of the first kind of definition, it could be said that while it includes the essential elements of the devotion, it has little regard for the psychological relations of those elements.

Turning to the second kind of definition — devotion to the love of Christ as symbolized in his glorified heart — I think we have here an example of the separation and isolation of the elements of a complex reality, to the detriment of understanding, which is a blemish in some speculative theology. Here, the love of Christ is separated from Christ himself and made to stand out as an isolated object. To say that the devotion is devotion to the love of Christ is like defining my relation to my mother as devotion to

the love of my mother. How roundabout and unreal! In everyday life does anyone have devotion to the love of another? Are not people devoted to another whom they love and who loves them? I do feel that this seemingly simple phrase "devotion to the love of Christ" is not an accurate statement of reality. It is only one of the many phrases and words that clutter up our theology and our prayers and lull us to sleep in a world of abstract concepts which has been built up in an academic atmosphere out of touch with human life.

Father McGuane has told us that he prefers "the worship of the Heart of Christ." Well, this phrase also comes into the field of my objections. I do not like it because it is directed to the heart as part of Christ. Understand that I am objecting to the psychological effect of words and phrases, to the way of expressing the reality of the devotion. I feel that this devotion has been surrounded by unhappy thoughts, words, phrases and sentences which have placed it in an unreal light.

This of course may be dismissed as imagination, but I feel that the trouble comes from the fact that Theologians spend their years of training chiselling out essences. The complete Theologian has a set of beautifully rounded essences; he has chiselled away all the accidentals, but it is through the accidentals (concrete reality) that the human mind must be approached.

In this devotion, is the heart of Christ to be used as a sign or not? The definitions say it is to be used as a sign. (This is a part of the definition I like). If so, it cannot be used as a thing in itself. It must be used merely as a sign. The distinction is complete. as far as I can see. It does not admit of degree or variation. In apprehending a physical object as a sign, the mind cannot at the same time stay in the object in itself. If it does, it has ceased to use it as a sign.

It has always puzzled me, therefore, why Theologians, in teaching that the heart in this devotion is a sign of love, hasten to point out that of course the heart of Christ can be worshipped as part of the sacred humanity united hypostatically with the Word. I feel that there is no need to say this. Does it not give the impression that they are not really sure how the heart should be approached. I fail to see that it makes any worthwhile contribution to the devotion, and is, I think, bad psychology. It emphasises the physical heart explicitly as a part of the sacred humanity.

The onus rests with me now to attempt a statement of the devotion. Firstly, here are the elements of the devotion in what seems to me to be their order of psychological importance:

- (a) the person of Christ,
- (b) his love for men,
- (c) his heart as a sign of his love.

Hence a description of this devotion or form of piety might run thus: What Catholics call 'devotion to the Sacred Heart' is devotion to Jesus Christ who loves all men. His



heart stands as a symbol of this love, and is used thus in the devotion.

A fuller description might be:

This devotion is devotion to Jesus Christ who is God-made-man and the redeemer of men, who consequently loves all men as God, as man and as redeemer, and reveals his heart to men as a sign of this love .

To show what I am trying to do here is criticising adversely some accepted definitions of a well-established devotion, I would ask you to consider the following questions and answer them.

If my mind does not go first to the heart of flesh and then through it to Christ, but goes directly to Christ who loves me, and refers occasionally to the heart in a mere passing way as a sign of his love for me, am I practising the devotion?

Again, if I do not explicitly apprehend the heart as a physical heart of flesh but only vaguely apprehend it as a mere symbol, am I practising the devotion? If the answers are in the negative, then I must confess that I have failed to attain the true devotion. I would suggest, however, that there may be others in my position.

On the other hand, if the answers to the above question are in the affirmative, then I would reaffirm my contention that the usual theological definitions of the devotion are not in harmony with the concrete reality.

For (to speak, as I am forced to, of my own devotion) the words "devotion to the heart of Christ" or "devotion to the love of Christ as symbolized in his heart," do not truly define or describe it. I am not devoted to the heart of Christ even as a symbol of his love. This is not a real description of my devotion. It is mere notional knowledge. I am devoted to Christ who loves me, and I am aware occasionally of the fact that he has revealed his heart as a sign of his love.

May I suggest that in speaking or writing of the devotion, we keep Christ himself at the centre of attention, we do not make an abstraction of his love but speak or write of him loving, and that we use the heart merely as a sign, a point of reference.

By way of a note, I would point out that the widespread custom of identifying Christ himself with the heart (eg. Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father) does not go contrary to my suggestions. Attention is not here drawn to the heart as a separate part of Christ, rather the physical heart is almost lost sight of in the enveloping emphasis on the person. This is the process in calling Christ himself 'the Sacred Heart,' a fashion of discourse which may appeal to some but not to others.

# DE LA SALLE VOCATIONS' PROGRAMME

By Courtesy of Br. Fintan, F.S.C.

The task of obtaining new postulants cannot be left to chance, nor to a programme of prayer alone. The Lord does, indeed, bid us to pray the Lord to send labourers into His vineyard, but He uses men to further His purposes.

## DUTIES OF RECRUITER FOR PROVINCE:

1. Helps and advises local recruiters — annual meetings etc.
2. Preparation of pamphlets, bulletins, etc. — vocation material.
3. Visits to the schools — speaks to the classes — interviews candidates — conference with community.
4. Places advertisements through Catholic magazines and newspapers — organises week-end retreats — visits to House of Formation — conferences to interested groups.
5. Makes arrangements with families of applicants.
6. Accompanies new members to Juniorate, Novitiate, etc.
7. Receives at least twice a year written reports from local vocation directors of their activities, interviews, prospects.

This in turn is handed to the Provincial.

## LOCAL RECRUITER: (Equivalent of M.S.C. Director of Religious Formation).

1. He must have suitable time and place for interviews — Stocks of literature should be available.
2. He must organise school programme, supply teachers with definite outlines and check its success.
3. Speak to the classes — invite pupils to interviews.
4. Sponsor vocation groups, sodalities — since these deepen the spiritual life of the students while offering them an outlet for their zeal.
5. Publicity — professions, ordinations, jubilees.
6. Preliminary interview work — helping and directing those interested in diocesan priesthood and other congregations as well.

He is the key-man in the community for all matters pertaining to recruiting, though he must avoid the pitfall of believing that it is his exclusive right to foster vocations in the school. He helps the other teachers in every way possible and takes a special interest in candidates who have been accepted.

## CLASS TEACHER:

1. Prepare the soil by encouraging attention at prayer, regularity at the sacraments.
2. Explain the problems in the Church today — the loftiness of working for God.

3. In his lessons, stress the great truths of life which led others to dedicate their lives to God.
4. Talks about religious life — duties, purpose, obligations privileges of the priesthood — difference between various kinds of Brothers — vows — secular and religious clergy — active and contemplative vocation.
5. Point out the joys, benefits and rewards of priestly and religious life.
6. Pleasant at all times, drawing youth by his kindness. His cheerful, friendly manner.
7. Direct approach — suggest vocation to suitable candidate. Personal interview more effective than group talks.
8. Co-operate with local recruiter in all programmes and activities sponsored in the school.

Such a programme if well organised and put into practice will arouse many to give themselves to the service of Christ our King.

(The above has been adapted from "TODAY'S VOCATION CRISIS" edited by Godfrey Poage, C.P. and Germain Lievin, C.S.S.R. It represents a study of many years of scientific research by nearly 1500 specialists brought together by the First International Congress on Vocations to the States of Perfection held in Vatican City in 1961).

# DEVOTION WITH A DIFFERENCE

By E. J. Cuskelly, M.S.C.

Fr. McGuane has asked a question as to whether we are agreed on the essentials of devotion to the Sacred Heart. I, for one, would not be prepared to question his theology, although we would probably differ on some of the trimmings. However, before the word "devotion" is banished (and I do not mind much if it is), I think that some of the differences among our members may be more easily understood, and tolerated, if careful account is taken of two distinctions:

- A. between two understandings of the word "devotion";
- B. between the popular spiritual climate of our day and that of some years ago.

## A. DEVOTION

- (1) *Restricted sense*, stemming from the 14th century. It owes its origin to the "devotio moderna" which aimed at fostering inner fervour by practices of piety which were *not liturgical*. It was called "modern", since it was quite different from the previous centuries when "prayer was always closely associated with the liturgy, the celebration of the eucharist and the chanting of psalms . . . Private prayer, especially in monastic tradition was always understood as a prolongation of (or preparation for) liturgical prayer." (All quotations in this section are from the articles on "devotion" in the Dictionnaire de Spiritualite. In this sense, "devotion" takes on the meaning of: "inner fervour expressed in and fostered by non-liturgical practices as inspired by and fostering this inner fervour.
- (2) *Applied to Devotion to the Sacred Heart*, this view of devotion results in a fairly simple and orderly picture:
  - (a) It *distinguishes itself clearly from the liturgy* of which it is not a part. In worship, there is first of all the liturgy, and then, as other exercises of the virtue of religion, the non-liturgical devotions. Among these is devotion to the Sacred Heart, with its own special practices. In line with the 'devotio moderna' approach, it considers these as doing something which the liturgy does not do, or can not do so well, such as fostering personal fervour etc.
  - (b) *From the Liturgy*, especially in these days, it hopes for a rejuvenation of its own practices, lest something of the way the piety of the faithful has been expressed for many years would disappear from their lives. Some would even regard such a disappearance as an impoverishment.
  - (c) *To the Liturgy*, as to something distinct from itself,

it can bring little more than formalized intentions and "Sacred-Heart-like" motives.

- (d) *To most apostolic endeavour* (since spreading the practices of the devotion is only a part of our pastoral activity), it can bring only the same intentions and motives.

We must admit that this is a perfectly legitimate view of devotion to the Sacred Heart — even though some of us do not hold it or doubt its vitality.

There is, however, another way of viewing the whole matter:

- (3) *A wider concept of 'devotions'* "The meaning which seems to have enjoyed most favour in the writers of the first centuries and which was to penetrate most deeply into christian language is certainly the one which conserves (from classical usage) the idea of *personal attachment* of the citizen to the emperor, making the idea of service of God correspond to 'devotion'. Thus understood, 'devotion' becomes a rather complex reality . . . Reference to worship is contained in it, since to worship God is one of the means of serving him."

(N.B. It is not completely accurate to identify "devotion in the theological sense" with "St. Thomas' definition of devotion," for "St. Thomas occupies a peculiar place in that he adopts a notion different from the one commonly admitted by the majority of authors of his time." (D. de Spir.)

- (4) *A correspondingly wider view of Devotion to the Sacred Heart* results from this view and leads to attitudes and conclusions which differ from those mentioned above. This wider view is one which I set forth briefly in an article in the first EN-COUNTER. It includes a 'vision of the whole of religion' which inspires a dedicated, affective response. As Fr. McGuane has pointed out, the Heart of Christ symbolizes the vision: that of a love given to us through all the mysteries of God's dealings with men; it inspires the response: that of a love returned through all our christian living. Now, in this view:

(a) *Spreading the devotion* will be sharing our vision and provoking a similar affective response. This we will do through *all* our work: preaching, teaching, hearing confessions, personal influence, etc.

(b) The *main part* of the devotion, as we live it, and we try to spread it will not be the "special practices," although, in one form or another, they will be a part. The main part will be our whole response to our vision of the love of God given to us in Christ; it will be the consecration of our whole life in love, worship, and action. In the way of worship, it will be first of all through the Liturgy, although — allowing as it can for individual attractions of grace — it will permit degrees in enthusiasm for liturgical forms. In spreading the devotion, we shall use all the modern methods of helping men to this vision and re-

sponse. The richness of this concept of devotion is such that it allows — or rather it expects — that each individual will use his own gifts, his own enthusiasms, his own personally preferred way of approach: biblical, liturgical, catechetical, or even ‘practices of the devotion.’

(c) This view is regarded by many as being the one of Haurietis Aquas, and also the one of Fr. Chevalier, for whom devotion to the Heart of Christ the High Priest informed the whole of his spirituality.

(d) Two remaining questions are (i) What stress is to be put on the place of “the physical Heart”?

(ii) What must be our attitude towards the “special practices of the devotion”?

The answer to these questions depends on a further distinction between

## B. SPIRITUAL CLIMATES (1) THEN (2) NOW.

(1) THEN (a) Private devotions, quite different from the liturgy, were part and parcel of ordinary christian piety.  
(b) In theology, catechism, preaching, and even biblical studies, not a great deal of stress was given generally to the love of God; the old Australian catechism mentions it twice, briefly.  
(c) Hence, when you said: “Consider the Heart of Christ,” this immediately opened up *new* avenues of thought, gave a *different* perspective to one’s view of God and his service. The devotee would then look for prayers and practices in which this special devotion could find expression.

(2) NOW (a) “Devotion unhesitatingly favours the sober taste of the Gospel to . . . gilt-edged prayer-books.”  
“The era of private and isolated piety is over”, for there is a greater consciousness of the Church as a united People of God.  
(b) The Liturgical movement.  
(c) The modern biblical studies catechetis, doctrinal and moral theology are all stressing the love of God, and our response to it as one of charity.  
(d) “No longer a question of imitating Christ, but of attaining to a living Person and being united with Him”.

Hundreds of quotations could be found repeating these points. The last two have a very special bearing. For, what happens now when to a person who has, through these modern movements, been brought to see this vision of Christ in his love, you say: “Consider the Heart of Christ”? Ask him what it suggests, and he will reply: “nothing that the other lines have not suggested.” Insist on the Heart, and it will be easy to give the impression that “the Heart comes between us and the Person of Christ” whom

he has already discovered.

In his article Fr. McGuane insists on the worship of the physical Heart of Christ. In hammering out points of doctrine, it is at times necessary to stress this. But, to my mind, one of the really crucial points is one closely connected, but not identical, with this one, viz. in preaching, and in 'spreading the devotion' what stress should be put on the physical Heart? I am convinced that

### INSISTENCE ON THE PHYSICAL HEART CAN EASILY DISTORT TRUE DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF CHRIST.

This conclusion follows from the certain truth that, in this devotion, the Heart of Christ is a *symbol*, and "movement towards an image (or symbol) does not stop short at the image, but tends towards that of which it is an image." If we insist so much on the physical Heart that it arrests the attention of our audience, we have destroyed its symbolic character, since a symbol is by definition that which does not arrest the attention. According to Haurietis Aquas, it is the Heart as symbol, not the Heart-as-physical-reality which enters into this devotion. The distinction is something the same as that between

- (i) a written page which is read in order to grasp the thought content; and
- (2) the same page studied as a reality of paper, ink and calligraphy.

For this reason, and for others as well, I could not accept completely this statement of Fr. Siebers (p. 5 of last Encounter): "It is therefore Christ, the entire Christ, *pointing to his heart*, and revealing to us his full personality who is the object of our devotion to the Sacred Heart." The underlined phrase may not seem to matter much, but if we really take account of the modern mentality we will omit it, for

- (i) It gives the physical Heart a prominence it need not have;
- (ii) It pinpoints the devotion to St. Margaret Mary. Certainly she has a special place in the history of the devotion. But today we are at a different period of religious history in which people "do not want a devotion founded on private revelation," or giving the impression that it is so founded.
- (iii) If we take, instead, the modern desire to "attain to Christ as a living Person and be united with him," we can easily lead people to a fuller discovery of the personal life of the God-man: of his love for the Father, his concern for men, his "feeling for us in our infirmities," in other words to his mind and heart. In this way we are "attracted to the interior Christ," and the "human Heart of God" will, quite naturally, summarize and symbolize all that the modern movements bring us to see and live.

Fr. Tessarolo writes: "Allusion to the heart must be discreet, devout, spiritual. It must be an elevation to the God of love, not a weight which drags us down to the materiality of things taken in themselves."

I can not see that we gain anything by substituting the word "worship" for "devotion," for:

- (i) Authors could be quoted who give to the words 'cultus, culte, culto' both the wide and restricted meanings.
- (ii) "Worship", in English, usually suggests a special exercise of the virtue of religion, and goes no further than that.
- (iii) Even more than 'devotion,' it suggests that we stop at the Heart. We must take account of this very real, popular difficulty. People want to be devoted to a Person, not to worship a part of his anatomy. I doubt if the theological reasons why we *can* worship the heart will help. Whatever terms we choose we must give people the idea (immediately and not after laboured explanations!) that we are preaching "devotion to the Person of Christ in his redemptive love, of which his human Heart is the natural, living symbol."

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Finally — in this view of "devotion", one's attitude towards the 'practices' will be more or less that set forth in my article in the first Encounter. Propagating them will be part of our pastoral activity, but not the main part. Also the modern movements make it evident that some of them must be up-dated. For instance, as Fr. Holstein says "Acts of reparation could well be rewritten in a more biblical, apostolic and ecclesial sense, and shorn of certain redundancies of style" to express better the biblical and theological teaching on the redemption. The man who has this wider view of the devotion will, with Pope Pius XII distinguished carefully between "the essential nature of this cult and the various forms in which it finds expression." Knowing that, in the past, certain forms of piety have served their purpose and then lapsed into oblivion, he can not begin with the premise that he must make every effort to preserve all the old practices which he hopes to see rejuvenated at the liturgical or scriptural foundations. Rather will he go first to the foundations from which people today draw their living waters of faith and devotion. His first preoccupation will not be to put the living waters into old bottles — nor even to re-shape the bottles. It will be rather to see what shapes the new streams produce in the field of prayer and piety. (For these must necessarily be formed by the strong currents of theological, scriptural, liturgical and catechetical renewal). And if some of the old bottles even re-shaped, do not fit, then he will reverently lay them to rest with the "Key of Heaven" and the "Garden of the Soul".



# REVOLUTION IN THE SENIOR RELIGION CLASSES

By F. Fletcher, M.S.C.

(This is a "DIGEST" of an article printed earlier in the year in "Our Apostolate" and the Teaching Brothers' periodicals.)

I think that everyone teaching Senior Religion and talking to Senior Religion Teachers (be they priests, brothers or nuns) and listening to comments of Senior boys and girls on their classes, must experience much disappointment. But what are we to do? How can this be remedied? When we have time(!) we attend Diocesan Conferences, we read, look for "the line" that will put the situation right.

We find firstly, a revulsion against the old dry-as-dust theology or apologetics treatments of years ago. The new line we hear is the KERYGMATIC Catechetical method of Father Hofinger and others with its emphasis on the presentation of the "Mystery of Christ" by an integrated use of Bible, Liturgy, Doctrine and Christian Living. The following of this method, we are told, will usher in a new age even in Senior Religion Classes.

So Senior Religion Teachers have thrown themselves enthusiastically into winning the souls of our 16-17-18 year olds by an enthusiastic Biblical-Liturgical-Doctrinal-Christian Living Course. With what results?

Certainly not with the very satisfactory results this method appears to have achieved in the primary grades. And much less than this same method has achieved at the First and Second Form secondary levels. Much less indeed! To the Senior pupils (if you will hear them, from schools in city or country, conducted by priests, or brothers or nuns) it appears a course that merely repeats again what they have heard so often before. They find the classes boring, and the matter uninteresting and of small help. I have what I consider sincere evidence from about 25 widely dispersed schools. Surely we can't all be so wrong or so inept.

This drove me back to a more careful study of Frs Hofinger, Sloyan and the Master, Fr. Jungmann, to see just what they said about Senior Students specifically..

By and large, without being able to quote any direct assurance in the book itself, my impression of Hofinger's "Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine" was that it was written mainly for primary and lower secondary grades, with only a few (rather interesting) indications for the Senior Secondary.

I could not feel satisfied with this judgement on Hofinger, so I turned back to his "Master", Father Jungmann in his book "Handing on the Faith." Here again continual insistence on "The child" seemed to have lower grades in mind. But what a windfall!

Jungmann has a whole section (section 10 of Chapter VII) on "Secondary Schools." He seems to envisage a new turn to Catechetics. He says, "In the lower classes we can plan the Religion period according to the method of formal steps. In the intermediate and upper classes it is better to be free of them, for it is no longer a question of learning single truths but of the *different realms of life*. An arrangement of subject matter will therefore have to be chosen which, while not dispensing with the systematic approach, will permit divisions more closely related to life . . . . A good plan will *first of all taken into account the psychological make-up of the pupils in the various stages of their development*. It is obvious that Religious Instruction at this time has a special task to fulfil. It should supply them with the answers to the doubts and difficulties typical of their years; the beginning of puberty is accompanied by a subjective phase. *Now there are several difficulties for which solutions are sought; other problems too, connected with character formation, caused perhaps by conflicts with family or society, take precedence*. Later on there will be questions concerning a future job and the first love affair. At this stage, too, interest awakens in problems of a *philosophical or ideological* nature. It is for the Teacher of Religion to find the right word at the right time for all. Then, and only then, will his instructions succeed in the *chief concern of all Religious training, the formation of Christian personality*." Can you hear your Senior students pricking up their ears at this meeting of the problems of their psychological make-up and the forming of their personalities? This different approach which he calls "more closely related to life" is exactly what youth themselves and earnest Teachers have felt was needed. There is the Master of Kergymatic Approach endorsing the same thing. This is the line we have been waiting for.

#### NEW APPROACH

In this section Jungmann speaks in terms of the whole secondary school. There seems no doubt that it applies particularly to the Senior Secondary students. It means "first of all to take into account the psychological make-up of the pupils in the various stages of development". This illuminates the significance of the work of Father Babin in his book "Crisis of Faith, the Religious Psychology of Adolescence" which sets out precisely the job of tracing their psychological make-up, the problems they face and the subjective helps and obstacles to a commitment to the Faith. His book, endorsed by a Foreword from Father Sloyan, calls for a "Catechesis of Life" along similar lines to Fr. Jungmann and based on a wealth of psychological study of adolescents at the Senior student level. He rules out any narrow, doctrinal Catechism lesson approach in which doctrine is handed on in its full content whether they are subjectively ready for it or not. He also outlines the doctrines and approaches which must be stressed in order to meet the psychological make-up of adolescence.

#### NEW FUNCTION OF CLASS AT SENIOR LEVEL

This "Catechesis for Life" which obviously applies for

Senior students should make us re-think the whole function of the class at this level of youth, 16 to 18 to 19.

It is platitudinous to say that the class is only one part of Religious Formation that begins and proceeds so much in the home, first of all; that is very influenced by relationships with priests, religious or dedicated Catholics at the school or parish levels; that is often conditioned by the religious practices voluntary or regimented in school or parish; that *can* be powerfully affected by the group formation apostolate. We must work to see this formation as one whole and so each part will get its function in perspective.

From this total view, we believe that their commitment to the Faith in these years 16 to 18, 19, is forged by such forces as family influence and/or the personal influence of some priest or religious or dedicated Catholic or by voluntary groups such as Y.C.S. Spiritual Striving Groups, Legion, etc.

Where does the Religious Class find its role? We see it as the AID to those forces of Christian Witness (including the Christian Witness of the Religious Teacher himself). We can distinguish three ways by which the class must aid this Christian Witness:

- (i) It must sustain INTEREST in Religion, not alienating the pupils by the abstract or what to them has little meaning or vitality.
- (ii) It must present Religion as answering their *Needs* and *problems* (after all, they are "subjective" adolescents).
- (iii) It must demonstrate that their Christian Religion is really important in Life and the World, both of which are glamorously opening out and alluring them at this stage of life.

So far all this may seem "up-in-the-air" theory. What would be the difference in practical classroom terms? For the sake of discussion let us compare the present 4th Year Syllabus already mentioned and a Syllabus I have drawn up which attempts to follow the new direction of Jungmann, Babin, etc.

*Present 4th Year Syllabus.* (I realise that is in process of change to adjust to Wyndham System — but the points made here still stand.)

#### A *Doctrine*

1. The Chosen People of God in Old Testament: 2. Christ the Messiah: 3. Christ's Teaching on the Kingdom of God: 4. The Apostles: 5. The birth of the Church: 6. Pentecost and the Growth of the Church: 7. St. Peter: 8. The Church — the Mystical Body of Christ: 9. The Unity of the Church: 10. The Catholicity of the Church: 11. The Powers of the Church — Govern, Teach, Sanctify: 12. The Church in the Modern World.

#### B *Social Principles*

1. Nature of Man: 2. Nature of Society: 3. Authority: 4. Law: 5. Freedom and Obligations: 6. Rights, Duties, Social Virtues: 7. The Church as a Society.

#### C *Church History*

Church in 19th Century.

## SUGGESTED SYLLABUS

### *Catechesis of Life*

Father Jungmann says to begin with their psychological make-up and that their subjective needs and problems "take precedence" in their minds.

#### FOURTH FORM

Average Age 16

(a) *Their Attitudes at this stage*

They are still "mixed-up" adolescents, in so many cases and after so many years of Christian Doctrine classes, rather negative about their Religion. Each feels the need to be someone: each wants and needs self-understanding. They experience a thirst for the world and for "life." Soon they will be leaving school and their future survival in Moral matters or in solid convictions for belief are, in a lot of cases, matters for conjecture. Their problems may be, broadly Morality and/or cynicism about childhood Religion; but they are easily bored.

(b) *Aids or THEMES for the years*

1. Religion is vitally important for his present personal life and for his future life in the world.
2. A personal grip on his Faith will give him a certain security and power to encounter the world. This personal grip means the following of Christ and life in the People of God.

(c) *SYLLABUS UNITS Not a programme.*

1. *His Personality* — Childhood and Adolescence — Religious Development (c.f. Babin). Temperaments and self-understanding (use of Le Senne Tests and Notes on Temperaments, etc.) Problems of Personality. Influence of Original Sin. Use of Sacrament of Penance for personal spiritual improvement; development of Supernatural Personality in Christ as complete self-fulfilment.

2. *Teenager Troubles* — Personal and in groups — Give case for Authority and Society; true notions of Freedom (without narrowness — c.f. Babin, Ch 7 and 8) Counselling — Holy Spirit as a Guide (a New Testament project could be made).

3. *The World and Its Views* — On Morality, Censorship, Divorce etc. Its Cynicism. Problems of a Catholic in the World — "Means of Survival" — discussions with use of New Testament.

4. *The World's Views on the Church's Faith.* General attack by adversaries. Simple exposition of rational arguments for Existence of God — Christ's Divinity — Foundation of the Church. (If they are leaving school, this must be done fully. If going on, it can be done simply with the indication of much fuller treatment in next two years.)

5. *The Church, in the World.* A Biblical Theme on *People of God* in Old and New Testament. Present situation of Church — geographically; Missions; in modern Society; Ecumenically, etc. People of God united with Christ's Action in the *Liturgy*.

6. *For School-Leavers - After-School Problems.* Especially of first one or two years.

### *A Judgement?*

The suggested syllabus for 4th Form (I could make a similar argument in terms of 5th or 6th Form) has glaring defects, I've found that already, but it is focused on the lines advocated by a "Catechesis for Life". It may not *look* as doctrinal as the former syllabus. But how little fresh thinking about doctrine comes from that syllabus.

### *Summary of Conclusions*

I submit:

- (i) That the Catechetics of the Hofinger style are only effective and were probably intended for use only up to lower secondary classes. By this time the "initiation in to the Mystery of Christ" has been imparted. (Surely nine years is a good long "Initiation".)
- (ii) Father Jungmann, the old Master of the Kerygmatic Approach, envisages something more psychological and closely related to the adolescent's life. He is taken further by Father Babin and by the experience of teachers and the desires of youth. We *may* be taking him further than he intends — but his treatment is brief.
- (iii) This requires a *new function* for the classroom religion, integrated with the other means of religious formation and commitment. We see it as an AID to the Christian Witness of Christians at Family, Parish and School levels.
- (iv) This Catechesis for Life will require syllabuses, textbooks and teacher training widely different from many now in use.

FOR OUR NEXT ENCOUNTER: Would those intending to write for the next issue have their articles in by February 20th. Thanks.