

edited by E.J.Cuskelly M.S.C.



**with
a
human
heart**

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With a human Heart

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This is the kind of book which, for some years now, I have been wanting to see written but was unable to write. Fortunately I have been able to enlist the willing cooperation of other people possessing the necessary talent. As a Superior General I have been able to call on a number of gifted men from my own religious Congregation:

Fr. A. Diez Macho, a Spanish Biblical scholar of world, renown,

Fr. J. Lescrauwaet, member of the International Pontifical Theological Commission and Professor of theology at Louvain,

Fr. L. Dunlop and Fr. J. Flynn who teach Sacred Scripture and Theology in Australia,

Fr. N. Strotmann, a young German theologian working in Peru,

Fr. André Tostain, a French Mariologist.

Other friends yielded to my pressures and contributed articles, namely:

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Jesuits, and

Fr. Thomas Kane, Executive Director of Houses of Formation.

Unfortunately most of my women friends pleaded either inability to write or lack of time to join in this enterprise.

Sister Elizabeth Smith of the Society of the Sacred Heart is my sole female collaborator. At present Provincial Councillor in the English Province of her Society, she is also a qualified historian.

To all these people I express my sincere appreciation and thanks. I feel confident that the light of Christ's love will burn a little more brightly in the lives of those who read this book. And if that be so, then we who have taken part in its writing will have been blessed indeed.

E. J. CUSKELLY, MSC.

with a human heart

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I. - At times we say some very beautiful things about ourselves without quite being aware of what we are really saying. Take for instance the word *humanity*. One of its meanings is «humaneness, benevolence, compassion; benevolent acts». Written into our own language is the belief that it is more human to be kind than to be clever.

It is more human to go hungry than a child might eat, than to be selfish and uncaring.

Men kill one another, they cheat, they steal. They are too often insensitive to others' sufferings. As long as they can satisfy their own desires, they care little about those who fall by the wayside or live in sickness and poverty. And yet all these things have been classified as «man's inhumanity to man». We go on believing that this is true, that man's humanity is the opposite, that it is made up of kindness and compassion. No matter what crimes are committed, we persist in believing that we are capable of, or at least called to, better things. We know that a heart filled with hatred is less human than a heart that has learned to love.

Called to better things we may well be. But as we look at the world around us, as we recall our human history, we may wonder whether mankind is capable of better things. Hobbe's *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to his fellow man) may not seem an inaccurate or unfair state-

ment of the human reality. It is, in fact, quite like St. Paul's statement of what man was - and will forever be unless Christ comes into his life: « there was a time when we, too, were ignorant, disobedient and misled and enslaved by different passions and luxuries; we lived then in wickedness and ill-will, *hating each other and hateful ourselves* ». (Tit. 3,3).

But « man can not live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless if love is not revealed to him, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This is why ... Christ the Redeemer 'fully reveals man to himself' ... this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption » (Red. Hom. 10). In Christ, man discovers his own humanity.

First of all he comes to know and to believe that he is loved. Without this conviction he will never really understand the reason for his existence or the purpose to his life.

« THE HUMANITAS (HUMANITY, KINDNESS) OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR » (Tit. 3,4) was revealed when Christ Jesus came. « He worked with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted through a human will and loved with a human heart » (G et S n. 22). Not only did he make known the love of God the Father for all of us; « he also revealed man fully to himself » (ib.); he taught us how to be human. That was why he came. He loved with a human heart that we might learn to love with true *humanity*.

This we will never do unless we first learn what it means to have God's love come into our lives. A reflection on the text of Titus 3,4 can help us here: « When the kindness and love of God our Saviour for mankind was revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us ... by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has

so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Saviour ».

« It was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us ». Whenever we think about God's love for man we must both affirm and deny. We affirm all the beauty, generosity and tenderness which human love has taught us; we need to deny all the limitations. We tend always to think in human categories; and « human love needs human meriting — wherefore should any set thee love apart of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot? » Francis Thompson here describes a doubt that plagues the human heart. Our human love for others is ordinarily called forth by a goodness we see in them, a loveableness which they possess. Now what can God see in us for him to respond to us in this way? One of the most vital points of faith is the wonderful knowledge that God does *not* respond in this way. God's love comes before any good in us, it causes it and gives it being. God has loved us into existence; he calls us to let ourselves be loved, humbly and gratefully, beyond all « human meriting ».

In fact the man who is pleased and self satisfied with his human meriting will never know the wonder of God's kindness. The humble heart is acceptable to God (cf. Ps. 50); for it is only the humble heart which can accept God's love in gratitude and joy. Only the man who knows that he is indeed clotted clay can thrill to the knowledge that God's love seeks him out, individually and personally, in spite of all.

St. Paul had learned this truth through his own experience: « I am the least of the apostle, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am » (I Cor. 15,9-10). Having seen the light of God shine out of darkness into his own heart (2 Cor. 4,6) he now reminds Titus of the human darkness into which the light of God's love came to shine: « we lived then in wickedness and ill-will, hating each other and hating ourselves » (3,3). Against

this background of « man's inhumanity to man » comes the striking revelation of « the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour for mankind » ... The Vulgate translates as *benignitas et humanitas* the two Greek words *krestotes* and *philanthropia*. God is goodness and kindness, tender and full of compassion towards every man.

Because power is so often misused, man has forever tended to attribute inhumanity to God. St. Paul insists that the opposite is the case, that God possesses that « humanity » for which sovereigns were praised when they dealt kindly with their subjects (cf. II Macchabees, 19,9). When we meet with someone powerful and important and find him full of kindness and understanding, we still say that « he is so human ». In Christ it is strikingly revealed that God « is human » indeed. « God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him » (I. John 4,9). When we hear that Christ « loved with a human heart », it is not his human weakness which consoles us (we need strength if we are to be lifted beyond our own weakness) but his understanding and compassion. In fact, the epistle to the Hebrews points to Jesus' human weakness as proof of his continued compassionate understanding. « It is not as if we had a high priest who is incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin » (Heb. 4,14).

The source of christian discipleship is the vision of Christ who had compassion on the crowds (Mt. 9,36; Lk. 10,33); Jesus who invites all to come to him who labour and are overburdened, knowing that his understanding love will lighten their burdens (Mt. 11,28-30). It is the Christ who has taught us to call God « our Father ».

A christian is, above all else, a person conscious of being loved; one who can say with conviction that Christ « loved *me* and gave himself up to death for *me* » (Gal. 2,21); someone who can « dare to say: Our Father ». As

St Paul says, the Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts, enabling us to say « Abba Father » (Rom 8, 15-17). Here we are urged to be at home with God our Father. We leave aside the more formal, respectful term « Abi » for the intimate, trusting « Abba » which Jesus used with Joseph and with his own heavenly Father. Beyond all fear and formality, a christian has the courage to say « Abba Father » with its intimate and familiar meaning. Our « belief in God's love » (I. Jo. 4, 16) must go as far — or come as close! — as that.

Let us repeat that, in order to appreciate God's love for us, we affirm all the beauty, generosity and tenderness which human love has taught us. On the other hand we need to deny all the defects and limitations which we frequently encounter in human love. We need constantly to correct our tendency to measure God's love by man's.

One example of this tendency is found in the way in which Phil 2, 7 is often translated and understood: « His (Christ's) state was divine, *yet* he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of slave, and became as men are ».

The « *yet* » is revealing. If a man were comfortably installed in heaven, it would be an effort for him « to get involved » in human troubles and to go so far as to accept death on a cross. Since this is so, we transfer a similar attitude to God and his Son. Even though the Son was divine, and beyond human suffering, *yet* (as if by a great effort) he became man. But « he is God, not man » — and there is no « *yet* » in the Greek text! *Because he was divine*, because he was the Son of God whom we have learned to know as love (« The Lord is compassion and love. Ps. 103, 8) he wanted to become man out of love for us.

He did so gladly because he was filled with « *humanitas* » in its perfection.

II. - The Christian response to this vision of faith is — that we love God « with a human heart », and — that we love others with true « humanitas » (cf. Mt. 22, 34-40; Mk. 12, 28-34).

We are called to love God with a human heart — human in its weakness, its struggles, its inconsistencies. There are no spiritual Supermen. In a beautiful passage of St. John's gospel, Jesus shows us the kind of human love he expects from us. The passage is well known, although difficulties in translation have often obscured its full meaning.

« After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter: ' Simon son of John, do you love me more than these other do '. He answered: ' Yes Lord, you know I love you '. Jesus said to him: ' Feed my lambs '. A second time he said to him: ' Simon son of John, do you love me? '. He replied, ' Yes Lord, you know I love you '. Jesus said to him: ' Look after my sheep '. Then he said to him a third time: ' Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was upset when he asked him the third time: ' Do you love me? ' and said: ' Lord; you know everything; you know I love you '. Jesus said to him, ' Feed my sheep ' » (John, 21, 15-17).

The point has often been made that from this passage one learns that no one is qualified to feed Christ's flock unless he has a real love for the Lord. The point is valid. However, another important lesson contained in this text concerns the kind of love which Jesus asks of Peter — and which he asks of us all.

If we are to appreciate this lesson fully we need to recall the type of man that Peter was — sure of himself, confident that he was loyal to the Lord. He believed so much in the strength of his own love that he assured his Master: ' I will lay down my life for you ' (John, 13, 37). His opinion of the other apostles was not so high; it would be no surprise to him if they betrayed the Lord, but he, Peter, would be faithful: « Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith ... even if I have to die with

you, *I will never disown you* » (Mt. 26, 33, 35. cf. Mark 14, 29).

When the time came, Peter's failure was worse than that of any of his companions. Many of them fled, in fear. Deliberately and repeatedly, three times, Peter denied his Master, « calling down curses on himself and swearing: ' I do not know the man you speak of ' » (Mk. 14, 66-72).

Now, after his resurrection, Jesus wants to be assured of Peter's love, not a love that is proud and self-confident, but the love of a heart that is humble, purified through failure and regret. His first question to Peter is ' Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do? ' Peter remembers how he had looked down on the others, judging them unworthy and capable of failure. From his reply he deliberately omits all reference to the others: ' Yes Lord, you know I love you '. He would no more consider himself superior to the others; he would confess his own weakness rather than judge theirs. This much he had learned from his failure and, in his second question, Jesus, too, omits all reference to others.

Running through the whole exchange is a very instructive play on words which does not come through from the Greek into the English translations. The latter use only one word for love while the Greek uses two: *agapan - philein*. In the Septuagint the word *agapan* has a technical meaning indicating a consecration to God which expresses itself in total fidelity and obedience. Less strong is the word *philein* which, however, signifies a true and deep human attachment.

Against the background of Peter's call, his confident declaration of love and his denial, this passage from St. John becomes very rich and humanly beautiful. With all these things in both their minds, Jesus says to Peter: ' Simon son of John, do you love me (*agapas*) with a strong and faithful love, more than all these others do? ' St. Peter will no longer compare himself with others. And he

can not, he dare not, assert that his love is strong or that it will be faithful. Therefore he uses a different word for love, replying simply and humbly 'Yes Lord, you know that, in my weak human heart, I have a deep affection for you (*philo*)'. Our Lord notes the omission of any reference to others, and the second time he asks: « Simon son of John, do you love me (*agapas*) ». Even on this second occasion, invited to it though he may be, Peter can not bring himself to repeat the strong word suggested by Jesus. He simply repeats his *philo*, reasserting his human affection for his Lord, and suggesting that « only you know how strong and faithful it will be, for only you can give it strength ». For Jesus this is sufficient; it is even necessary, for a love that is self-confident, sure of itself, is bound to fail. The only love that can endure is the love that, conscious of its human weakness, looks to God for strength. As St. Augustine said: « Our strength in you is strength indeed, but apart from you it is weakness ».

In his third question, Jesus himself changes to Peter's word for love — *phileis*, asking 'Simon son of John, do you really have in your heart this deep human affection for me?' At this, Peter is upset — could Jesus really call into doubt the depth of his human friendship? Weak though it might be, it was deep and authentic. And so he replies: 'Lord you know all things; you know that my friendship is real, although without your help it will remain a weak and human love'. And Jesus is satisfied. He confirms Peter in his mission to care for the flock of Christ, reminding him that he must always remember that they are « my sheep », those for whom he had died, and towards whom the shepherds must show the same tender compassion as Jesus the Good Shepherd.

To every one of his followers, Jesus addresses the question: Do you love me? Who among us would dare reply with an *agapao*, the confident assurance that I love the Lord and keep his commandments, that mine is a love that will be faithful? This is not the reply that he wants, as we know from the parable of the Pharisee and the

Publican. Rather he wants our *philo*, the assurance that in our weakness and through our failures, we still love him with our human hearts. A hymn in the English breviary asks God to watch over « our heart's desire to love thee, Lord ». We are told that we should « love the Lord our God with our whole heart and whole mind and whole soul ». Who among us would dare to say that he does, at least in the measure prescribed? Yet this is our dream; this too is a desire that springs eternal in the human breast: to love the Lord our God.

We love with a human heart.

It is human in its weakness which continues to exist along with its deep desire to love. It is human in its blindness, not knowing clearly what are the ways of the Lord. It is human in its inclination to take the easy way and in its readiness to justify the easy way it takes.

Yet we can say that we truly love with a human heart, if our heart remains open to greatness, if it cherishes the desire to know the truth and to be strengthened to do the good.

In Christ the Son of God loved us with a human heart, in its compassion and understanding of human weakness, able to feel for us in our weakness and human need. Weakness or sinfulness is never a reason for feeling unloved. This was the tragedy of Judas — not that he betrayed the Lord, but that he failed to believe in the merciful love of his Saviour greater than all betrayal, who can « free us from sin by might of his great loving ».

In Jesus, a Son of man finally loved God with a heart that was truly human, above selfishness, although not beyond weakness. He showed us what it was to let love lift us to goodness and love. He is our way, our truth and our life. He is the one who « fully reveals man to himself ».

III. - « *He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law* »
(Rom. 13, 8).

In being « humane, benevolent and compassionate » towards others, we are being christian, and showing true « humanity ». This is why Mother Teresa of Calcutta is a loved and admired figure — she is a living lesson of what human nature at its best can be. There are, of course many elements contained in being fully human. « In this creative restlessness (of the human heart) beats and pulsates what is most fully human, the search for truth, the insatiable need for the good, hunger for freedom, nostalgia for the beautiful and the voice of conscience » (Redemptor Hominis, n. 18). However, here I wish to concentrate on the one aspect of loving others with true compassion. As a christian response it has its source in the love of God revealed in Christ. It has its possibility in the enabling Spirit of love.

« See how these christians love one another » was a judgment passed upon the members of the early church. To many moderns this sounds like a phrase from an ancient fairy-tale. « Am I my brother's keeper? » was Cain's careless reply to God after he had slain his brother, Abel. In one sense there are many of Cain's disciples among those who profess to follow Christ.

I know a man who does not go to church. He believes in Christ; he has only one commandment: ' If you can do good to others, you are obliged to '. This makes me think of the text from St. Mark, 12, 34. To a man with similar views, « Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, ' You are not far from the kingdom of God ' ».

Jesus spoke much of a practical love of our neighbour. He gave his « new commandment » that his followers should love one another (John 13, 34; cf. Mt. 22, 34-40). He said that we would be judged by the measure in which we gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and cared for the homeless, the naked, the stranger (Mt.

25, 31-46). His teaching is repeated in the letters of St. Paul, St. John and St. James.

Yet, how many Catholics would put this practical love for our neighbour as the central element of their christianity after their love for God? Questions about what being a catholic means frequently give the same kind of reply: it means going to Mass on Sunday, keeping the commandments and avoiding birth-control. Many a Catholic feels that whatever he does in the way of « charity » is something over and above the strict call of duty.

« He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law » (Rom. 13, 8). Many a « christian », while claiming to « fulfil the law », would rather « not get involved » in other people's problems. In the competitive western world, everyone is taught to look out for himself. Nations keep their atomic warheads ready to launch against their fellow men. « Hard-nosed » business-men are out to make a profit in whatever way they can. Confidence men and tricksters prey on the simple.

Members of the richer nations often begrudge any help to the poorer ones whom they regard as not being sufficiently industrious. They have not applied S. Augustine's words to themselves: « Give from your riches. From whose riches do you give except from his ...? for what have you that you did not receive » (In Ps. 95, 14-15).

The question as to how we help our neighbour most effectively in this modern world is often a complicated one. It does not permit of an easy simple answer. However no adequate answer will ever be found by people who ask why they should be their brothers' keepers. Having problems to solve is no great problem. What is disturbing is that we have too many christians who do not regard solving the problems as any concern of theirs.

What has happened that we have so many practising christians who do not regard it as a christian duty to show practical compassion and concern for those who are

poor and suffering? In how many homes have christian parents, by word and example, inculcated the desire to aid the needy, to love our brothers and sisters in Christ? How well has our catechetics taught people to believe in love and practise it?

IV. - *Church - Sign and Herald of God's love*

« The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation; she makes known the mystery of God's love for man and she makes it present among men » (G. S. 45).

Anyone who knows the history of the Church knows how true this statement is. Through the centuries the Church has been the herald of God's love for man; in various ways she has been the sign of God's compassionate love present among his people. However, this image of Christ's compassion on the face of the Church has not been totally untarnished. It has not shone through clearly, especially to those who view her from a distance. In every age we who are the Church must examine our conscience regarding the image which the Church projects through us.

To make a distinction which is theoretically questionable but practically true, the Church and her official teachers have seemed at times to be more concerned with the truth than with « doing the truth in love ». A so-called concern for truth has seemed to exclude a true human and christian charity. We have only to recall the Inquisition, the burning of heretics and the recriminations of pre-ecumenical days to realize how true this is. There are modern ways of insisting on the truth which seem to rule out compassion and love. The truth should help to love. But who can grasp the whole truth? And how often has the so-called insistence on truth destroyed real christian charity? It is easy to appear un-caring for persons in a « care for the truth ».

Insofar as this is true of the Church in any age, to that extent has she failed in her mission to be the Sacrament

of Christ's love, compassionate and kind. Some failure is inevitable in this regard, for many adults are like children who regard any imposition of discipline as a failure to love.

True love is demanding. But its demands will be met in the measure that they are seen to be the demands of love. The Church must preach the truth; but the primordial truth of God's love for man must be preached more loudly than all the rest. Then when we think about the realities of our lives, about God and his will for the world, we will know that, before all else, « we stand in the presence of the great heart » (Cardinal Wojtyla).

In the measure that the Church makes present the mystery of God's love for men she makes us stand in the presence of the Christ of the Gospels. « While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples.

When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?'. When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice. And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners' » (Mt. 9, 10-13).

A basic truth which the Church must proclaim is that Jesus loves sinners — and tax collectors — and divorcees and people who practise birth-control. It is he alone who can 'free them from sin, by might of his great loving'. The Church proclaims Christ's love for every man and woman no matter what their situation, no matter what their way of acting. She can not approve all situations or all ways of acting. Some values she must constantly assert — such as fidelity in marriage, her view of God's plan for the role of sex in human love. However she does not brand as 'sinners' those who do not live up to these values or who find themselves in situations which she can

not approve. As Christ loves every human person, so does she; and she tries to love with the 'humanity' which Christ Jesus showed. She knows that, in response to God's love, every man and woman must « love with a human heart » — human in its desire to love, but human, too, in its weakness and caught up in the complicated realities of its human situation. As an official document of the Church has stated:

« Particular circumstances surrounding an objectively evil act, though they can not make it objectively virtuous, can make it diminished in guilt, inculpable, or subjectively defensible.

In the last analysis, conscience is inviolable, and no man is to be forced to act contrary to his conscience, as the constant tradition of the Church attests » (S. Cong. for the Clergy. Document in the « Washington case » 1970).

Perhaps the Church would do well to preach upon the house-tops what she has preached in secret. For here, too, are truths which are part of the message of God's love for man. Some authorities are afraid that, if we proclaim these truths we may appear to set double standards, or approve situation ethics. This, of course, is not the case. But the Church must show that, like her Lord and Master, she loves withh a human heart — kind, compassionate and understanding of human weakness.

« If on the one hand it is an outstanding manifestation of charity towards souls to omit nothing from the saving doctrine of Christ, still on the other hand this must always be joined with tolerance and charity. Of this, the Lord himself in his conversation and dealings with men has left an example. For when he came, not to judge but to save the world, was he not bitterly severe towards sin, but patient and abounding in mercy towards sinners?

Husbands and wives therefore, when deeply distressed by reason of the difficulties of their life, must find stamped

in the heart and voice of their priest the likeness of the voice and love of the Redeemer ».

Here we hear « the voice and love of the Redeemer » echoed in the official voice of the Church. (It is in fact the voice of Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* n. 29). That voice says that it is love for man, not fanaticism for abstract truth, that urges us to proclaim the full message of Christ who reveals our full humanity. At the same time, love brings tolerance and understanding of human weakness. With tolerance Episcopal Conferences have recognised that there are stages « of spiritual growth in which) the penitent may be incapable of accepting this teaching (of the Church) fully and in practice ». (Australian Episcopal Conference, September 1974). « Such a person could be without blame; he would certainly not have cut himself off from the Church; and in acting in accordance with his conscience he could be without subjective fault » (ib.). This is an echo of what the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy said in 1971: « The Counsellor ... should not too quickly presume ... a deliberate rejection of God's loving commands in the case of a person who is honestly trying to lead a good christian life ».

Here we have the voice of what, in a later article, Fr. Kane calls « an affirming church »: a Church which obviously speaks « with the voice and love of the Redeemer ». It affirms that, amid human weakness and sincerity, God looks on « our heart's desire to love the Lord » and with this he is satisfied. For he knows that, in time, he can « cleanse us from sin by might of his great loving » and brings us to live a more perfect response to his love.

V. - Here we have the elements of an answer to a question asked earlier regarding the anomaly of 'convinced practising Catholics' who show little practical interest in the needs of others. We recall what St. John wrote in his first epistle: « Think of the love that the Father has

lavished on us by letting us be called God's children ... God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him ... My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another » (I John, 3, 1; 4, 9; 4, 11). The Christian is more than a « do-gooder »; he does not simply carry out a commandment to be charitable towards others. He is not primarily a person who has learned to believe ' in all the truths which God has taught and which the Church proposes '. Before all else, he is one who has « learned to believe in the love which God has for us » (I. John, 4, 16). When he goes to church on Sunday, he goes, not grudgingly fulfilling a law, but he goes gladly in order to celebrate, together with others who believe in God's love, the wonder of that love given. He must reflect on the meaning of God's love given to others.

It was in the days when the christian community was alive with the conviction that « God has loved us so much » that others would say « see how these christians love one another ». The two loves went together — love for God and love for others. Christ had said: « If you love me you will keep my commandments » (John, 14, 15). And St. Paul declares: « All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: *You must love your neighbour* as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments » (Rom. 13, 9-10).

This aspect of the christian vision was expressed by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in December 1979, as she received the Nobel Peace prize:

« Our poor people are great people, a very loveable people. They don't need our pity and sympathy, they need our understanding love and they need our respect. We need to tell the poor they are somebody to us, that they,

too, have been created by the same loving hand of God, to love and be loved ».

In discovering that all people are worthy of love, we discover our own 'humanitas'.

We love with a human heart. Because it is human it is limited, with a need to be guided and enlightened. In its thirst for freedom, it can think that it will be more human if it rejects the 'impositions and restrictions' of religion. People who think in this way fail to realize that we all obey. We all conform to some norms. On our choice of whom we obey depends the possibility of true liberty. We can obey the dictates of the pleasure principle, of self-seeking, of materialism and then we fall into slavery to the dictatorships of the world and our times. Christ came to reveal man's true humanity, his true freedom:

« I shall walk in the path of freedom for I seek your precepts » (Ps. 119, 45).

The will of the God who created us can only be liberating and humanizing. Yet this is not the message preached by the world — a message recorded at the beginning of the Bible, where it was said by Satan that man would not die if he choose to disobey his Creator. The message is repeated daily: you will not die if you disobey, if you take drugs, if you do not give value to fidelity, honesty, justice; you will not die if you indulge all your urges for pleasure. But the opposite is true — something will die within you and you will be less human. You will have less happiness (although you might think that you have more pleasure), you will have less self-fulfilment, although more self-indulgence.

In some ways Christians, like Christ, will be inevitably « a sign of contradiction » (Luke 2, 34). We do not set out to contradict what others are saying and doing. But our affirmation of Christian and human values is a sign of the great contradiction of these values which is preached by the world to the world. The Christian message has to

assert that much of what a self-seeking world affirms is a contradiction of Christian values, of truly human values — a denial of the value of life, of fidelity, of the dignity of every human person, of the primacy of the spiritual.

Because of these contradictions, we need to look carefully to Christ to understand how he, our Redeemer, fully reveals the ways in which we are called to live and love with a human heart.

« The Church seems in a particular way to profess the mercy of God and to venerate it when she directs herself to the Heart of Christ. In fact, it is precisely this drawing close to *Christ in the mystery of his Heart* which enables us to dwell on this point — a point in a sense central and also most accessible on the human level — of the revelation of the merciful love of the Father, a revelation which constituted the central content of the messianic mission of the Son of Man ...

The Second Vatican Council ... speaks repeatedly of the need *to make the world more human*, and says that the realization of this task is precisely the mission of the Church in the modern world. Society can become ever more human only if we introduce into the manysided setting of interpersonal and social relationships, not merely justice, but also that 'merciful love' which constitutes the messianic message of the Gospel ».

John Paul II. *Dives in Misericordia*. 1980.

**Christ,
model of
« Religion of the Heart »**

L. Dunlop, M.S.C.

What follows attempts to show how a purely scriptural study of Christian spirituality, especially as expressed in the Gospel of St. Matthew, brings out elements which harmonize well with traditional values of « devotion to the Sacred Heart », in terms which may be adapted to modern sensibilities.

Truly Christian morality, as expounded by St. Matthew, is very much a morality « of the heart ». It does not content itself with an external conformity with accepted rules of conduct, but demands a complete transformation of the person so that his good actions can be said to spring from the heart. In fact, no other form of morality is possible.

This comes to the fore in the sermon on the mount (Mt. 5-7), which Matthew has formed by collecting most of the available sayings of Jesus as a sort of compendium of instruction on the conduct of the Christian's personal life. The very fact that he sets this artificially formed discourse on a « mountain » (the Jerusalem Bible has incomprehensibly translated the word « hill », thus obscuring the point), indicates the importance that Matthew gives to it, since it is thus compared with the law given on Mount Sinai (Ex. 20-Num. 10). Just as this law was the charter which regulated life according to the requirements of the Old Covenant, so the basic requirements of life according to the New Covenant are summarized in the sermon on the mount.

The hope of a new covenant was born in Old Testament times out of disillusionment with the Sinai covenant. The Babylonian Exile (587-539 B.C.) involved the destruction of the most cherished of Israel's national institutions — the Temple and the monarchy. Besides, the fact that the bulk of the population, or at least the more important classes, were deported to Babylon meant that they had lost possession of the promised land of Palestine, and so one of the most basic of God's promises to the chosen race was no longer fulfilled. The only conclusion which suggested itself was that God had repudiated his covenant with his people, and the resulting self-questioning is expressed in the Book of Lamentations, which, after giving a harrowing description of the state to which Jerusalem had fallen, ends on a note of disquieting uncertainty:

« Make us come back to you, Yahweh, and we will come back. Renew our days as in times past, unless you have utterly rejected us in an anger that knows no limit » (Lam. 5, 21-22).

This kind of situation brought home to the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel the fact that even so comprehensive a set of laws as those contained in the Old Testament is incapable of solving the problems which flow from what man is. Hence they came to hope for a future when man would be healed and transformed from within, not just presented with a series of directions which, no matter how complete or detailed, leave him what he was before.

« See, the days are coming, it is Yahweh who speaks, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine ... No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive ... Deep within them I will plant my law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people ... » (Jer. 31, 31-33). « I shall pour clean water over you, and you will be cleansed.

I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies, and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances ... You shall be my people, and I will be your God » (Ezek. 36, 25-27).

An examination of the moral teaching of the Gospels reveals that it is based on this same approach, insisting primarily on a radical transformation of the Christian, rather than attempting to regulate his activity by means of detailed directives imposed from without. Jesus « liberates the will of God from its petrification in tables of stone, and reaches for the heart of man ... » (Günther Bornkamm, « Jesus of Nazareth » p. 105).

The contrast with the typical Old Testament approach to morality can be seen rather strikingly by comparing the beatitudes (Mt. 5, 3-2) with the ten commandments (Ex. 20, 1-17). The comparison is justified by the relationship already established between the sermon on the mount as an expression of the life-style of the new dispensation, and the law given on Mount Sinai, which holds a similar position for the people of the old dispensation. In these two documents, the beatitudes and the decalogue respectively form a kind of opening summary. The commandments are for the most part concerned with well-defined and easily identifiable actions which are either commanded or forbidden. The beatitudes on the other hand are primarily concerned with what the Christian is — he must be poor in spirit, meek, merciful, clean of heart, and must hunger and thirst after justice (this last requirement, although expressed in active form, is obviously an expression of an attitude of mind and heart rather than a clearly-defined action or set of actions). Even the demand that a Christian be a « peacemaker » is more a demand that he be a certain type of person than that he perform a set of prescribed actions. Naturally, all these qualities, if genuine, must express themselves in action, but the action

will not necessarily be identical in all circumstances. Twice there is a special stress on the radical and far-reaching nature of the demand — poverty « of spirit » is more (not less) demanding than a mere external poverty which is the result of economic circumstances, and cleanliness « of heart » contrasts with an external cleanliness based on ritual requirements.

Insistence on a morality which flows from the heart does not stop there. One section of the sermon on the mount makes an explicit contrast between the old and new law (Mt. 5, 21-5, 48), and one of the characteristics of the Christian ethic which emerges is the depth of its demands: not just murder and adultery, but the least tendencies in those directions, are unworthy of the Christian (Mt. 5, 21-30). Far from being content with external performance, Christ concerns himself about the motives for which the classical Jewish triad of good works (almsgiving, prayer, and fasting) are performed (6, 1-18). Again this implies a radical, deep-reaching goodness, which can come only from the heart.

This principle is made explicit in Mt. 7, 17-18: « a good tree bears good fruit, an evil tree bears evil fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit nor can an evil tree bear good fruit ». The thought is further developed in Mt. 12, 34-35. After a repetition of the saying that a good tree can bear only good fruit and an evil tree evil fruit (v. 33) we read: « brood of vipers, how can you, who are evil, speak what is good. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart. A good man draws things from his store of goodness, a bad man draws bad things from his store of badness ». Christian action must spring from what a man is. Hence it is important that his heart be set on things that are good: « where your treasure is, there your heart is, too » (Mt. 6, 20).

Even what appears a purely legal matter at first sight, the prohibition of divorce (Mt. 19, 1-9), is really an appeal for a change of heart (and, we may add, only a transform-

ation of heart can make this ideal liveable). In v. 9 the toleration of divorce in the mosaic law is explained as a concession to man's « hardness of heart » (this is a more literal translation of the phrase which the Jerusalem Bible, again rather disappointingly, translates « because you were so unteachable »). This implies that, now that hardness of heart has been removed by Christ, the ideal of complete fidelity in marriage is possible.

From the negative point of view, a holiness which is content with externals and does not go down to the « heart » is condemned along with other typically « pharisaic » vices in Mt. 23, 25-28.

« Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who clean the outside of cup and dish, and leave the inside full of extortion and intemperance ... Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who are like whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption. In the same way you appear to people from the outside like good honest men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness ».

The theme appears in Lk. 16, 15, where Jesus addresses the Pharisees in these words: « You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as virtuous in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is thought highly of by men is loathsome in the sight of God ».

The Christian ideal, especially as put forward by Matthew, is clearly a fulfilment of the expectations of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with their ideal of a people with hearts renewed, so as to perform the will of God not in a spirit of constraint or grudgingly, but with the wholehearted obedience that springs from a deep desire. It is, moreover, an ideal which has been most perfectly fulfilled in Christ himself. Just as the new Spirit (cf. Ezek. 36, 25) is very manifest in his activity (cf. especially Lk. 3, 22; 4, 1; 4, 18-20), so his is that new « heart of flesh » (Ezek. 36, 25) on which the law of God was engraved (Jer.

31, 33). This is expressed in one Gospel text, again from St. Matthew (11, 28-30):

« Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light ».

Rabbinic language spoke frequently enough of the « yoke » or « burden » of the law. We find a similar usage in Mt. 23, 4: « they (the Pharisees and scribes) bind up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will not lift a finger to move them ». By the time of Christ the multiplicity of rabbinic laws certainly laid a heavy burden on anyone who attempted to observe them, but on a more fundamental level still, any law, even one that expresses the most pressing and certain of obligations, is an imposition to one who conforms only because constrained to do so, and who lacks a heart to seek and do God's will (cf. 1 Tim. 1, 8-11).

« The rest » which Christ offers is not an absence of demands, and the Gospel can even speak of the « yoke » of Christ, which will, however, be easy and light. The Gospels can also speak of carrying a cross (Mt. 10, 38; Lk. 14, 27; Mt. 16, 24; Mk. 8, 34; Lk. 9, 23). The key to the « ease » of the Christian yoke is not to be found in any mediocrity of ideals, but in the fact that it is borne by one whose heart is transformed on the pattern of Christ (« learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart »). In fact, the two characteristics of Jesus which are singled out for mention (« meek and humble of heart ») are typical of what he demands of his followers. The beatitudes speak of the very similar « poverty of spirit », « gentleness » and « mercy ». The demand that Christians become like children (Mt. 18, 3-4) is also similar. It is made in opposition to the disciples' concern with rank and prestige (Mt. 18, 1), and is therefore meant to direct attention to the child's recognition of his own smallness and need of support; this comes close to « meekness »

and « humility ». Mt. 11, 29, then, holds Jesus up as the embodiment of an essential Christian attitude, with special stress on the fact that this is not a pose learned according to rule, but a disposition of heart, an attitude which possesses him totally.

Although Mt. 11, 29 singles out a very basic attitude of heart which is fulfilled in Christ, it is not really all-embracing. However, we can perhaps develop the approach somewhat, along lines which can be sketched only briefly here. Most characteristic among the demands of Christian « change of heart » are the inseparable ideals of love of God and one's fellow men (cf. Mt. 22, 36ff; Mk. 12, 28ff; Jn. 13, 34-35; 1 Jn. 2, 10-11; 3, 13-18; 4, 16; Gal. 5, 13-14; Rom. 13, 8-10). Rom. 5, 5 insists that this love is a gift of God, « poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us ». The phrase « in our hearts » again stresses the radical, total nature of the transformation effected by this typical Christian virtue. It too is fully verified in Christ. He lays claim to a love for men than which none greater is possible (compare Jn. 15, 13 with Jn. 10, 11). His love for God is evidenced in his complete identification of himself with his Father's will (compare Jn. 14, 23; 15, 10, which equate love with doing the will of the person loved, and Jn. 4, 34; 14, 31). In accordance with the line of thought we are following, we can claim that, on biblical principles, this love « fills the heart » of Jesus (cf. Rom. 5, 5). In line with the biblical use of this type of expression, we are thereby directing attention not just to the fact that Jesus loved God and his fellow-men, but especially, to the quality of that love. It is, as all true Christian virtue must be, deep-rooted, an expression of his deepest self, a love which springs from the heart and informs the whole of his activity.

Tender, forgiving and patient, the love of God (as depicted by the Prophets) ... was strong and sublime. However it was no more than a foreshadowing of that burning love which would one day flow from the Heart of the Redeemer promised to mankind. This love would be the model for our loving and *the foundation of the New Covenant.*

Pius XII. May 15th, 1956. Haurietis Aquas. n. 17.

From contract to covenant A Spirituality of the Heart

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

I begin this chapter with some thoughts on the rather improbable topic of marriage and annulment of marriage. Specifically I want to point out an interesting recent development in the outlook of some marriage tribunals. They speak far less than formerly of the marriage CONTRACT and far more of the marriage COVENANT. By their change of terminology they wish to emphasize a special quality of the consent required to make a valid Christian marriage. They also wish to indicate that the marriage can be annulled if the parties did not make, or were incapable of making, a real personal covenant — and this because of the lack of the kind of consent required.

There is some interesting discussion among moralists about how the lack of love might bring it about that the consent to marriage is invalid, because, they say, in its deep reality the consent needed is an act of the free will whereby two persons give themselves mutually, radically, totally.

Real love means a readiness to give; it is an altruistic, unselfish love which opens out in giving and is ready to keep on doing so. There is, on the other hand, a self-centred love which is incapable of giving, or does not want to give. It wants to enjoy the other person, but is capable of no more than that. When both parties to a marriage get a lot of enjoyment out of each other, what is

no more than infatuation and a self-centred love can appear as sufficient for marriage. But it is not.

A covenant is more than a contract because it is informed and pervaded by a real, self-giving love. Some people who go through the form of marriage are not capable of entering a covenant. Others, though capable, are too selfish to do so. Such people may live a contract for a while; they may even live it for many years, but they never move onward into living a covenant. On the other hand, there are some who did really enter into a marriage covenant. But selfishness can intrude; one or other of the partners can recede into a 'contract-mentality'. Then, when love has died out of the marriage, the contract may be very hard to keep, and it may be impossible to restore the lost love.

At every Eucharist we recall « the blood of the new and eternal Covenant ». The Church is a covenant people, or at least is called to be.

Where is the Church today? This is a question frequently asked especially of one who has seen something of the Church in many countries. I suppose that each man will have his own reply to this question. I would suggest that the Church today stands between contract and covenant; she stands in need of learning to live anew that New Covenant foretold by the Prophets and brought about in Christ.

The People of God has always been called to be a covenant people; always called, but rarely responding with sufficient generosity. The covenant may be forever new, but humanity grows old repeatedly and needs to discover again the God who renews its youth. In the wonder at the marvels that God worked to bring them out of Egypt, in the freshness of Yahweh's call to them, the people said, enthusiastically and gladly: « Yes indeed, we will be your people, and you will be our God » All too well we know how this wonderful opening chapter was succeeded by very human stories of selfishness and sin

and forgetfulness of covenant lived in love. They forgot their God and what they had promised so eagerly. But God does not forget; and again we all know the promises he made through the prophets.

« Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Juda, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people » (Jer. 31, 31ff).

« A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances ... and you shall be my people and I will be your God » : Ezech. 36, 26ff).

The New Covenant is realized in Christ. In him the words of Psalm 39 find their perfect expression: « My God I delight in your law — in the depths of my heart ». (cf. Ep. Heb. c. 10). In the depths of his human heart, a son of man rises above all contracts to live in love a delight in God's law, a perfect covenant-love. From that same heart, pierced on the Cross symbolized by the flowing water, he gives us his Spirit that we, too, might delight in being God's people and letting him be our God.

This delight characterized the early christians who, in the wonder of their first Easter faith, sealed a new covenant with the Lord. It has been lived with the same fresh response in every time and in every land in which the Good News is perceived as light to our darkness, as hope for our apathy and as the wonder of the gift of love. But

the freshness fades with time; the weight of the years brings weariness. There are many interesting things in this world of ours which occupy our minds and divide our hearts. And even for us, the new covenant can grow old; it can pass from covenant to contract. When we no longer delight in God's law, we can wonder if the contract is worth keeping. Carrying out duties, observing laws, keeping commandments, but without the Spirit and with a heart of stone — this is not living a covenant.

Where is the Church today? Behold the days have come when people are weary of rules and observances, when some do what they have to out of a sense of duty, when others appear in church for baptism, wedding and burial. There are men like Lefebvre and his followers who say: let's get back to clear contracts with rules that bind us and that we observe carefully. But No, I can not see that this is the call of the Lord. Let us go forward to living and preaching a covenant, with a heart renewed.

As Vatican II made clear, the days have come (they came some years ago) when religious are asked to pass from contract to covenant, or to make it manifest that they were living a delight in the law of a living God. According to the Council, they were not to keep obsolete structures, they were not to observe rules which had lost all meaning except that they were written in terms of the old contracts. And what happened when we were told this? Some saw this as a time for revision of contracts and possible renewal. They rescinded theirs and are now no longer with us. (It was only when I was doing some reading about the annulment of marriages that I realized why Rome, before granting dispensations, does a lot of enquiring into the life and character of the priest in his seminary days. She is really trying to see if, at profession or ordination, he entered into a contract or really made a covenant with the Lord, in a consent which was motivated by a self-less love, open and ready to give).

It would be consoling to think that all of us who have

stayed have done so because we have been always living a personal covenant with the Lord who has called us. But here, too, we have cases which are parallel to marriages that are not a total success. At profession or ordination, religious or priest echo the prayer of David: « Joyfully have I offered all these things ». In the freshness of the offering, there is joy in the giving. The joy will remain only if in our hearts the love which inspired our gift remains alive. Therefore we need to continue with a further phrase from the prayer of David (Chronicles, 29). « Domine Deus Israel, conserva hanc voluntatem » — keep us constant in the gladness of our giving. Otherwise, although we may persevere in our profession, the covenant we once made has deteriorated into a contract. We sweat it out, and we take what consolations we can.

Fortunately for us, there is an important difference between marriages that have deteriorated and personal covenants with the Lord that have lost their freshness. Yahweh's love will last forever, his faithfulness till the end of time. If we wish, the Lord can give us a new heart and put his Spirit within us. Let us listen again to Ezechiel: « Shake off the sins you have committed against me and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why are you so anxious to die, House of Israel? I take no pleasure in the death of anyone — It is the Lord God who speaks » (Ez. 18,31, f).

The days have come when the Church has need of religious and priests who live their own personal covenant with God in Christ, and can help others to be a covenant people. This applies to our reflections on the ministry — are we going to get people to make and observe contracts, or are we going to get them to keep covenants?

I believe that we are specially blest in our days if we have learned to look carefully to the Heart of Christ. A 'spirituality of the heart' is admirably suited to help us (and to help us assist others) through this transition time which all the Church is living. It is centred on the new

heart and the Spirit which the prophets saw as the source of life and the new covenant. When he laid down his life for his friends, when his side was pierced, Christ gave us his Spirit. This Spirit puts love into our hearts and gives us the will to serve. All of these things, and more enter into what, elsewhere, I have called « a spirituality of the heart ». This terminology suggests several elements: It suggests that our « religion of the heart » has become interiorized and habitual. Furthermore it indicates that:

a. We have to go down to the depths of our own soul in a realization of our profound personal needs of life, of love and of meaning.

b. We must find, through faith and reflection, the answer to our own questioning in the Heart of Christ, i.e. in the depths of his personality, where man's yearning and God's graciousness meet in redemptive incarnation.

c. Then, fashioned by these forces, our own heart will be an understanding heart, open to, feeling for, and giving to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

d. We will not be *dis-heartened*, or dis-couraged in the face of difficulties. We follow Christ who « loved with a human heart » as Vatican II reminds us; he shared our humanness that we might know that over us all is the everlasting love of the Father. In God's good time the omnipotent love of God will have its way. It is *this* love in which we have learned to believe.

Footnote: The matter contained in this chapter has appeared in two books written for private Circulation: *A New Heart and a New Spirit* and *Jules Chevalier*.

HEART AND SPIRIT

Here and now the Spirit of the Lord has been given to us as a foretaste of the eventual victory of life and of perfect harmony and love. This is *the Spirit that was first poured out by the Father into the Heart of the Word made flesh*, the Spirit which in that Heart communicated its first light and fire, the Spirit which made Jesus say 'Abba' from the depth of His being and which made him reach out to man as the brother of all. It is this Spirit which the glorified Jesus communicates to his own from the time of the first Pentecost.

The presence of the Spirit in our hearts is the link between our present existence and the easter lifting-up of Jesus in the past. This Spirit makes us look back to what happened on the Cross and see, in faith, the stream that began to flow from His side at the beginning of our salvation. But the same Spirit also helps us to look ahead and builds a bridge between our present life and our future glory. He makes us look forward to that City where the river flows 'rising from the throne of God and from the Lamb'. Finally, the presence of the Spirit makes us look up to the Lord who is with the Father and who from his inmost being communicates life to us from day to day. *The Holy Spirit is the gift of his Heart to our hearts*. Man's heart is his dwelling place thanks to the incarnation of the Son. It is there that he brings about the closest union between us and Him 'who is, who was and who is to come' (Apoc. 1, 4; 1, 8; 4, 8 and 11, 17). It is the Spirit given to us now who already inaugurates our promised future because of something that happened in the past ...

J. Lescrauwaet MSC.
in TRIPTYCH FOR A SPIRITUALITY
· OF THE HEART.

The Heart in the Bible Symbol of the person

Alejandro Diez-Macho, M.S.C.

1. The word « Heart » is the anthropological term most often used in the Hebrew Bible

Quantatively it is a most important biblical term. It appears 853 times in the Hebrew Bible, if you count the 8 times that it occurs in the Aramaic sections of the Book of Daniel. In order of frequency, the Psalter holds the first place, for there the word occurs 147 times; next comes the Book of Proverbs — 99 times, to be followed in descending order by Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Exodus, Ezechiel, 2 Chronicles and Ecclesiastes¹.

Of its total usage, no less than 814 times the word refers to the heart of man. In the Hebrew Bible the word « heart » occurs 59 times more than the other quantitatively most important anthropological term of the Old Testament, namely the word « psyche » (in Hebrew *nefesh*), which is frequently, though inexactly, translated as « soul »².

In the New Testament, the word « heart » appears 159 times. St. Paul mentions it 51 times, without counting the 11 times that it occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He is, in fact, the New Testament writer who uses the term most often. Next comes St. Luke (24 times in the Gospel and 21 in the Acts of the Apostles), followed by St. Matthew who uses the word 17 times³.

Such frequent occurrence in the Bible of the word « heart » is explained by the wide field of meaning that the word has.

2. In the Bible « heart » has many more meanings than those found in our dictionaries

In modern languages, « heart » has a wide range of meanings: in its proper sense, the physical heart; in a figurative sense it has a rich variety of usage: spirit, valour, courage, will, love, benevolence, the middle or centre of a thing, the interior of an inanimate thing.

In our languages, the applied meanings of the word « heart » refer, mostly, to the affective life of feeling or will, or to moral conduct which is sincere, honest and open. At times « heart » can be interchanged with ' soul ' ; the expression: « He has no heart » is equivalent to « he has no soul » ; « to open one's heart » means to « reveal one's soul » ⁴.

In spite of the wide field of meaning which the word « heart » still covers, it has, nevertheless, a diminished extension in modern languages. Its function of « knowing », so outstanding in the Bible, in ancient Greek and among the Romans, has left very few traces in our modern languages. In English we still have « to learn by heart » and « to know by heart » meaning to commit to memory, to learn to know and remember. The words « accord », « concord », composed with the Latin word « cor » (heart) remind us of the intellectual function once attributed to the heart ⁵.

In the Bible the field of meaning of the word « heart », is more, much more extensive. There so many things are said of the « heart », that it is only when we substitute « person » for « heart » that we have a subject of which so many and so varied things can be predicated ⁶.

The ancient Rabbis had already noted that, in the Bible,

the word « heart » is rich in the variety of its meanings. Commenting on Ecclesiastes 1, 16 (I have spoken in my heart), the exegetical commentary called *Qohelet Rabba* adduces sixty passages of the Bible which attribute a number of other functions or predicates to the heart: The heart sees, hears, speaks, walks, falls, stands on its feet, rejoices, cries, is comforted, is troubled, becomes hard, grows faint; it grieves, fears, is broken, becomes proud, rebels, invents, cavils, flows over, devises, desires, goes astray, lusts, is refreshed, is stolen, humiliated, enticed; it errs, trembles, awakes, loves, hates, envies; it is searched, rent, it meditates, it is like a fire, hard as a rock; it repents, it becomes hot, it dies, it melts, it takes in words, it is susceptible to fear, it gives thanks, it covets, it becomes hard; it makes merry, it acts deceitfully, it speaks within itself, it loves bribes, it writes words, it makes plans, receives commandments, acts with pride, makes arrangements and aggrandises itself⁷.

For all the many meanings of the word « heart » which this rabbinical text gives, it is still not exhaustive. However it is sufficiently wide-ranging to show that, in the Bible, « heart » has a richness of meaning which it does not possess in modern languages.

3. The proper meaning of the word « heart », namely the physical heart, is rare in the Bible.

Although the proper meaning of the word « heart » both in the Bible and elsewhere⁸ is that of the physical heart, the Bible hardly ever uses this anatomical or physical meaning. I Sam. 25, 37 mentions Nabal's *heart* attack. Nabal was that rich Calebite who had three thousand sheep and one thousand goats in Carmel, and who suffered a heart attack after getting very drunk: « his heart died within him and he became as stone ». After ten days he died. Among the many evils which afflict a sinner who has been punished by God are « palpitations of the

heart » (Ps. 38, 11). Jeremiah (4,19) describes his heart attack provoked by the impending war: « My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent »⁹.

At times a parallelism occurs between heart and « kidneys » which makes some authors think that, in such cases it is a question of the physical heart¹⁰.

The rare mention of the physical heart in the Old Testament is due to the fact that the chapters concerning sacrifice make no mention of this organ¹¹.

In the New Testament also there is the same scarcity or lack of references to the physical heart. St. James (5, 5) reproaches the rich: « You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your *hearts* in a day of slaughter ». St. Paul preached to the People of Lystra that God had given them rain and fruitful seasons « satisfying your *hearts* with food and gladness ». Luke (21, 34) warns: « Take heed to yourselves lest your *hearts* be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life ». However, in these three cases the meaning of heart seems to be figurative, namely that of the body or of life¹².

The same can be said of Genesis 18, 5; Abraham fetches a morsel of bread so that the three men who approach him in the vale of Mambre might strengthen their *hearts*, that is, that they might restore their forces.

Clearly, then, the Bible pays little attention to the physical heart; the term is used almost exclusively in a figurative sense.

An implicit allusion to the physical heart is to be found in John 19,34. This is an important text in the history and theology of the cult of the Heart of Jesus. The text speaks only of the piercing of the side (pleura) of Christ, however, it refers implicitly to the physical heart of the Lord. In order to make sure of the death of Jesus the soldier wanted to pierce not merely the side but also the

heart¹³. This is the understanding contained in the Litany of the Heart of Jesus in the invocation « Heart of Jesus pierced by a lance », as also in the Encyclical *Haurietis Aquas* which makes frequent reference to the wounded heart of Jesus.

From what has been said it follows that the Bible favours the figurative meaning of the word « heart ». The same is true of the cult of the Heart of Jesus; first comes the figurative meaning of « heart », although it also includes the physical heart, the « Heart of Jesus formed in the womb of the Virgin » of the Litany quoted above.

4. Figurative meanings of « heart »: The breast

The breast

We have seen that « the side » in John, 19, 34 means « heart ». Inversely, a number of times in the Bible, « heart » means « breast », « side », that which shelters the heart. When Absalom remained caught by his hair in an oak tree, Joab « took three darts in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom ». Here the meaning is that he thrust the lances into the breast or side, for had he thrust them into his heart, it would not have been necessary for Joab's ten armour-bearers to strike him later and kill him (2 Sam. 18, 14ff).

The arrow which Jehu shot, as he pursued Joram, « pierced his heart » (2 Kings, 9, 24) — meaning that « it pierced his breast »¹⁴. Those women who, at the assault of Niniveh, lament, moaning like doves « and beating their hearts » (Nahum 2, 7), moan and beat their breasts.

The breastpiece which Aaron wore « upon his heart » (Ex. 28, 29ff, three times) was the token he wore upon his breast.

« With the words ' place me as a seal upon your heart and upon your arm (Cant. 8, 6), the bride of the Canti-

cles asks that she be sealed on the breast and the arm of the groom ».

The use of « heart » with the meaning of « breast » made up for the lack of a word in biblical Hebrew to signify the human breast. The Hebrew word for « breast » (*hazeḥ*), in the Hebrew of the Bible, seems to mean the breast of animals¹⁵.

5. Heart: the interior of a thing

As the heart is sheltered within the breast, it easily took on the meaning of the interior of things. The interior of a man or an animal — the heart — by metonymy, came to signify the interior of things. Some examples from the Bible are: Ex 15, 8, « The deeps congealed in the heart of the sea », means that they congealed within the sea. To lie down (Prov. 23, 34), to navigate (Prov. 30, 19), to trade, to lose one's merchandise « in the heart of the sea » (Ez. 27, 4.25-27; 28, 2.8), signify actions or losses in the midst of the sea. Fire burning « to the heart of heaven » signifies that it rises extremely high into space. For the Son of Man to remain three days in « the heart of the earth » (Mt. 12, 40) is the same as spending this time within the earth. The « figure as of a man » lifted up by the wind « from the heart of the sea » (4 Esd. 13, 3) is the Son of man who emerges from within the sea¹⁶.

Semitic languages other than Hebrew make the same transfer of meaning: in them « heart » means the interior, that which is within. This is the case, for example in such ancient languages as arabic and akkadian¹⁷. It is also the case with indoeuropean languages¹⁸.

6. Heart: the interior life of a person

In a special way « heart » signifies the whole interior life of a person. Accordingly « the interior of a person » is

placed as a synonym in a poetic parallelism with « heart »:

« I will put my law *within them*, and I will write it upon *their hearts* » (Jer. 31, 33).

« *In the hearts* of discerning men wisdom makes her home,

within the fool she has no place at all » (Prov. 14, 33).

The « external appearances of a person » is an expression used in a parallelism of contrast with « heart »: « Man looks at *appearances* but Yahweh looks at *the heart* » (1 Sam. 16, 7).

The « interior » contains the internal organs. The heart is the most important of these. Next in importance are the kidneys which the Bible mentions on a number of occasions in association with the heart ¹⁹.

The word « heart » means « interior of the person » so often in the Bible that certain authors believe ²⁰ that this inner nature of the person is the common meaning which underlies all the different biblical uses of the word we are studying.

In the Septuagint the word « heart » has the same semantic tendency as in Hebrew, that of meaning the interior nature of a person. There are cases in which the Hebrew text has « interior » while the Greek text translates it as « heart » (Psalms 5, 10; 61, 6; 93, 19; Proverbs 14, 33; 26, 24) ²¹. In this Greek translation, as in the Hebrew original, « heart » « before anything else, is both the organ of personal human life and the interior point where a person's being and doing are concentrated as spiritual personality » ²².

In Jewish inter-Testament literature also, the whole interior life is attributed to the heart ²³.

In the New Testament as well, the heart is « the centre of the interior life of a person — it is location and source of all the psychic and spiritual forces and functions » ²⁴.

Likewise « for the ancient Semites, the heart ... is the

centre of all psychic and moral life, of the interior life »²⁵.

8. Heart: the affective life, sentiments and will

Since the affective life has an impact on the human heart, it is to be expected that the Bible, like other documents from a different cultural context²⁶, should attribute the manifestations of this affective life to the heart: all sorts of sentiments, emotions and acts of the will:

The heart groans (Ps. 37, 9); is broken (Ps. 34, 18); is enlarged (Ps. 119, 32; 2 Cor. 6, 11); it doubts (Eccl. 2, 20; Lam. 1, 20); it is saddened (Gen. 6, 6, 1 Sam. 1, 8; Prov. 13, 12; 14, 10; Jn 16, 6); it rejoices (Ex. 4, 14; Judges 16, 25; Ps. 4, 8; Ps. 118, 111; Is. 24, 7; 66, 16; Pro. 23, 15; Acts 2, 26); it grieves (Gen. 6, 6; 1 Sam. 1, 8; Is. 1, 5; Jer. 4, 18; Ps. 13, 3; Rom 9, 2); is intimidated (Deut. 1, 28); it trembles like leaves before the wind (Is. 7, 2); it fears (Deut. 20, 3.8; Ps. 25, 17); it is alarmed (Deut. 28, 65); it grows faint (Is. 7, 4; Deut. 20, 8); it melts like wax (Ps. 22, 15; Deut. 20, 8; Joshua 2, 11; Is. 13, 7; Ez. 21, 12); it revives (Gen. 45, 27) it burns (Lk. 24, 32); it grows angry (Job. 15, 12). Naturally, the heart *loves*: The Spouse of the Canticle of Canticles reproaches the Bride who has stolen his love: « You ravish my heart, my sister, my promised bride, you ravish my heart with a single one of your glances » (Cant. 4, 9). The commandment of love sums up the whole law, and we have to carry it out with our whole heart: « You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength » (Deut. 6, 5; cf. Mk 12, 30; Mt. 22, 37; Luke 10, 27). Yahweh circumcises the hearts of the Israelites so that their hearts will be able to carry out their duties of love: « Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, until you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul ... » (Deut. 10, 6). God, says St. Paul,

« turns your hearts towards the love of God » (2 Thess. 3, 5). St. Peter tells the early christians: « let your love for one another be real and from the heart » (1 Pet. 1, 22). S. Paul bore those whom he loved within his heart: he writes to the Philippians: « You have a permanent place in my heart » (Phil. 1, 7); he asks the Corinthians: « Keep a place for us in your hearts » (2 Cor. 7, 2); he assures them of a place in his own heart, united with them in life or in death (2 Cor. 7, 3).

In the heart are located both individual love and the mutual love which we call friendship. When the Acts of the Apostles (Acts. 4, 32) relate that « the whole group of believers was united, heart and soul », it is clearly meant that the believers were united in mutual love, which is the classic definition of friendship²⁷. Just as love is located in the heart, so also is hatred (Lev. 19, 17).

In the Bible love is frequently attributed to the heart with different, though equivalent, words. This is because love, in the Bible, is basically a decision of the will, a free choice, surrender, obedience listening, response. Thus love clearly appears as located in the heart, although the Bible does not say that the heart loves: rather, the heart listens, obeys, accepts, carries out the will of God.

In the heart, too, according to the Bible, decisions are located as is the whole wide range of acts of the will: plans (Prov. 16, 9; Ps. 20, 5; Gen. 6, 5; Prov. 6, 18), intentions (2 Sam. 7, 3; Is. 10, 7); purposes (2 Cor. 9 7; Acts 11, 23), desires (Eccl. 11, 9; Rom. 1, 24), impulses towards action (Ex. 35, 21; 2 Kings 12, 5), obedience (2 Sam. 15, 6; 1 Kings 8, 61; 11, 4; Prov. 23, 26), conversion (1 Sam. 12, 24; 2 Sam. 24, 10; Job 27, 6; I John 3, 20), the will (1 Sam. 13, 14).

9. Heart: cognitive or intellectual life

The field of meaning of the word « heart » is not limited to the affective life, to the life of sentiments and will: it

embraces also, and in a special way, the cognitive or intellectual life. The Old Testament mentions « the heart » of man 814 times. In about 400 of these cases ²⁸ functions of knowledge are attributed to the heart. We shall explain how this is not a semantic usage proper to the Bible; it exists in other cultures, too.

In the Bible the word « heart » does not have a specialized meaning denoting only the emotional life. It is interesting to note that it is the sapiential biblical literature, of a didactic nature, which is most generous in its use of the word « heart ». It occurs 99 times in the book of Proverbs, 42 in Ecclesiastes and 51 in Deuteronomy ²⁹.

The heart understands (Deut. 29, 3; Is. 6, 10; Mt. 13, 15; John 12, 40) or does not understand (Luke 24, 15); it thinks (Ps. 14, 1; Eccl. 2, 1, 15; 3, 17; Mark 7, 21; Mt. 6, 21; Luke 3, 15; 5, 22) it acquires knowledge (Prov. 18, 15; Eph. 1, 18); it seeks knowledge (Prov. 15, 14); it is wise (Ps. 90, 12); it remembers (Deut. 4, 9; 8, 5; Is. 33, 18; 65, 17; Jer. 3, 16; Ps. 31, 13; Prov. 3, 3; Dan. 7, 28; Luke 2, 51); it is the intelligence (Job 12, 3; 34, 10; 34, 34), or the organ of wisdom (Prov. 2, 10; 14, 33; 16, 23; Eccl. 1, 16). To have little heart is to be lacking in knowledge (Prov. 10, 13), to be without heart is to lack knowledge altogether (Prov. 24, 30); to have a heart is to be intelligent, which is why Job says to his friends: « I also have a heart as well as you » (Job, 12, 3) or, as modern translations read:

« I can reflect as deeply as ever you can » ³⁰.

The aramaic traditions which we call Targumim (or Targums) make it clear that, for Judaism, « heart » signified the faculty of knowing: in Deuteronomy 8, 2 the Hebrew text reads: « to know in your inmost heart ». The Neofiti Targum translates into aramaic « to know what you have in the thought of your heart ». In Deuteronomy 18, 21 the Hebrew says: « You may say in your heart ». Neofiti translates: « You may say in the thought of your heart ». Genesis 8, 21 says: « And Jahweh said in his heart »:

Neofiti reads; « and Jahweh said in the thought of his heart »³¹.

The frequent biblical usage of the word « heart » for functions of knowing should not lead to the mistaken conclusion that the term is not an appropriate one to symbolize the affective life or the life of love. This would be to project into the biblical « knowing » that intellectualist meaning which « knowledge » possesses in Greek culture — and in ours under the influence of that classic culture. The knowledge of which the Bible treats most often goes beyond a mere knowing of sensation or intellect, and implies an experiential knowledge, a knowing which is both affective and loving. To know someone is to come close to him in affection; it is care and concern. The negative opposite is un-caring, unconcern, abandonment, a burden of lack of love. A person who is known is not merely someone to whom one can give a name, but one's neighbour, a compatriot, the man in whom you trust, a relative, a friend³². Two examples, two texts suffice to illustrate this affirmation that the biblical « knowing » is both knowing and loving, the two things combined: « We can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments. Anyone who says ' I know him ', and does not keep his commandments is a liar » (1 John 2, 3-4). Here as in other texts of St. John, to know is to love, to love is to keep the commandments of God and his Son. A second example is found in 1 Cor. 8, 3: « Any man who loves God is known by him ». Here, to be known by God is synonymous with being known and loved by him.

So bound up are knowing and loving for the Hebrew mentality that the expression « thought » (mada) signifies jointly thought and heart³³.

10. Heart: cognitive life also outside the Bible

In order that the close linking of knowing and loving should not lead us to under-value the psychology of the

Bible, we shall go on to show that this is a common association in non-biblical cultures. Modern psychology appreciates the value of the heart's involvement in the function of knowledge.

« For a Semite the heart is, first of all, the intelligence »³⁴.

Among ancient Semites there is a tendency to distinguish knowledge from the other phenomena of our psychological life, and to localize knowledge in the heart, while the emotions and sentiments are situated in the stomach or other internal organs³⁵.

For the Arabs, « heart » in the concrete signifies heart and intelligence³⁶.

The same is true of ancient Egyptian and Coptic³⁷, as also of the Greek of Homer, Hesiodus and the poets. For them the heart is not only the place of emotions and sentiments, but also of thought³⁸. Thought and sentiments are located not only in the heart but also in the pericardium and the diaphragm³⁹, in the lungs⁴⁰, in the breast⁴¹, in the breath contained in the breast⁴². This « breath » expresses itself in all kinds of sentiments, especially anger, and moreover, like the heart, thinks knows, reflects, imagines and remembers⁴³. Later, in classical Greek, this last word « breath » (*zymós*) absorbs a large part of the figurative meanings of « heart », one of these being that of knowledge. This reduction of the field of meaning of « heart » is due to the influence of philosophy in classical Greek. The philosophy impoverished the meaning of « heart », despoiling the word of its figurative meanings, one of them being that of knowing. It transferred intellectual activity to the intelligence, to the mind⁴⁴.

Among the Latins it was the poets, especially Virgil and Lucrece, who adopted the archaic and metaphorical use of « heart » and « breast » (*cor*, *pectus*), attributing functions of knowledge to the breast more frequently than to

the heart. The prose writers, on the other hand, attributed thought to the mind ⁴⁵.

In the Latin field, as in the Greek, it was Platonic philosophy which reduced the semantic area of « heart » and various correlative terms. Plato localised 'rational' ⁴⁶ knowledge in the head; this was later called 'directing' knowledge ⁴⁷. Before Plato knowledge had been localized in the head by Alcmeon of Crotona, a contemporary of Pythagoras and perhaps his disciple ⁴⁸.

Great though it was, Plato's authority did not prevail everywhere and different doctors and philosophers continued to localize knowledge in the heart. Although Hypocrates, Democritus and Plato thought that the intellect resided in the brain, the Epicureans and Stoics placed it in the heart. However, the spiritualizing tendency of Platonism was gaining ground. This explains the almost total disappearance of the metaphorical uses of the word « heart » from the classical Greek and Latin languages (*kardia* and *cor*) ⁴⁹. When the word does appear, it is almost always with a precise anatomical and physiological meaning. The ancient usage of the word « heart » in the general sense of interior of a person, of the sum total of his psychological faculties is replaced by the ordinary use of the word « soul » ⁵⁰. Other words are used to indicate the place of the intelligence ⁵¹.

Despite the opinion of certain doctors and philosophers neither Latins nor Greeks take up the word « heart »; in classical Greek only the word for diaphragm, pericardium (*fren*) kept a metaphorical meaning, no doubt because it was less familiar in its proper meaning much more specialized than that of « heart ». When localizing sentiments, they preferred to use the word « breast » rather than heart, doubtless judging it more precise and more definite ⁵².

We meet with a number of languages which have the same linguistic usages as those of the Bible and the Semites in general. We have brought out their predilection for

the metaphorical use of the word « heart »⁵³. Through the influence of philosophy, classical Greek and Latin reduce the field of meaning of the word « heart »; nevertheless the Greek Septuagint version retains the variety of meanings which the word « heart » enjoys in the Hebrew text. Accordingly, in the Septuagint the heart has functions of knowledge⁵⁴.

The same is true of the New Testament, partly because of the Semitic mentality of the sacred writers, partly through the influence of the Septuagint which was the Bible adopted by the early christians. In the New Testament, the heart knows.

Since the field of meaning of the word « heart » was reduced less in classical Latin than in Greek, it is not strange that the Vulgate gives to the word « heart » the wide variety of meanings which the word has in the original Hebrew which the Latin translates. In the Vulgate, too, the heart knows⁵⁵.

The Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers who were followers of neoplatonism eliminated the function of knowing from the heart — it was reserved for the mind or the understanding. Those who kept the biblical usage, maintained the figurative meanings of « heart » such as that of knowledge. In general the eastern spiritual writers retained the biblical usage of the word « heart », while the westerns abandoned it. St. Augustine adopts the philosophical meaning at times, at others the biblical usage⁵⁶. Modern psychology breaks with the Greek dichotomy which has so much influenced our habits of thought; it aligns itself with biblical psychology and recognises that human knowledge is normally shot through with affectivity. However, to attribute cognitive functions to the heart does not lessen the aptness of this organ to be a symbol of both affective and cognitive life.

11. Heart: moral and religious life

Finally, the most varied manifestations of moral and religious life are attributed to the heart:

The heart is hard (Ez. 3, 7; Mark 10, 5; 16, 14) or is hardened (Ex. 10, 20, 11, 10; Ps. 94, 8; Rom. 2, 5); is perverse (Prov. 6, 14; 17, 20; Jer. 17, 9; Deut. 29, 19); it is clean (Ex. 16, 30; Ps. 23, 4; Mt. 5, 8; 1 Tim. 1, 5; 2 Tim. 2, 22); it has impure desires (Rom. 1, 24) it is adulterous (Mt. 5, 28), it is envious (James 3, 14), it is faithful (Neh. 9, 8); it is haughty (Jer. 49, 16), proud (Deut. 8, 14; Hos. 13, 6; Is. 9, 8), or it is meek and humble like the Heart of Jesus (Mt. 11, 29); it is hypocritical or sincere (Eccli. 2, 14; 1 Chron. 29, 17; Eph. 6, 5; Col. 3, 22); it is righteous (Ps. 10, 3; 35, 11; 72, 1; 93, 15); it is perfect (2 Kings 20, 3; Is. 38, 3), it is slow to believe (Lk. 24, 25); we believe with the heart (Rom. 10, 10; Acts 8, 37), with the heart we turn to God (Jer. 24, 7; 2, 12); we worship with our hearts (Eccli. 39, 41); with our hearts we serve Him (1 Sam. 12, 20) and with our hearts we love him (Mt. 22, 37; Mark 12, 30)⁵⁷.

Precisely because the moral and religious life is localized in the heart, God who reveals this life to us, gives himself in the heart of the human person: « God searches every heart » (1 Chron. 28, 9), he scrutinizes hearts (Rom. 8, 27), he tests the heart (1 Thes. 2, 4), he knows what is in the heart (Lk. 16, 15); Christ dwells in our hearts through faith⁵⁸.

12. The heart is the person

This statement will cause no surprise to those who recall that, according to biblical anthropology, « the living body and its different parts are considered organ and vehicle of personal life, to such an extent that the totality of the person can be expressed and contained in each part »⁵⁹. « Characteristic of Hebrew thought is the discovery of the whole in each part »⁶⁰.

The heart is the person: this is clear first of all from those biblical texts in which « heart » appears as a synonym parallel with a personal pronoun:

Ps. 22, 14: « *I* am like water draining away, my bones are all disjointed, *my heart* is like wax melting inside me ».

Ps. 27, 3: « Though an army pitched camp against *me*, *my heart* would not fear, though war were waged against *me*, *my trust* would still be firm ».

The synonym is clear: the heart which does not tremble is the I who trust.

Ps. 45, 1, « *My heart* is stirred⁶¹ by a noble theme; I address my poem to the king ». The synonym is between the heart which is stirred by the poem and the I who recite it to the king.

Job. 23, 16: « God has made *my heart* sink, Shaddai has filled *me* with fear »⁶².

Mark. 2, 8: « Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within *themselves*, said to them, ' Why do you question thus *in your hearts?* ' ».

In 2 Cor. 6, 11-12, « heart » is equivalent to « entrails » and to « person »: « Christians we have spoken to you very frankly; our *heart is wide* (with love). You are not restricted *by us* (in our heart), but you are restricted in your own affections (lit. in your *own entrails*). In return — I speak as to children — widen *your hearts* also (give me your love) ».

John 16, 22: « So *you* have sorrow now, but I will see you again and *your hearts* will rejoice, and no one will take *your joy* from you ».

Col. 4, 8: « I have sent him (Tychicus) *to you* ... that he may encourage *your hearts* ».

James 5, 5: « You have lived on the earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened *your hearts* (you ate to your heart's content) on a day of slaughter »⁶³.

Exegetes have pointed out that « heart » and « person » are equivalent. To give a few examples: « Heart (*leb*) can take on a more general meaning to indicate the very

person, and can be used in the function of a personal pronoun »⁶⁴. « In some circumlocutions the word « heart » (kardia) is equivalent to the simple personal or reflexive pronoun »⁶⁵. « The heart, the most interior part, represents the I, the person »⁶⁶.

At times heart (*leb*) is used as a « composite form to designate the whole person, his interior life, his character (Is. 10, 7; Prov. 3, 1; 24, 17) »⁶⁷.

After these statements of exegetes regarding the equivalence of « heart » and « person », let us see some further texts of the bible which show why these statements can be rightly made:

1 Pet. 3, 4 tells us, in a very cryptic phrase — « the hidden person of the heart » — that the heart possesses the interior man or woman⁶⁸ or rather, that the interior person is the heart⁶⁹.

At times the heart is the I, the responsible subject: « heart (*leb*) denotes especially the person as subject responsible for action: « what comes forth from the heart is truly characteristic of the whole person; the heart is responsible for it in that it is an 'I' who acts consciously »⁷⁰.

At other times « heart » simply denotes the person, as in the following sentences:

Ps. 22, 26: « Long life to *their hearts* » is the same as « long life to *them* »⁷¹.

Ez. 28, 2: « Because *your heart* is proud and you have said. I am a god ».

The first phrase is the same as « *you* have become proud ».

In phrases which say that the heart melts (Jos. 2, 11; 5, 1; 7, 5; Is. 13, 7; 19, 1), sinks (Ez. 21, 20), is alarmed (Deut. 28, 65) and others of this kind found in many pages of the Scriptures, « heart » refers to the whole human person⁷².

In many biblical phrases, as we have already said, one may substitute for the word « heart » the corresponding personal pronoun: Col. 2, 2: « That *your hearts* may be encouraged (or comforted) » is equivalent to « that *you* may be encouraged ». Acts 5, 3: « Why has Satan filled *your heart* to lie » becomes, in another translation: « How can Satan have so possessed *you* that you should lie ».

It is the equivalence of « heart » and the personal pronoun which often authorizes a translation which leaves the word « heart » untranslated. What difference is there, in fact between saying « joy of heart » and « joy »? What difference is there between saying « be joyful in your heart » and « be joyful »? ⁷³. At times the Bible itself suppresses the word « heart » as being superfluous. Thus in Ez. 9-10. The first leg of the parallelism says: « I shall grieve the heart of many peoples » while the second, synonymous with the first, says « I shall stun many peoples with shock », instead of saying « I shall stun the hearts of many peoples ».

From all this it follows that, in direct and express fashion, the Bible identifies person and heart ⁷⁴.

It makes the same identification indirectly and implicitly when it attributes so many predicates to the heart that such predication can have meaning only if the heart is identified with the person. This is affirmed by a famous author: « Since the heart is the 'place' of sensitive life, of affective life and of intellectual life (even being identified with the latter), the heart contains all the constitutive elements of what we call person » ⁷⁵.

We do not say that every mention of heart in the bible indicates the person. What we affirm is that the many and varied attributes can be applied to the heart only if this is equivalent to the person, the final and ultimate core of our being to which we attribute all the phenomena of our existence ⁷⁶.

13. According to the Bible « person » is « heart »

We have just seen that the heart is the person. Now let us look at a different formula, which is, however, equivalent to the first: the person is the heart. The first formula studied above, is common in biblical lexicæ; the second formula — « the person is the heart » — is proper to books of biblical anthropology.

« The heart is the man » is expressed in different ways in two biblical lexicæ: O. Garcia de la Fuente⁷⁷ concludes his description of « heart » in the Bible with these words: « So many are the functions which the sacred authors attribute to the heart, that it can well be said that, according to Scripture, a man's value is what his heart is worth ». J. Caballero⁷⁸ affirms that the heart « often sums up the whole man in what is specifically proper to him ». J. de Fraine - A. A. Viard⁷⁹ say: « The heart of a man, then, designates his whole personality, conscious, intelligent and free ».

Modern books on biblical anthropology make use of statements such as the following: man is flesh, or, he has no flesh⁸⁰; he is soul, or, he has no soul; he is body, or, he has no body. They also affirm that man is heart. We read, in a recent book of anthropology⁸¹: « It is a well-known subject that, according to biblical anthropology, the I, the person, the man, 'is soul, flesh, heart, etc.' »⁸².

To understand the meaning of the assertion « the person is heart » or equivalent anthropological terms, some reflection is needed about the anthropology of the Bible: It has been customary for some years now to affirm that the Bible contains a *monist anthropology*, that is, that it considers man as a whole without taking him to pieces as the Greek philosophers did after Plato. Under the influence of the dualist Greek philosophy, we say that a man is composed of body and soul. The Bible, in accord with the monist exegesis already mentioned, says: man is an undivided psychosomatic unity expressed by different

words such as « heart », « flesh »⁸³, « soul »⁸⁴, body⁸⁵. As the Hebrews had no term to signify the person, they had to take one of these words which signify an aspect of the person, of the psychosomatic whole, in order to denote the man, the person, the « I ». The Greeks did the same: they had to have recourse to a term from the theatre, *prosopon*, the mask which the actors put before their faces as a means of expressing the person.

A monistic exegesis will point out that the words used to signify the human whole, such as « heart », « flesh », « soul », « body » do not signify parts of the person, but rather aspects of the *whole* person: *man is flesh* indicates the whole man under the aspect of weak humanity, as he belongs to this world, in his frailty, and at times in his opposition to God, as is the case in St. Paul. *Man is soul* signifies the whole man as a living being, endowed with the breath of life. *Man is spirit*⁸⁶ means the whole man in his orientation towards God, not only supernaturally through the Holy Spirit and the gifts of God, but by his very nature. *Man is body*, signifies the whole man as he can relate to his surroundings through a physical body in this world, in a new corporeal way after the resurrection. *Man is heart* means the whole man as centre of all the physical, psychic and spiritual operations which do not appear externally.

To repeat: flesh, soul, spirit, body, heart are all aspects of the whole man; they indicate aspects, not parts.

There are points of this monistic anthropology proceeding from the formula « man is heart » and other similar expressions which could be discussed. Examples are: whether to extend monism, without distinction, to the Old and New Testaments, and within the Old Testament to all the books or: whether certain books such as Wisdom, 2 Maccabees, and many passages of the New Testament reflect a dualist anthropology which does distinguish between the corporal and spiritual components of man, as R. H. Gundry has recently proposed⁸⁶. Another point of

monistic anthropology could also be discussed: whether those 'totalizing' terms of heart, soul, flesh, body, spirit in themselves signify the whole human being, although from different aspects or points of view; or whether rather each one of these terms signifies in itself one sector or one dimension of the person, and this serves by synecdoche (the use of the part to signify the whole) to denote and express the whole human person⁸⁷.

In spite of these objections which can, or should, be made against a monist biblical anthropology⁸⁸, the 'totalizing' formulae: « man is heart, is flesh, is soul » etc. still hold up: for those many upholders of monist biblical anthropology, they represent a matter applicable to the whole Bible. For those who object to the monist anthropology, they still remain valid for the Old Testament apart from a few recent books. At the very least they hold up for those passages of the Old and New Testaments in which the 'totalizing terms' quoted are synecdoche, that is, part of the person used to signify the whole.

Leaving aside other similar expressions and restricting ourselves to the use of the word « heart », it would be difficult for anyone to deny that, in both Old and New Testaments, it is a « totalizing » term, as we have proved above. « Heart », by synecdoche in many cases, denotes the human person; and because it is the universal subject of multiform human activity, it is not different from « person ».

The undeniable 'totalizing' character of this word is supported not only by the formula « the heart is the person », but also by the other formula, much used today: « the person is heart ».

¹ This is not true of modern English versions which often give the figurative sense of the word « heart ». Accordingly, at times an older translation (such as the Douay-Rheims) has been used. For the Hebrew: cf. F. H. VON MEYENFELDT: *Het Hart (leb, lebab) in het OT*, Leiden

- 1950; E. JENNI - C. WESTERMANN: *Diccionario teológico manual del AT*, I, Madrid 1978, *leb*, col. 1177.
- ² H. W. WOLFF: *Antropología del Antiguo Testamento*, Salamanca 1975, p. 63.
- ³ Cf. J. B. SMITH: *Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*, Scottdale, 1955, *kardia*, p. 192.
- ⁴ Cf. *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1956, the second meaning of the word «heart».
- ⁵ Unlike *ricordar*, *ricordare*, «record», in English does not refer to a person remembering.
- ⁶ This is not generally true of English, although an occasional term such as *sweetheart* does have a personal connotation.
- ⁷ Cf. *Midrash Rabba*, ed. by H. FREEDMAN - M. SIMON, *Ecclesiastes*, by A. Cohen, Soncino Press, London 1939, pp. 46-49. Each predicate is accompanied by the corresponding biblical text.
- ⁸ H. FRISK: *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (I Heidelberg 1960) gives *kardia* these meanings: «heart» (Herz): in a transferred sense «soul, spirit» (Seele, Geist); and also «upper orifice of the stomach» (der obere Magen Mund); «the heart of the wood» (Kernholz); M. CHANTRAINE: *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968): *kardia*, «heart»: at times the seat of thought and feelings (Homer, Ionic, Attic) upper orifice of the stomach, stomach, heart of the wood.
- H. STEPHANUS: *Thesaurus linguae graecae*, IV, col. 960-961, sub voce *kardia*: in a proper sense, «heart» (*cor*): in a metaphoric sense, courage (*animus*), voluntarily, sincerely (*ex animo*); feelings (*sensus*), for example «to dull the heart» is to blunt the feelings. Other meanings: *os ventriculi*, the stomach, *matrix*, the pith or heart of trees.
- J. POKORNY: *Indogermanische Etymologisches Wörterbuch I*, 579-580, sub voce *kerd*: heart; *kardia*: heart, stomach, pith of plants; latin *cor*: heart.
- ⁹ Cf. WOLFF: *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- ¹⁰ H. L. GINSBERG (*Enc. Judaica*, VIII, Jerusalem 1971, Heart, col. 7) adduces Jer. 11 20: 17, 10; Ps. 7, 10; 73, 21, as references to the heart in the anatomical sense; in reality they are references to the heart and kidneys in the figurative sense; cf. *Enc. Miqra'it*, IV, Jerusalem, 1962, cols 413 f.
- ¹¹ The Misna, Tamid 4, 3 does not mention the heart notwithstanding a large *halaká* referring to the different parts of the sacrificed victim.
- ¹² J. BEHM (TWNT III 614) interprets these texts in the sense of heart as central organ of the body, seat of the vital force.
- ¹³ M. J. LAGRANGE, *Evangelie selon S. Jean* (8 Paris, 1948), p. 499: «Side (*pleura*) breast and heart are easy to relate. The relation of 'side' to 'heart' is implicit in the Latin hexameter of Lucillus: *tum lateralis dolor certissimus nuntius mortis*'. Regarding the relation of 'side' (*latus, latera*) and 'breast' for the Romans cf. J. H. SCHMIDT: *Synonymik der Griechischen Sprache*, Stuttgart 1879 (reprinted. Amsterdam 1969) III, p. 628 ».
- ¹⁴ H. L. GINSBERG, *ibid.*, col. 7.

¹⁵ On the other hand the corresponding aramaic word (*hade*, Dan. 2, 32) is used in the sense of human breast. F. S. Baumgartner: *Hebräische Wortforschung, Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von W. Baumgartner*, XVT 16 (1967), p. 80, and H. L. GINSBERG, *loc. cit.*, col. 7, maintain that the Hebrew word *leb*, heart, also signifies «throat», for example in Is. 33, 18; Ps. 19, 15; 49, 4; Job 8, 10; Eccl. 5, 1. According to Ginsberg, heart (*leb*) would be, in biblical Hebrew, the proper term for «throat» substituted for «throat» (*garon*) only when the use of the word «*leb*» could be ambiguous. Regarding this presumed meaning of heart (throat) the argument is brought forward that heart (*leb*) occurs in parallelism with mouth or in connexion with *hgy*, a word which always signifies an audible sound. The semantic association of «heart» and «throat» would explain the frequent association of «to say», «to speak» with the word «heart».

¹⁶ Another reference to the «heart of the sea» is 4. Esd. 4, 7.

¹⁷ In *Diccionario árabe-español* (Madrid 197, p. 680) F. Corriente offers the following meanings of «heart», *lubbu*, plural *lúbúb*: heart, half, bone, seed, pulp, crumb of bread, starch, *internal part*. Both the word given and its derivative *labúbu* signify quintessence.

«Heart», in Assyrian, has the following meanings: *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, L 164. *libbu*: 1. heart, entrails, womb. 2. *inside* (or inner part) of a building, an area, a region of a container, parts of the human body, parts of the exta, *inside*, pith of plants, a type of document, etc. 3. mind, thought, intention, courage, wish, desire, choice, preference. 4. woof, 5. «heart» (bud, offshoot, leaf, trunk) of the date palm. In Akkadan: *Akkadisches Handswörterbuch*, bearbeitet von Wolfram von Soden, 549, *libbu(m)*: Leib, Inneres, Herz, Herz als Körper, Herz, Gemüt, Sinn, Wunsch, Belieben, Inhalt.

¹⁸ Cf. note 8.

¹⁹ The proper word for «interior» is *qereb* in Hebrew, *qirbu* in Assyrian. Cf. H. W. WOLFF, *Antropología del Antiguo Testamento*, pp. 93-97.

²⁰ J. S. LICHT: *Enc. Miqrail*, *loc. cit.*, col. 414.

²¹ TWNT III, col. 612.

²² TWNT III, col. 613.

²³ «The full range of personality, *inner life* or character», according to D. S. RUSSELL (*The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, London 1964, p. 396) who makes a collection of the texts of apocalyptic literature in which «heart» has this meaning.

²⁴ TWNT III, col. 614.

²⁵ A GUILLAUME, «Les sens des noms du coeur dans l'antiquité», in *Le Coeur*, Desclée, 1950, p. 42.

²⁶ A typical example can be seen in the Letters of Mari: the heart (*libbum*) constantly echoes the sentiments of desolation, disquiet, joy, peace, suffering. Cf. *Archives Royales de Mari X. Feminine correspondence* translated by G. Dossin and A. Finet. Paris-Brussels 1978, X 2, 6-10 5. 33-37; 17, 5-9N 44, 5-10, 45, 8 ff.

²⁷ *Etica a Nicomaco* IX, 8, 2; Cicero *De Amicitia*, 21, 81 *unum animum*.

²⁸ This is the calculation of G. PIDOUX, *L'homme dans l'Ancien Testa-*

ment Cahiers Théologiques, 32 (1953), p. 25; according to the inexact calculations of W. Mohr, *Sentido bíblico del hombre*, Madrid, 1970, p. 53, heart (*leb. lebab*) refers to intellectual activities 204 times, and 190 times to volitional activity.

²⁹ WOLFF, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

³⁰ Cf. I. KNABENBAUER, *Lexicon biblicum* (Ed. M. Hagen. Paris 1905) *cor.*, col. 1985; JENNI-WESTERMANN, *op. cit.*, col. 1179; WOLFF, *op. cit.*, 71-77.

³¹ Targum Onqelos translates « and Jahweh said in his Word »; LXX « and the Lord God, having thought ».

³² Cf. M. REVUELTA, *La raíz yada' y el conocimiento de Dios en el AT*. (Inedited thesis of the University of Barcelona 1972), pp. 41-42; cf. R. BULTMANN, *gignosko* TWNT I (1933), 688-719; P. VAN IMSCHOOT, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament*, Paris, 1954 (To know is to surrender to God; it is fidelity in a will) « The intellectual activity of the heart is made real in close connexion with the understanding and the will, so that the knowledge is never that of a cool spectator, but something demanded by an energetic participation and internal decision ». (W. EICHRODT, *Teología del Antiguo Testamento*, Madrid 1975, p. 150 f.).

³³ HENOKH YALON, *Estudios de la lengua hebrea* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1971, pp. 233 f.

³⁴ GUILLAUMONT, *art. cit.*, p. 45.

³⁵ GUILLAUMONT, *ibid.*

³⁶ Cf. FEDERICO CORRIENTE, *op. cit.*, p. 681; *lubbu*, pl. *alābb*; *labib*: intelligent, wise (p. 681).

³⁷ GILLAUMONT, *op. cit.*, 46-48, quoting Pinakoff, *Le Coeur dans les textes égyptiens depuis l'Ancien jusqu'à la fin du Nouvel Empire*, Paris 1930, pp. 45, 49, 100.

³⁸ Odissea IV 427. 572; V 389 (imagination); PINDARO, *Olymp*, 13, 16 ff.; SOFOCLES, *Antigona* 1254; TWNT III, Col. 611.

³⁹ *frén*, plural *frenes* in Greek, cf. J. H. SCHMIDT, *Synonymik*, p. 628 f.

⁴⁰ *ētor* in Greek.

⁴¹ *stēzos* and *stérnon* in Greek, cf. M. GUERRA, *Antropología y teología*, Pamplona 1977, pp. 110 f.

⁴² *zymós* in Greek.

⁴³ Cf. GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.*, pp. 52 f. M. GUERRA, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁴⁴ *nous*, *diánoia*.

⁴⁵ cf. GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ *logistikón*; *Timeo* 42 e; 69 d.

⁴⁷ *hegemonikon*.

⁴⁸ Cf. T. F. GLASSON: « Visions of the Head (Dan. 2, 28) », *Expository Times* 81 (1970), pp. 247 ff.

⁴⁹ *Cor* (heart) in a lesser degree especially in the archaic expressions of poetic language.

⁵⁰ *psyche* in Greek and *anima* in Latin.

⁵¹ *nous*, *diánoia* in Greek, *mens* and *animus* in Latin.

⁵² *zymós* in Greek and *pectus* in Latin.

⁵³ GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.* pp. 60 f.

⁵⁴ Sometimes « heart » in the LXX *ad sensum*, for *mind* (*nous*), thought (*diánoia*), soul (*psyche*).

⁵⁵ Cf. FLASCHE, H., « El Concepto de Cor en la Vulgata », *Est B* 10 (1951) pp. 5-49.

⁵⁶ GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.* pp. 61-78.

⁵⁷ BAUMGÄRTEL, TWNT III, Col 611.

⁵⁸ BEHM, TWNT III, cols. 615 f; H. MÜLLER, « Corazón en la sagrada escritura y su aplicación en la devoción al Sd. Corazón de Jesús », *Revista Bíblica*, n. 90, p. 206.

⁵⁹ W. EICHRODT: *Teología del A.T.* II, p. 153.

⁶⁰ W. EICHRODT, *ibid.*, p. 154; he is in accord with J. Pedersen and A. R. Robinson: *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 1949.

⁶¹ Cfr. G. CASTELLINO, *Il libro dei Salmi* « La Sacra Bibbia », ed. S. Garofalo, Turin-Roma 1955, p. 574: *rahas* in Hebrew is a hapax whose meaning in Aramaic and Syrian is to be moved, excited.

⁶² ALONSO SCHÖKEL-MATEOS, *Nueva Biblia española*, Madrid 1975, translates « Dios me ha intimidado ».

⁶³ The text is the RSV version; the parenthesis is from the Jerusalem Bible.

⁶⁴ F. STOLZ, *leb* in *Diccionario teológico ...* col. 1180.

⁶⁵ J. BEHM, TWNT III 16.

⁶⁶ J. BEHM, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ W. EICHRODT: *Teología del Antiguo Testamento* II, pp. 149 f. The author continues « When this occurs, there is a clear reference to voluntary and conscious spiritual activity of a human « I » considered as a complete whole; this is contradistinguished, in clear fashion, from the activity of the *nefeš*, of a strongly animal and instinctive character, and from the *ruah*, which acts in domineering fashion dominating a man completely ».

⁶⁸ « of the heart » as genitive possessive.

⁶⁹ « of the heart » as genitive of definition, cf. R. FRANCO: *La Sagrada Escritura* BAC, NT, III, Madrid 1962, p. 264.

⁷⁰ W. EICHRODT, *op. cit.* p. 150.

⁷¹ The context seems to postulate this reading of « their hearts » which the Jerusalem Bible gives; the original is « your hearts ».

⁷² Cf. STOLZ, *ibid.*, col 1180.

⁷³ Cf. H. L. GINSBERG, *Heart*, *loc. cit.*, col. 8.

⁷⁴ GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.*, p. 48 corroborates our assertion: « In certain texts the heart designates (directly) the person himself ». As examples he gives Ez. 28, 2, 6 (cfr. Ez. 11, 19) and Daniel 4, 10-33: in the vision which Nebuchadnezzar had of the tree, it is said that his human heart will be taken from him and that he will given the heart of a beast. This is a way of affirming that his human personality will be changed

and he will go to live as a beast. The author then (p. 49) brings up a parallel with Egypt: for the Egyptians the vicissitudes of the physical heart are an image of the changes, disappearance and re-birth of the person. See what Eduardo Alfonso and Hernán have to say in *Compendio de gramática jeroglífica clásica del antiguo Egipto*, Barcellona 1973, with an appendix on Egyptian symbolism pp. 116-117: «The heart for the Egyptians was an organ of superior importance. They said of it: 'The heart is the conscience; it guides man and censures him; it is an independent being of a superior order which resides in the body'; 'the heart of man is his proper being'» (from a coffin in the Museum of Vienna).

«Of all the parts of the body, the heart was the one preferred as a protecting amulet or as a saving talisman. A text of the ritual says: 'Leave me my heart this year and this day. Do not speak against me. My heart belongs to the Lord of Hermopolis (the god Thuth) to him whose words are obeyed by his members and whose soul is tranquil within his breast. He protects me against the gods and leaves me my heart eternally».

«We see, then, that the Egyptians, interpreting a psychological reality made the heart the symbol of the essence of the human being».

⁷⁵ GUILLAUMONT, *loc. cit.*, p. 48.

⁷⁶ Meyenfeldt has interpreted this fact correctly when he defines the heart as the organ which is representative of man in his totality, the organ which expresses all that is important in his personality. Licht, on the other hand, does not accept such a definition (*loc. cit.*, col 414) alleging that it does not correspond to the proper sense of heart in the Bible — this sense would be that of 'interiority'. However Licht confuses the concrete meaning of the heart in determined texts, and the global meaning of heart. What follows from particular quotations need not be the person; but from all the texts together heart does signify the person.

⁷⁷ *Enciclopedia de la Biblia*, Ed. Garriga, II, «corazón», col. 522.

⁷⁸ *Enciclopedia de la Biblia*, II, article *Corazón de Cristo*, col. 524.

⁷⁹ *Vocabulario de Teología Bíblica*, ed. X. Lon-Dufour, Barcelona 1967, article «corazón», p. 159.

⁸⁰ Cf. W. MOHR: *Sentido bíblico del hombre*, Madrid 1970, p. 48.

⁸¹ MANUEL GUERRA, *Antropología y teología*, p. 241.

⁸² Cf. W. EICHRODT, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁸³ *bašar* in Hebrew, *sarx* in Greek. Example: «The Word was made flesh» (John 1, 14).

⁸⁴ *nefeš* in Hebrew, *psyche* in Greek; for example Lev. 17, 10 «If any mean eat blood ... I will set my face against his soul (*nefeš*)» (Douay Rheims version) ...

⁸⁵ *bašar* in Hebrew, *soma* in Greek.

⁸⁶ *ruah* in Hebrew, *pneuma* in Greek.

⁸⁷ *Soma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology*, Cambridge 1976: the thesis of the book is that the New Testament, and also the Old, is expressed in a dualist anthropology, which is not the platonic anthropology of dichotomy, because the Bible does not talk

of soul and body nor does it downgrade the body as platonic anthropology does.

⁸⁸ MANUEL GUERRA, *Antropología y teología*, pp. 227-257 prefers to describe the anthropology of the less recent books of the Old Testament, in which the monistic anthropology is more apparent, as anthropological pluralism or living monism: man is experienced as a whole, as a unity, without analyzing or dividing this whole. This experience of man as a whole is what he calls living monism. Anthropological pluralism signifies that the personal «I» is perceived in a certain plurality, as heart, as soul, as flesh etc., without being identified with any one of these aspects or realities (p. 241). «This convertibility and identification (My heart = my soul = me, etc.) is compatible with narrowing down the soul, the heart, the flesh ... as to a package, a part of an integrated plurality in the 'I'; by means of each section the 'I' exercises distinct psychological actions» (p. 243). «The 'I' which is not divided up only into body and soul (dualism) but into various psychic and somatic facets (soul, flesh, heart, etc.), thus appears as pluriform in the measure in which each one is consistent in itself. Each aspect acquires totalizing dimensions» (p. 243). «In this anthropological pluralism or living monism each part is, as it were, independent and totalizing, directly linked to the personal 'I', which, in some way is the result of the conglomerate ...» (p. 243).

⁸⁹ On this theme, see my book *La resurreccion de Jesucristo y la del hombre en la Biblia*, Madrid, 1977, pp. 137-153, and passim.

The Redemption of the world — this tremendous mystery of love in which creation is renewed — is, at its deepest root, the fulness of justice in a human Heart — the Heart of the First-born Son — in order that it may become justice in the hearts of many human beings, predestined from eternity in the First-born Son to be children of God and called to grace, called to love.

John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, n. 9.

Heart of Christ Encounter of God and man

Joseph Lescrauwaet, M.S.C.

Recently a well known author wrote about man that « his mind's desire is to know, his heart's desire is to be known »¹. The statement needs no proof. Our mind never ceases raising questions about the world and human existence. At the same time our heart is continually on the lookout for that sharing that confirms us. As a matter of fact, both longings are intertwined. We live with a reasoning heart.

The Christian vision of our existence is deeply rooted in this most human of aspirations. This is so not only in theory, but also in a very concrete sense. As concrete and particular as the life of Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus' life, our christian insight perceives this fundamental human ambition at the highest level of its activity. In him it sees our human desires also completely fulfilled.

The fulfilment found in him, however, was not just for him alone, but concerns our existence too; he realized our desires precisely as the Messiah given to us by God for all mankind. Through his reasoning heart there is a way out for all of us from our deepest ignorance and loneliness. his heart opens a road in life that every man can follow with all his heart. To sketch this road is the goal of the following seven theses.

I. - The christian vision of human existence starts with the conviction that, in its deepest reality, our life is a gift.

A present by Some One to some one. A real gift, not a loan but a present. A gift which continues and consequently creates a permanent relation. The reasoning heart becomes thankful for this relationship.

To be conscious of our existence is specific to our human being. Nothing is so dear to us and so near to us as our own existence. This does not, however, imply that we know all about it. On the contrary, it is precisely on the subject of our existence that the most urgent questions assail us.

From our earliest years we are looking at ourselves in the mirror, literally and figuratively. Inquiring and wondering and longing. The vital questions about the meaning of our existence surface without the need of any prompting: why, and whence, and whither? As we grow older we cease to formulate these questions so frequently, but we carry them with us from one period of our life to the next. We do not raise these questions only because we are so eager for knowledge. We are concerned about the possible answers for at least two quite concrete reasons.

The first reason is that we, as free men, are responsible for all our decisions and actions. We have to choose and to commit ourselves to a line of personal conduct. The compass needle of our reasoning heart looks for its right direction. We live only once, and we have to lay out a course towards an objective that is in conformity with the vital aspirations of our heart.

The second reason is given with the experience of the loneliness of our human condition. We feel this loneliness when we have to choose our road in life. We feel it again in the boundary situations of life: conflict and guilt, suffering and death. In this loneliness there is a longing as deep as our heart for some sharing with another.

The christian realizes that he has the beginnings of an answer within his reach. It is true that his knowledge is still imperfect, and his prophecy is imperfect, but at the

same time he feels able to appreciate his life as a gift, a personal and permanent gift. The fact of his existence is for him essentially more than the product of an impersonal process of evolution. It is something that needs to be appreciated from the heart; it is the fruit of a personal and permanent act of giving.

For a real gift supposes a knowing and free giver. It supposes also the giver's intention, that he wants his gift to be accepted. Therefore, somebody who receives something as a real gift realizes in the same moment that he is known. He knows that he is not alone and that someone is kindly disposed towards him. His reasoning heart says to the unseen Creator and Giver of life: « I thank you ».

In the last phrase the use of the personal pronouns is remarkable. For we know that the human idea of a « person » is inadequate to express the mystery of God. On the other hand, we discern in the gift of our life a « personal » invitation to a free acceptance and a grateful response. For if our existence is really a gift made to a person, it must be at the same time a call to reciprocity. Precisely in this reciprocity between gift and response there becomes manifest the « personal » relation between the mystery of God and the mystery of my own heart.

Because the gift of our existence is a permanent grace, our relationship to our Benefactor is a lasting one. The grateful experience of this most fundamental relation leads us to the confession of Augustine: « You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart can never rest until it rests in you »².

II. - Thankful for its life, Israel ascribed to the unseen God and continual Helper a heart as in a human person. The Israelites were nevertheless convinced that there can be neither image nor definition of God.

However, they knew of no symbol more human and more appropriate than this one of « heart » to express their experience of God's personal presence.

The christian interpretation of life borrows its primary convictions from Israel's religious experience of human life. By this fact the christian vision is rooted in a history of this people at least ten centuries before Jesus Christ.

By countless events and their feelings about the way that they were linked together by God, Israel became deeply convinced that God was real and near. This conviction was not the result of an abstract philosophy, nor the teaching of one genius. It was by the maturing fruit of Israel's common experience, and its repeated prophetic explanation, that this people became aware of God's love for them.

On the basis of this experience Israel ascribed no quality to God more frequently than his loving-kindness. This meant a goodness always linked to a fidelity and a willingness to forgive. The Israelites compared their experience of God's attitude to them with the conduct of parents towards their children, or with the relationship between a bridegroom and his beloved bride.

It is within this metaphorical context that Israel ascribes to God a living heart. The Israelites sang of the efficaciousness of « the thoughts of his heart to all generations » (Ps. 32, 11). Thus they expressed their firm confidence that God would continue to carry out during the course of the centuries what He had started with mankind in the beginning.

Undoubtedly Israel was deeply convinced of the absolutely spiritual character of God. Consequently the heart is not spoken of in its physical entity, but in symbolic language. Israel borrows this symbol from the human experience of a « heart for thinking » (Sir. 16, 16). For Israel's anthropological ways of speaking, the heart symbolized not only the affective and the emotional experiences, as is the case in our language today. The word « heart » in biblical language symbolizes the totality of somebody's inner life. It includes his personal and innermost thoughts, experiences, feelings, intentions, wisdom,

resolutions, and desires. By the word « heart » the Israelites symbolize the centre of a personal existence as such, the decisive kernel of a personality. In his heart a man possesses his own life, assimilates his experiences, stores up his recollections, and initiates his important decisions³.

In this way the Book of Job professes that « God is wise in heart », in spite of the experience of such a lot of misery (Job. 9, 4). In an account of human sins, however, the Book of Genesis declares with regard to God that « it grieved Him to his heart » (Gen. 6, 6). For Israel sin means withdrawing from Jahweh. God, however, prevents this process from becoming fatal, and He says:

« How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel! (...)

My heart recoils within me,

My compassion grows warm and tender » (Hosea 11, 8).

After the consecration of the newly-built temple, Jahweh, referring to this holy place, assures king Solomon: « My eyes and my heart will be there for all time » (1 Kings 9, 3). Finally, in the Song of Songs God compares the covenant between Him and Israel to the bonds of love between bridegroom and bride. As the bridegroom of his people Jahweh declares:

« You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;
You have ravished my heart » (Song 4, 9).

In the sequel of this Song, however, Jahweh invites Israel from his side: « Set me as a seal upon your heart » (Song 8, 6). The history of God's concern with Israel has two sides. God is not only manifesting the mystery of his heart; He is also demanding the heart of mankind. In various ways Jahweh is asking: « My son, give me your heart » (Prov. 23, 26).

III. - Israel understood that true religion must be more than intellectual agreement and oral confession, more than external obedience and formal liturgy. God is demanding man in his wholeness. Of this human wholeness the heart

is the specific symbol. Israel failed in fact in answering the demand of God. It kept, however, to its hope that in its midst the promised One would one day arise with « the heart of the just ».

The first rule for Israel is significant. Soon this rule would become also its daily prayer. The oldest version reads as follows:

« Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one God;
and you shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your might;
and these words which I command you this day
shall be upon your heart » (Deut. 6, 5-6).

The biblical use of the word « heart » is noteworthy in its frequency; it is used more than 660 times. This is more frequent than the use of the words for « God » or « Lord ». In its merely physical sense it seldom occurs. It is almost always used in connection with human life, seen as one whole of spirit and body. Thus man has eyes to see and ears to hear, but a « heart to understand » (Deut. 29, 4).

The heart is also typically that part of man that receives the words or signs coming from God. It is in the heart of the faithful that the encounter of God and man is realized. The Israelite acknowledges:

« I know, my God, that thou triest the heart ...;
in the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered
all these things ...;
O Lord, keep for ever such purposes and thoughts
in the hearts of thy people,
and direct their hearts towards thee » (1 Chron.
29, 17-18).

Yahweh is not content with the outward appearance, but « the Lord looks at the heart » (1 Sam. 16, 7). By the mouth of his prophets Yahweh let it be known several times; « I, the Lord, search the mind and try the heart » (Jer. 17, 20; cf. 29, 13, etc.). The condition for the cove-

nant to be efficacious runs as follows: « If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods ... and direct your heart to the Lord (1 Sam. 7, 3). Finally, the value of all worship depends on a « broken and contrite heart » (Ps. 51, 17).

In fact Israel did not often reach this level of religious purity. The prophet ascertains on behalf of Yahweh that « this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; ... and they do not say in their hearts ' Let us fear the Lord our God ' » (Jer. 5, 23-24). Their hearts were not attentive and they « walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts » (Jer. 7, 24). They are warned: « Harden not your hearts », but this and other warnings go unheeded: « They are a people who err in heart » (Ps. 93, 8-10). Prophets blame their people because of « their uncircumcised hearts », and even their false heart » (Lev. 26, 41; Hosea 10, 2).

The most faithful of Israel understood the prophetic summons to get themselves « a new heart and a new spirit » (Ezech. 18, 31). They repeat from generation to generation the supplication: « Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me » (Ps. 51, 10; cf. Lam. 3, 41; etc.).

This repentant receptivity corresponds exactly with God's positive intentions for the new and definitive future. Yahweh promises to realize in them what they are unable to realize themselves: « A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you » (Ezek. 36, 26-27).

This promise about a new heart and a new spirit as the two components of the new life of mankind with God, reaches beyond the history of Israel to the final reconciliation of all men with God and with each other. The fulfilment of this promise began in Jesus of Nazareth as the representative not only of Israel but as God's Christ for the whole world.

IV. - In Jesus of Nazareth God fashioned and gave to man the true and ideal Israelite. As the unique « servant of Yahweh », Jesus opened his human heart without reserve towards his God and fellow-men. Although He was the Son of God (see thesis V), Jesus became obedient unto death and offered himself through the eternal Spirit for his brothers. In the midst of his heart God and men met each other perfectly for the first time and in a way decisive for all mankind.

A messianic psalm, as interpreted by the Letter to the Hebrews, lays open to us the transition from Israel's prophecy into the Gospel's fulfilment. This psalm reads as follows:

« Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required;
then I said, Lo, I come;
in the roll of the book is written of me;
I delight to do thy will, O my God;
thy law is within my heart » (Ps. 39, 6b-8).

The Letter to the Hebrews quotes these words as spoken « when Christ came into the world » and could say to his Father in the most realistic sense: « A body hast thou prepared for me » (Heb. 10, 5-7).

This quotation functions in a context dealing with the unique significance of Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. In the mouth of Jesus these words act as a declaration of his intention. This declaration reveals two remarkable aspects of Jesus' messianic offering.

Firstly, it reveals that the unique value of Jesus' death does not consist in the offering of his blood as such, but in the surrender of his will to the Father's plan. Secondly, it affirms this conformity of his heart to God's will as performed by Jesus precisely in and through his bodily human existence. Both aspects are brought together in the concluding sentence: « By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all » (Heb. 10, 8-10). We are saved by the free

surrender of a human heart, the heart of the Son of Mary as the true servant of Yahweh.

A third aspect is added by another verse in the same letter on the death of Christ, « who offered himself through the eternal Spirit » (Heb. 9, 14). It was the Holy Spirit who enabled Jesus' heart to empty himself and to love to the end. Thus the prophecy about the new heart and the new spirit was fulfilled.

The heart of the Messiah is seen here as the natural symbol of the unity of the spiritual and bodily components of his human existence. The word « heart » interprets the deepest kernel of his human existence in its wholeness. This totality is bodily too, and the word « heart » includes also the heart with its physical and psychological aspects. In this perspective we never intend to refer to the bodily heart in itself or in separate isolation, but precisely as the typically human centre of his personal and active being, with all that is implied in its spiritual and bodily dimensions.

The basis of this approach is found in Israel's interpretation of human existence, as described earlier in thesis II. In the case of Jesus this interpretation has heightened emphasis and more specific application because of the mystery of the Incarnation. Since « the Word became flesh » we are invited to reverent reflection on the mystery of the heart of the Incarnate Word (Jn. 1, 14). Since Christ Jesus was « born in the likeness of men » found in human form », we believe thankfully that He is the one mediator between God and men precisely as « the man Christ Jesus » (Phil. 2, 7-8; 1 Tim. 2, 5).

Reflecting on the heart of Christ, the faithful remembered spontaneously the messianic psalm: « The law of his God is in the heart of the iust » (Ps. 36, 31). Because Jesus' food was to do the will of his Father and He did always what was pleasing to Him (Cf. Jn. 4, 34; 8, 29). The execution of God's plan led Him to the cross and after the piercing of his side the Gospel recalls the prophecy,

that says: « They shall look on him whom they have pierced » (Jn. 19, 37; Zech. 12, 10; Rev. 1, 7).

From of old the liturgy and the patristic preaching were attentive to the messianic meaning of the psalm our Lord began to pray on the cross: « My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? » (Ps. 21, 1). The soldiers who divided his garments and the mocking priests standing by the cross, fulfilled as a matter of fact the prophecies of this psalm (cf. vs. 7-8; 18; cf. Mk. 15, 34; 31; Jn. 19, 23-24). In this psalm also the Messiah declares: « they have pierced my hands and feet », and finally He sighs: « My heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast » (vs. 16; 14). The Gospel witnesses with emphasis: « one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water; he who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth, — that you also may believe » (Jn. 19, 34-35).

Thus Jesus, « taking the form of a servant » emptied himself (Phil. 2, 7). He became the first one, whom God could praise as « the righteous one, my servant » (Is. 53, 11). Into his heart the Father poured out the promised new spirit as « the Spirit of his Son » (Gal. 4, 6). Into this human heart the Father could enter without any resistance. In the midst of this fully loving heart the Father met Him as the beloved Son. This heart was the place and the moment for the first perfect encounter of God and men. Here the Father found the worship He was looking for, « the worship in spirit and truth » (Jn. 4, 24).

At the moment of this encounter the Father revealed Himself as the One who took the initiative in the whole history of Jesus' human life. In this very encounter the Father resuscitated and glorified Jesus' human existence through the all pervading effusion of his Holy Spirit. From the time of this encounter the Father seats Jesus at

his right and on high, and says to Him: «Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee» (Heb. 1, 5; 5, 5).

The Father was behind and within Jesus' human history. He was continually active in the development of his Son as «the Servant of Jahweh». And Jesus, «although he was the Son», had «to learn obedience through what He suffered». Through a life-long process of growing surrender Jesus was «made perfect» and «designated by God a high priest» (Heb. 5, 8-10). Thus it became clear that it was the Father originally who «so loved the world that He gave us his only Son» (Jn. 3, 16).

V. - By the mystery of the incarnation of his Son, God created not only the perfect human Lover of Himself, but He fulfilled by the same mystery his eternal love towards us. In his human existence Jesus Christ is the perfect reflection and mediation and proof of God's loving kindness to all men and to every individual person. Sending his Son as the universal Saviour, God reveals to the utmost that He is our compassionate and forgiving Father and Pastor.

The Gospel is reducible to one single sentence: the Father of Jesus Christ is the real lover of mankind. Jesus proclaims and realizes this most fundamental mystery of God's eternal love by his own existence of boundless love to one and all. «For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him» (Jn. 3, 16-17).

In three striking parables Luke has described for us in Jesus's own words how Jesus characterizes not only this gentle attitude of his Father but the most personal feelings of his own heart too. In these parables, the shepherd leaves his ninety-nine sheep to find the one which is lost; the woman who loses one of her ten silver coins lights the lamp and sweeps the house until she finds it;

and the father who loses one of his two sons was on the lookout while his returning son was yet at a distance, « saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him » (cf. Lk. 15, 3-32).

Jesus as the « good shepherd » is the vivid parable and active image of the « Shepherd of Israel » (Jn. 10, 11; cfr. Ezech. 34, 11-13). Or, in the words of saint Irenaeus: « The Father is the invisible of the Son, the Son the visible of the Father »⁴.

As sent by the Father, Jesus was aware that He was not only the witness but also the personal instrument of God's loving. On the occasion of one of his successes Jesus « rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: ' I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes » (Lk. 10, 21). The beginning of this quotation recalls the messianic psalm: ' I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart » (Ps. 9, 1). Interesting in Luke's report is not only Jesus' grateful dependency on the Father, but also the explicit mentioning of the Holy Spirit, who enables his heart to express this jubilation.

Almost parallel to this account is the one by Matthew, who combines this jubilation with Jesus' self-presentation as « gentle and lowly in heart ». This revealing text runs as follows.

« Jesus declared, ' I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.

All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will

find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light » (Mt. 11, 25-30),

At the very moment that Jesus declares himself to be the only Son and the only Mediator between God and men, He presents himself as the guide to God precisely because He is « gentle and lowly in heart ». Thus He fulfils Isaiah's portrait of the Messiah, quoted by Matthew some lines further down, in which God says:

« Behold my servant Whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him
and he shall proclaim justice to the gentiles.
he will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will any one hear his voice in the streets;
he will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smouldering wick,
till he brings justice to victory » (Mt. 12, 17-21; Is. 42, 1-4).

This prophetic character-sketch corresponds in a striking way with the messianic entry Jesus chose for himself « six days before the Passover ». All the four Gospels describe this entry in Jerusalem together with its messianic prophecy. The shortest version runs as follows: « And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, ' Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass' colt! ' ; his disciples did not understand at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this has been written of him and had been done to him » (Jn. 12, 14-16; Zech. 9, 9). Jesus did not present himself on horseback as the kings and the mighty of his days did. The horse was for Israel a well-known symbol of power and readiness to fight. But Jesus chose another symbol for his entry, the symbol of a modest and gentle way of life.

In line with this symbol the mystic Jan van Ruusbroec characterized « Christ our Lover » by these three qualities: « humilty, love and toleration of inward and out-

ward grief ». In this human way the Incarnate Word became the vivid icon of God's heart. A vivid icon because of the Spirit. And Ruusbroec added: « His love is in its origin incomprehensible to us, because it springs from the Holy Spirit as its bottomless source »⁶. This indication corresponds with Luke's description of Jesus' joy « in the Holy Spirit » (Lk 10, 21). It corresponds especially with John's account of Jesus' repeated promise to communicate us his Spirit in order that we may participate in Jesus' views and in his life itself.

VI. - Jesus Christ is not only our Saviour as the perfect Servant of Jahweh and as the personal instrument of God's love for us. Since the event of his Passover He is always living as our Christ by communicating us his Holy Spirit from his glorified human existence at God's right hand. Jesus promised to the faithful this permanent gift of « living water » as overflowing from his own breast as soon as he was glorified.

John describes this promise of the Holy Spirit in the context of Jesus' self-manifestation in the midst of the pilgrims attending the feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

« On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, ' If any one thirst, let him come to me; let him drink who believes in me; as the scripture has said, ' Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water '. Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified » (Jn. 7, 37-39).

On this day of the festivities the priests walked around the sacrificial altar, pouring over it water from the well at Silo. At the same time they prayed for the rain that would be needed in the time ahead, recalling the event of Moses striking water from the rock and listening to the prophecies about water as an image of messianic salva-

tion. The words of Jesus during this ceremony call to mind his other self-manifestations of this kind. Once He said: « I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst » (Jn. 6, 35). And again: « I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever » (Jn. 6, 51). On another occasion He said: « I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life » (Jn. 8, 12). And also: « I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die » (Jn. 11, 25-26).

In common with these other self-revelations, in front of the water-drenched altar, Jesus opens to us the depths of his very being. He is not simply declaring who He is, but He is communicating himself at the same time. He appeals to the deepest human cravings of every man for drink, food, light, happiness, deliverance from death. His words are directed towards the most intimate and vital aspirations of the ever-restless human heart. To this heart He opens up the central mystery of his own life. He reveals the hidden source itself of his personal existence and He promises the communication of the life-giving Spirit, who dwells in the midst of his own heart.

This communication of his Spirit, however, will not take place before Jesus has been glorified. On the eve of his Passover Jesus assured his disciples: « It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you » (Jn. 16, 7). As soon as the passion of Jesus will have turned into easter for him, then « out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water » for us. His easter will become manifest in our share in pentecost.

Jesus' easter began from the very moment He said « It is finished » (Jn. 19, 30). This was « the hour » of his glorification. Jesus spoke about this supreme moment as

his « lifting up ». « When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He » (Jn. 8, 28). To Nicodemus He predicted: « As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life » (Jn. 3, 14). This « lifting up » is in the gospel of John something more than the technical act of the soldiers who have to raise the cross. It is at the same time a revelation, that the Father is taking his Son with him « on high » and appointing Him to be the universal Lord and Christ for mankind.

As a fulfilment of this expectation the fourth gospel gives special attention to the fact that Christ's side was pierced immediately after his death and that « at once there came out blood and water » (Jn. 19, 34). This event is passed over in silence by the other evangelists, but John introduces it into the Church's preaching. As mere evidence that Jesus really was put to death, his information about seventy years after the fact would be meaningless. But he is not so much informing as witnessing; and he links his witness with the prophecies of old. He takes us back to Zechariah and quotes from a context where God promises: « I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him » (Zech. 12, 10). John also recalls another sentence of Zechariah where God's promise is mentioned, that « on that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness » (13, 1). The relevant passage in the gospel reads as follows:

« When they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth — that you

also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of him shall be broken'; and again another scripture says, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced' » (Jn. 19, 33-37).

When the stream came out of Jesus' side John saw three aspects of the Christ's Mystery in one vision: the self-offering of Jesus, as the Lamb of God; his being lifted up by the Father into his glory; the result of his glorification in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit⁷.

VII. - As Saviour of the world living with God, Jesus Christ pours out the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the faithful. Thus He enables them to live to the full an encounter with God and with each other. The Spirit of Christ raises up in the faithful a completely new way of life, characterized by the qualities of Christ's heart. Thus God's promise of a new heart and a new spirit is becoming realized.

The first proclamation, that God made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ, was testified by a corporate experience of the entry by his Spirit into the hearts of the faithful. As the only evidence for his proclamation Peter points at this manifestation of the Holy Spirit « which you see and hear » (Acts 2, 33). What was to be seen? What was to be heard? Nothing else than a group of deeply changed people, « not drunk » but « filled with the Holy Spirit » (ib.). The pentecostal « rush of a mighty wind » and the appearance of « tongues as of fire » passed, the changed men and women started their new style of life.

In the midst of a wondering city « all who believed were together and had all things in common; (...) distributed their possessions to all, as any had need; and day by day, attending the temple together and breaking the bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people » (Acts 2, 44-47). A completely new approach to the

reality of everyday life by people who were « of one heart and soul » (Acts 4, 32). Not only at the first and original pentecost, but also shortly afterwards « when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness » (Acts 4, 31; cf. 8, 17; 10, 47; 11, 15; 19, 6).

The « new heart » and the « new Spirit » manifested themselves in a remarkably unusual kind of community. A togetherness crossing the traditional and deeply social borders between men and women, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, jew and greek, former priests and tax-collectors. This quickly rising new community was indeed not without discordant sounds. The stories of Ananias and Sapphira, the daily distribution among the widows, and the « no small dissension and debate » about circumcision are illustrative enough (cf. Acts 5, 1-11; 6, 1-6; 15, 1-35). But the new mentality of those who « were cut to the heart » and endowed with the « gift of the Spirit » proved to be stronger than the human inclination to disintegration (Acts 2, 37-38).

The growth of this community and its ability to unite the most different kinds of men, including the incurables, were amazing not only for some years and in some places, but for decades and in all the important cities of that first century « after Christ ». Up till now there is no adequate historical explanation available for the dissemination of the very small christian community in Jerusalem through the whole roman empire between the years 30 and 100. In any case its recruitment was not empowered by an irrefutable theory or book on a new style of life, neither by an elaborate scheme for social revolution, neither by a team of experts in propaganda. The christian movement started and was kept going by the personal and collective style of life of people with new hearts, changed by the Spirit. The Spirit from the heart of Christ.

Christ promised and sent his Spirit into his new commu-

nity, but where precisely was this Spirit dwelling? « God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts » (Gal. 4, 6). God keeps us permanently in vital communication with his incarnate and glorified Son by « giving us his Spirit in our hearts » (2 Cor. 1, 22). The Spirit is poured out into the hearts of the faithful and nowhere else. Not into the books of the church as intellectual guarantees; the Spirit is using those institutions as his tools. The Spirit as such is the only guarantee, living in our hearts.

Consequently « if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for man believes with his heart and so is justified » (Rom. 10, 9-10). Paul repeats in this way Jesus' demand to keep God's word « in an honest and good heart », and Jesus' promise that only « the pure in heart » shall see God (Lk. 8, 15; Mt. 5, 8). Jesus asks his disciples to forgive each other « from your heart » and warns them to keep their hearts free from dissipation and the cares of this life in order that they may be attentive to his definitive coming (Mt. 18, 35; cf. Lk. 21, 34). The talk by the risen Christ to the disciples at Emmaus made their « hearts » burn within them, and shortly afterwards Jesus reproached some other disciples: « why do questioning rise in your hearts? » (Lk. 24, 32 and 38).

To believe in Christ and his Father means « having the eyes of your hearts enlightened » and living in a way which manifests that « Christ dwells in your heart through faith » (Eph. 1, 18; 3, 17). A christian has to be someone who is living from his inner centre what he expresses in his outward behaviour: « let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit » (1 Pet. 3, 3). As a quality and an activity of the heart faith is at the same time hope and love. Living faith becomes joyful in hope and communicative in love. This is the threefold fruit of the grace, that God « has shone in our hearts to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ » (2 Cor 4, 6).

Faith, hope and love characterize a christian heart, « but the greatest of these is love » (1 Cor. 13, 13). Consequently Paul resumes God's threefold gift, writing about the « love God has poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us » (Rom. 5, 5). Thus he confirms Jesus' proclamation of Israel's « great and first commandment » to love God « with all your heart », and « the second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself » (Mt. 22, 37). This superiority of love includes a pastoral indication too: if some one's faith is not yet strong or his hope not yet joyful, let him try to grow in love. It was the pastoral experience which bishop Polycarp described: « Faith is the mother of us all, hope flows from it, and love of God and neighbour prepares the way for it »⁸.

Finally, it is joy that enables the human heart to communicate this life. « Glad and generous hearts » characterized the first christian community (Acts 2, 46). And Paul's encouragement was founded on experience, when he wrote: « Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart » (Eph. 5, 18-19). The joy of the human heart, sure of being known and loved by God and by God's children, is the best witness of the gospel. This joy was catching in the first century of the church and it can be contagious today. We have only to frequent the road to its source.

Epilogue

In its Constitution on the church in the modern world, the Second Vatican Council describes the mystery of the incarnation in this concrete way: the Son of God « worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind, he acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved »⁹.

The last words read as a summary. A summary not only of a past mystery. For the entry by Jesus into his Father's glory does not mean that the mystery of his incarnation should be over. « He holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever; consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them » (Heb. 7, 25). His human heart lives for ever to love. To love God and the children of God.

Paul's reference to the living heart of Christ was to the point, when about thirty years after Jesus' easter he wrote to the Philippians: « I hold you in my heart (...); God is my witness, how I yearn for you with the heart of Christ Jesus » (Phil. 1, 8).

The post-conciliar comment on the renewed Liturgy of the Hours is also to the point when it recalls that, since God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice, « the praise of God wells up from the heart of Christ in human words of adoration, propitiation and intercession, presented to the Father by the head of the new humanity »¹⁰.

The heart of Christ is for ever the center for the encounter between God and men. Since his easter and our pentecost the heart of Christ is no longer only his heart. Since those decisive events of redemption and renewing of creation, his heart is in a certain but real way our heart too. The continuing communication of his Spirit in our hearts enables us to unite our prayers with the permanent act of his praying, and to feed our energies for love and justice. Augustine once said in a sermon to the faithful: « He bore your heart »¹¹. In this human heart, the heart of the first-born Son, the redemption of mankind is rooted, « in order that it might become justice in the hearts of many human beings, predestined from eternity in the first-born Son, to be children of God, and called to grace, called to love »¹². From the fullness of Christ's heart we are receiving the lifegiving Spirit who enables us to believe in the fundamental mystery of love in which human

history moves, and to become the personal instruments of God's active love in this history.

In conclusion. Is it true, that our mind's desire is to know and our heart's desire is to be known? If so, believe in that other experience too of so many people like you and me:

« If you trust in the Lord and do good
then you will live in the land and be secure.
If you find your delight in the Lord
he will grant your heart's desire » (Ps. 36, 3-4).

¹ JOHN S. DUNNE, *The Reasons of the Heart*. London 1978, 48.

² ST. AUGUSTINE, *Confessiones* I, 1, 1.

³ Our word « heart » is the translation of a series of hebrew words with almost the same meaning: *leb*, *lebab*, *beten*, *me(j)'im*, and *kereb*. The greek version of the Old Testament and the New Testament uses just as well different words: *kardia*, *kolia*, and *splangchna*. The latin version of Holy Scripture uses not only *cor* but, with almost the same signification, also: *venter* and *viscera*. Cf. the biblical lexica.

⁴ ST. IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses* IV, 63.

⁵ For the interpretation of Jesus' meek and humble feelings as the specific sentiments of the « Anawim », the poor in spirit, the poor of Jahweh, see: E. J. CUSKELLY MSC, *A New Heart and a New Spirit*, Roma 1978, 40-41.

⁶ JAN VAN RUUSBROEC (1293-1381), Flemish mystic, beatified in 1908. The quotations are taken from his *Die Gheestelike Brulocht* (*The Spiritual Espousals*) ed. L. Moereels, Tielt-Amsterdam 1977, 75-85.

⁷ For the biblical background cf. J. F. LESCRAUWAET MSC, *Triptych for a Spirituality of the Heart* (Kensington) 1975, 2-12.

⁸ ST. POLYCARP (c. 69 - c. 155), *Letter to the Philippians*, 3.

⁹ Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22.

¹⁰ *The Liturgy of the Hours*, General Introduction (1970), no. 3. This text refers to the conciliar constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the liturgy, n. 83.

¹¹ ST. AUGUSTINE, *Enarr. in Ps.* 63, 18 (C.C.L. 39:821): « Non enim duo corda et diversa, Patris et Filii; sed in forma servi portavit cor tuum ».

¹² JOHN PAUL, II, enc. *Redemptor Hominis*, 1979, no. 9. A liturgical application in twenty Bible Vigils is edited by P. WENISCH, *Liturgy of the Mystery of the Heart of Christ*. Tamil Nadu (India) 1976, 441 pp.

The Heart of Christ Centre of the christian mystery and key to the universe

P. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

1. The word « heart », both in everyday language and in biblical terminology is one of those words which K. Rahner has called an *Urwort*, that is a root-word, a parent-word which generates other words. Such words are packed with meaning and are very difficult to define, and for that reason are also highly evocative. Just as a small sea conch conjures up the roar and fury of the sea, such words stir up a rich variety of ideas and sentiments. The word « mother » is another example. Who can say all that this word evokes? Or who can reduce it to a definition? To any definition of this word one can say « yes, all that but more », because no one can reach the very depth of its meaning and even less communicate it to others. The value of these words is precisely that we can understand each other's meaning when we refer to deep and complex realities. The psychology of language has in such words a subject for absorbing research.

2. But the very richness and depth of these words is, in part, their weakness. They are used so much in human communication that they become victims of abuse and end up cheapened and corrupted, or else they are watered-down so that they lose their flavour, or again they are inflated and adapted to the fleeting fancy of the current vogue, then discarded abruptly. Fortunately nature always wins out, and these words — which instead of a human

figment seem a divine gift — come to life again and bloom, their profound meaning and values intact.

3. « Heart of Jesus » is an expression that has suffered such vicissitudes. Marked with the symbolism and with the literary style and imagery of an era — which is necessarily fleeting — it seemed that it would remain buried beneath the wave of renewal. Not for long. « Heart of Christ » is a phrase of unusual aptness and so rooted in biblical meaning that it is irreplaceable. It was sufficient to free it of superficial connotations for the original, rich and mysterious meaning to be restored. Heart of Jesus: all the love of Christ, God and man, sent by the Father, through the Spirit, who offers himself in redemption for all and with each of us establishes a personal relationship.

4. « ... the inner mystery of man, in Biblical and non-Biblical language is expressed by the word « heart ». Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way the mystery of man and entered his « heart ». (*Redemptor Hominis* 8) « In him human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. By his incarnation, the Son of God has in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved » (G.S. 22).

The love of the Heart of Christ - key to the understanding of the History of salvation

5. This gift which the Father has given us in the person of Christ is our salvation, the salvation of all men. Christ in his incarnation intervenes in the established relationship of man with God and completely transforms it. The great power which effects this revolution, the great nov-

elty of the New Alliance is the love of His heart, and the love which He comes to kindle in each one of us. He has sealed this New Alliance with the sacrifice of reconciliation offered once and renewed in each Eucharistic celebration, a sacrifice completely acceptable and pleasing to the Father and gloriously sublimated in His Resurrection.

6. The pristine catechesis and the Gospels derived from it, are the story of this love. The four Gospels show us this love in action. This is especially true of the last chapters of St. John's Gospel and of his letters — very particularly his first letter — where the theme of love becomes an exhortation, pointing us directly to the feelings and sentiments of the Heart of Christ urging us to reciprocate His love.

Paul, for his part, spreads the Good News throughout the whole world to all men, the news of our new condition, that we are a « new creature ». The old law has been abrogated by God's love. In this way the fourth Gospel and the « *corpus paulinum* » marvellously complement and shed light on each other.

7. If the Old Testament is in essence the history of human tension in the presence of God the Creator and can be summed up in the counterposition: « heart of stone » / « new heart », the New Testament is summed up in the new relationship of love : « *cor Christi / cor Hominis* », (Heart of Christ / heart of man). Thus, a term which is so typical in Semitic languages is raised in the New Testament message to a much higher level of meaning: the sentiments and acts of the Son of God and of each person in their reciprocal relationship.

Christ, defined by His Heart

8. It is impossible to find in the New Testament a word which more readily and accurately, more profoundly and

with more human warmth, could come close to a definition of the person of Christ than His « Heart ». Much of what John thinks and says of Christ is contained in the word « logos », but there are many passages that do not fit that concept and also much of what the synoptics say is not contained in it; apart, of course, from the human characteristics which here and there bear out the rich personality of Christ. The word « logos » has a mental resonance that does not immediately « describe » Christ. Rarely, on the other hand, do the Gospels reveal some interior characteristic of Christ that we cannot epitomize in his heart. Furthermore, the external signs, His parables and discourses, his whole life as presented in the Gospels — even considered as « Kerygma » — are not totally understood or understandable in all their profound meaning unless they are read from the angle of His heart. Read in this light, on the other hand, Jesus is seen whole and undivided in each moment of His life. All that He says and does in any instance gives us the measure of His inner being, of His infinite divine-human coherence: a person completely dedicated to the Mission received from the Father. And it is precisely these inner depths of Christ's life and being that we must try to discover through his words and deeds.

9. Consequently, it is not old-fashioned piety which makes us refer to the heart of Christ in order to sum up in one word all the values which we find in His person. There is no other expression more apt to convey « the breadth and the length, the height and the depth (of) the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge » (Eph. 3, 18). Neither the « logos » of John, nor Wisdom, nor Son of Man, nor Messiah. Not even the definitions which Jesus applied metaphorically to himself: way, truth, life, light, good shepherd, bread, etc. Jesus himself, when he wanted to describe himself and his deepest sentiments, put aside all metaphors and used simple everyday language: « learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart » (Mt. 11, 29).

Christ values the heart of each man

10. Christ judges each man by his heart. It is true to say that in the teaching of the Prophets interior dispositions are already given considerable relevance; Jeremiah (4, 1-4 and *passim*) and especially Ezekiel, and also that marvel, the language of the convert in Psalm 51, the *Miserere*. John the Baptist centers his preaching on the same theme and with the same stress as the prophets. Jesus also will do so but if, before, love was implied in the sorrow of contrition (« crushing » of the heart), in the preaching of Jesus it is the other way round: it is remorse that is implied in love.

11. For Christ a man's coherence and integrity is of the essence. If there is one thing that really drives Jesus to holy indignation it is pharisaic insincerity, duplicity of heart, palming off the appearance of righteousness for love. Christ insists again and again that the goodness or badness of man is in his heart. The exaltation of man's inner being stresses a line along which the prophets had hardly advanced at all, namely, that it depends on man's inner self whether he is able to be incorporated into God's Kingdom. The Old Testament image of the Kingdom is now definitively replaced.

It is in the heart of man that, once the divine filiation is restored, the union between man and God is accomplished. The kingdom, before its eschatological completion, is nothing else but the « *eklesia* », the community of those who through faith have received this interior transformation (Cf. 1 Cor. 1, 2) and in brotherly union are on their way to the Father's house.

12. The central point in the relationship *heart of Christ / heart of man* is love. More than faith, more than any other sentiment, it is love which transcendently describes man and it is also love which comes closest to a definition of God. God is love. Christ corresponds to the

Father's infinite love with absolute loving obedience, and at the same time he loves man « to the end » (Jn. 13, 1). Christ's heart is the smelting vessel of his love for the Father as Word and as man, and also of his love for mankind. In the heart of man redeemed by Christ this love must find a proportionate response. This precisely is Paul's claim: « He loved me and sacrificed himself for my sake » (Gal. 2, 20). In the one divine person of Christ the two natures establish an encounter of love.

Christ: a new concept of love

The love of Yahweh in the Old Testament

13. From the beginning God took the initiative in the dialogue of love with man. But one cannot say that man completely understood or corresponded to the divine initiative. Biblical man « knew » God, and for a Semite to know something is to have a certain experience of it, and in some way to love it. In the earlier period, the idea of God as creator is paramount; God mysterious and distant who chooses his friends and confidants among men: the prophets and patriarchs. They are the witnesses of the drama of Yahweh's love and wrath. The people respond with adoration and obedience. Many of the Psalms both before and after the exile show that not only the people as a group or their leaders, but each individual and in particular each « poor » one, each « little » one, each « just » one is loved by God.

14. But there are many questions still left unanswered. In what way is Yahweh's love interpreted? How does one respond to it? What is the relationship between the love of Yahweh and the love of one's neighbor? Yahweh is accepted as the one God, the creator, the protector, the one who mysteriously rewards the righteous. His love is made tangible in his offer of the alliance by which he weds himself to his chosen people. Israel's response can

be nothing else but submission and fidelity, obedience to the law. This would be the meaning of the first precept of the decalogue: love God « with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength » (Dt. 6, 5).

Even the Song of Songs, after all, is just a poetic exaltation of the alternate searching and possessing of Yahweh and his people. parallel to the prophetic line which presents the alliance as a relationship of love, there is the legal line, which eventually predominates and increasingly insists on interpreting the alliance in terms of accepting the law and obeying it: a law that becomes fragmented in countless precepts; an oppressive law which just about smothers love. Love of Yahweh turns into fear of Yahweh. The center of gravity, so to speak, moves from the cordial to the servile. This fact provokes Christ's bitter reproaches against the pharisees.

15. And perhaps it could not have been otherwise, since the revelation of the Trinity was yet to come. Love could not be perfect as long as men did not know God as Father, and were unaware of their kinship with the Son, and had not received the Spirit. And how could they have anticipated Yahweh's personal intervention in the history of his people by becoming one of them? Their idea of the Messiah was clouded by these obscurities. They expected a regal Messiah a priestly Messiah and, above all, a deliverer. The Messiah's relationship to God was still ill-defined and there was hardly an inkling of what his relationship to mankind would be. The veil which hid the mystery of the Trinity during the time of the Promise also concealed the fullness of God's love. The plurality of Persons was vague, barely a metaphoric intuition and therefore the One Sent could hardly be identified with one of these Persons. Furthermore the notion that the Chosen One should suffer and die was a scandal to the Jews. One can say that they were not ready for such love, for such overwhelming love. Christ, defined by his heart,

surpasses all the expectations of the Old Testament and is established as the key to the whole history of salvation.

The Love of neighbor in the Old Testament

16. The Old Testament also enjoins Love of one's neighbor, but with obscure restrictions. True, the book of Leviticus completes the commandment about loving God with « a second commandment »:

« You must love your neighbor as yourself » (Lv. 19, 18) and « you must love the stranger as yourself » (Lv. 19, 34) but « neighbor » is practically the same as « brother », that is to say, those who belong to the predestined race. Especially after the Exile, brotherhood has well recognized limits. The stranger who must be loved is a stranger (foreigner) happening by, or a resident: « for you were strangers in the land of Egypt » (Dt. 10, 180) but it excludes the gentiles who by definition are enemies of God and consequently enemies of his people. The question « who is my neighbor? » does not have a clear-cut answer, even for a well-intentioned Israelite. The less well-intentioned can give all sorts of wrong answers. Our Lord gives his own clear reply to this question in the parable of the « Good Samaritan » (Lk. 10, 25-37).

17. The worst kind of hatred is hatred for religious motives. It is so much easier to justify when it appears under the guise of zeal and pious outrage. If even Yahweh could become an enemy of his unfaithful people and punish them and make them suffer, is an Israelite's hatred for a heathen, or a dissident or a public sinner not justified also? The pathetic exhibition of his hatred for sin comes to be regarded as religious fervour and so the contest is on: who can voice the most bloodcurdling curses? From simply keeping one's distance from the « impure », or refusing to have dealings with a dissident (e.g. Samaritans) or tearing one's robes in outrage at a

blasphemer, they reach the extreme vengeance of stoning to death.

Christ, sign of the love of the Father

18. God in the Old Testament shows his love for man by his predilection for a particular people. He establishes an alliance with it, he gives it a promised land, he leads it back there after various exiles. It is a story of tormented love. But in the fullness of time the love of the Father for mankind takes on a completely new expression in an unrepeatable gesture: his Son is « sent » to be the protagonist on earth in the drama of this love-dialogue between God and man. This sending of the Son completes all the most loving gestures of the time of the promises ... « the promises God made, the Yes to them all is in Him » (2 Cor. 1, 20). « In Him, the love God has for us was made manifest » (Rom. 8, 39). The initiative for this new order is exclusively divine and has no other explanation but love: « God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son ... This is the love I mean: not our love for God but God's love for us when he sent his Son » (I John 4, 9 ss.).

19. In this way, the love of God is manifested no longer through actions alone but through a divine Person who, by the very act of his Incarnation in the nature of man, shows concretely the heights of this love. In Christ, God loves man infinitely and is loved by Him. That is why Christ proves the genuineness of his being sent by the Father, not so much by his omnipotence, his signs, or his omniscience, as by his radically new concept of love which he comes to promulgate and to exemplify. The qualitative leap from the love enjoined in the Old Testament to the love envisioned by Christ affects love of God as well as love of one's neighbor. Through the revelation of his divine nature and through the acceptance of his supreme sacrifice, Christ opens man's eyes to the reality of God's

infinite and pure love which to redeem us and return us to our former estate as his sons: « did not spare his own Son, but offered him for all of us » (Rom. 8, 32). « Christ ... loved us and gave himself up in our place » (Eph. 5, 2). It is a love which is related to the alliance established in the Old Testament only in as much as it is the consummation of the promise.

20. In reference to fraternal love and universal charity, the qualitative leap introduced by Christ is equally unprecedented. The novelty consists in the cancellation of all restrictions in the concept of neighbor and in the heightening and sublimation of the motive for charity. That the exterior acts by which this charity is expressed must be of unrestricted generosity is an obvious consequence. But before analyzing these concepts it will be well to call attention to two fundamental considerations.

Christ is bearer of the Father's love

21. The first point to consider is the clear consciousness that Jesus has of the innovative character of the love he promulgates: He is fully aware that by so doing he is transcending the law and the prophets and is declaring his messianic role. In the doctrinal summary which Matthew gives in chapters 5 to 7 of his gospel, no less than six times Jesus introduces his preceptive teaching with a formula brimming with meaning: « You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors ... But I say this to you ... » (Mt. 5, 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). There is no doubt that, however much this striking repetition can be ascribed to Semitic taste, it is also the true echo of the emphatic will of Christ that he be understood regarding the innovative character of his doctrine and that effectively He is placing himself above the law. Three of the precepts thus solemnly promulgated concern charity. The striking attitude Christ shows in this connection is paralleled only by his vehemence in abolishing divorce. When Christ at the end

of his life will have fully revealed at its deepest level all his understanding of love, he will affirm unequivocally that this is a « new » commandment (Jn. 13, 14) as is also « new » the alliance sealed with his blood which will be shed for us (Lk. 22, 20) as the supreme troth of his love. So unexpected is this novelty that at the beginning of his preaching his hearers exclaimed « What is this? This is a new doctrine with authority behind it » (Mk. 1, 27). Love is the most radiant novelty of the Gospel: it is preeminently the commandment which the Lord chose to call « mine » (Jn. 15, 12).

Only one love

22. The second consideration is this: The reason for loving one's neighbor is a theological reason which closely relates it to the love of God. They are not two parallel loves, nor is love of neighbor a subordinate love. It is the two sides of one love, as one is the love within the Trinity and one the love with which Christ loves the Father and mankind. The close connection of the second commandment to the first (as we shall see later, in Paul's and John's description it acquires its highest expression) conforms to this profound causality: one cannot love God without loving one's brother and he who for God loves his brothers is already loving God (cf. Mk. 5, 45 and Lk. 6, 35).

23. The three synoptics report instances when Christ likens love of neighbor to love of God. In Matthew (22, 34-40) and in Mark (12, 28-34), Christ answers the pharisee's provocative question and with a hint of challenge he blends both commandments into one. In Luke (10, 25ff) it is a quibbling lawyer who has to respond to Christ's sparring question. The casuist links the precept in Deuteronomy (6, 5) about the love of God with that of Leviticus (19, 8) about the love of one's neighbor — neighbor of course, as the lawyer understands the word.

To correct the notion, Jesus tells him the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Christ manifests his own love

24. Of nothing else did Christ speak so much as of love, with the exception perhaps of the Kingdom: « the kingdom of Heaven is like ... » But even the parables of the kingdom are set in a context of love. Love with all its harmonics — friendship, compassion, tolerance, benevolence, mercy, sadness, hope, joy, etc. — is enough to describe Christ in his inner self in his heart. Christ calls his followers to goodness and love, sometimes directly, from the beatitudes right up to the sermon of the last supper; at other times indirectly and through sublime allegories: the Prodigal Son, the Lost Pearl, the Stray Sheep and the whole cycle of the Good Shepherd parables. Christ « goes about doing good » (Acts 10, 38) and displays his miraculous power in « signs » which are more often acts of kindness than proofs of his messiahship.

Love without bounds: universal

25. If the love which Christ practices and teaches is the radically new feature of the Gospel, as indicated earlier, it is because it formally suppresses and abolishes the limitations and restrictions which previously narrowed down the idea of love. We know that « Love your neighbor as yourself » (Lv. 19, 18) is already the second commandment in the Old Law. But one needs only to compare this text with the other in which the first commandment is promulgated (Deut. 6, 4-9), to appreciate the difference in emphasis between the two commandments. The concept of neighbor is vague. The fluctuating meaning of the Old Testament expressions — « the other », « the brother » — is an example of this vagueness. When the

decatalogue, promulgated in other texts (Exodus 20, 2-17, and Deut. 5, 6-12) is epitomized in a single sentence (Deut. 6, 5), all mention of love of neighbor disappears: « You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength ». There is no mention of neighbor whatsoever.

26. Christ breaks down the fences of a restricted brotherhood, and this is his great revolution of love: universal salvation, universal filiation, universal brotherhood and universal love, are all correlative ideas logically connected and interchangeable. We will see that there is only one exception: the preference for the neediest.

27. But it is necessary to mention expressly the two most radical changes introduced by Christ in the notion of universal love. In this new vision no one at all is excluded, not even those falling within the two categories which the law excepted and religiously set apart: the enemy and the sinner. The whole history of Israel is a struggle for survival. Hatred for one's enemy is even ranked as a religious sentiment and as such it is expressed even in the sacred books (Psalms 137, 139 etc.). Enmity toward a personal enemy, a thief and those who ensnare the just man, is lawful. It is already an advance in moderating revenge when it is stipulated that retaliation must not exceed the offense: « You have learnt that it was said: 'eye for eye and tooth for tooth'! But I say this to you ... » (Mk. 5, 38; Lk. 6, 27). Jesus is specific: « Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you ». This is one of the high points of the Gospel, because here we discover the essence of Christianity: unconditional fraternal love.

28. Jesus expressed his thoughts in semitic imagery: lend the other cheek, give your cloak as well as your tunic, go the extra mile. The conclusion of the text is of the highest importance because Jesus gives the reason for his precept:

« So that you will be sons of the Heavenly Father, for he is kind even to the ungrateful and the wicked ». The image which Jesus gives us of the Father is no longer that of the God who inspires revenge but of a Father whose perfection is manifested in his mercy. All is contained and epitomized in this lofty exhortation: « You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect » (Mt. 5, 48). What reversal of values could be imagined more radical than this? Now it is the enemy that has to be loved, and precisely because this is God's way.

Love of sinners

29. There is still more: one has to love God's enemy, the sinner. Scripture praised the hatred God shows toward idolatry, plunder, perjury, any kind of sin (cf. Deut. 12, 31; Jer. 44, 4; Zac. 8, 17; Prov. 5, 16) and consequently for the sinner who in a way is one with his sin, and can be chastised with an impure illness. The Israelite affirms his piety by hating sinners. And here is Jesus declaring he has come not for the just but for them (Mk. 2, 17).

Taking his place in the line of teacher-prophets, Jesus, as his forerunner, announces the Good News for sinners disposed to repent. In Jesus, denunciation of sin rivals his inexhaustible compassion for the sinner. Jesus causes scandal when he forgives the adultress, when he speaks to the samaritan woman, when he heals and pardons paralytics and the possessed, when he ignores legal impurity in order to share a meal with sinners. To describe the Father and himself, in the parables of the Prodigal Son and of the Good Shepherd, Jesus refers to his heart open to forgive. By his whole life and by his death he will confirm all he has preached. He will even call his betrayer friend and ask forgiveness for those who are crucifying him.

30. More than his parables it is Christ's life that launches

this revolution of love. Samaritans, gentiles of Cana, Tyre or Sidon, officials of the Roman occupation, publicans, prostitutes, lepers, all have a place in his heart. To love sinners Christ throws down the barriers of legal impurities, of the sabbath observance, of religious discrimination, of the sacredness of temple offerings. Loving sinners, Christ strips hatred of its last pretext: religious zeal.

The supreme love of the heart of Christ

31. It might seem that nothing could be added to Christ's proclamation of universal love made at the beginning of his ministry, and of which his whole life has been a constant confirmation. All the aspects of love are illustrated: the love of God whom he taught us to call « Father », the love of himself and the love of our brothers. But Christ reserved for the last hour — and this word can be taken in the Johannine sense — the deepest and most meaningful lesson of his pedagogy of love. As evening falls, the day before his passion, and time is running out, when he no longer needs to hold back from revealing the fullness of his heart, now that his disciples have been witnesses of his life and work and are soon to be witnesses of his sacrifice, Jesus discloses to them the wealth of sublime reasons on which his love for them is based and which must inspire the love they bear for each other.

32. « Love one another; just as I have loved you » (Jn. 13, 34). With good reason Christ can describe this commandment as new, for new indeed is such an unimaginable reach of love. « You must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahweh » (Lv. 19, 18). The scope of pre-Christian love, which could have been as an ideal, in this new light shows its inadequacy. « As I have loved you ». This comparison is the ever pressing goad that from that time onward urges each believer in Christ to strive to love his neighbor without reservations or hesitations. It is a goal to which we must aspire always, even though we

know we will never be able to reach it. Only « through his Spirit for your inner self to grow strong ... planted in love and built on love, will you ... grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge » (Eph. 3, 17-19).

33. « As I have loved you » contains the entire mystery of the Incarnation, the « *kenosis* » accepted as preparation for the Paschal Mystery, the gift of self in the Eucharist, the consummation of his sacrifice and his perpetual intercession before the Father. Jesus speaks as a man to that puny flock of fearful men, but his words echo the love of God. The ultimate clue to this love beyond belief will be his twofold standard.

34. Christ proclaims a new comparative standard of love and he will personally fulfill it, « a man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends » (Jn 15, 13). Less than a day before his death, these words are evidence of a supreme love; it is the measure of his love for them and thus the measure of love which they must have for each other. Love is measured by self-giving. Jesus faces death and accepts it, conscious of the fact that by his death he proclaims his love for all men. The disciples will eventually understand the full value of the comparison « as I have loved you »: dying for you.

35. The second standard is by appeal to a mystery « As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you » (Jn. 15, 9). Christ will repeat this in nearly the same words a few moments later in the priestly prayer: « I have loved them as you have loved me ». Words which must be received with a reverence beyond expression. The whole heart of Jesus pours itself out in this supreme confidence that surpasses any human measure, because it already points to the infinite love within the Trinity: the mutual love of Father and Son. But this is the measure of love to which we are urged: love one another as I have loved you: I have loved you as the Father loves me. The most

radical innovation the Gospel offers, charity, is thus established in its ultimate expression. But, is it not an exaggeration? No, it is not. Quite the contrary. It is a deliberate and conscious affirmation which John once again puts on the lips of Jesus as the conclusion of the long discourse, just before the evangelist begins the story of the Passion: « that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them » (Jn. 17, 26).

36. The insertion of the Father as the point of reference for the love between Christ and mankind at this peak moment of the revelation of love is extremely enlightening. The mission of Christ, besides other things, is the revelation of the Father. For this reason it is important to establish that the Fatherhood is also exercised in love, love of the Son, and unmediated love of the Father for mankind. The same Father, whom Christ invoked in the agony in the Garden and on the Cross, the ultimate challenges in the test of his love, is also invoked in the proclamation of fraternal charity. « The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again » (Jn. 10, 17). The same Father who « ... loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost » (Jn. 3, 16). Fraternal charity, lived as Christ teaches us, is a direct way to approach the Trinity.

Christ in our brothers

37. In love thus understood the unification of the two ancient precepts reaches its highest perfection. Now there is one and no more. The same charity that draws us to God must also bring us closer to our brothers. In them we must find God. Christ is in them, above all in the most needy, in the poor, in the little ones (Mt. 25, 40). During his whole life Christ showed his predilection for them and following his example we too must give preference to them. If the discourse on love is reported at the

end of John's Gospel just before Christ's passion, it is in the same sequence that Matthew's Gospel reports Christ's proclamation of his identification with the poor. It is as if he were going out of his way to make sure the fact remains imprinted in our minds: « in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine (hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick, oppressed) you did it to me » (Mt. 25, 40.45). A love of God that does not find expression in love for mankind is always suspect. Because « a man who does not love the brother that he can see cannot love God, whom he has never seen » (1 Jn. 4, 20). John warns us in no uncertain terms that love of God which is not accompanied by love of neighbor is an illusion. His language, which in points is nearly of a gnostic loftiness, becomes concrete and incisive to assert that such love would be inconsistent « if a man who was rich enough in this world's goods saw that one of his brothers was in need, but closed his heart to him, how could the love of God be live in him? » (1 Jn. 3, 17). « Closed his heart » means depriving him of the love and the sharing which love implies. Because there is no other word which points more directly to love than the word « heart ».

38. Paul, after his conversion will completely assimilate this doctrine. He is the author of the most beautiful hymn to the love of Christ (Rom. 8, 31 ff), and of the vibrating eulogy of charity (1 Cor. 13). He is the promoter of mutual aid among the churches.

Of this assistance, given in the name of love, he makes an instrument of unity when there is a threat of division between the churches of the Jewish tradition and those burgeoning among the Gentiles (Gal. 1, 10; Rom. 15, 26; 1 Cor. 16, 1-4). Two whole chapters of his second letter to the Corinthians are dedicated to organising, urging and giving meaning to the collection of voluntary offerings (2 Cor. 8 and 9). So impassioned is Paul's plea that, with a hyperbole, he goes so far as to claim that the whole law comes down to fraternal charity « the whole law is contained in this one command: love your neighbor as your-

self » (Gol. 5, 14). It is the old formula of Leviticus, brief and incisive, reflecting its rabbinical origin, and it helps him encourage the churches of the diaspora to practise mutual love: « Serve each other for love » (cf. the same is urged in Rom. 13, 9-10).

39. St. James, with the semitic expressions which are peculiar to his style, more homiletic than epistolary, exalts the poor and severely chides the rich. Charity must be shown in works so that faith may not become fruitless.

Charity and fullness

40. It is clear that, « *pleroma* » (fullness) is a fundamental concept in Paul's theology. Besides the fullness of the times there is the fullness which dwells in Christ, and again the Church is the fullness of Christ. This great concept is seen throughout Paul's letters, above all in his more lyrical and syntactically more intricate passages, when his enthusiasm for Christ, for the Church or for a particular community touches off his genius for soaring expressions to convey his thought. In the idea which Paul has of the fullness of Christ and of the Church, love is a basic ingredient. It is not only that love is the dominant theme in the whole divine plan of salvation, that which establishes the harmony of its different aspects: but the fullness of Christ, in whom the Father has placed all things, and the fullness of the Church as mystical body of Christ. « Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence » (Eph. 1, 4). It is the love of God which chooses us and to this love corresponds « the love we have for God that has been poured into our hearts by the Spirit which has been given us » (Rom. 5, 5). Theologically and anthropologically speaking, the lyrical lift of Paul's hymn to charity (1 Cor. 13) marvelously heightens the sweeping novelty of the Gospel: the manifestation of

the love of Christ's heart which establishes new relationships between God and man and between man and man.

41. John expounds the same doctrine. He takes it directly from Christ's lips when at the last supper Jesus proclaims his love for us and says that his love is to be the gauge of the love the brethren must have for each other. It seems he is acquitting himself of the last responsibility left before his mission is definitively accomplished: « I have told you this so that my own joy », (this is the messianic joy of the Son of God) « may be in you and your joy be complete » (Jn. 15, 11); « while still in the world I have told you these things to share my joy with you to the full » (Jn. 17.13). The fullness of joy of Jesus of which John was a witness is also a sentiment that John repeatedly made his own when he communicated his testimony « We are writing this to you to make our own joy complete » (1 Jn. 1, 4). John knows that brothers' love for each other fills Christ's heart with joy and that sharing in this joy and generating it in the hearts of those who believe in Him is a pre-announcement of the fullness of fruition that those in the Kingdom will enjoy when they will be assumed into the glory of the Father and their human love will be anchored in the infinite love of the Trinity.

There, one will experience that « God is love, and everyone who loves ... because God is love ... is begotten by God and knows God » (1 Jn. 4, 8.16). To be of God and to know God, in John's language, is a way of being possessed by Him and possessing Him. Human love has its point of origin and destiny in the love of the Trinity. There is no higher summit than this.

42. It is now twenty centuries since the promulgation of the one and only commandment of love, a commandment that continues to urge us. Fraternal love continues to be a necessity for all men and for all times, and still more necessary in our time now that the world has become a « global village » and human interchange is on a truly

universal scale. Universal brotherhood is no longer a qualitative aspect of love, in the sense of excluding prerequisites. It is a quantitative reality since the revolution brought on by communications, technology, and the possibility of exchanging resources.

Because of this we can no longer plead ignorance of the miseries of our brothers in any part of the world; we can no longer say that they are no responsibility of ours.

43. All the modern tragedies are ultimately a wounding of love or a challenge to our capacity to love. The tragic fratricidal hatred of Cain for Abel is still casting its shadow over us « This is the message as you heard it from the beginning that we are to love one another; not to be like Cain, who belonged to the Evil One and cut his brother's throat » (1 Jn. 3, 11.12), but « this has taught us love that Jesus gave up his life for us; and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers » (ibid. 16).

The danger of the Old Division

44. For this reason we cannot but decry the emergence of the old Jewish dichotomy which traced a boundary line between love of God and love of one's neighbor; a dissociation « contra naturam » that the Heart of Christ wanted to remedy for all time. It would be going back on the Gospel. We do not have true and full love of God if we do not also manifest it toward our brothers, concretely toward those in whom Christ said we should recognize Him. Nor do we have true and full love of our brothers if in them we fail to see and recognize God and so reduce charity to the level of philanthropy, robbing it of its transcendental dimension. Any of these failings would mean forgetting that « the fundamental law of human perfection, and consequently of the transformation of the world, is the new commandment of love » (G.S. 38; cf. also n. 24). All the excesses of a reductive horizontalism

or an unincarnate verticalism are an option between the « first and principle commandment » and the « second which is equal to the first », which after the discourse at the last supper no longer makes sense. They are a fatal corruption of the model of love proclaimed by Christ.

45. And unfortunately this is the way one could summarize the theoretical ends of the diverging lines of current thought and of Christian action. One must not so exalt Jesus the man, the person who had a predilection for the poor and the simple, who argued for detachment from worldly goods, who was persecuted by the religious and civic structures of his time, that one disregards Christ, the son of the Father, who came into this world to save us all from sin, to infuse into our hearts the love of the Father and to give us the certainty of future life. Neither must one center one's attention on the primacy of faith, on grace, and on the spiritual nature of the kingdom to such an extent that one does not hear with all due sensitivity the cry of the poor, and does not realize what existential human miseries so often challenge fraternal love. So the attitudes are typical of a harmful reductivism. Jesus is indeed the ideal model of a « man for others », who was deeply pained when it happened that his hearers went without eating for three days in order to follow him. (How his heart would suffer today in the face of the widespread and persistent phenomenon of hunger!). But he is above all else Jesus Christ, who « loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood » (Rv. 1, 5).

Experience and knowledge of Christ

46. The cause of this dichotomy, or to put it in more pragmatic terms, of this meaningless fragmentation of the Christ of the Gospels is certainly the fact that we are not fully aware through experience and knowledge of the many facets of « the love of God which has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given us » (Rom. 5.5).

Our heart is in danger of continuing to be « hardened » like that of Israel under the alliance. We need that « circumcision of heart » (Rom. 2.29) that frees us from the old alliance of subjection so that we can enter into the new alliance of love. Only this awareness and lived experience of Christ, in faith and charity, will enable us to present to our brothers Christ whole and not mutilated. We can do this only if we have obtained « the spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring [us] to full knowledge of him who enlightens the eyes of [our] mind ... » (Ep. 1, 17-18). Only from Him, in whom abides the fullness of divine life — and not from theorists or from any power of this world — can we receive that life and lead our brothers to the fullness of the whole Christ, which is the Church.

47. A well-known saying of K. Barth is « Tell me what your Christology is and I will tell you who you are ». The idea we have formed of Christ — not to raise problems or to argue or debate, but only to feel his presence and love him, to seek him and find him — determines our relationship to God and our Christian relationship with man and the world. Of the utmost importance, therefore, is the response that each of us gives interiorly to the question Jesus put to those who were about to follow him: « Who do people say the Son of Man is? » (Mt. 16, 14). The whole history of the Church, its whole present estate and the whole future of the kingdom, awaits the response we will give, both collectively and individually. A response which no doubt, in its countless valid formulations serves as a basis for fraternal dialogue, for mutual enrichment, and for the fuller understanding of Christ's inner self, His Heart.

Christ is God among men, and the Son of Man before God. He is the bridge that spans all chasms and therefore He is the only mediator. He is the sacrament of God in the world and therefore he is our justification. He is the Word that comes from the Father and returns to Him,

and therefore He is the key to all creation. His Incarnation and His revelation have made it possible for us to answer the question « who do men say I am? ». But it is necessary to accept and live His word about Himself if it is to grow in us, reproducing the Trinitarian love that confounds all logic: the miracle of love that is a scandal to the Jews, madness to the Gentiles and a thing of no account to the unbelievers of our time.

48. It is paradoxical that we should be more disposed to accept Jesus who suffers than Jesus who loves, and that in our brothers, we make the inevitability of suffering an excuse for our egoism and our rejection of love. There is a subtle temptation to accept Jesus the man and to be reserved with Jesus the God. It is urgent that we reveal to the world precisely this Son of God made man, without watering down the mystery. To proclaim the fullness of this love whose beneficiary is all mankind, each man, the whole human race, is to give the world a point of vantage for the realization of the « pleroma », of the fullness of Christ in all things (Eph. 1, 10).

49. Christ cannot be fully understood except in terms of his divinity: this is the essence of our faith in Him. For the free gift which He makes of Himself, there must be a corresponding freedom in man to accept Him. Both God's offering to man and the highest response of man to God coincide in Christ. I believe this is the reply we must give to modern conventionalism which speaks of « Christology from below » or ascending, and « Christology from above » or descending. Christ is the meeting point and very specifically we mean the point where the reciprocal love between God and man is consummated. Christology from below or above is a distinction which, in the profusion of current Christologies, can offer some methodological advantages. However, we must handle it with extreme care and avoid exceeding definite limits. Otherwise we will cause division in something which cannot be divided. Christ who came down from Heaven, is the same Christ

who, having completed the Pascal Mystery, is at the right hand of the Father. Our knowledge and experience of his person cannot be derived only from the « Word » taken as the point of departure, nor only from the historical Jesus of Nazareth. It is dangerous to think one can theologize starting exclusively from Jesus to arrive at knowledge of Christ, or starting from Christ to arrive at a knowledge of Jesus.

50. A mention of Teilhard de Chardin is inevitable in this context. He saw Christ Jesus as the single focal point of the universe. Of course, we need not be in agreement with each and every step of his line of reason. But I mention him here because he inspires respect as the scholar who made the most honest scientific reflection compatible with an exceptional spiritual perceptivity and responsiveness. Teilhard professed an impassioned attachment to the heart of Christ, and on two levels. One, a pure and simple devotion to the heart of Jesus, along the lines of the typical presentation of this devotion at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. This he professed openly and without reserve. It is the heart of Jesus, which, in his spiritual life, is his standby in the extraordinary difficulties which he encountered, in his activities as a scientist. It is the Sacred Heart of his diary, of his correspondence and of spiritual direction. The other level — and perhaps this division would irritate Teilhard — is that of Christ the « omega point » of the universe, whom he instinctively knows and who can be defined tentatively only in an act of love. Starting from the conviction that the universe is evolving and that each stage is meaningful only in terms of its relationship to the preceding stages, Teilhard concludes that the process as a whole must have a reason and an end, one omega point which is already virtually contained in the process itself and directs it from within providing its dynamism and meaning. A few months before his death in 1951 he writes in his diary a sentence which indisputably reveals the final stage of his thought: « The great secret, the great

mystery: there is a heart in the world (Fact of Reflection), and this heart is the Heart of Christ (Fact of revelation). (...) This mystery has two stages: the centre of convergence (the universe concentrates in one centre), and the christian centre (this centre is the heart of Christ). Perhaps I am the only man who says this. But I am convinced this expresses what each man, each christian feels ». (Journal, cahier VI, p. 106).

Heart of Christ approach to the Trinity

51. In these pages the word love has been used deliberately more than the word charity, even though some people would reserve the word « love » for the relations within the Trinity, and would prefer charity as more appropriate for fraternal love. Love has a more general connotation.

Apart from the fact that it renders better and, it seems, more scientifically the term and also the biblical concept, the analogy is diminished a little when one speaks of the affective relationships within the Trinity and those which exist among men. We start from the fact that through grace we are admitted to participation in the divine life, that is to say, to the intimacy of the Father and the Son in the Spirit. The philosophic terms that we apply to the Trinity, (nature, persons, relations) leave the mystery intact and must cede their place to the word: love. « God is love » (1 Jn 4.16). We accept that we cannot understand the mystery though we know that through love we are included in it: the Father and Son assume us in the Spirit making us partakers of the fullness of their love. Those who have accepted the mystery of Christ, says St. John, « will live in the Son and in the Father; and what is promised to you by his own promise is eternal life » (1 Jn 2, 24-25). This is possible in virtue of the love « that God has poured into our hearts through the Spirit which has been given us » (Rm. 5, 5).

52. But love, when defined, not by its object, but by the interior disposition of the one who loves, can only be one. That is why supernatural love for one's neighbor, whom Christ loves, and whom we love for Christ's sake, is a way to draw near to the Trinity. Love of neighbor therefore, and not only of God, is a theological virtue.

Especially for those who have consecrated their lives to the service of others following the evangelical counsels which have no other foundation but love, it is a way of direct access to the intimacy of the Trinity.

53. Is this not what we mean by contemplatives in action? It is not only a matter of an intellectual approach and intentional reference of our activities to the Lord. It is also to love Him through our works and in all things (the expression is Ignatian but the concept is authentically Pauline) especially our brothers, since both contemplation and action have for that cause and end the one God, who is love and who commands us to love. The clarity with which we see God — and love Him — in our neighbor is the measure of our spiritual coherence. This is « the illumination of the eyes of the heart » (Eph. 1, 8); this is the highest test that « God's seed remains in us and is living » (1 Jn. 3, 19). This divine « seed » is nothing else but the principle of life, the Spirit who is at the same time, personification and fruit of love. We turn to man and we find God. It is the theological sublimation of our fraternal relationship.

54. Whoever lives in this light of undivided love for God and man, is not afraid to go forth into the world, because men will not be an occasion to interrupt his dialogue with God. On the contrary, they are so many more occasions for his encounter with God. Still more, in today's world characterized by unbelief, peopled by men and women who are not aware that they are the center of the love of the Trinity, or who deny it, one discovers God through the great vacuum that their ignorance or neglect has left in their hearts.

55. The love which takes us to the Trinity is the foundation and strength of our community bonds. Our community has meaning only if we live in love. It is the love Christ had and has for each of us that has brought us together. Christ loves us individually, yes, but also as a group. It is the personal response of each of us to this love of Christ and the union of all these responses put together that causally establishes our group. As long as we are and remain united by Him and for Him, He is in our midst. Our plurality reproduces the plurality of Trinitarian love, which is all self-giving participation and communion. More than the community of faith — although it is that too — it is the community of love or, if one prefers, the community of love that is born from the community of faith, that constitutes the formal element of a fraternal community. This is the deep meaning of the joyful exaltation of togetherness which Ps. 133 expresses: « How good, how delightful it is for all to live together like brothers ». It is an old experience of the Christian community that is renewed in us, that of being « of one heart and one mind » (Acts 4, 32). He who gives reproduces in himself the generosity of the Father; he who receives reflects the submissiveness and docility of the Son, the bond of theological love that unites us bears the mark of the Spirit.

56. All that we have said of the Trinity, of love ... is full of anthropological references. Is it not possible to express ourselves in any other way? Faced with this mystery our minds are brought to a halt; the only entry is by way of the heart. And we enter into it more deeply and more vitally when our hearts are attuned to the Heart of Christ. This is, after all, what is expressed by the ancient prayer which the author of the Book of Chronicles puts on David's lips:

« Yahweh, God of our ancestors, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Israel, watch over this forever, shape the purpose of your people's heart, and direct their hearts to you » (1 Ch. 29, 18).

The Gospel source of devotion to the Heart of Christ is found in his own words:

I am the Good Shepherd ...

The Good Shepherd gives his life for his sheep, for his flock ... In other words, the image of *kindness* is linked to that of a *heroism* which gives itself, sacrifices itself, immolates itself ...

POPE PAUL VI, April 28th, 1968.

1. Gaspar Garcia Laviana was a priest, a poet and a missionary. As missionary he left his native Spain to work in Nicaragua. There, as a priest he felt the injustices, the poverty and the oppression from which the people suffered. As a poet he felt these things with a special sensitivity: he wrote of how they haunted him:

« In my flesh
I felt your poverty
Like a whip of fire ...

Peasant, you've set my
entrails afire,
like liquid lava
in the bosom of the earth ... ».

« They wound me
Your premature deaths ...

I am wounded by your ignorance
and your eternal sadness ...

Everything about you wounds me
O peasant, but most of all
It is your *powerlessness*
which wounds me ».

In December 1977, he wrote to his Superiors that he was joining the guerillas, feeling his own powerlessness to assist his beloved peasants unless he did so by force ... He judged the situation in Nicaragua to be one which called

for the justifiable use of violence allowed for by Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* (n. 31). He felt that the Gospel love which he preached was forcing him, in conscience, to take this step for the liberation of his people. He believed that the rebels would succeed in throwing off the yoke of oppression — but he intuitively sensed that he would be asked to give his own life as part of the price to be paid. He wrote a poem called « When I die »:

« When we win the war,
Do not come sadly to my tomb,
With roses and carnations
Red like my blood which was shed.

« I swear that if you do,
I will rise up and beat you with them.

I will accept only violets
the colour of my butchered flesh,
colour of my mother's grief
colour of the peasant hunger
of my Latin America ».

Death came to him in an ambush on December 13th 1978. His cause won its victory not long afterwards, and to his grave at Tola flowers are brought, tribute of a grateful people.

2. Reflecting on these events, a young Nicaraguan confrere of Gaspar's Religious Congregation wrote:

« I want to be a guerilla - but not with a gun,
I want to be subversive - but not of established systems;
I want to give my life - but not at the cost of others' lives.

My guerillas have no leaders,
They have no training camps nor chiefs of staff,
No high-sounding names, nor false ideologies.

My campaign does not lend itself to international manipulation;

It is not of center, left or right,
It is not interested in territory nor in strategic positions
of power,

My campaign does not divide the world into spheres of
influence,

nor in continents to be dominated.

It does not set out to profit by political or economic
opportunities.

My aims are not to exploit all possibilities
of power, riches, or sexual delight,
but to put an end to poverty, injustice, loneliness,
bitterness and remorse ...

That man might be brought to true liberty,
to the one possible revolution, violent and difficult
more deadly than the usual revolutions,
it aims at killing the « old man » in millions who are
filled

with wretchedness and human corruption,
in order to give life to new men, artisans of a new
history.

IT IS A REVOLUTION OF LOVE.

Arms for my warfare are not machine-guns, intercontinent-
al missiles nor neutron bombs, but something more explo-
sive: MAN HIMSELF; as a thinking being and artisan of
his destiny, man as responsible for himself and those
made in his likeness for whose benefit the whole world
was made;

Man, constantly confronting his de-humanizing inclina-
tions, in the light of a living Word, a dynamic Word, the
Word of the Gospel, the Word of Jesus Christ.

My warfare is hard, with tough man-to-man combat, with
victory won through blood and pain in an effort to de-
stroy the false positions and false images which man gives
himself.

However, when my warfare triumphs, it produces fruits of justice, liberty and fraternity; it produces true human solidarity and unbreakable bonds of cooperation and brotherhood. Its greatest fruit is that it makes man into a co-creator of the world in happy association with God the Creator.

It is to fight for these fruits for myself and my brothers throughout the whole world that

I want to be a Guerilla,
A Guerilla of Love ».

Rodrigo.

3. Time passed, Nicaragua won its revolution.
Another priest-confreere of Gaspar wrote:

« Dear Gaspar,

I used to talk with you a lot, although I was not the only one to do so. Today I thought that I would write to you, in order to share with you, as we did so often. Better than anyone else, you know that Nicaragua is rejoicing. It is celebrating its joy, its happiness, its Resurrection. It is our joy, too, our happiness, our Easter.

This Easter I have thought of you a lot; I have thought of the many people like you who have made all this possible. Gaspar, you really understood the breadth and depth of the Gospel, and you made it your LIFE. I know that many do not agree with what I am saying, that they will be scandalized as they read these lines. For you were a sign of contradiction. However, Another was that before you; Another who was the reason of your life, whom you followed and whom you saw in the oppressed peasant, in the girls enslaved in brothels, in the poor and the marginalized. He it was who motivated you when you wrote as you made your radical choice:

‘ My FAITH and my membership of the Church oblige me to take part in the revolutionary process, because the

liberation of a people oppressed is an integral part of the Redemption of Christ. My active contribution to this process is a sign of christian solidarity with the poor and the oppressed and with those who fight to free them. It is also a link between the Church and the just revolution ... '.

Gaspar you have made me ponder and go deep into the Gospel:

— I have come to serve, not to be served ... and you certainly served;

— He who keeps his life will lose it, and he who gives it up will keep it ... and you gave up your life totally.

— Greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends ... and you loved unto death ...

— If the grain of wheat does not die it will bear no fruit ... and today we gather the harvest for which you and others died.

— Thankyou Gaspar for your life and for your death. For your Resurrection. Thankyou because your choice makes us question many egoistical and comfortable things. Thankyou for your constant friendship.

I conclude asking that you help us have the courage, the boldness to die so that others might rise ... as you did.

Love, Tino ».

Tino judged that Gaspar, too, was a guerilla of love.

For many in our days an old christian prayer takes on an agonizing modern dimension:

« O teach us *how* to love thee and serve thee while we live ».

« In concrete situations, and taking account of solidarity in each person's life, one must recognize a legitimate variety of possible options. The same christian faith can lead to different commitments. The Church invites all Christians to take up a double task of inspiring and innovating, in order to make structures evolve, so as to

adapt them to the needs of our day. From Christians who at first sight seem to be in opposition, as a result of starting from different options, she asks an effort at mutual understanding of others' positions and motives ».

(Paul VI. Octogesima Adveniens, n. 50).

In Guatemala, on June 4th, 1980

a confrere of Fr. Gaspar, Fr. José-Maria Gran Cirera, was assassinated, at the age of 35, as he returned from saying Mass in the out-lying stations of his parish. He was only a guerilla of love — in the sense that his offence was to be with the poor and the oppressed, and thereby to provoke a violent reaction from their oppressors. As the Conference of Religious wrote from Guatemala:

« From the time that he arrived in our land, this priest decided to work with the poor Indians of the Department of Quiché. To these people he announced the Good News that God is with them, that God is a God for the poor ... He knew the hunger that the Indians suffer and he was also a witness of the sufferings of the peasant families ... he shared with them the repression which this area has endured for some years. To this total reality he brought the light and strength of the Gospel to prevent the enemies of God from continuing to plant death in our fatherland ... This was the great crime of Fr. José-Maria: to preach to all men their right to life with dignity and equality according to the Will of God ».

His fellow missionaries wrote:

« Our missionary spirit is stronger than ever. We experience the normal human fear felt by any man, however we are ready to die for the love of God and our neighbour ... It is wonderful to see the general spirit of sacrifice. Without exception, all offer to go to the most dangerous places ... Our commitment to the poor has made us so poor that we can not even protest against the injustices. Like Christ we are nailed to the cross, and

whatever happens, we think that we are doing our duty ... And, illogically, we feel a great joy which must be the gift of God ... ».

5. « You must not be surprised, brothers, when the world hates you;
we have passed out of death and into life,
and of this we can be sure
because we love your brothers.
If you refuse to love you must remain dead;
to hate your brother is to be a murderer,
and murderers, as you know, do not have eternal life in
[them.

This has taught us love -
that he gave up his life for us;
and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers.
If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods
saw that one of his brothers was in need,
but closed his heart to him,
how could the love of God be living in him?
My children,
our love is not to be just words or mere talk,
but something real and active ... » (I John 3, 13-18).

6. In the first Christian centuries, the local churches wrote to one another at times about the difficulties which they endured, about the ways in which their members witnessed to Christ. This shared knowledge and interest was a source of mutual support and inspiration.

The Church in Central America is living a dramatic moment of its history in which religious, priests and laity are involved. We publish some aspects of their involvement for our mutual support and inspiration.

Their experience can touch our more prosaic lives - with grateful pride, with joy and sorrow, resolve ... with ... what you will ...

« Within us
Our hearts burn
As we see the broken bread
of brother's lives - as we, too, yearn
to walk, with them, the way you tread.

Our hearts burn.
In brother's love outpoured
The Risen Lord
draws near;
Love casts out fear.

Jesus Lord,
We bid you stay
with us upon our humbler way.
Accept a kindness to the blind, the lame,
The cup of water offered in Your name ».

As you well know, Jesus Christ looked with special love on the sick, the afflicted, the poor, the handicapped and the suffering, reserving for them the most tender love of his Heart, the greatest miracles of his power and the assurance of a special place in his kingdom: 'Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted » (Mt. 5, 4).

Pope John Paul II, Jan. 16th, 1980

Compassionate contemplation

John Flynn, M.S.C.

Contemplation

Webster's first definition of « contemplate » reads: to view or consider with continued attention. For the purposes of this reflection contemplation can be taken as the act of simply looking at, listening to and being-with something.

Contemplation is therefore primarily an act of self-forgetfulness — interest in something other than ourselves. It is not a distracted but a steady interest: not a controlled interest, seeing only what we « want » to see, but an open-minded interest.

Responses that are elicited by this kind of contemplation are not experienced in the first instance as willed acts. For example, when one looks at the beloved, the response of love arises because of the beloved, not because one has decided to love.

Compassionate contemplation

These two words are used to indicate a specific kind of contemplative ministry and the response evoked from those who give themselves to it. The following examples may serve to clarify the significance of this.

- Matthew 9:36 When he *saw* the crowds (contemplative attitude) he had *compassion* for them (response evoked).
- Luke 10:33 When he *saw* him he had *compassion*.
- Luke 15:20 His father *saw* him and had *compassion*.
- Luke 7:13 When the Lord *saw* her, he had *compassion* on her.
- John 11:33 When Jesus *saw* her weeping ... he was *deeply moved in spirit* and troubled ... (and) *wept*.
- John 19:37 They shall *look on* him whom they have pierced and they shall *mourn* for him (Zech 12, 10-13, 1).

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Documents of Renewal, no. 3: « *Looking on* him who was pierced on the cross we see *the new heart God has given us* ».

In each of these texts the object of contemplation that leads to the awakening of compassion and mourning — the poor, the sick-lepers, for instance, who were really the « crowds » of the Gospel are the uneducated people, the day-labourers and landless tenants, the weaker and more vulnerable members of society « who do not know the law » (Jn. 7, 49), the totally « useless », the poorest of the poor, the sick-lepers, for instance, who were really the most wretched of the wretched because of the rigorous restrictions of Leviticus 13, 45-46.

The text from Luke 10 is about the man whom I am to make my neighbour — a victim of his fellowman's violent injustice. In order to make him my neighbour I am to « see » him as Yahweh « saw » the affliction of the people suffering injustice in Egypt (Exodus 3, 7) and as Moses « saw » what a hard life they were having (Exodus 2, 11) — so that the voiceless « cry » of his plight moves me to compassion. Luke 15 is speaking about seeing a man who, like Jacob who crossed his brother Esau, is

himself entirely responsible for the unfortunate circumstances in which he finds himself. Luke 7 speaks of a woman who has lost the two significant men in her life, a life now overshadowed by their death. Here we see the inconsolable grief into which the death of loved ones can lead every one of us. John 11 is the same story. The text from John 19, 37, and the Documents of Renewal of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, demand a refusal of every flight from the crucifying reality of the human world: look at what we do to ourselves and one another until it breaks your head and your heart and — beyond despair, unbelief and every other escapist tendency — you find yourself moved by God's response to us who crucify one another: sorrow (mourning) for sin, hungering and thirsting for justice, compassionate solidarity.

My experience is this: that this « new heart » of compassion — which is the love of God for this crucifying world poured out into our hearts — has been and is awoken within me primarily and directly by a contemplative contact with the poor of the earth. I need this kind of contact with this kind of person in order to become and remain a man whose heart is true to God and to fellow man.

A religious major superior wrote recently to his confreres: « If I do not believe that I am going to learn from the people I deal with and that they are going to change me for the better as much or even more than I shall change them, I should desist from activity and pray for enlightenment ». Luke 6, 38 says « Give to others and God will give to you: you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands — all that you can hold ». There is a specific kind of « giving » to others implied in the words « looking on him who was pierced on the cross » — a still, silent and contemplative sharing in and entering into the sorrow and pain of another before there is any attempt to act, to do anything about it: a sharing in the experience of the powerlessness of the poor.

We « receive » the gift of the Spirit in abundance through this kind of « giving ». By sharing the lot of the powerless rather than seeking to escape by trying to rescue them, the divine care, the response of God's Spirit in us to this crucifying world, will come to flood our consciousness — a spirit of sorrow (mourning) for sin and of hungering and thirsting for justice; a spirit of love for this world.

Trappist abbot André Louf calls this gift of God the « superabundance of the heart ». « Our heart is already in a state of prayer », he says, « All the time, in fact, the Spirit is calling within us and he prays, Abba-Father, with supplications and sighs that cannot be put into words but never for an instance cease within our hearts (Rom. 8, 15; Gal. 4, 6). This state of prayer within us is something we always carry about, like a hidden treasure of which we are not consciously aware or hardly so. Somewhere our heart is going full-pelt; but we do not feel it. We are deaf to our praying heart, love's savour escapes us ... For our heart, our true heart, is asleep; and it has to be woken up, gradually — through the course of a whole life-time »².

In my experience this « praying heart » (« the new heart God has given us »), the living presence of God's great love and longing for this world in us, has been and is awoken primarily and directly by contact with the powerless poor. As Helder Camara claims, « their cries are the voice of God — the unvoiced demands of those who have no voice and no hope », shattering our complacency, keeping alive in us God's sensitivity to injustice and suffering in this world³.

These people are the Word of God to us. The Word of God touches our hearts, it wounds, it needles, it pierces, it cleaves our heart open. It jolts our heart awake. Our « hearts of stone » are broken (Joel 2, 12) and we are given a « heart of flesh » instead (Ezek. 36, 25-27) by contact with the powerless poor. Through the sacrament of contemplative encounter with them we are given

our true selves, « the hidden man of the heart » (2 Pet. 3, 4).

« Always, wherever we may be ... » (2 Cor. 4, 10).

In a Sue Ryder Home in England in 1969 I lived with some people who came out of World War II without a country and irreparably maimed in body and mind. They were the first « poor » whoever touched me: people who knew the sense of futility, incapacity and helplessness — beyond self-help and our help. It was the first time I'd heard the « cry of the oppressed »: the cry of impossibility. One man wanted to be put to sleep with an injection. One woman walked out one night to die in the cold. One man refused to bath or shower — his fear mixed up with incoherent memories of police.

The story is told by Elie Wiesel that in Kovel, where the Nazis had assembled all the Jews in the synagogue before butchering them, an inscription was found on the wall: « O earth, do not cover my blood and let my cry have no resting place ». That « cry » was in the minds and bodies of those people. I touched them and was touched by them — washed them, fed them, walked with them — physically. And found that contact to be the beginning of a healing for me — a deliverance from my prejudices, and an escape from my apathy, self-pity, self-absorption and cynicism; an awakening of an awareness that had deep within it a sense of urgency that « justice » be done.

For the last few years I have been involved in spiritual direction and retreat work. The people I remember most of all are those who find themselves — in this crucifying world — drained of the desire to live, feeling unable to help themselves and beyond the help of others. Originally they could love life. But now, on the other side of betrayal, failure and compromise they find they cannot anymore — the desire to escape from life and its pain becomes a compulsion: « We were so utterly crushed that we despaired of life itself » (2 Cor. 1, 8). They turn to God,

and to the priest, in this escape: « Lord, save us we are sinking ». These people disturb me. I'd prefer them to leave me alone. I can do nothing for them — not because I am not a professional counsellor, but because what they want, sanctuary, no one can give them. They remind me all too vividly of the pain and suffering of life I wish to escape from myself. They remind me of the fear of death which constantly threatens my freedom to embrace life wholeheartedly. They remind me of the constant temptation to a view of life as a palace of illusions where death ultimately has the last word.

They remind me of the man who, when faced with such people, asked without fear, « What do you want? » (Jn. 1, 38). Here was a man who went out of his way to be touched by such people — the ones who are alive to the painful reality that they want what they cannot. The ones who remind us they, we, all of us, want what we cannot. Here was a man who didn't collaborate in our combined endeavour to escape from it. Rather he went out of his way to awaken it even more. He was a man who filled his followers with awe when he rebuked them for their escapism and demanded that they be converted from fear and self-pity to faith — that rather than seek for sanctuary in « God », they face the crucifying reality of human life until, beyond all escapist strategies — self-pity, self-righteousness, cynicism, bitterness, anger, resentment, apathy, despair — their heart breaks and true sorrow (mourning) for sin and longing for justice which come from God alone, flows within them as a spirit of peace with and love for this world.

In 1977 I was exposed for the first time to the wordless cry of the plight of the aborigines. It was like the situation of a person immersed in the words of the prophet (Isaiah I, 11-17) — « one of being exposed to a ceaseless shattering of indifference ». What is really at stake is not people's hunger for more food, money, health or education, but their hunger for life, for freedom and culture. Thomas Cullinan says that « he saw that the profoundest

form of under-development and of oppression is the moral state of men who have sapped out of them any desire to shape their own history. They have no inner ability to call life their own, they have been treated for so long as the object of other men's decisions, that they have lost the spiritual ability to say, « I matter, I will stand up and shape things ». He saw that this was the ultimate injustice of men against men, and could only be met by what the Latin American thinkers and theologians meant by liberation ⁴.

The situation questioned me in the following way (not necessarily connected with the way the situation questions others who live in the midst of it): What happens to a man who « sees » and « hears » this wordless cry for liberation in the moral apathy of this people? What heart-felt response is called forth from within him by the poverty that leaves them with no response in themselves other than to wait for someone else to solve their problems and bring solutions? It is not so uncommon for us to find ourselves with people like this. The book of Exodus not only proclaims man as summoned by the Lord God to the painful business of being free, but it also describes in some detail the immense reluctance of people to be liberated. They had to be practically dragged out of Egypt by the hand of Yahweh. The heart-felt response to this is to « deal gently » with them because he himself « has suffered and been tempted » to escape from the burden of freedom (Hebrews 4, 14-15). The book also describes what response is drawn out of Moses who, by the gift of God, desires above all else the liberation of this reluctant people; in his creative effort to encourage the people to inner freedom and to forge new social structures that supported and directed its just exercise, Moses eventually cried out in anguish, and in the Spirit, « I am not able ... » (Num 11, 4-15). In the face of their habitual reluctance to take part in their liberation and to prefer to settle back into the well-known structured comfort of letting someone else run their lives for them, the tempta-

tion for Moses was to settle for something less than liberation, something less than the summons (the Word) and the desire (the Will) of God. (cf. Mt. 4, 1-11). When Moses was tempted to feel sorry for himself, God would say: stand up, son of man, I want to talk to you. And he would invite him again to share His desire for and commitment to nothing less than liberation — not to settle for helping these people but to share in their oppression and go with them on the painful journey to inner freedom. Moses and every follower of God since is called to « be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God » (Heb. 2, 17), sorrowing for sin, hungering and thirsting for justice, unconditionally prepared to take another's suffering upon himself for the sake of liberating the other from fear of suffering and death, and for creative living in this world.

Blessed are those who mourn.

We must not grow accustomed to injustice. The thought at the basis of my use of the word is this: « True love discovers that it is unjust that our neighbour should suffer. Only authentic love can feel that everything our neighbour suffers is an intolerable injustice ». And God is love. God is never indifferent to injustice, he can never be resigned to it, never unmoved by it. To enter into God's response in us to injustice it is necessary to pass over from the standpoint of one who stands apart and resents being treated unjustly, judging himself innocent — « I thank you God I am not as the rest of men ». It is necessary to listen to those things which sensitize us to the pattern of injustice in which we live and move and have our bread while others go hungry — the injustice of which we are all victims and perpetrators. It doesn't matter if the injustice is of the enormity of the Holocaust or the ordinariness of our everyday routine insensitivity: God's response in us to it is mourning: the Spirit of God in us is always hurt anew by injustice, suffering and death (all of which have their origin in sin).

It is not a matter of course to be moved by another's suffering. Everyone has had the experience of seeing without being moved — walking by on the other side. To be still moved each time anew by suffering is a gift of God's mourning and comforting spirit — it is a blessing. The presence of a suffering person blesses the community with this gift of divine care. The word «care» Henri Nouwens tells us, finds its roots in the Gothic: *kara* which means lament. This is the human experience that lies behind the word⁵.

In early Christian literature this care springing from within was signified by the word *splanchna*, which means the inner organs of the body, the bowels. *Splanchna* means the whole human personality, in so far as it is profoundly moved and affected. In St Paul, the same word means the ability of man to be moved by love, or simply man as someone who loves. The latin word *miseri-cordia* uses the image of the heart (*cor*) to indicate the quality of care. In this image a caring person is one who has a «tender heart» for the misfortune, misery and distress of others. According to this image, the caring person opens his heart, the innermost center of his personality, to the misery and suffering of another, and is so consistent in this attitude that it becomes a permanent disposition⁶.

It seems to me that we are called to ask for and accept the gift of sympathy with the feeling of God for those who suffer in any way. «Many distrust any manifestation of feelings in prayer and ministry. They believe it imperfect to grant the feelings any place in the spiritual life. They make dryness or difficulty in praying and ministry into a trial to be borne with courage, when it would be more helpful to look for the causes and remedy the situation. It is not up to man to arouse these feelings at will. They are the work of grace. But at least in the abandonment and dryness he feels, he can always cry out: How long will you hide your face from us, Lord? Do

not abandon us to the hardness of our hearts. Deliver me from hidden evil! »⁷.

Paul prays that this tender-hearted love may grow in us, and he sees its fruit as knowing how to respond to people as God wishes: « This is my prayer for you: that your love increase and abound in deep knowledge and perception, so that you may judge correctly what really matters » (Ph. 1, 9-10).

We tend to look on caring as doing something, as condescension — an attitude of the strong toward the weak, of the powerful toward the powerless, of the have's toward the have not's. The inner heart of care is awoken when someone who is suffering comes to us, and we are powerless and unable to help. To care is to be moved to enter into his suffering rather than to try to cure it. This is a work of mercy that demands far more of us than feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty. It demands that we share the helplessness of someone who is suffering. There is the story of the young woman standing « among the tombs » (cf. Mark 5, 5) who was gently and persistently asked, « Woman, why are you weeping? » Here was a man who was unafraid of entering into another's pain; a man who was able to be still and silent in the face of being able to do nothing for another person in inconsolable grief (Jn. 20, 15). He could allow the helplessness of another person fill his soul, let his life be darkened by the darkness of another's pain (Isaiah 53, 14), enter into that secret meeting place of God and man that this world calls the folly of having no « power ». Only this freedom of the sons of God — freedom from the fear of death, suffering and powerlessness, and of what they might do to us — can bring « comfort » to those who live in the land and shadow of death.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice.

Shakespeare's words can serve as a stimulus to begin to awaken the longing heart within us:

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,

That time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose (Sonnet 64).

In secret our heart is constantly « experiencing the pain of transitoriness, the fact that the beloved object is taken away, that living beauty is always in a state of passing, that death is the neighbour of the beautiful. But in stark opposition to that is the desire for the eternal, for the infinite, for the absolute. This longing for the absolute is joined to the profound consciousness that it cannot be attained ... resulting in a restlessness that cannot be stilled ... like a fluid that permeates everything, like a simultaneous bitterness and sweetness that is mixed into everything. Basically it is a yearning for love. This deep longing affects not only part of our being, but proceeds from its centre, it doesn't restrict itself to particular relationships and times, but pervades the whole »⁸.

St. Augustine's spirituality of the heart focused on the same experience: « In one of the psalms someone says to God, « I shall be filled when your glory is manifested ». He will show us his face and we shall be filled, he will be sufficient for us. Until this happens ... we are exiles from him, until then we hunger and thirst for justice, and long with a passion beyond words for the beauty of the form of God »⁹.

There is a privatized spirituality, which considers man as related to God, essentially in some inner spiritual life and not in the totality of his human, social existence. This « passion beyond words » of the praying and longing heart within us will be domesticated into escapist sentimentality if it is read from within that spirituality. It must be read from the standpoint of one who finds an answer to the question, « Who am I? » not by introspection but by contemplatively listening to the weaker and more vulnerable of his human brothers. Certainly that is the only way a man can find his way to his own heart.

To begin to get an inkling of the « passion beyond

words » within our heart we need to « make ourselves the neighbour of absolutely every person ... whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign labourer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience »¹⁰. We need to let the entire world become for us a « global village », or as Barbara Ward puts it, a « psychological neighbourhood », — and it's a neighbourhood in which one-third of the people share four-fifths of the wealth, while two-thirds share one-fifth of the wealth. We need to take steps to make ourselves aware and informed « about the serious injustices that oppress and abuse men and women, about the gross inequalities between nations and between individuals, about the irresponsible squandering of the resources of the world to the probable prejudice of future generations, and about the socio-economic structures in our society which favour the continuance of these evils »¹¹.

Listening to « them » over there, over seas, we find a painful answer to the question about « us »: It is enough that they show us what we have made of them for us to realise what we have made of ourselves. « We discover the amazing extent to which our Western world is geared to its own success, to gratify its own needs; and that the destitute world is held destitute, not by their failure to work and catch up, but by our taken-for-granted living standards and economic growth. It is the very economic and social structures that we operate which work profound injustice against the destitute, and we are all involved in such structures whether we like it or not »¹².

This man is hearing the Word of God today. « God is the continuing inner call within our lives toward authentic solutions ... But we are not capable of always attaining the good, the whole, the integral. So God is the unrest in us that does not allow us to be tranquil and content, that keeps prodding us toward the better course that remains ahead of us. It is in this unrest, in this anxious desire to

arrive at authentic solutions that we gradually come to know the God in whom we believe. As a Spanish poet put it: « I know you, Lord, when I feel all the desire and yearning that surpasses me. The void of my discontent contains the broad dimensions of your immensity »¹³.

This Word of God — our global neighbour in need — jolts our heart awake, and we discover at first hand that « the whole created universe groans in all its parts as if in the pangs of childbirth. Not only so, but all of us who possess the first fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait to be sons and for our bodies to be set free » (Rom. 8, 19-23). And this « hope does not deceive because (already) the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us » (Rom. 5, 5). Already the « flame of desire » that our earth will be recast has been kindled in our contemplative encounter with our neighbour and our crucifying selves. Already we have been healed of our tendency to grow old and accustomed to and cynical about injustice. Already a hunger and thirst for justice on earth in the image of Isaiah 11, 6-9 has been awoken within our hearts. This hunger and thirst — and the call to conversion within it — is God-within-us. This desire in its all-encompassing length and breadth and height and depth comes from God to fill all the dimensions of our existence. God's desire in us is put into words by Jesus: « May they all be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, so also may they be one in us ». The articulation of the « ultimate concern » in the hearts of those who are followers of Jesus and his Father are these: « Dear Father, Thy kingdom come ». To awaken this prayer we need to be in contact with our poor neighbour and then have the question put to us: « What do you want? » (Jn. 1, 38). Teilhard suggests that our heart's radical answer to this question is the prayer of Christ in our hearts, the eucharistic prayer: « Lord ... in the very depths of this earth you have implanted an irresistible desire, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike: Lord, make us one! »¹⁴.

- ¹ Cf. WILLIAM A. BARRY s.j., « The Contemplative Attitude in Spiritual Direction », in *Review for Religious* 35 (1976) 820-828.
- ² ANDRE LOUF, *Teach Us To Pray*, Darton Longman and Todd, London 1974, p. 40.
- ³ HELDER CAMARA, *The Desert Is Fertile*, Sheed and Ward, London 1974, p. 26.
- ⁴ THOMAS CULLINAN, *If The Eye Be Sound*, St. Paul, Slough 1975, p. 10.
- ⁵ HENRI NOUYEN, *Out of Solitude*, Ave Maria, Notre Dame 1974, p. 34.
- ⁶ LADISLAS BOROS, *God Is With Us, Search*, London 1973, p. 50-51.
- ⁷ The whole subject is well treated in J. Laplace's excellent little book *Prayer According to the Scriptures*, Cenacle. No date.
- ⁸ ROMANO GUARDINI, *The Focus of Freedom*, Helicon, Baltimore 1966, p. 81.
- ¹⁰ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 62.
- ¹¹ Marist Brothers' XVIIIth General Chapter: Poverty and Justice Document.
- ¹² THOMAS CULLINAN, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- ¹³ J. L. SEGUNDO, *Our Idea of God*, Orbis, New York 1974, p. 182.
- ¹⁴ PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *Hymn of the Universe*, Fontana, New York, 1970, p. 20.

We have already said that the term ' Sacred Heart ' stands for that reality in which the unnameable mystery which we call God is made present to us as *compassionate and self-bestowing* proximity.

(K. RAHNER. Theological Investigations. Vol. VIIII, p. 226).

An affirming Heart

Thomas A. Kane

Introduction

If we were to page through the liturgical books of the Eastern Rites of the Church, we would frequently find the beautiful title, « Lover of mankind » (Philantropos) expressing the Father's love and the Son's love for us. When the Father creates, sends his Son, and imparts the Spirit, it is because of his love for us. When the God-Man carries out his mission, suffers, dies, and rises from the dead, it is because he is « good and loves mankind »¹.

There appears to be a similar usage in this Eastern expression, « Lover of Mankind » and the Western use of the word « heart » in reference to Jesus. In Western tradition, thought and art, Christ's physical heart is used as a symbol and visible sign of all that Jesus is and does for each of us out of affirming love. This similarity between the Eastern expression (Lover of Mankind) and the Western one (the Sacred Heart of Jesus) is not just a coincidence. It arises out of the common use of the Bible and the teachings of the early Fathers of the Church.

The extraordinary emphasis in the Christian religion on the infinite love of Christ for each person is its deepest source of joy. That Christ loves us is the great secret, the most intimate secret of every soul. It is the most inconceivable reality; it is a reality which would completely change the life of every man if he could but realize it

fully. This realization requires not merely a theoretical knowledge of this mystery as a revealed truth, but an awareness of this love similar to one's awareness of the love of one's beloved. And it also implies an awareness of the incomparable character, the unique character of this divine love, its absolutely new and mysterious quality, its ineffable holiness, such as shines forth in the Gospel and the Liturgy, and is mirrored in the lives of the saints².

The true reflection of this love of Christ for mankind is in the witness of how Christians love one another. Ironically, we find that non-Christian people are often irritated by the fact that Christianity calls itself the religion of love, while at the same time it has not succeeded in building up much of a real '*communio*' even in its own circles. Marxism rebukes Christians for always talking about God and about love, while forgetting at the same time to make the world a place worth living in for everyone. And who would dare to say that Christians could justly ignore this rebuke without even making the beginning of an examination of conscience.

Perhaps the problem could be posited this way, that the world today is honestly dissatisfied with religion as it presents itself and rightly asks of religion to be taken seriously by the Church. Very often the world of today experiences the religious person as one who is not happy himself and does not make others happy. To the world the religious person resembles the famous Prometheus of Greek mythology. Chained immovably to a rock, bound, not free, and tortured by an eagle picking at his liver, he suffered interior pains, division, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, intolerance.

It could be very interesting and at the same time instructive to see how often in the Scriptures the word 'joy' is written and used as a kind of label for the believer, for the Christian. « I have spoken thus to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete ». In human intercourse it is always the human being who gives joy and happiness to the other. It is the Christian who

should take first place in this art of affirming humanity. But he who wants to affirm his fellowman will have to be affirmed himself first by someone else. Only the one who is blossoming in affirmation is able to open up and affirm the other. It is not difficult to see how so many people are asking to be affirmed by someone else; the person who is lonely for whatever reason, or the person in the midst of an identity crisis who no longer recognizes himself and is uncertain of himself. To affirm and to be affirmed is a matter of fundamental interaction in human society.

Affirmation

The word affirmation comes from the Latin *affirmare* and means to make firm, to give strength to, to make strong. It implies assent, agreement, consent, a willingness to say « Yes » to all creation.

Affirmation is the acceptance of the goodness of the other person as he is. At the essence of all maturing love is affirmation: « You are good ». « You are wonderful ». The most tender, indeed healing, touch of affirmation is that I allow the other person to be as he is, immaturity and shortcomings included. I do so not of fear but out of free choice. I encourage the other to be who he is so that his potential may be realized.

The psychology of affirmation or creation goes beyond the utilitarianism so often found in our world. Affirmation is concerned with being and not primarily with doing; it is not concerned with functionalism.

Josef Pieper

Forty-six years ago, when he was a twenty-eight year old professor, Josef Pieper, the contemporary German philosopher wrote a small book, *About Fortitude*, in the face of National Socialism - The Nazis. Today he has given us

the best book available concerning the theory of affirmation, and it is rich in Christian anthropology and conversant with contemporary phenomenology.

It is from Pieper that we learn that creation is synonymous with affirmation. God calls us into being. This act of creation is the primal act of affirmation. « The most marvelous of all things a being can do is *to be* »³. It is God who in the act of creation affirms mankind, « I will that you exist ... and it is very good that you exist » (Gen. 1, 31). Because God delights in our being, we humans can dare to take delight in loving and affirming our brothers and sisters, and all of created things. There is no such thing as illegitimacy in God's plan. All that is called into being, all of creation is meant to reflect the goodness of God. Human nature is the greatest of God's creations and His love transforms all that is created. « God with His love neither destroys nor changes nature, but *perfects* it », Pius XII states so beautifully.

Martin Buber

The Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, one of the earliest great persons to teach us about affirmation writes: « In human society, at all levels, persons affirm one another in a practical way, to some extent or other, in their personal qualities and capacities, and society may be termed human in the measure to which its members affirm another ».

« The basis of man's life with man is twofold: and it is one — the wish of every man to be affirmed as what he is, even as what he may become, by men; and the innate capacity in man to affirm his fellow-man in this way. That this capacity lies so immeasurably fallow constitutes the real weakness and questionableness of the human race: actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds. On the other hand, of course, an empty claim for affirmation, without devotion for being and becoming, again and again, mars the truth of life between man and man.

« Men need, and it is granted to them, to affirm one another in their individual being by means of genuine meetings; but beyond this they need, and it is granted to them, to see the truth, which the soul gains by its struggle, lights up to others, in a different way and even so be affirmed » ⁴.

Radical view of humanity

We can understand and live affirmation by slowing down, by saving ourselves from the frenzy of always doing; by living and pausing to gaze at the goodness of others. I state this not just in a sentimental way, but as the radical (radical comes from the Latin *radix* and means the basic or root of something) and essential life-style. Affirmation is not a technique, it is an approach to living ⁵.

Ways of affirmation

Ways of affirmation differ, but all are important. Affirmation can be *visual*, e.g. a responsive smile; *tactile*, e.g. an embrace; *auditory*, e.g. an expression of sympathy; and it can be *spiritual*, e.g. shared prayer. All ways of affirmation lead our brothers and sisters to know and feel their own goodness and help them to gently live this life with happiness. Affirmation can only be given as a free gift and can only be a gift if it is graciously received by another person. Thomas Aquinas over seven hundred years ago stated that « love is the first gift. Whatever else is freely given to us becomes a gift only through love ».

Affirmation of things

The affirmed person not only affirms his brothers and sisters but all that *is*. He affirms the dignity and nobility of being as such. Thus, he can affirm goodness, even in a

drop of water or in a blade of grass. Affirmation develops within mankind a sense of awe and reverence for all of creation.

Once we experience affirmation, we wish to share it with others and have an « inner readiness », as the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel puts it, to accept affirmation when and where offered to us, individually or corporately ⁶.

Jesus heals by affirmation

Affirmation makes *firm*, gives *strength*, and heals our brothers and sisters of their wounds. Jesus, the Divine Physician, healed by affirming mankind. The New Testament celebrates examples of Jesus healing by affirming men and women in gentle ways. He so much wanted his followers to be in peace, to take delight in his presence. He wanted his followers to share in creation, to be thinkers of their thoughts and feelers of their feelings, rather than just doers.

As a matter of fact, Jesus was repelled by the busy-ness in his Father's temple, and by the futility of the « doing-rules » of the Pharisees.

Reflecting on the Scriptures we find many examples of Jesus' healing touch of affirmation. An important scriptural illustration of the meaning of affirmation is found in the account of the meeting of Jesus with Zacchaeus, the tax collector. Neither accepted nor loved, Zacchaeus desires to be accepted by others simply for being who he is. Such acceptance he had not known and evidently placed some hope in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was to pass through his neighborhood and there would be a crowd to see him. Like other times, because of occupation and physical appearance, Zacchaeus would be denied again. Trying to get a view of Jesus, Zacchaeus — so small in stature — could not work his way through the crowd. He

climbed a fig tree on the side of the road hoping to view the Nazarean. Jesus does not pass him by but accepts him as he is. « Zacchaeus come down because I must stay with you today », Jesus calls out to the little man in the tree. What is the result? Zacchaeus immediately is opened — like a flower in bloom. Zacchaeus stood there, and said to the Lord: « Here and now, I give away half of my possessions to charity, and if I have cheated anyone, I am ready to repay him four times over ». Charity and justice, then, are the fruits of the man who has been affirmed, who has been liberated, also of the man who has been redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Jesus healed many wounds of anxiety, of unhappiness, of low self-esteem, frustration, etc. The reader is encouraged to take Scripture in hand and reflect on the many affirmations of the lovableness of humanity as taught by Jesus, the Divine Physician. Pertinent Scriptural references are: John. 8, 10-11, Mt. 16, 16-20, Mk. 2, 1-11, Mk. 10, 13-16, Mk 12, 41-44, Lk 15, 20-25, Lk 23, 39-43, Lk. 19, 1-9, and John. 2, 1-11.

The affirming Church

In all these actions and parables Jesus teaches us that the union of human persons creates an atmosphere for growth and healing. Jesus Christ whose Body is the Church offers us, too, the gift of being affirmed members in love; in His Body we know a new dignity. The Church, to me, rich in its tradition, ever fresh in its articulation, offers strength, nobility of being, and an opportunity for growth, healing and health. Recently, in Puebla, Mexico, Pope John Paul II stated « The primordial *affirmation* of the Christian anthropology is that man is God's image and cannot be reduced to a mere portion of nature or a nameless element in the human city ». Our Christian understanding of the Mystical Body hits at the very essence of what the *scientiae humanae* seemingly are just discovering.

The futility of reaching

If we stop for a moment and observe human behavior we see contemporary men and women striving to win acceptance, indeed, many reaching out and pleading for affirmation. They are often, unknowingly, seeking it where it cannot be found and their search becomes despairing and futile. Trying to prove themselves to be worthwhile, they try to affirm themselves by doing many things and striving to achieve success for the sake of success. Many of these people seek affirmation in bed, switching partners, or seek affirmation in always trying to please people. They commonly think that job or sexual status will give them affirmation so they become work-a-holics or sex-a-holics. Often the futile searcher has personality traits that may display a false timidity, or arrogance in dominating others, a false joviality, compulsive perfectionism, « name dropping » behavior, rebellion against any authority. Or such a person may become a do-gooder, never able to say no or draw limits, procrastinating or always putting himself down, becoming the martyr or sufferer.

All of these ways can only lead to anger, unhappiness, futility and despair. We must repeat over and over again that affirmation cannot be grabbed for; we really cannot *do* things or perform behavioral tasks which will lead to our « winning » affirmation. Only another person can affirm us. The healing touch of affirmation comes primarily from another human being, that *significant other*.

Significant other

The *significant other* is that beautiful human person who reflects my goodness back to me; that person who accepts me as I am and for who I am. The *significant other*, though aware of my shortcomings and immaturity, compels me to take joy in being myself and challenges my

potential for growth and love. I know and feel that this other person loves me and is not concerned with using me. From the significant other I grow emotionally in the essentials of affirmation, i.e., trust, recognition, acceptance, appreciation and reverence for my own goodness. The significant other gives me strength, a sense of my own *firmness*, while not robbing me of my individuality. The significant other moves me with joy to sing out « alleluia »; « I am good and I am wonderful ». Only through the known and felt affirmation of significant others, can a human mature in the joy of living. One who is consciously experiencing love can say « I need you in order to be myself ... In loving me you give me myself, you let me be »⁷.

Stages of development

A person grows in appreciation of self, only through the affirmation of the significant others. All experts agree that the foundations of good emotional health are laid in early childhood and that a happy childhood and secure environment is important to growth and development. Frederick Leboyer, the French obstetrician, offers sustaining evidence to the aforementioned truths in his new best sellers, « Birth Without Violence » and « Loving Hands ».

Let us sketch the presence of the significant others as follows:

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE	SIGNIFICANT OTHERS
In the womb	The mother
Infancy	Mother primarily and Father
Pre-school years	Parents, older brothers and sisters, relatives
Early school years	Same as above but now enter other significant adults,

	e.g., teachers, clergymen, etc.
Adolescent years	Family closeness important, friends now affirm. The Parental Proclamation: « You are you » « You are a worthwhile individual ».
College years	Friends, other loves now affirm significantly.
Marriage	Two mature adults affirm one another.
Celibate style	Definitive need to develop close emotional bonds with women and men, friends.
Middle years	Husband, wife, friends, and children reflect back to parents their own goodness.
Retirement years	Husband, wife, children and other caring persons.

Tragedy results when a person has had little affirmation or no true significant other in his life. Once again the importance of significant others in childhood cannot be underestimated. The family is the center of affirmation and it is here that the person first learns what he feels about himself and others. The key to personal acceptance, to personal affirmation which is the pivot of physical and intellectual functioning lies in the unique experiences of the child in the hands of the most powerful affirmers, its parents, in the course of the early years.

We see many adult men and women around us who never really had mature parents who could emotionally be *enough* for them as significant others. These men and women live in the world of the deprived and have common characteristics of feeling unwanted, lacking in self-esteem, finding it difficult to trust others, to give or receive loving feelings, and to initiate or maintain meaningful inter-personal relationships.

In his book of essays, *Cycles of Affirmation*, Jack Dominian, M. D., writes: « The deepest layer of affirmation requires a relationship of trust and closeness in which the physical, psychological, intellectual, and social aspects of each are identified, encouraged to grow and affirmed by feelings which invest and maintain the total goodness of the person. In the very nature of the process, permanency in the forms of continuity, reliability and predictability are essential for the realization of the goal of affirmation »⁸.

Affirmation not possession

Affirmation is a liberating experience both to the lover and to the beloved. Affirmation does not mean possession of the one I affirm. One of the most insightful reflectors of human experience today is John Powell, and in his recent book, *The Secret of Staying In Love*, he writes: « A sense of his own worth is no doubt the greatest gift we can offer to another, the greatest contribution we can make to any life. We can give this gift and make this contribution only through love. However, it is essential that our love be liberating, not possessive. We must at all times give those we love the freedom to be themselves. Love affirms the other as *other*. It does not possess and manipulate him as *mine*. Pertinent here is the quotation of Frederick Perls: ' You did not come into the world to live up to my expectations. And I did not come into the world live up to yours. If we meet it will be beautiful. If we don't, it can't be helped '. This means that wanting what is best for you and trying to be what you need me to be can be done only in a way that preserves your freedom to have your own feelings, think your own thoughts, and make your own decisions. If your personhood is as dear to me as my own, which is the implication of love, I must respect it carefully and sensitively. When I affirm you, my affirmation is based on your unconditional value as a

unique, unrepeatable and even sacred mystery of humanity »⁹.

Thus, we can see that the touch of affirmation comes through another human being, *the significant other*, who opens me to my own goodness and to the goodness of all creation. Having been affirmed by another, I will experience the Creator and the world with love, peace and joy. For many persons there is a new birth, a new beginning, once they have discovered, been touched by, the significant other and know and feel the delight of his or her affirming care.

Jesus, the significant other

Jesus is God's diivne-human affirmation of mankind and he is at the same time our « amen » to God. (2 Cor. 1, 19) The New Testament however, does not look merely to Jesus Christ for the solution to man's problems of loving. It encourages us to look through Christ to the Godhead. Christ made his central moral exhortation to men that they must love. In doing this he was revealing the nature of man to men, and behind that the nature of God to men. Jesus' importance was not only what he was in himself, perfect Man, but that he was the Word of God too, an explanation of God to men¹⁰.

Ultimately the fullness of affirmation will be found « in him, through him and with him », the Significant Other! Prayer, the language of awareness, brings us to relationship with the Savior of whom Paul writes to the Church at Corinth, « Before anything was created, he existed and he holds all things in Unity ». Affirmation, as previously noted, is the awareness that I am intrinsically good and is my acceptance of this fullness of my being. Jesus could affirm others because there was nothing within himself of which he was not aware or would not accept; thus, he could be aware of all other people and he needed to reject nothing but sin. A new vision of the

Church as Mystical Body emerges when we are affirmed persons and *live* affirming others, because we are intimately in the presence of the most Significant Other, Jesus the Christ. We are encouraged in Paul's prayer to the Church at Ephesus that « he may live in your hearts through faith, and then planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have the strength and the depth, until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God ». (Eph. 3, 17-19).

The ministry of the house of affirmation

It is the unique ministry of the House of Affirmation to the Church to ask some questions and to search out the truth in order to heal and reconcile in an atmosphere of renewal and love. Our community is an international therapeutic treatment center for emotionally troubled religious and clergy. It began in 1970 as the Consulting Center of Clergy and Religious for the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts. The original outpatient service expanded in 1973 to include a residential treatment facility in Whitinsville, Massachusetts. Since then, four additional therapeutic centers have been opened in Boston, Massachusetts; Montara, California; Webster Groves, Missouri and Knowle, England. This expansion was made in response to the ever-increasing demand for our services. Each move was sanctioned and welcomed by the local diocesan and religious superiors.

The founders of the House of Affirmation are Sister Anna Polcino, S.C.M.M., M.D., and Reverend Thomas A. Kane, Ph. D., D.P.S., Sister Anna, formerly a missionary surgeon in West Pakistan and Bangladesh, is a practising psychiatrist. She is presently the psychiatric director of therapy. Fr. Kane is a priest psychologist of the Worcester Diocese and is executive director of the House. Both have impressive academic, religious, and human qualifica-

tions for this work. Since its founding, the clinical staff has been increased as the need for expansion arose. This includes psychologists, psychiatrists, art therapists, and a psychiatric nurse. There is additional part-time staff who provide the ancillary therapies which fill out the program. We also have a dedicated staff of housekeepers, cooks, administrators, and maintenance people. The staff is as widely varied as the Church itself, with diocesan and religious priests, brothers, sisters, and lay persons, married, single, and widowed, men and women of all ages and several cultures. Many schools of psychology are represented, as well as widely diversified educational backgrounds and interests.

Atmosphere and treatment

The atmosphere at the New England residential facility is familial and dignified in a beautiful eighty-year-old mansion and neighboring buildings in the rolling hills of Massachusetts. The House of Affirmation is a total therapeutic milieu with one permanent community and one which changes. In order to ensure a healing atmosphere and a climate of loving cooperation, the staff devotes considerable attention to its own interpersonal relationships. Time is regularly scheduled for the staff to meet to discuss clinical issues, enjoy one another socially, share areas of expertise, pray, resolve the inevitable conflicts that arise, and supervise one another. Care is taken that each staff member stays in good health and gets proper recreation. Decisions that affect the life of the community are arrived at by discussion and consensus. Thus the atmosphere among the staff is one of openness and shared responsibility. It seems that this human dimension, carefully attended to, is at least as important as clinical expertise for the work of healing, since it serves as a model of healthy community living. We are generally happy, hopeful, caring men and women of deep faith and love for the Church.

Problems of identity

Every person is constituted by an almost infinite variety of identities. Each one partially answers the question, « Who am I? » These identities are arranged interiorly by each person in a constantly shifting hierarchy of relative importance. The identity which at any given time is the most personally important receives the greatest amount of attention and energy. There are, however, some identities which are of greater intrinsic value than others. For instance, my family and name are intrinsically more important for knowing who I am than is the color of my eyes. Both, however, are constitutive of my total identity. In the case of many religious, the relative value which is assigned to various identities is not in conformity with their real value. It is not uncommon to find religious professionals who find their most significant personal identity through membership in a particular congregation. This identity by affiliation is followed in order of importance by priest, sister, brother, function; then by Roman Catholic, Christian, nationality, man or woman, the least important identity being one's humanity. Thus the objectively least important ingredients of personal meaning become the most important to the individual and receive the most cultivation and attention. In fact, until recently, the most important and basic elements of personal identity, namely, humanity and sexuality, were considered evils to be overcome. How can grace build on nature when one's humanity is deficient? It is much easier, but personally devastating in its effects, to define oneself in terms of a role than to rejoice in the goodness of being a living person. In other words, there are fairly accurate ways of measuring oneself and thus knowing when one is behaving like a « good » religious of a particular congregation, or a « good » sister or priest, because the criteria are constantly being spelled out objectively in documents or group customs. It is much harder to know when one is being a « good » human, or a « good » man or woman. This problem of personal priority of identities becomes

more acute when the various identities are seemingly in conflict. A man finds who he is as a man in relationship to his complement, a woman, and vice versa. However, when the atmosphere of seminary, convent, or rectory is so restrictive that it prohibits or discourages normal relationships with the opposite sex, sexual identity must be developed in relation to the same sex. This exclusiveness often contributes to mutual reinforcement of the worst aspects of masculinity/femininity and impedes the process of maturing. Finally, when one's identity is defined in terms of observance of rules and structures, and those rules and structures are called into question or changed, the person who is unsure of his or her more basic identity experiences an acute emotional crisis. Some of the signs of such crisis are feelings of anxiety, bitterness, scepticism, defensiveness, selective rigidity, and awkwardness in situations that call for human responses rather than pat dogmas¹¹.

Religious professionals have been uniquely trained to be models of the perfect life with ready solutions to the mysteries of this and the after life. But we who once thought we were already in the promised land are now finding ourselves once again wandering around in the Sinai desert. We simply do not have the roadmap. The familiar landmarks of devotion have disappeared. However, we do have the special perspective of faith, the indispensable and unique point of departure for reflection to be shared with our fellow pilgrims. We are partners in a dialogue with the world, immersed in its life and profoundly sharing its questions and doubts. For this task, the religious person should be first a sound human being, striving for maturity in the normal human way: that is, through the development of progressively deeper personal relationships and friendships. Faith assures that we can have confidence in the presence of the Holy Spirit who permeates the process. Through contemplative reflection on personal experience enlightened by the scriptural revelation of God's ways with humans, the religious prophetically calls atten-

tion to that presence. This witness may not even involve much God-talk. It can simply be radiation of the inner joy and richness of one's life in the Spirit.

The reality is sometimes quite different. One sister recently spoke to me of her disillusionment with her community and with much anguish told me: « It all came to a head at our province assembly a few weeks ago. I looked around at several hundred sisters and all I saw were pale, drawn faces and no joy. They were all so tired looking. I then took a long look at myself and saw that I was the same. I don't want to live this way any longer ».

Religious living is human living

To rediscover the life springs within, a therapeutic community such as the House of Affirmation, and, by extension, every religious community, should be a place where truth, reality, and faith prevail. The grace of healing is present in the community as a whole and in the individuals of the community. The same grace is given to the one who is healing and to the one who is being healed. All are called upon both to be healed and to be healers of others, no matter how much one may be personally hurting. It is my conviction that the grace of healing is given precisely at the growing edge of the personality¹². A person is healed when most exposed and vulnerable, and likewise performs the most graceful healing when the sore places are reaching out tenderly to touch another. When facade relates to facade, or even when facade relates to suffering humanity, there is a pretense of loving and caring. The head may be present to the other, but the heart is not. The grace of healing is mediated through the humanity of each person in the community.

In our special healing community, the House of Affirmation, the principal responsibility for creating the atmosphere, developing programs, etc., is with the staff. Each of us has come to this work through a personal odyssey of

suffering, healing, change, and growth. We are willing to share this weakness, and it is our greatest strength. We are constantly being reminded of our own frailty and limitations. Yet, just as constantly, we discover the unfolding mystery of the action of God in our lives. This confidence in the strength and love of God gives us the willingness to risk feelings and responses of genuine love to the goodness of the other which is more important for healing than clinical skill alone. However, without the clinical expertise, we could easily lose our way in the problems that present themselves. Our task is to be both loving and professional.

We have found that in most religious, intellectual and even sometimes spiritual growth has outstripped emotional development. The characteristic defense mechanism of religious is intellectualization, in which feared emotional responses are cut off from and repressed by the intellect. Eventually the person becomes unable to feel anything at all. In our therapeutic program, the religious can discover and actualize creative potentialities through guided trial and error, and incorporate them into the whole process of growth. Thus, each individual comes to understand the uniqueness of his or her learning style and pace of growth. Nothing is forced or unnatural.

Another important dimension of our life together is the opportunity for men and women to live in the same community, and to learn to relate to one another as persons rather than as objects of fear or fantasy. This kind of living sometimes gives rise to reactions that are characteristic of delayed adolescence. When such feelings arise, they become the material for guided growth toward sexual maturity within the context of celibacy and its limits. We have found that celibacy as such is not the main problem of most who come to us. It is rather the lack of affirmation and affection which leads to problems in the area of sexuality. Only a small portion of those who have come through our program have left religious life.

Grace in nature for healing

We firmly believe that our therapy is a work of collaboration with the healing spirit of God in humanity¹³. This work demands much reflection and contemplation of where and how God is present with his healing grace in each person. In this prayerful therapeutic process, the neurotic barriers to inner freedom in both the healer and healed are discovered, exposed, and removed. Growth in freedom and the consequent acceptance of increased responsibility demand deep faith in the incarnation, that God is among us in human flesh. Our goal, then, is to help religious with emotional disorders to achieve a balanced and integrated personhood, wherein all feelings are joyfully accepted and guided by the graced and gentle light of reason and will. To achieve this goal, we have provided a milieu where the process of conversion from denial to affirmation can be experienced. Our clients are becoming healed and are returning to creative service in the Church. Our files contain many letters from former residents and nonresidents, testifying to the permanency of the growth and changes that have occurred in their lives. The sad part is that frequently the communities and work situations have not changed. At the end of the course of treatment there is a renewed sense of the loving presence of God at deeper levels of the personality and an increased desire for prayer. It is not uncommon for a person to make a directed retreat prior to discharge with an affective responsiveness that was simply impossible before coming to us.

Conclusion

We have reflected on the process of affirmation and have seen that a grace-filled life invites us to embrace God and one another *with a human heart*. The work of Creation is always unfinished and it cannot be finished until we affirm one another into the completeness that God has begun. In

a true sense, we are co-creators with God. As such, then, it is fitting that we express prayer toward one another that we be brought together to become what in fact we really are, the image of the Trinity.

¹ KUCHARÉK, CASIMIR, *The Byzantine-Slav Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Allendale, PA: Allelulia Press, 1971), pp. 317-318; Maloney, George, *Bright Darkness: Jesus - Lover of Mankind* (DENVER, N. J.: Dimension Books, 1971), KERN, WALTER, *The Lover of Mankind and His Sacred Heart* (Homiletic & Pastoral Review, June 1980).

² DIETRICH VON HILDEBRAND, *The Heart - Source of Christian Affectivity* (Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, IL 1977), p. 11.

³ THOMAS AQUINAS, as quoted by ETIENNE GILSON, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, Inc. 1955).

⁴ MARTIN BUBER, «Distance and Relation», *Psychiatry* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957).

⁵ THOMAS A. KANE, *The Healing Touch of Affirmation* (Whitinsville, MA: Affirmation Books, 1976).

⁶ THOMAS A. KANE, *Who Controls Me?* (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1974).

⁷ JOSEF PIEPER, *About Love*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975).

⁸ JACK DOMINIAN, *Cycles of Affirmation: Psychological Essays* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., 1975).

⁹ JOHN POWELL, S. J., *The Secret of Staying in Love* (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1974).

¹⁰ JOHN DALRYMPLE, *The Christian Affirmation* (Denver, N. J.: Dimension Books, 1971).

¹¹ BERNARD J. BUSH, S. J., *Living In His Love* (Whitinsville, MA: Affirmation Books, 1978).

¹² THOMAS A. KANE, *Happy Are You Who Affirm* (Whitinsville, MA: Affirmation Books, 1980).

¹³ THOMAS A. KANE, *Psychotheological Therapy* (Washington, D. C.: New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XVII, 1979).

The invitation of the Heart of Christ demands an internal religion from anyone who accepts it. The Heart of Christ invites us to the practice of a religion which goes beyond externals to reach the very core of our life — an 'interior' religious living. We need to enter with careful tread, with attentive soul, in recollected meditation, with the depths of our being ready to receive the echoes of the immensities of life and love which are revealed, gradually, to anyone who has the courage to sound the depths of the psychology, the Heart of Christ.

CARDINAL MONTINI, Discourse, June 8th, 1956.

What was it that moved Jesus Christ?

An invitation to reflection on
the Heart of Christ

Norbert Strotmann, M.S.C.

Your life can be inspired by the Heart of Christ if you wish it so. Your wishing presupposes your own free decision to let this symbol guide you, for man is free in his choice of symbols, especially religious ones. *Symbols¹ are products of custom, social convention or tradition.* For a symbol to be a constant source of inspiration, a certain apprenticeship or time of personal study is needed.

The Heart of Christ as a symbol does not constitute the centre of Revelation and the Christian faith; it is however, an invitation to seek this centre. This symbol invites the man with an open heart to direct himself towards the Christ of revelation, towards the Christ of our Christian faith. He is invited thereby *to seek what is central to the personality of Jesus*, central to his life, to his message and to his way of acting, central to his death and resurrection. Accordingly, a spirituality which receives its tone from the Heart of Christ presupposes faith in Jesus as the Christ. Without a living faith in him, a spirituality based on the heart would be impossible — for it would have no term of reference.

Consequently, it can not be said that anyone is obliged to accept the symbol of the heart of Christ as a guide for his own life. When anyone does choose this symbol he does so freely — in order to concentrate his faith on Christ. His christian creed is presupposed.

A symbol which is able to give direction to our lives needs to be both wide-ranging and extremely important. It must invite us to think about the decisive values of our life. It can not be opposed to our daily experience. Rather it must take hold of our lives and show us how we can live our ideals. Can the symbol of the heart fulfil these expectations?

The symbol of the Heart of Jesus represents Jesus the Christ. However, in what sense does it do this? How exactly does it invite us? *Others have used this symbol and this word before us*; a whole tradition exists. Taking the philosophical tradition of the word *heart*², we see clearly that it has always served to represent elemental central functions of human life. History shows that, even though its content has varied considerably, the symbol has always been very important.

When Greek philosophy opposed head and heart, it was setting up an analytical contrast that affects our thinking even today. This way of making the distinction meant that *heart* could signify basic aspects of being human — such as intellect, will, and sentiment; but still in this perspective it indicated no more than a partial aspect of being human.

*In the Bible*³ and *Patristic thought*, however, things are different. There, *heart is used to indicate* not merely particular activities of man, but *the person in his totality*. The Bible and the Fathers of the Church use heart to indicate man both in the centre of his personality, and in the source of his bodily and spiritual dynamism. From his heart he is moved and impelled to be and do what is properly personal and truly human in him. If we follow this approach, then the theme of the heart of man will make us face a fundamental question, and offer us a pressing invitation to reflect on:

What is it which moves Jesus Christ?

There is a definite advantage in looking at the symbol in this way, and translating it into this perspective. For we can then use it fruitfully as giving guidance and direction in the important concerns of life; we do not simply bind ourselves to a pre-fabricated set of affirmations and prescriptions.

The symbol of the heart of Christ is in fact a pressing invitation to us to search out, in his life and in New Testament reflections on it, what it was that moved and impelled Jesus Christ and moves him still today. What urged him on in his life on earth is the same as what motivates his presence to be with us to the end of time, to give himself to us in the Sacraments. The symbol of the heart induces us to search out what was the driving force in the life of Jesus, in order that in our own lives that same driving force may become ours. If we accept the invitation of the symbol in this way, then we are free — with the true christian liberty which looks to Christ for direction and purpose.

There are symbols in our world that no one can do without. And society insists that they not be ignored — traffic lights for example. But there is a different type of symbol that does not so much oblige us as invite us, and religious symbols are especially of this latter type. *The religious symbol of the heart of Jesus has this character of inviting us to accept what it offers as guide for our lives.* Some may not wish to accept this offer, and no one will oblige them to walk this particular path. *For it is only when it is freely accepted that it is a safeguard of liberty.* We must be free in our acceptance of it if it is to show us effectively what Christian liberty ultimately is all about, a freedom that frees us to be in and for Jesus Christ.

« What is the driving force in the life of Jesus? » is the question which will continue to inspire the man for whom the heart of Christ is a genuine symbol. Is this an

idle boast? It would be, and the symbol would be corrupted into an empty formula, if it became just a habit of language. *Our way of speaking about the heart of Christ has real meaning only if our concern is to discern what is the driving force in the life of Jesus, in order to let ourselves be moved by that selfless motivating force.* In such a context, the most serious abuse of language would be to speak about Jesus Christ as guide for our lives without however any real commitment of faith in him; and to eulogize his personality in terms of love, without however any intention of loving as he did! From this point of view, the symbol of the heart makes insistent demands on our sincerity and integrity, and calls for a deep sensitivity to its implications if it is not to be abused.

Many today are not attracted to making the heart of Christ the guide of their lives, because they are unwilling to walk in the way it points. Those who are only comfortable when the majority is on their side will be decidedly uncomfortable in following this path. For to live in the light of this symbol presupposes the courage of faith. *A spirituality of the heart of Christ is a radical method of living one's faith*, although not something to which faith obliges us. This radical way of living our faith is not an obligatory « social security » or insurance policy; it is a commitment that makes it possible for our life to become ever more open to God and man, after the pattern of Christ.

Why not define *heart* by words like love, compassion, etc? There is no easy reply, other than the danger that facile definitions of this sort limit the function of the symbol and somewhat muffle the insistent invitation implicit in it. If someone says « The Sacred Heart indicates to us that God is love », then he is of course expressing an important truth. But he is also running the risk that such a glib definition may appear to be only a well-worn label that people are too used to notice any more. If, on the contrary, we take the heart to Christ as prompting us to both raise the question and offer our response to « what

was the driving force within Jesus Christ? », then we are face to face with a truly dynamic method of translating our faith into action.

This approach has all the advantages of the biblical and patristic total approach to the heart of man. It avoids the selectiveness that some languages and cultures fell prey to, especially by identifying the symbol with the sentiments and sentimentalism. The question and reply to « what moves Jesus Christ » is one which necessarily involves the whole Christ.

Yet it is not definitions we are concerned about. The Church's faith in Jesus as the Christ is presupposed, of course; but it is not the work of symbols to offer dogmatic declarations of anything. Rather the symbol of the heart prompts us to reflect: « Christ does not let himself be easily defined; you should rather interest yourself in plumbing more deeply his inner mystery, in recognizing what was the impelling motive he cherished, in order that you may cherish and be moved by it in your turn. Christ does not invite you to define him, but to let him share with you the experience of this impelling motive and driving force of his life. And if you do not do this, then Christ will not offer you his heart ».

Symbols cannot but be ambiguous, and this is especially true of religious symbols⁴. The symbol of the Heart of Christ puts before us the Christ of faith, and asks us to recognize what it was that most deeply influenced him: in his incarnation, his life and preaching, his whole pattern of decision and action, his death and resurrection, and in his promises to live in us till the end of time. And this can be recognized in Jesus without dividing him up and parcelling him out into the compartments of understanding and will, sentiments and values, his universal attitudes and his homespun idioms. All else is grist to the mill for the single question that must remain central: « What is it that moves him as the driving force in his life »?

Stephen Toulmin wrote in his *Critique of Collective Rea-*

son: « Man gives proof of his intelligence not by elaborating his concepts or ideas in exact formal structures, but by facing up to new situations with an open mind »⁵. The openness of our symbol and in consequence its ambiguity provide our faith and our theological reflection with a golden opportunity — the opportunity of seeing that the claims of our faith and our real-life situation meet in harmony. This is a clear assertion that, often if not always, a « theory » of « the Sacred Heart » is developed at the cost of the symbolic function; its function is an invitation to do something, not a formula to explain something⁶. This invitation presupposes that the person who wants to be helped by the symbol has a committed interest in Jesus Christ. Similarly, it allows for different ways of being expressed in different life-situations. It is clear that the tender attention a child pays to the Heart of Jesus is different from that of an elderly bishop; the interest of a young labourer is other than what appeals to a religious. In the future there will be as many forms of venerating the Heart of Jesus as there are individuals and groups who experience its attraction. Even though abuses may still exist, both in linguistic expression and devotional practice, we need to remind ourselves that the living power of a symbol does not depend only on how some people use it. It does not even depend on the symbol as such, but rather and above all, this living power of religious symbol flows from the person's faith in Jesus Christ. This faith might be simple but nonetheless vital; it might be sophisticated but nonetheless limited. For the faith of the peasant is not on that score less than the faith of a specialist theologian.

Since this essay is not a « theory of the Heart of Christ », we can now pass on from exposition to example — an example of how the Heart of Christ can offer attractive guidelines for living. But it is an offer, an invitation, and it is spoiled by pretending that it is an obligation.

There are indeed many different ways of living for the Heart of Christ, and our example points out one direction

which leads us to one interesting and valid form of the Christian life. It is able to interest all while obliging none because of the very structure and function of a symbol; and even more basically, because of the very nature of God, for « God is not necessary; he is much more than necessary! »⁷. If our example can throw some light on this point of view, then it will also have proved the thesis that symbols do have the power to make us stop and think.

I. What is it that moves Jesus Christ?

« At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time, the last days, He has spoken to us through his Son » (Heb. 1, 1f).

We are tempted to continue in the same vein, that at various times and in different ways Christians, too, have spoken about the Son of God, from his resurrection to these last days. We know the Jesus described as friend of the hippies and we know the Christ of classical dogmatic theology⁸; we know the Jesus of the critical historical method⁹, and we know « Christ the King » and « Jesus the Worker »; we know of the tensions between the Christ of the charismatics and the Jesus of liberation theology¹⁰; but while we recall the tensions and debates of history¹¹, we must not forget the simple faith of the many. Our present purpose is not to indulge in a new Christology or a new fashion, but to rest content in having to go on speaking about God in imperfect fashion. *For he who lets himself be guided by the Heart of Christ* is unworried by the fact that each epoch has to find its own expression of faith in Christ, and that theology must present within our present life-situation both the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. He respects the need for such research, but the focus of his life of faith is different.

He is not pretending to be an exegete (however much he

is inspired by the results of exegesis) when *he makes his own contribution with the question: What was the driving force and the impelling motivation operative in the whole of Jesus' life?* This way of living our faith in the light of the double question 'What moved Jesus Christ?' and 'What can move me in my life?' can still be a powerful help to theology. Without hindering scientific progress in theology, it can ensure that theology preserves a constant preoccupation with Christ, in the very centre of his personality.

It is the faith of the Church which is the context for our following Christ under the symbol of his heart, a faith based on the Bible and continually renewed as it grapples with present-day concerns. New fashions of thought affect the believer, new tensions find new solutions, but the Heart of Christ concentrates the attention of the believer in what is most powerfully central in Christ himself. It is Christ who in the last instance invites us to this way of living our faith, as it is surely he who must correct any possible abuses of the symbol.

Reflection on some examples will help us to see the answer to our question 'What was it that moved Christ'. We will consider his becoming man, his life and mission, his cross and resurrection, with one concern uppermost in our mind: what was the central dynamism, the source of all his actions, that was operative in his person?

I.1. *The Incarnation - « God WITH us »*

« When the appointed time came God sent his Son born of a woman, born a subject to the law, to redeem the subjects of the law, and to enable us to be adopted as sons » (Gal. 4, 4).

The texts about the mystery of the Incarnation are to be found in the Pauline and deuterio-Pauline epistles, in the synoptic gospels, in the Apocalypse, and in the prologue to St John's gospel. They are post-resurrection reflections,

and they can claim as many literary forms as theological motivations¹². Still, each author makes quite clear his interest in the question « Who is Jesus for us, before ever time began? ». For Paul, he is the pre-existent Son who humbles himself in taking our sins upon him; for Matthew he is the one who is « greater than Moses »; for Luke he is the one who is greater than the greatest prophet of the Old Testament; John presents him as the Word ...

It is clear that it has always been difficult, from the apostles to the present day, to explain the logic of the incarnation. It is enough to consider how many are the aspects of this mystery that the Bible puts before us in order to see the proportions of the problem. Many a theologian has tried to resolve the difficulties of the theme *Cur Deus homo?* and finally explain the divine motivation behind God's becoming man; and some of the less felicitous attempts convey the impression that the theologian knows more than God. A modern problem of language complicates the issue. For while theology has used the word 'incarnation' to indicate 'God became man', the word in recent years has been used within a theology of religious life to indicate a social program, i.e. to demand that religious adapt themselves to the social conditions of the poor and the marginalized.

What is it that moved the Son of God to become man? Why did he not just send a symbolic message? Why did he take on human form? It was not honour and glory he was seeking in order to make himself known, but he was made in all things like us, except for sin (Heb. 4, 15). He did not seek to shine but to share. He did not use his incarnation to force himself on man; that would have violated human dignity, as we see exemplified in the history of religion in the case of pagan gods¹³. His birth indicates rather the relations of mutual respect which should exist between man and God. With Christ, a new situation between God and man is born. In spite of all the ways across history in which man has vilified the

name of God as well as corrupted himself, God is still in love with man. And God's love for him is not content just to accompany him during life, to care for and protect him (Old Testament). His Son becomes man, shares in our life, a life which is very short and oftentimes a failure, so that we might share in his life for ever (New Testament). He places no conditions, he excludes no-one. All he asks is faith in his Son. « *God loves to be with us* ». This is the heart of the mystery of the incarnation.

Thus man's life takes on a new quality and is quite transformed. From now on, every man's life, none excepted, is of divine interest. Since the incarnation, man has an extraordinary value for God, a value which God wishes should never be lost. Since the incarnation, every man has a special value and a dignity all his own conferred on him by God himself. Christ has sounded the death knell to those gods who force themselves on man by thunderbolts and prodigies. The incarnation speaks with living faith of a god who shares with man. The values that God offers us create a life with new meaning. It is up to us to show in fact what importance this truth has for our daily lives.

I.2. The Public Life — « FOR the Father and FOR men » ¹⁴

« He made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God » Luke 8, 1).

« That evening they brought him many who were possessed by devils. He cast out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick » (Mt. 8,16).

To sum up in a phrase what it was that moved Jesus in his public life, we could say that through Jesus spent his life in the midst of men, *the central core and inner*

dynamism of this life rests in a disposition to be for the sake of his Father and for the sake of men. His public life is more than a sharing, it is a total commitment of himself for the Father and for man, unreservedly and unconditionally.

The nucleus of Jesus' message is the good news from God that « the kingdom of God is at hand ». By these words Jesus is indicating an event with a power and an energy to change man and his world, because it is God who is bringing a divine dynamism into our world, acting for and with man. Jesus devotes his life to the truth that God is giving us his kingdom, that the Father is « grace », benevolence for and with men. This kingdom is life, happiness and joy for man, and it is God's own doing. In this way the message of Jesus seeks to open up a future for man, a future for and with God. And at the same time it seeks to open up a future for God with man. However, man can refuse; and Jesus experiences the danger of this human rejection. What Jesus is announcing in proclaiming the Kingdom of God is that « God is at work in our world for the sake of men »¹⁵.

Jesus invests his life in this message, he commits his total energies to preaching it. But he does not try to circumscribe the time or the manner in which his Father will fulfil his plan for the kingdom (cf. Lk 17, 20f). The meaning of his central message is made clearer throughout all Jesus' preaching and his whole way of life. For in him the kingdom of God can be met in an experienced way, since « he has done all things well; he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak » (Mk. 7, 37).

The preaching of Jesus is based on his faith that the Father will act for and with man. In doing this his message opens up new perspectives for the way man is to live. For the message of the kingdom does not condemn man to passivity, to fatalism, but rather it liberates him for a new way of acting and to a new way of living. This new perspective for life is indicated by Jesus especially in

the great parables. There Jesus shows us what are the other possibilities for a new approach to life. We are to trust in the Father who accepts man, without condition or exception (Lk 15, 11-32: the prodigal son), that Father who opens his arms to embrace all men without condition or exception (Lk. 10, 29-37: the good samaritan). In the eschatological parables which treat of himself, Jesus explains that it is in himself and through him that God's kingdom has still to come in its fulness, both in our world and in our understanding. Through such parables Jesus is requiring of us: Even now you have to change your way of life. In fact, the central message of the parables can be summed up by saying: *« If the Father is acting on behalf of men and for their sakes, then man must act for God and for his brothers ».*

There is still more in the message of Jesus on this theme. His beatitudes (Mt. 5, 1-12; Lk. 6, 20-23) teach us that *« even now God has come close to you as a God vitally committed to those who need him ».* With Jesus the kingdom has come, and it embraces all men: the poor, the forgotten, the despised, sinners ... And what finds favour in the sight of God are such things as peace, a smile from the heart, health and happiness; for across the events of our life God finds his glory in man fully alive and in his true well-being, not in death and misery. The beatitudes too build a spirituality on the experience of man's recognition of his own limitations as he faces evil in his world. They ask of us a faith which not only recognizes that suffering exists and that man is powerless to eliminate it; but a faith too, that Jesus proclaims in the beatitudes, that God exists in a suffering world and only God can change the meaning and value of human suffering. *« If man will do what is possible, God will transform its value for the sake of man ».*

The life of Jesus is a life that is filled with a message. And the message that he brings from his Father is his very own self. What his life is showing us is no abstraction or mere theory. For his day-to-day actions and atti-

tudes underscore what he is preaching; his revelation of who God is shines through his words, his actions, his whole person. And this revelation is that « God, my Father, is a God who cares about every single man ».

Each gospel points out how Jesus ate at table, despite the veto of the law, with sinners and tax-gatherers and women of ill repute. In fact, the invitation to be one with God must reach the sinners and the marginalized. To get out of their sinful isolation, sinners have no other way than being brought to sit at God's table, and to renewed communion with other men. Thus Jesus, through his whole way of acting, is saying: « My Father puts no conditions, he excludes no-one; he is without prejudice a Father for all men ». *Jesus' life and action reveal God living and active among us.*

In order to announce the kingdom Jesus forms his circle of disciples (Mk. 1, 16-20). They follow him and they help him. And through this community, the experience of salvation through Jesus Christ comes down to us even today — from God himself. Like Jesus his disciples have to live for God and for men. Their following of Christ supposes not only faith in him and their confession of faith; but, as is indicated by the way Scripture recounts their call, Jesus asks for the conversion of each disciple. *Through his call to each disciple, Jesus says: « If God is acting on behalf of men, man must act for God and for his brothers ».*

That the kingdom is pure benevolence on God's part does not remain mere words. In his encounters with the sick and the outcast, Jesus practises the beatitudes he preaches. Suffering, which man cannot change, is changed by Jesus. The will of his Father at work in him makes hope live again in human suffering. The more critical exegetes are convinced today that Jesus' cures of the sick, and his driving out devils, were truly historical episodes (cf. Mk. 1, 32-34; 3, 7-12; 6, 53-56; 9, 14-30). In Jesus, salvation was experienced even bodily: « and he cured all the sick

through pure mercy ». The kingdom of God is meant for the good of man, and in Jesus this truth becomes visible. Not only his miracles¹⁶ but Jesus's every action tells us: « *God will change human suffering* ».

The message which is being played out in the life of Jesus is that God is Father for each and every single man. His whole manner of life echoes this. For the sake of his Father, and for us men, he commits his whole life and person without compromise or mixed motives. And, in a way each of us can grasp, this has spelt out an altogether *new hope for every man born into the world*.

I.3. *Cross and Resurrection: Life FOR us.*

« This man ... you took and had crucified
... You killed him, but God raised him
to life » (Acts 2, 23 f).

In St. Luke's account of the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus offers the bread with these words: « this is my body which will be given up for you »; and the wine, saying « this chalice is the new covenant in my blood, which will be poured out for you » (Lk. 22, 19 f). Jesus accepted his death voluntarily, as the most ancient traditions bear witness¹⁷. He sought to give meaning to our lives through a meaningless condemnation to death as a common criminal. *His life finishes* in the cruel failure of that senseless fact that we call the cross; and in and through all that, *his life remains a cry* to men that « *God is a God in the midst of men, and is Father of each and every man without exception* ».

What is the meaning for Jesus of following a path that leads him to the cross? For modern man, death is the « supreme point of the meaninglessness of human suffering »; and the killing of a man, especially an innocent man, can only be lamented and condemned. Yet there must needs be a meaning in Jesus' voluntary giving himself up to death.

The meaning that we are seeking to bring into sharp relief is that: *Jesus died on the cross FOR the Father and FOR men*. Each of these aspects presents difficulties that call for careful understanding.

In the first place, sacrifice — in the sense that Jesus died on the cross « for the Father » — is not always properly understood. Very few people today accept the idea that God could be so cruel as to demand the death of his Son. Old Testament analogies such as Abraham offering Isaac at God's request (Gen. 21, 1 f), or the lambs being taken to the temple of Jerusalem at the same sixth hour as Jesus died, are ideas which do not help very much. There are some dated ideas of justice and satisfaction that explain nothing. The God who sent his Son to manifest to man that he was a God committed to men for their sakes, was not one who would demand the killing of his Son as satisfaction.

Does this imply that the death of Jesus is not a « sacrifice »? On the contrary, it is much more a « sacrifice » than the sacrifices of the Old Testament or of other religions¹⁸. For it is not some gift made to buy favour or to tranquillize some distant deity; but it is the voluntary self-giving of Jesus for his Father, so that the true heart of God might be revealed. Jesus on the cross is the rebuttal of every idea of sacrifice which presupposes an egoistical, capricious or cruel god. The sacrifice of Christ is cruel, but the Father is not; and it is the Father who is made known through the meaning of the cross. It would have to be a very strange god who would feel that he was reconciled with man through the injustice committed against his own son. What then was the impelling motive behind Jesus' voluntary acceptance of the cross? This is a question which can be given a real answer only by highlighting the meaning of his death for the Father.

The second difficulty is that, if salvation is badly understood, the statement that Jesus died for men will be distorted. And the social consequences that flow from this

invite ready criticism. A theory of religious salvation which tends to make man passive and fatalistic in the face of suffering is the sort of thing readily criticized by a Karl Marx as the « opium of the people »¹⁹. But should we offer Jesus' death as a palliative in terms of « Christ has already suffered, you must take up the cross of your life in like fashion »? Is the cross really the divine justification of human suffering? We cannot deny that the cross has been abused in this way in history. But to abuse Christ in this way turns out to be an abuse of man too. For us to discover the real truth of what motivated Jesus Christ in dying on the cross for us is to discover the falsity of such notions.

For though Christ had to bear the rejection of both his message and himself as messenger, he did not seek this rejection. From the beginning of his life on earth, he offers us a God who has come to be with and dwell among men, a God who accepts everyone without condition and without exception. In his public life he proclaimed and lived the message that « God is with and for all men », a God who is bent on seeking out all men without prejudice, without punishment. For he announces that the kingdom is for all, including the tax-gatherers and the prostitutes; and that he comes to change the lot of the weak and infirm.

It was his message and his way of acting that brought about his rejection by all, by all of those who do not accept him as the living message of God. It brought him *rejection by all who have a different concept of God and his destiny for man*, rejection by the religious ideologies of the pharisees and sadducees and zealots — because he *represents a different God from theirs*. He incurred the rejection of the political ideologies (Herod, pax romana ...), because the Father of Jesus Christ treats man as something very different from these ideologies. His message is dangerous for anyone who holds different views, and so all the alternatives try to eliminate him. Whether they reject him on religious or political grounds, or be-

cause they are faced with admitting that either he or they are charlatan, it is always the case that Jesus' message questions their very way of being and their program and norms of living.

Jesus could have withdrawn or retired. Before Pilate he could have denied the accusation saying « I am not a king ». He could have watered down his message saying « Well now, look, that was not what I meant to say. My Father gets on with everybody, with the pharisees and the sadducees. He accepts any gods. So leave me in peace ». What kind of God with us would he then have been, who withdrew before man's misfortune. What travesty of a Father must he needs have seemed to some? You could not say of this god that he is greater than our hearts (1 Jn. 3, 20) ²⁰.

God did not become man just so that human beings might incur a debt of gratitude towards him. And Jesus did not announce that there would now be a « God-with-man », but hedged around with the condition that « man should be with God ». This kind of commercial god would not need that his son invest himself totally; for a much cheaper price you can buy this kind of god or religion or political ideology in the street. Jesus did not invest his whole life in his message that God is « Father of all », only to water it down with the condition « to the extent that man lives for God ». This kind of little god does not need, or rather excludes, any concern for the sinner and the outcast, for the sick and the scorned. It is not this kind of God who is the Father of Jesus Christ; and, thanks to what Jesus did for us on the cross, it is not this kind of God who is our Father.

Jesus invests his life « FOR the Father », to show that God is with man even when man rejects him, that he is the Father for all, even for the men who kill his Son. The cross is the proof of the message and of the life of Jesus: God's benevolence is without measure, it is not measured by man's benevolence. Since the Word became flesh, God

has thrown himself wide open to man in a way he means to be without recall. In Christ, he says his Yes to man, and not even the assassination of his Son will make him go back on his word, since God is greater than our heart (1 Jn. 3, 20). *Thus the cross is the gospel in action, the revelation of God without need of words.* And only through the cross is it true that the Son of God was « made in all things like to us except for sin » (Heb. 4, 15). It is only in this God that it is worth believing and trusting; only in this God is it worth hoping and looking towards the future without being forced off course by the misery of man; only through this Christ can we in our turn try to follow the way of self-giving.

Jesus invests his life « FOR men ». The rejection of his message by men does not cause on his part any change in his fidelity to the message of his Father. Rejected by men, he dies for them, proving thus the fidelity of his message about the fidelity of the Father. *Dying on the cross for men, his fidelity expresses a fidelity we did not know, the fidelity of the Father for and with men.* In this cross there is no fatalism, no question of suffering for suffering's sake. Christ's passion is in no way passive; it is active, for it is an expression (that has no need of words) of the fidelity of God for us and in our midst; it is an implicit criticism of all human suffering except suffering for the fidelity of God for and with man.

Jesus commits his life into the hands of his Father for men, and in the death of his Son the Father commits his own life too. The risen Christ is for us the invitation to let ourselves be moved and impelled by him in order that we might share his life. *In the resurrection God fulfils the beatitudes of his Son; God does change man's suffering.*

In this way of seeing the death of Jesus for us (« salvation ») something like a tranquillizer? By his death, Jesus showed our unconditional acceptance by God our Father. This make our faith easier, that faith which man needs to respond to the invitation of God in a life truly happy.

However, such a salvation as this does not solve even the slightest problem of our daily living. Rather, even more demands are made on us by this death « for our sakes » since it asks: « trust in God, and invest your life in others without conditions and without exception. Such a commitment as this will obtain for you a sharing in the life of God, but not thereby will it ensure the good graces of men ». If man follows the example of Christ and does what is possible for him, God will change what man cannot change — even human death.

The answer, then, to what moved Jesus Christ, to the search for the driving force within his Person and life, is his concern for the Father and for us his brothers « without separation or mixture »²¹. *He shows us a new face of God*. And this God who made us is not a God above and remote from us, but a « God with man ». He is not a god scowling on men from the heights, but a God who is on man's side and for his sake, a God who invests his life for man. And this God hopes that man will live by his own Spirit, confessing him as Father through the Son. He is a God who hopes that we will invest our lives in men as he invested his, so that we might become sharers in his own life. In this way the heart of Jesus will be for all men the *fons vitae*, the source of life.

II. « ... in order that we too might be moved »

Symbols can serve to guide our lives. They do not impose laws or rules, but they do invite us to reflect. The symbol of the heart of Jesus invites us to seek in the life of Jesus what it was that moved him. We have seen what were the values in which he invested his own life; we have seen the history of his giving himself for the Father and for his brothers. However, the symbol does not distract our attention from life itself; it is not alienating. Rather, once it is accepted in liberty and sincerity, it points to where we may find guidelines for our own life²². *The*

heart of Jesus makes us see what it was that moved Jesus Christ, and finally it makes us ask: « and what is it that moves you in your life? ». Can the same motivating force which impelled Christ in his life also serve as a norm for our life? Is it telling us how we should live? The answer is yes to all these questions; but it is an answer given in the form of an invitation, and not a formula for keeping lists of rules. This way of making « what moved Jesus » a norm of life that can move me in my living is a demand felt each day by every man who accepts the Heart of Jesus as supplying the orientation for his life²³. Part of the richness of our symbol of the heart of Christ is its power to speak to us in every situation, because it signifies a life-giving, not an abstraction from human life.

In what way then can what moved Jesus Christ move us too? We have seen that the central values of the life of Jesus are summed up in the themes of God-with-us, of his public life for the Father and for men, and his giving of his life for us. Let us reflect on how they can provide norms for our own life.

II.1. The « God WITH us » who moves us.

« With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give ». (Rom. 8, 31 f)

It is God's regard for man that gives man his value and his dignity. He is no longer just one more banal end product of evolution, no longer a mere object for scientific analysis. Nor is he any longer the plaything for manipulation by politicians, using him as a means to further narrow and arbitrary ideologies. For any system which makes

man his own god ends up by wreaking misery on man, and every such system has to be finally questioned and judged by Christ and his message. For Christ announces now, without condition or exception, that there is a God who is present to and lives with all men. It is because God is acting in their midst that there is a new basis of faith given to men. It is the God who lives with us who invites all men to live with him.

If God is with men, then no man can live against his fellow man or above him. The high appreciation in which God holds man is more than enough to denounce and reject any type of man despising his fellow man. Thus there emerges clearly one of the primary tasks of the man who lets himself be guided by the heart of the Lord, who tries to live his own life moved by what moved Jesus Christ. *He has to try to live in his family, in his community, in his daily work, always with and not against, always with and not above, other people.* It is only in this way that he acquires the right, while recognizing his own shortcomings, to ask others to admit theirs; to ask social institutions and society as a whole to change economic, political, and cultural structures, so as to make possible for man a life in truly human fellowship²⁴.

II.2. *The challenge of « Life FOR the Father and FOR men ».*

What God is giving us is not just theory or ideas. His Son, by investing his very life in the message of the Father, makes his very person the message for all men. *The way Jesus lived his life challenges every man to come face to face with the question: for whom does he live, and what truths does he live by?*

The mass media flood our world with their messages of happiness and the superstitions they imagine men crave for. Novel religions promise psychic tranquillity to those who follow their latest vogue. Political ideologies of all types promise heaven for the votes that give them power.

Drug addicts seek a more dubious bliss yet. But whether these messages promise power or possessions or knowledge, they are unremitting in multiplying their claims to be messages of instant happiness.

The message of Christ questions and challenges man to see through the sham of such gods of man's own fashioning. Instead, each of us is led to contrast all superficial and seductive messages with the message in which Jesus invested his life - the God who is with and for all men without exception. Jesus lived for his Father, and rang the death knell to man-made gods. But this decision to invest his whole life in that one truth brought on him the counter-attack of all the other competing alternatives and their messengers.

Christ's life shows clearly what values they are that merit the total investing of our own life. These are God and man, with no ifs or buts or whethers. Life's meaning does not depend on possessions or power or gnosis. Since the coming of Jesus, the meaning of life depends on a commitment of will to live for God and for men ...

Any party which tries to benefit only its own members, any religious group which lives closed in on itself, any form of economy which serves only particular interests (by enriching a few capitalists or by the aggrandizement of State bureaucracy), any form of life which does not possess a basic structure of service for all men, lies open to the criticism that it does not let itself be inspired and moved by what inspired and moved Jesus Christ. And this judgment is equally true of individual persons, of religious communities, or families, of all sorts of communities and institutions, and of the State itself. However, no man can lawfully claim to condemn the false gods of others until he himself is committed to live by the same force that impelled Christ.

II.3. *Giving our life « for God » and « for men »: an a-normal life.*

The message of Jesus does not depend on man's applause or his rejection. When Jesus preached that « God accepts all men », men cried out to him that such a God they would not accept! *Fidelity towards the Father of all men brought about his sacrifice. It was a fidelity to his Father, whose image Jesus will not falsify even though they kill him; and a fidelity to man, to whom God continues to offer himself as Father notwithstanding the assassination of his Son.*

The logic of the cross of Jesus is so difficult to explain because it is a-normal. If we simplify some results of the theory of social behaviour, we see how men react in different ways²⁵. This example is given:

$(+) \cdot (+) = +$ (The friend of my friend is my friend),
 $(+) \cdot (-) = -$ (The friend of my enemy is my enemy),
 $(-) \cdot (+) = -$ (The enemy of my friend is my enemy),
 and

$(-) \cdot (-) = +$ (The enemy of my enemy is my friend).

The Father of Jesus Christ is not « God with and for all » only as long as men applaud. In the cross of his Son he shows himself greater than all men. He refuses to give up being « the Father whom the Son announces ». He refuses to follow the norms of our behaviour, or react in the way statistics show men tend to react.

Ever since this event of the cross, *the man who follows Christ and lets Christ become the motivating power of his life, runs the constant risk of being a-normal*. For in undivided loyalty and with no mixed motives, his life would begin to be with and for God, with and for men. No longer would he be swayed by men's applause or by their rejection, because he is now swayed and impelled by Christ, and by the motives of Christ's life. Without thinking himself any better than other men, he is striving to invest his whole life for God and for man.

This way of letting ourselves be moved by what moved Jesus Christ is the task which can transform each day of our lives. But it calls for a full commitment of oneself to

this task each day. In this way and only in this way the heart of Jesus becomes a *fons vitae*, a source of life. Symbols make us think; *the symbol of the heart of Christ also makes us live*. It is not a way for everyone, but he who walks this way will be led into new lands. And it is Christ who guides us along that way, and ensures that it remains a way of liberty. For those who wish to take this path, the beatitudes are vindicated. If man does what is possible, God will indeed act in his life.

Briefly summing up these reflections, we can say: « God turns towards the world with the same love with which God loved himself from eternity, in which the Father loves the Son. This love is the Holy Spirit, and is a love of God for our world for which our world can yet offer no yardstick. As our world cannot supply any measure for it, it cannot be deduced from our world but remains hidden in it. This love is revealed only by the fact that God communicates himself in him who is the Word of God »²⁶. « Only through this faith can one perform works which are justified before God, before the world, and before our brethren »²⁷. It is only such a faith that liberates man from fear of himself. It is only such a faith that frees in man the hope that he needs in order to live, a hope which transcends death. To let oneself be guided by the symbol of the Heart of Christ is a method of living this faith.

¹ Cf. H. J. HELLE, « Symboltheorie und religiöse Praxis », in: *Religion im Umbruch* (ed. by J. Wössner) Stuttgart 1972, pp. 200-214; A. RAPAPORT, *Bedeutungslehre - Eine semantische Kritik*, Dormstadt 1972, pp. 14-35 (Original: *Invitation to Semantics*, New York 1973) and H. ÜTZMANN, « Symbol », in *Wissenschaftstheoretisches Lexikon* (E. Braun H. Radermacher) Graz-Wien-Cologne 1978, col. 568 f.

² According to W. BIESTERFELD, art. « Herz », in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Vol. 3 (ed. J. Ritter) Basel-Stuttgart 1974, 1100-1112. Also, the articles on « Heart » in 2 L.Th.K. V, 285-300.

³ TH. SORG., art. « Herz » in *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (ed. L. Coenen et al.) Band II, Wuppertal ³1972, 680-683.

Cf. also P. HOFFMAN, art. «Corazon I - Sagrada Escritura» in H. FRIES (ed.) *Conceptos Fundamentales de la Teología* Vol. I, Madrid 1979, pp. 248-252.

⁴ Cf. H. GIPPER, *Gibt es ein sprachliches Relativitäts-Prinzip? Untersuchungen zur Sapir-Whorf-Hypothese*, Frankfurt 1972, pp. 236-249.

⁵ Id., *Kritik der kollektiven Vernunft*, Frankfurt/M. 1978, p. 9.

⁶ This does not exclude the fact that a group of faithful can present in theoretical form their own experiences with this religious symbol.

⁷ This is the central thesis of E. JÜNGEL, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, Tübingen 1977, pp. 30, 520.

⁸ W. KASPER, *Jesús, el Cristo*, Salamanca 1976; O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDENAL, *Jesús de Nazaret - Aproximación a la Cristología*, Madrid 1975; W. PANNENBERG, *Fundamentos de Cristología*, Salamanca 1974; Chr. Duquoc, *Cristología - Ensayo dogmático sobre Jesús de Nazaret el Mesías*, Salamanca 1974, and *Mysterium Salutis - Manual de Teología como Historia de la Salvación* (ed. J. Feiner and M. Löhrer) Vol. III *Cristo*, Madrid 1971.

⁹ K. H. SCHEKLE, *Teología del Nuevo Testamento*, Tomo II: *Dios estaba en Cristo*, Barcelona 1977; E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Jesus - Die Geschichte von einem Lebenden*, Freiburg/Br. 1975; H. LEROY, *Jesus - Ueberlieferung und Deutung* (Reihe: Erträge der Forschung Bd. 95) Darmstadt 1978.

¹⁰ L. BOFF, *Jesucristo el Liberador - Ensayo de Cristología para nuestro Tiempo*, Buenos Aires 1976; JON SOBRINO, *Cristología desde América Latina*, México 1976; J. I. GONZÁLEZ FAUS, *La Humanidad Nueva. Ensayo de Cristología*, 2 vols. Burgos 1975.

¹¹ H. Karpp, *Textbuch zur altkirchlichen Christologie*, Neukirchen 1972; A. ADAM, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2 vols. GÜTERSLOH 1970; A. GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Vol. I, Oxford/London 1975; A. GRILLMEIER, *Mit ihm und in ihm - Christologische Forschungen und Perspektiven*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1975.

¹² See K. H. SCHEKLE, *op. cit.* in n. 9, pp. 215-274.

¹³ Cf. M. ELIADE, *Historia de las Creencias y de las Ideas Religiosas*, Vol. I. Madrid 1978 (original in French).

¹⁴ As a basic orientation cf. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *op. cit.* in n. 9, pp. 124-240.

¹⁵ Today we notice theological tensions between two extremes: a) God brings about the kingdom without man, and b) Man must bring about the kingdom through his own effort, even if it should be without God. Both extremes are mistaken because they conceive of the relation between God and man as a form of competition of systems. It seems to us that the only valid model is that which invites to faith in God as condition of human liberty.

¹⁶ K. H. SCHEKLE, *op. cit.*, in n. 9, pp. 114-141; and L. BOFF, *op. cit.*, in n. 10, pp. 65-91.

¹⁷ K. H. SCHEKLE, *op. cit.*, pp. 151 f; E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-281.

¹⁸ Cf. G. WIDENGREN, *Fenomenología de la Religión*, Madrid 1976, pp. 257-299; G. LANCZKOWSKI, *Einführung in die Religionsphänomenologie*, Darmstadt 1978, pp. 116 f. For the historical perspective cf. M. ELIADE, *op. cit.*, in n. 13.

¹⁹ K. MARX, «Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie» (1844), in *Karl Marx - Frühe Schriften*, Vol. I (ed. H.-J. Lieber & P. Furth), Darmstadt 1971, pp. 488.

²⁰ The cross is the expression of God's liberty, the expression of his acceptance of man. This is why we cannot show its logical necessity. We can only indicate the meaninglessness of the alternative: the rejection of the cross by Jesus.

²¹ DS, n. 302.

²² Cf. articles in this volume by A. DIEZ-MACHO msc and J. LE-SCRAUWAET msc.

²³ In a well-known passage H. SCHELSKY asked « Ist Dauerreflexion institutionalisierbar? » (Can continued reflection be institutionalized?). Here we give an affirmative example. (Cf. Id., in *Religion und Gesellschaft* (ed. J. Matthes) Reinbek bei Hamburg 1967, pp. 164-189.

²⁴ Cf. CH. E. CURRAN, « Etica Social: Tareas para el Futuro », in *Concilium* 138 (1978) 268-305; H. BÜCHELE, *Christsein im gesellschaftlichen System-Sozialethische Reflexion über den Zusammenhang von Glaube und sozio-ökonomischen Strukturen*, Wien ²1976, and *Handbuch der christlichen Ethik* (ed. A. Hertz, W. Korff et al.) Vol. II, Freiburg/br. ²1979.

²⁵ Cf. G. C. HOMANS, *Elementarformen sozialen Verhaltens*, Opladen ²1972.

²⁶ P. KNAUER, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören - Ökumenische Fundamentaltheologie*, Graz-Wien-Köln 1978, p. 309.

²⁷ P. KNAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

« The love of Christ wants no weak sentiments, or second or third-rate feelings. It wants feelings that are genuine. It wants a strong love, a virile courage; it wants something great from our soul, from our prayer ».

CARDINAL MONTINI, June 8th, 1956.

Revival of a devotion or Re-birth of a spirituality

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

Some of us are old enough to recall the end of a « golden age » of Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Many of us have studied its history and know how flourishing it once was. There are those who cling to the hope that, if only we can find the right approach, an « updated devotion » can, and should, have a new life within the Church. Others — less optimistic — appreciate the spiritual good which it did for millions of people but they believe that it belongs to an age of piety which is gone beyond recall.

Among those for whom this is more than a question of mere piety are the members of religious congregations dedicated to the Heart of Christ, or at least having in their history a tradition of a special devotion to the Sacred Heart. There are at least fourteen religious congregations of men and one hundred and twenty (120) congregations of religious women whose societies have the Sacred Heart in their official title (cf. *Annuario Pontificio* of 1981). In a time when the Church has been urging them constantly to get back to the spirit of their Founders (who deliberately chose the titles they now bear), the question of the value of devotion to the Heart of Christ is one that touches them very closely. Debated within their ranks, the question has often been cause of hurt and bewilderment.

Some attempts at reviving the devotion have borne little fruit. They looked to the past, but perhaps not far enough

into the past to be free, now, to re-create. Often they did not look with sufficient understanding to what is happening in the present to be able to provide an impulse for the future. And yet devotion to the Heart of Christ has done so much good for so long in the Church that it would be irresponsible to conclude too easily that it has lived its life and may now be laid to rest.

What do I mean by being « free to re-create »?

We naturally become attached to something which has meant a lot to us. However we must be able to let many questions be asked without feeling threatened. Are many of the elements which have made up « our » devotion to the Heart of Christ really necessary for that devotion? Is it necessary for devotion to the Sacred Heart to be lived by all in the same way? For another class of people: Does a reaction to a certain piety and its expressions which do not attract us prevent us from taking a new look at their source of inspiration?

To be freed for creativity, and to find the right road to renewal, we must, I feel, accept certain facts and then discuss their consequences. Among these, I would list:

a) No amount of quoting doctrine or Papal documents is going to bring a devotion alive again. Such quotations prove the orthodoxy of the devotion; they assert that it can be a useful form of piety. They will not make it pass into the lives of people unless these people are *attracted to it in other ways*. It is a question here of psychological and spiritual attraction, of the particular needs and tastes of persons. These vary even in the lives of individuals; they change from one epoch to another, as they change from one culture to another.

b) There is not *one* devotion to the Sacred Heart. Through the course of history, there have been different expressions of the devotion: with, for example, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. John Eudes, St. Margaret Mary. After St. Margaret Mary, with many theologians writing on the

subject, there came to be a more or less unified expression of « the Devotion to the Sacred Heart ». Many of us are familiar with the contents of this: the physical heart as symbol of love; Consecration, Reparation and Imitation as essential expressions of the devotion; particular practices such as observance of the First Friday, Litany of the Sacred Heart, acts of reparation. Certain stylized images of « the Sacred Heart » went with the rest of the devotion.

However, this was *one* form of the devotion. For centuries it had a very effective place in popular piety. But *as a form* it may well have lost its appeal irrevocably. It has certainly lost its appeal for many. We must be able to ask, objectively, what this implies for the future.

c) The historical devotion to the Sacred Heart was strongly connected with a specific approach to the mystery of the Eucharist and with a concentration of the attention on the earthly life of Jesus. However, particularly since the Second Vatican Council, there are different emphases present in our piety. The Eucharist is seen primarily as an activity, and Jesus is proclaimed as crucified and glorified.

d) The *differences* in ways of practising the devotion, the differences of vision and of emphasis are not limited to different historical periods; they do not exist only between people of different national cultures. They exist, and have always existed to some extent, between different groups such as different religious congregations dedicated to the heart of Christ. Anyone who has assisted at discussions between representatives of such groups immediately becomes aware of the differences. A clear example is that of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart who give a central and predominant place to reparation, while many other Societies do not.

e) These differences are *necessary*; they are an enrichment, not a defect. They are necessary. This becomes clear with a little reflection upon the charism of each Founder

passed on to his Institute. It is a religious experience into which enters a particular vision of the Christ of the Gospels with the call for a particular response. Devotion to the Sacred Heart may well be « the summa totius religionis » [H. Aq. n. 60], but a particular spirituality grows up around a special focus and emphasis given to one aspect of the mystery of Christ — with all things else lived in the light of that. The constant call from recent Popes to rediscover and live the charism of the Founder is not a request for us all to get together and live a common expression of devotion to the Heart of Christ.

f) There are elements in the commonly accepted form of devotion which simply do not appeal to many people in today's Church. Those who have studied the Encyclical « Hauritis Aquas » of Pope Pius XII know that it set out to answer certain objections and to reply to certain difficulties. The Encyclical did not make the difficulties go away. A doctrinal or magisterial document is often not an answer to problems which are of another order, which exist in the field of religious experience and feeling.

A summary list of the objections is:

- 1) Many people do not favour a devotion based on private revelation, in this instance mainly revelations to St. Margaret Mary.
- 2) Many people prefer to go directly to the person of Christ, rather than to his heart.
- 3) Reparation has little appeal to the modern spirit; the idea of consoling the heart of Christ has still less.
- 4) The liturgy, rather than private devotions, enters into modern spirituality.
- 5) Today, people prefer a spirituality of concern for others rather than a devotion centred on personal gain.
- 6) It is difficult to harmonize this devotion with devotion to the Trinity, and especially with the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 7) Devotion to the Sacred Heart is sentimental;

8) Today people prefer a devotion which develops their personality.

(cf. P. Zoré, S. J. *Gregorianum* 37 (1956) pp. 1 ff: *Recentiorum questionum de cultu SS. Cordis Jesu conspectus*).

Many of the difficulties are still real and need to be considered — especially by those who want us all to continue propagating an old-style devotion.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart, following their Founder Fr. Dehon, have developed a spirituality built around the concept of reparation. Yet one of their authorities has recently written a book in which he seeks for a biblical term to substitute for the word « reparation » « because of the negative reaction which this word arouses ». As he so wisely points out: « Much more important, in fact essential, is that we do not, in our use of words, allow their vital content to be lost » (Giuseppe Manzoni, S.C.J.: *Riparazione: Mistero di espiazione e di riconciliazione* », ed. dehoniane, Bologna 1978).

L'Abbé Huvelin, spiritual director of Charles de Foucauld, is well known for his solid spirituality in which the love of God had a central place. Yet he did not speak about devotion to the Sacred Heart. The reasons for his silence were: the devotion appeared sentimental and, through the nine First Fridays and the promises attached to them, it appeared as self-serving.

He who reads, let him understand!

When I say that difficulties must be considered; I do not suggest that they should be refuted with learned theses. This is a waste of time; polemic usually performs a disservice to any devotion. The service that is needed is that of showing forth values with the kind of human appeal which will dissipate misunderstandings and remove all grounds for them.

This is not always easy. Sentimental devotion repels many. On the other hand, one reason given for the success of the charismatic movement in the U.S.A., is that the preaching of religion was too cerebral. In the attempt to speak to « the whole man » and to evoke a total human response, one has to balance on the fine edge between excess of sentiment and defect. We must be able to speak to « man's reasoning heart » and evoke its response.

The road to renewal. For religious, the road to renewal has been pointed out clearly in three essential steps: rediscovery of the Founder's charism; a life centred on Christ in faith and prayer and a response to the signs of the times.

It is along *this* way that religious societies dedicated to the Heart of Christ will discover what their renewed « devotion » should be. One of their first discoveries will be that they are not called to practise a devotion — *they are called to live a spirituality*. The distinction is important. Most people have a devotion to Our Lady, but in quality and extension this is quite different from living a Marian spirituality. In the latter case devotion to Mary covers one's whole religious vision and response. In the former, it is part of one's whole spiritual life and is itself coloured by the dominant factor in that life. In fact, a devotion, if it is rich enough and if it is intensely lived, tends to become a centre of the spiritual life. It creates a perspective or vision; it traces lines of action, and brings about a structuring of the spiritual life which is *not artificial but living*.

It is from our Founder's initial inspiration and experience that we will discover our way of living a spirituality centred on the heart of Christ. This will differ from one congregation to another. For each Congregation lives from its founder's charism. This is « a particular way of *looking* at Jesus in the Gospels, a special emphasis on a *way of following him and serving him in others* ».

For the founder of my own religious congregation, devotion to the Sacred Heart was a means through which he discovered (in a profound religious experience) his particular vision of the Christ of the Gospels. I believe that this must have been the case for all founders who gave a special place to the heart of Christ in the spirituality of their orders.

It is recognised by the Church that Founders of religious congregations are moved by the Holy Spirit to begin their religious Institutes. One can not imagine a multiplicity of calls, given to very different personalities in quite different circumstances, to establish religious congregations to live the same devotion to the Heart of Christ in all its details. Some apostles of the devotion have the habit of speaking of « the devotion approved by the Church ». Approved does not mean « imposed », and even more solemnly approved are the religious Institutes with the call to live their own spirituality and inspiration. It is through an understanding and development of this inspiration that they will bring newness of spirit to a spirituality centred on the Heart of Christ. Some of this newness will be transmitted to others.

A specific example should illustrate and clarify these assertions. The example I shall give is that of the Founder I know best, Fr. Jules Chevalier, founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. In a time of deep religious experience, through and in devotion to the Sacred Heart, he discovered the Christ who was « the revelation of the kindness of God », the Christ who had compassion on the crowds, Christ the Good Shepherd, the Christ who invited all who suffered and were burdened to find in his Heart the love and understanding for which they longed. This was his vision; and his response to this belief in God's love revealed in Christ was the desire to form a group of people who, believing in that love, would strive to respond to it totally. « Trying to make the sentiments of the heart of Christ their own », they would be missio-

naires of this love and kindness through their own kindness and concern for those who suffered, through their preaching and apostolic activity. They would try to bring it about that, through them in some small measure, « the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation: at one and the same time she both demonstrates the mystery of God's love for man and makes it present among men » (Gaudium et Spes n. 45).

At the same time he insisted that the Congregation he was founding had as its mission « to glorify the Heart of Jesus », and through it to give glory to the Father. He would have been pleased to read what Fr. Arrupe has written about the « heart » calling our attention to « Christ the Son of the Father, who came into this world to save us all from sin, to infuse into our hearts the love of the Father and to give us the certainty of future life. One must not centre one's attention on the primacy of faith, on grace, and on the spiritual nature of the kingdom to such an extent that one does not hear with due sensitivity the cry of the poor, and does not realize what existential human miseries so often challenge fraternal love ».

This quotation and other passages in Fr. Arrupe's article point up the two essential thrusts of religious life. These are, firstly, the call to live in a special way for God and, secondly, the mission to dedicate ourselves to the cause of those who are the needy ones, those who labour and are burdened. Without the first our concern for others will neither appear to be, nor be in reality, both presence and proof of the love of God for man. Without the second our life for God gives no witness to the love that redeems the world.

In the days of their greatest glory religious orders were clearly consecrated to God and committed to the cause of those in need. It was, perhaps, through religious that the Church was most obviously the Sacrament of the love of God present to the little ones. As we reflect on the past

we can see clearly how strikingly religious made love present where there was no love. They brought love to the un-loved, care to the un-cared for.

In their hospitals they cared for the sick who otherwise would have been uncared for.

In their orphanages and corrective institutions, they gave love to those who received no other human love.

In their schools they gave education to those who, otherwise, would have remained without education.

They gave love to the old in their later love-less years. In their missions they brought the light of God's love to those who had never heard the Good News; they brought the beginnings of development to underdeveloped countries.

Today the State and other agencies supply many of these services in schools, hospitals and homes for the aged. The Gospel has been preached in almost every land. Consequently, it is less clear than it used to be that religious set out to bring love to the unloved, that they care when nobody else cares, and in this way are sacraments of the God who loves and cares for all. This is, no doubt, why Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her nuns have made such an impact on the minds of many. They are, in a more striking way than many other religious, a sign of the love of a God who goes out into the by-ways, searching tirelessly for those he loves.

Here we have food for reflection on the renewal of religious life. And here too, a spirituality centred on the Heart of Christ provides inspiration and impulse.

Obviously, many of the things written in this book are aspects of a spirituality which will be a living devotion to the heart of the Lord. Those who live it will have their own preferred fields of contemplation; they will need to find forms of prayer, both private and communal, and religious practices through which the spirituality is ex-

pressed, and by which it is nourished. But let us remember that a devotion brings about a structuring of the spiritual life which is not artificial but living.

It would be artificial — and it would be deadening for many in our days — to ask how we should express this in « consecration, imitation and reparation ». This would be trying to put new wine with its own interesting flavour into the old bottles that reduced all to a common taste. Liberated from the strictures of old forms, a newly surging life will create its own expressions which correspond to the spiritual and psychological needs of our times. It will, perforce, re-discover all that was truly solid and timeless in the old devotion; but it must be allowed to do so in its own way.

As each religious Institute rediscovers, re-develops and re-formulates its own spirituality centred on the Heart of Christ, it will communicate to others something of what it discovers. It will communicate; it will not seek to impose, for the more it learns to appreciate the « *investigabiles divitias Christi* » the more will it delight in the different ways the mystery of divine love is manifested through limited human expressions. We will all learn from one another, and people who feel no call to practise « devotion to the Sacred Heart » will want to share in our spirituality. And we, in turn, will learn from them.

For example, a fraternity seeking, in its own way, to live the spirituality which inspires a certain religious institute has taken as its motto: To be the Heart of Christ on earth. For those who have read this book (especially for those familiar with the spirituality of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity) it is obvious that such a motto can suggest a whole spirituality. The Fraternity states that it sets out to help its members « recognise a special love of God for them in their lives, so that they can be seized by this love and live it; that they might be on earth a reflection of the love of God, especially for the little ones, the poor, the

sick ... to share in the missionary thrust of the Church ... ».

In this book we have invited our readers to reflect on different aspects of a spirituality centred on the Heart of Christ. They are, I believe, ways of suggesting some of the richness which devotees of that heart appreciate without ever being able to express adequately: « living a spirituality of the heart »; being called to practise a « compassionate contemplation »; trying to be « the Heart of God on earth »; « living a covenant-love »; looking to the biblical meaning of the word heart, signifying « the whole interior life of a person », inviting us to leave aside all superficiality as we discover something of the breadth and the depth of the personality of Christ.

Nor will the invitation of St. John be neglected, an invitation he addresses to all christians to look on Christ whose heart was pierced on the cross. If they consent to look « in a spirit of compassion and prayer », they will know that the words of the prophet are timeless, and knowing that they « look on him whom *they* have pierced », « they will mourn for him ». And once more it will be true that « their mourning will be changed into joy » through the gift of a redemptive love to a heart that confesses its need of redemption.

A Christian lets himself be confronted by God's love in Christ Jesus — in his life, his death, his resurrection and outpouring of the Spirit. He lets himself be confronted, too, without escapist subterfuges, by the Evil in the world. He lets himself be confronted by the challenge of both. His response has been called « reparation ». What it is called matters little. What does matter is that his response be real and built into his total spirituality.

Consecration to the Heart of Jesus, if it is genuine and sincere, demands that we live and make a real-life application of the supreme commandment of love for God and our neighbour. This is also the source and the force, the only effective way to resolve problems in personal and social fields and within the family:

« Always treat others as you would like them to treat you » (Mt. 7, 12).

The love of Christ given to us must flow out from us to others and, in practice, permeate all social relations so that it continually transforms human personal relationships into one fraternal family — one in its origins, one in its redemption and its destiny, in which respect is always given to the human and christian dignity of each person, his or her aspirations and inalienable human rights.

POPE PAUL VI, Message to Spain, May 26th, 1969.

A study in renewal

Elizabeth Smith, R.S.C.J.

« Wholly consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the propagation of its worship ».

(Summary of the Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart).

By looking at the renewal of one religious congregation consecrated to the Sacred Heart, it may be possible to discern something of the new forms in which experience of the Heart of Christ may find expression.

The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded in France in 1800 in the aftermath of the French revolution, and is « wholly consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the propagation of its worship ». To understand its mission both then and today it is necessary to understand the cult of the Sacred Heart and devotion to it as it was in France in 1800, since the work of Sr. Jeanne de Charry on the 'History of the Constitutions' makes it very clear that the foundress, St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, struggled tenaciously for the new Society to be consecrated to the Sacred Heart at a time when politically it was impossible to adopt the name openly.

The title Sacred heart had become a name for the person of Jesus under the aspects of his heart, a devotion to the interior life of Jesus, his thoughts, desires, virtues and above all his compelling love for all men. Though originally the human heart of Jesus, it had become the Divine

Heart worthy of worship and adoration in itself. Therefore it contained within itself a message of God's mercy, a divine thirst for the salvation of all men so that they might find therein the love of God for them and be drawn to love in return. Therefore from devotion to it came a compelling urgency for mission, for drawing all men to the knowledge of salvation in Christ. But because it was a wounded heart it was seen as pleading with men, sparing nothing, exhausting and consuming itself in an effort to communicate that love, and receiving in return only ingratitude, coldness and contempt from so many. In fact being 'outraged' over and over again. Those drawn to this devotion experienced themselves called to share in the work of redemption through reparation and to console the heart of Jesus by their adoration and love, and, by taking on themselves the same urgency to communicate that love to others in order to bring them to salvation, to slake the thirst of his heart for souls. It was at once a devotion of reparation and apostolic zeal for making him known and drawing others to him. The aspect of adoration and reparation centred upon Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; here was a sacramental presence in time and space where his wounded heart could be consoled by love returned, and adored in a spirit of reparation. From that source of love, the adorer would draw fresh love and zeal for saving others.

In the full stream of this cult, the new Society was consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart and the spreading of its worship. Consecration was a setting apart, a making holy exclusively for the purpose of God, in this case the glory of the Sacred Heart. And so the first consequence of this consecration was the obligation of each member to work at her own perfection, her own holiness, which was seen as union and conformity with the Sacred Heart by the imitation of its virtues and interior life. And its correlative was a further consecration to the sanctification of others « as the work dearest to his heart ». The mission of the religious was born out of this

insight that the glory of the Sacred Heart was the holiness and sanctification of themselves and others. It determined the nature of the Society as wholly contemplative, wholly apostolic without dichotomy or distinction, and made mission coextensive with the lives of the religious. The spirit of the Society was therefore essentially based on prayer and the interior life. The manner of living the vows, the virtues, and love were all to be drawn from his heart. Union with the heart of Jesus was the end for them and also the means to the sanctification of others. This was stressed throughout the constitutions which sought a congruence between life and words for the religious which would be more efficacious in achieving the end than any instruction. Embedded in this idea was the realisation that relationships, though the word was not used, were the way to communicating the love of the Sacred Heart, and much of the constitutions were pervaded by the manner in which the religious were to 'treat with their neighbour'. So what was prescribed was a life that was essentially an education of others to the knowledge and love of Jesus, who alone could sanctify them, and a forming of them to be 'adorers' in their turn, through every means in the power of each religious. The word 'adorers' was used because of the centrality of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to the devotion to the Sacred Heart and reparation, current at that time. St. Madeleine Sophie's original intuition of the Society included perpetual adoration to be made possible by the religious undertaking the apostolate of teaching and forming the children to take part in adoration and through them extend it far beyond the limited possibility of the religious themselves.

« Praying alone before the tabernacle in the secluded oratory near her room, she thought of the churches that had been closed, the outrages against Christ in the sacrament of his love, the havoc wrought by anti-religious propaganda, especially in the souls of the young. Then there flashed into her mind what she later recognised as

‘ the original idea of our little Society of the Sacred Heart: to establish a little community which, night and day, would adore the Heart of Jesus outraged in his eucharistic love ’. To have twenty-four religious replacing one another on a prie-Dieu would be a great deal, and yet very little. Then another idea sprang to life: ‘ If we had young pupils whom we could form in the spirit of adoration and reparation, how different it would be ’. And I saw those hundreds, those thousands of adorers before an ideal universal monstrance raised up above the church ».

(History of the Constitutions).

The new Society was not tied by its aim to a particular social or charitable work. The obvious external constraint was the limitation on what was acceptable in 1800 for enclosed women religious. But the stronger internal one was the need for the work to be in harmony with the essential mission of the institute, an indispensable aspect of which was the educative dimension inherent in the consecration to the sanctification of others. The chief means chosen were schools, both boarding and day, retreats and all necessary contacts with seculars. Although this choice was in line with the original insight, perpetual adoration never became the major work but the spirit behind it remained very apparent in the constitutions.

This life was rooted in a theology and spirituality that remained relatively stable in the church for the next century and a half while the world outside changed dramatically. But since Vatican II many of the basic attitudes of the church have changed under the impact of opening its doors to the advances in human knowledge in every sphere of the physical, human and social sciences and the humanities. The world is seen as having a proper value in itself, being in process of evolving towards its fulness in Christ. We no longer have a static but a dynamic world view in which man bears the responsibility for its future. The church seeing itself as the sacrament of Christ in this world seeks to dialogue with all men as an essential part

of this process, proclaiming the proper dignity of man. All social, economic and political organisation being made must also reflect his dignity and protect human rights. Man himself is understood in terms of becoming also, a dynamic process for which he is responsible. This gradual development to the fullness of his humanity with all his material and spiritual gifts and potential actualised in a relationship with God and his fellowmen lies at the heart of a modern spirituality. True human maturity is seen as a product of holiness. Man is most fully alive when he is aware of his dependence on a transcendent immanent God who saves and calls him beyond himself to an unselfish love that transforms him and all his relationships. Out of weakness and fragility he is called into a sonship in Jesus through the Spirit which is part of the total liberation of all creation which « itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God » (Romans 8, 21) when the sons of God are revealed. It is a vision which embraces the whole man, body and soul incarnated in a material world, which gets away from the dualism underlying the traditional spirituality. It highlights the social dimension of the christian commitment for the church which now sees work for justice as an integral part of evangelisation.

Modern spirituality is being changed too by a return to the gospel as the norm of christian commitment rather than moral codes. The word of God is addressed to man in every age in his concrete historical situation and can become a source of reflection on his life and a means of listening to God's call. The gospels are seen now as that kind of reflection by the early christian communities on the life and words of Jesus and their experience of his risen presence among them. Jesus's own historical experience is understood as a gradual growth in human consciousness to which we can relate. His knowledge of who he is and who his Father is, is not given but achieved through the struggle to complete his mission in the face of doubt, temptation and human weakness.

We see this growth in relationship to his Father, a growth that carries human nature beyond the limits of its unaided potential into the divine, through an act of love that reveals the nature of the Father as love. Jesus glorifies his Father by revealing that essential nature.

The church teaches that all christians are called to holiness, a holiness given in baptism through which « they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature » (Lumen Gentium ch. 5 p. 40) but which needs to be actualised in each one's life. Today there is a renewed response to this call in a hunger for prayer and more spiritual formation which is most obviously expressed in the charismatic movement but is also evident beyond the limits of that renewal, in the desire for christian community. Many different kinds of community are being experimented with both in and outside the church. Modern man experiences this great need for community for a variety of reasons beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to note the part that need is playing in shaping a modern spirituality based on shared faith and life in the Spirit. These communities are not seeking holiness by a separation from the world, but by an involvement with others at a more radical level than normal social relations provide in the church, because they see christian commitment as a commitment to communion. Personal relationships with Christ and others are seen as a basic necessity for a search for holiness which is very far removed from the individualistic spirituality of a former age.

Because of these changes in the world and in her attitudes the church has asked for an updating and renewal of her life, teaching and worship based on Vatican II. Every sphere of that life is being subjected to critical analysis and re-interpretation. The religious orders have also been asked to renew themselves by a return to the gospel and their founder's original charism, and to restructure their lives to meet the demands of the modern world. For the Society of the Sacred Heart this renewal has meant a reaffirmation of its consecration to the glory of the Sacred

Heart. But the devotion itself has not yet been renewed and restated for the church in a language, devotional style and mission that can contain the new modern spirituality that is developing. Devotional spirituality grows out of the culture and needs of people and is experienced and expressed in people's lives before it becomes organised and formalised. Devotion to the Sacred Heart as it stands can appear irrelevant to these needs today, the product of an expression of the theology and spirituality of a past age concerned with very different issues to our own. To a certain extent this is true in that the time of its greatest dissemination co-incided with a period when the church was in conflict with many of the trends which were breaking up the social, economic and political structures of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The church stood out against this progress and devotion to the Sacred Heart formed one of the powerful bulwarks of its fortress mentality. It was ideally suited for this role with its accent on reparation for the outrages committed against God's love which were too easily identified with traditional structures, privileges and status for the church. But its origins lie deeper in christian tradition and spirituality than the conflicts and devotional attitudes of the 19th century. It is rooted in scripture, in mystical experience and the lives of many saints. But more importantly it begins in the heart of Jesus and his saving love for each person and meets the longing in the human heart for a relationship with God that can express all his deepest needs. In Jesus the Father has revealed this relationship as a relationship of gratuitous love. Therefore whether the outward expression and celebration in human terms of this incredible fact changes, even disappears for a time, is not essential. The truth of its reality will not. The experience itself will break through in human lives in whatever form seems appropriate. By looking at the renewal of one congregation consecrated to the Sacred Heart it may be possible to begin to discern something of that form already.

How does the Society of the Sacred Heart propose to live

out its consecration to the glory of the Sacred Heart in the world today? In the Old Testament the biblical image of glory was used as a sign of God's presence. No man could see God but they could behold his glory. God chose a people, a community, to glorify him in the Israel of the Old Testament. In the New Testament he chooses a people in his Son. Others will recognise them by the way they love one another, the way they relate to each other in faith, in justice, in truth. They will be a sacrament, a sign, of God's presence. The search for their own holiness and the sanctification of others enjoined by the original constitutions for the Society is therefore a communal search. Holiness is not sought in isolation, is not a private pursuit. Community was often seen as a support for such a search, now it is a necessary part of it because holiness is relational. It is love. It is about our capacity to love, the perfection of which is union with God. Holiness is a relationship with God that is intensely private in one sense, but which requires a loving from the human person which can only be engendered in the effort to love humanly. That is to love the brethren. « If anyone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen » (I Jn. 4, 20). The struggle to love the brethren is the pursuit of holiness. For without relationships the human person cannot grow towards an unselfish love. Love begins by being possessive, because of our need for it. Only a slow process of maturing into self-giving without conditions, without demand for a return can draw the full potential for heroic love, the ability to give one's life freely, from the human heart.

Without that maturing at the human level there can be no leap in faith into a love which God offers in prayer that demands a total stripping before it becomes a transforming union with him. Our inner and outer experience of love have to be congruent. God's love is poured into our hearts in the measure in which our heart is made capable of receiving it. Part of the struggle lies in recognising it

for what it is — God's love, a recognition that is dependent on experience of giving and receiving love. Because it often does not feel like love, learning to recognise it is an important step in the commitment to respond. Much of the experience of prayer is this; a dryness and absence of God to our senses. But we are conditioned to persevere because we have been led to expect this as part of the process of faith and love maturing in prayer. We have to learn how to persevere with the same determined effort to love in relationship. A thing we find much harder because it is more painful, more undermining to our self-respect and security, more revealing of our weakness and poverty, more stripping to our pride, than prayer sometimes is, since the measure in which we are avoiding it with people, will be the measure in which we are avoiding it in prayer. In place of the discipline of an asceticism of self-mortification, we find in community the discipline of love.

But we also find fellowship in the Lord. If our relationships with others are part of our search for God, they are also part of the finding. In the uniqueness of each person we see another aspect of God when they share with us the God they experience. Our limited ability to know ourselves is complemented by what others reveal to us about ourselves. We actually receive a great deal of ourselves from other people's recognition of our gifts and capacities. They open up areas within us unknown before into which we grow and find who we are a little more fully, a little more wholly. And we are lead to pray with a little more of ourselves. So when we speak of mission being co-extensive with the lives of the religious, we are talking about the most ordinary daily interaction of community life where we learn what St. Paul meant when he wrote to the Colossians, « Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything

together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body » (Col. 3, 12-15).

To see in community life and relationships the material for holiness, for sanctifying and being sanctified, for mission, we need a contemplative vision because it is our mode of relating to all of it which transforms it. That is to say our way of being present to people, things and events can be a way of being present to God in our lives. It is a gift, the fruit of a contemplative prayer and discipline which has allowed us to integrate our past history into a relationship with its Lord, and so freed our energy for that quality of awareness, that capacity to be with, which contains the potential for finding God in all things, not because it is self-consciously seeking, but because it is free. To live with such a contemplative outlook on life implies firstly a commitment to live in the faith that Christ is present in our world drawing us to discover him there, and secondly a disciplined approach to living close to that presence. We have to learn to become sensitive to that drawing in and through the ordinary events of our life by reflecting alone and with the community on our inner experience, sifting and sorting it to interpret it in faith, in order to discern what spirit is moving us. The ability to discern the on-going action of God in our hearts and lives is crucial to the whole enterprise of living out a contemplative life in and not apart from the world. It enables us to 'see' God's presence, live close to it in dependence on the Holy Spirit, and make it visible for others.

It is intimately connected to a commitment to a prayer that should characterise a religious of the Sacred Heart. A prayer that is centred on the heart of Christ and is a seeking of our heart involving the whole person in a relationship with him that tells us who we are and defines who we are in an on-going growth in love and self-knowledge. A relationship which tells us who Jesus is in relation to his Father, draws us into his self-giving, self-emptying

before the Father and finds its release and fulfilment in adoration. From this experience the knowledge of what we are for unifies our vows and consecration into a single mission of communicating this love by bringing others to a relationship with the person of Jesus.

The mission is essentially educative whatever new forms its external expression may take today in the wider variety of ministries now open to women religious. The selection needs to be based on their suitability, in the context of the church and country, as effective channels for an education that aims at the development of the whole person in faith so that they can be enabled, freed, to live their lives fully from an awareness of their identity and purpose. The key to this self-development has to be given to them through methods designed to make them capable of undertaking the responsibility for their own continued growth. That means seeking ways to bring out their human, spiritual and intellectual gifts and enable them to take possession of them so they can shape their own futures creatively through the choices they make. It presupposes in the educator, the religious, the capacity to recognise these gifts, the contemplative vision that can be sensitive to the work of God in the other, to the 'shape' his presence is taking there, and help to make it more visible. This can only happen if a relationship of mutual respect and truth is established in which they can experience the excitement of self-discovery and gain the confidence to make their own judgements and decisions and evaluate them with others. Ideally the relationship should be mutually educative and it can only be this if it is rooted in humility and reverence before the emerging personality of the other. The basic formative experience this education is seeking to foster and develop is of course a relationship with the person of Jesus out of which a mature christian commitment can grow. A commitment that will be the basis of their understanding of this world and the basis from which they relate to it. So an important aspect of the work must be the formation firstly of

the social dimension of christianity, the sense of community, of church, and the wider community of all men, and secondly of the responsibilities inherent in this dimension, based on the commandment of Jesus to love as he has loved.

So it must be an education to christian love, to the importance of relationships and the ability to form them creatively and responsibly in their immediate context of family, church and work but which goes beyond this to be part of the church's concern for all men and for justice in our world. A justice based on a faith in the presence of the risen Christ in our world, and therefore, an integral part of the process of evangelisation. It begins in a conversion of heart that makes Jesus and his message the criterion for judging what man needs to be truly human. Without denying the contribution the social, economic and political sciences bring to an analysis of man's condition and the programmes for development, the christian experiences the gospel relativising these absolutes. He knows he begins from a different vision because Jesus has identified himself with all men and therefore his brother becomes a sacrament. The urgency of justice from this vision comes very close to us, to our neighbour, to the people we live and work among and reaches out to all men. In biblical terms it becomes our integrity. Therefore it touches the way we relate and act in God's truth and touches the core of the Society's mission of communicating his love. It is not enough simply to add this aspect to our understanding of the educative dimension of that mission. If it is to be authentically part of it, it must be received at that point of contemplation where we experience our consecration and mission as one. Only then will we integrate it into our contemplative outlook on our world and our immediate reality, as part of our search for holiness for ourselves and others. In that way it will be inseparable from the educative dimension of our lives in community and in our ministry, and will have its effect on our apostolic choices.

By looking at the renewal of the Society of the Sacred Heart we have seen that the essential elements of its end and means remain but are expressed in very different ways and a very different language. Though it is possible, and indeed necessary, to trace these expressions back to their roots, we are not seeking in that to deny the very real change in the Society. In 1967 we recognised that we were not fundamentally a monastic order but an apostolic institute and moved out of enclosure into the world. That step has produced a profound reinterpretation of our lives and mission in the pursuit of our aim to « glorify the heart of Christ ». We should not again remain untouched by the issues that are changing the church and our world if we wish to be relevant in every generation and country. Perhaps indeed we now appreciate that change and adaptation are a necessary part of the furthering of its goal for any religious consecrated to an apostolic end in a world in process of evolution.

What can this conclusion from a study of the Society show us about renewal of devotion to the Sacred Heart today? Its validity as a means to a personal love for Jesus is not in question. The cult itself needs no defence having already shown its capacity to integrate new spiritual insights that altered its focus and deepened its spirituality before our starting point in 1800, and it can continue to do so to the benefit of the church today. It is obvious that its devotional aspects and the language in which they have been expressed must be allowed to change. The focus must clearly be seen to be the person of Jesus symbolised by the heart. That symbol is still a powerful image in human terms of the mystery that lies at the centre of a person. It is peculiarly suited to the present emphasis on the importance of relationships to the development of mature persons capable of loving and living creatively, because firstly it speaks eloquently of a love that endured through death into life, and secondly it invites to a deeply personal relationship with Jesus. It could therefore today be seen to be urging us to love one

another as he has loved us; to recognise that the consuming desire of his heart is not only that men should know themselves loved by God and be drawn to love him in return but that they should also commit themselves in that response to the building of a christian community in love and fellowship. The devotion itself centred on the wounded heart of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament being 'outraged' by men's coldness and lack of response and generated a whole movement of reparation and adoration. Today's emphasis on Christ's heart wounded in our brothers, on the eucharist of the poor, the exploited and dehumanised in our society, could be integrated into the devotion and direct that power of reparation into a work for a just and fraternal world as part of its adoration of the Sacred Heart. Lastly its language and spirituality needs to return to the gospels, to a reflection on the life and words of Jesus in the light of our experience of his risen presence among us if it is to become a way of relating our christian commitment to the world we live in.

It is in this same Heart of Jesus that the Church finds the incentive to look for ways and means for our separated brothers to come into full unity with the See of Peter, and also for all those who are still far from being christians to know, with us, « the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent » (John 17, 3).

Pastoral drive and the missionary flame are so much more alive when priests and faithful, for the cause of God's glory, contemplate the eternal love which Christ made known, and, as a result, direct their own energies that all might know the inexhaustible riches of Christ.

POPE PAUL VI. « Diserti interpretes facti »
May 25th, 1965

Conclusion:

The Mother of God made man

André Tostain, M.S.C.

In the image and likeness of his Trinitarian love, God has created us male and female; often he is portrayed as a mother, a mother who can not forget her children.

When the fulness of time had come, God spoke to us in His Son — and this Son willed to be born of a woman. His human heart was formed from the flesh of Mary his mother, formed from the 'heart' of Mary through the human, spiritual and religious education which he received from her.

There is a wonderful, a delightful harmony in this: Mary was the one whom God had prepared, the one to whom he entrusted his Word-made-flesh. It was she who, keeping all things in her heart, led her son gradually to grow in age and wisdom until he reached his full maturity.

Reading the account of the wedding-feast at Cana, we delight to note Mary's attentive thoughtfulness for the young couple as they were faced with their embarrassing problem ('they have no wine'). This could hardly have been an isolated instance of her « humanity ». Such incidents of human kindness *must* have been sprinkled profusely through all the hidden years.

At Cana, too, as modern exegetes point out, as the perfect human mother, Mary invites her son to be himself. Her human task of formation was complete. She invites him to begin his mission as Saviour, to bring the Good News to the poor.

This very « human » Mother, this mother who formed him and fashioned his growing, who then stood back to let him go, stood by him under his Cross. He had willed it so. He wanted her there. And there he wanted to give her to all of us. She was to help us « contemplate him who was pierced » and « drink with joy from the living fountains of salvation » — and all this together with her. It was in the Cenacle that Mary began to exercise her motherhood towards the Church, imploring for it the Spirit from whom she had received her own gift of motherhood. This role of hers will continue until the day that the Body of Christ, which is the Church, grows in wisdom and grace to reach its full maturity.

In following Christ, we are to love with a human heart. We are to be sensitive and attentive to the poor, the little ones. We must work in the Church, receptive to the influence of the Holy Spirit, to form adult Christians (letting them be themselves). We are called to witness truly to a God who did not hesitate to speak of his « maternal feelings and attitudes ». We witness to a God who, in his own image and likeness made us male and truly to a God who did not hesitate to speak of his children. For all this, we need to be among the disciples whom Jesus loved, who take Mary 'into their home'.

By this way of faith we meet, too, with the human sciences which today stress the importance of the feminine for human health and balance.

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