

# RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

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## TEILHARD DE CHARDIN -- AMERICA CORRECTS THE POST

These days there's magic in the name Teilhard de Chardin -- magic in intellectual circles, that is. Consequently, even those who don't read the Saturday Evening Post regularly searched out the issue (Oct. 12, 1963) with the ten page, color-illustrated article and the full page portrait of "The Priest Who Haunts the Catholic Church." "During his life," Saturday Evening Post says, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French Jesuit, was prohibited from publishing his unorthodox theories. Now, over eight years after his death, his many books are creating fierce controversy and influencing thousands, including some princes of his church meeting in Rome."

The provocative title and the introductory blurb, quoted above, are enough to intrigue even a reader who might never have heard of Teilhard de Chardin. The article was probably widely read on the campus, and with a great deal of profit as an introduction to the famed French Jesuit.

Now, a week later, a Jesuit confrere of Teilhard de Chardin, Thurston N. Davis, S.J., editor of America, cautions against uncritical acceptance of everything in the article. He says it is sentimental and does an injustice to the Society of Jesus.

"A sentimentalized article in the October 12 Saturday Evening Post tells the story of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the eminent paleontologist, who died eight years ago. In impressing on its readers the genius of his great human spirit, the article does an unwitting but real injustice to the Society of Jesus, of which Pere Teilhard was a member for over fifty years.

"In Rome, the Holy Office found considerable difficulty with his writings and was inclined to put them on the Index. The Society, therefore, placed real but reasonable checks on Fr. Teilhard. As a result, his work was not consigned to the Index. Never published it continued to circulate in dittographed volumes passed around by friends. Open publication, of course, would have brought discussion and the benefits of criticism by other scholars. Teilhard's writings were never given such criticism. This was unfortunate.

"Apprehension about Teilhard's work was not unfounded. His was a brilliant mind and a mighty, creative imagination. Yet he was an  
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## Council Matters .....

FATHER WEIGEL ON THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH In the light of the discussions now going on in Vatican Council II on the nature of the Church, the analysis of this problem written by Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., before the opening of the second session is of particular interest. He leads into his article by stating that early Ecumenical Councils defined in part at least the doctrine of the Trinity and gave attention to the Incarnation of the Son of God, as we profess these doctrines in the Apostles' Creed, along with belief in the Holy Catholic Church. "But no Council has ever defined the Church."

"The reason for the glaring lack of definition in so important a reality as the Church is that she is a mystery. God, being a mystery, cannot be defined according to the rigor of philosophic definition. This is equally true of God's Church. If no Council of the past has given us a defining formula, we need not expect one from the Second Vatican Council.

"Yet though the Church cannot be defined, much can be known and said about her. During the last few centuries many questions have been raised about the Church and her nature. These questions have been serious and trying. We expect from the present Council some answers to some of these questions.

"The Church of Christ is one, but it has many dimensions. You can look at her through the glass of liturgy. She can be studied in her very reality as grasped in faith. Since she is a visible communion, she needs laws to keep external order in the people of God. Consideration of this latter aspect of the Church is thus juridical.

"Much juridical meditation has been made in the past. In some centuries it was the only consideration given. However, study of this kind is superficial and does not satisfy the faith-enlightened mind in search for deeper understanding of the reality which is so close to us.

"Theologians in the last hundred years have been pushing for a fuller vision of our ecclesiastical structure. The time has come to lay down some guide lines and it is to be expected that the Council will supply what we need.....

"The First Vatican Council dealt with one facet of the Church. It taught us what the Pope's place is in the house of God. Papal primacy and papal infallibility were defined. This brought up the whole question of hierarchy. Yet so little was said about the bishop's place among the People of God. Certainly bishops are more than representatives of the Bishop of Rome. The ancient Fathers clearly saw episcopal powers as wider than the exercise of papal jurisdic-

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TEILHARD DE CHARDIN (continued from the front page)

amateur in philosophy, theology, and Sacred Scripture, who drew immense inspiration from a few selected verses of St. Paul, and suffused his scientific work with much philosophical and theological speculation. While original and full of appealing master ideas, his writings provide the reader with no clue as to where the poetic and the imaginative leave off and the strictly scientific begins.

"When Harper published Teilhard's The Phenomenon of Man, we asked a friend of the author -- a distinguished French Jesuit scientist -- to review it. The long and carefully nuanced article of Fr. Francois Russo (4/30/60) is probably the best and most balanced short evaluation of Teilhard in English. We included it (pp 262-274) in a recent America anthology, Between Two Cities. It is worth reading as a corrective to the article in the Saturday Evening Post."

Devotees of Teilhard de Chardin may retort that Fr. Davis' remarks are evidence of a prophet not being accepted in his own land. Yet it is understandable that the Post article, appealing to the general public, might be somewhat sensationalized. Fairness would dictate following Fr. Davis' advice to read Fr. Russo's evaluation.

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FATHER WEIGEL (continued from the front page)

tion. In fact they considered papal prerogatives as an instance of episcopal power.

"Certainly the second session of the Council will tell us just what a bishop is in the Church and what his function in the Mystical Body entails. Current theologians see the bishops as directors not only of local churches but so united around their universal primate that they all together guide the Church universal. This idea must be analyzed and explained. We wait the Council to do so.....

"Now we must not demand too much of the Council. It cannot be in session for many years. The questions about the Church are so numerous that the shortlived Council cannot take them all into consideration. Among the many questions only some will be chosen for answers -- those which press up hardest in our time. Other Councils must deal with problems which their moment in history present."

--from the Davenport Catholic Messenger (Sept. 26, 1963)

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IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following. Deceased: Brother Bernard Gervais, C.S.C.; father of Dennis O'Neill of Zahm; father of Kevin Cahill, '63; grandfather of Mike McBrien of Fisher; grandmother of Richard DuFour of Walsh; friend of John O'Meara of Farley; mother of Harold P. Klein, '26; brother of William T. Daly, '48. Ill: mother of Edwin Kohlbrenner of Fisher; grandmother of Ray Sullivan of Walsh.

Fresh from the Pad .....

"HAVE YOU GOT A FIX?"

The struggle with your emerging sexuality begun during adolescence is no mean skirmish. But has this very demanding and, sometimes, heroic effort to become master of yourself caused you to fall into a trap? The trap of identifying the whole Christian life with just a segment -- purity? Do you view the broad spectrum of Christian living through the prism of the virtue of purity? Are the ups and downs in the struggle with your sexuality the funnel through which you experience your intimate relationship with God? In examining your conscience does the trip begin and end with the sixth and ninth commandments? Do you labor under the common delusion that purity is synonymous with holiness? "I'm pure -- so where's my halo?"

It might seem rather novel but the Christian life is a far greater challenge than the narrow one presented by purity. It is all-pervasive. It embraces every facet of human activity. Has your all-out battle in the arena of sexual control made you insensitive to the large chunks of your life covered by, justice, kindness, courage, humility, patience, reverence, obedience and the supreme virtue of charity? When is the last time you examined the effect made on your friendship with God by unjust prejudice, biting sarcasm, vicious detraction, blatant disobedience, subtle vanity, sly cheating and conscious disregard of prayer? And how about THE virtue which is the essential trademark of the Christian life -- charity? Do you think of charity as some kind of an extra, an added frill, for those few chosen souls who have been spared the harrowing struggles of life?

Incidentally, if you do have a real battle with purity it is psychologically devastating to fix on it. By making purity the only sensitive area in your moral awareness you succeed in riveting all your attention on the very thing you want to avoid. It would seem therapeutic to accept the Christian life for what it is -- total commitment.

--Father Baker, C.S.C.

P.S. "In the twilight of life we will be judged on love."