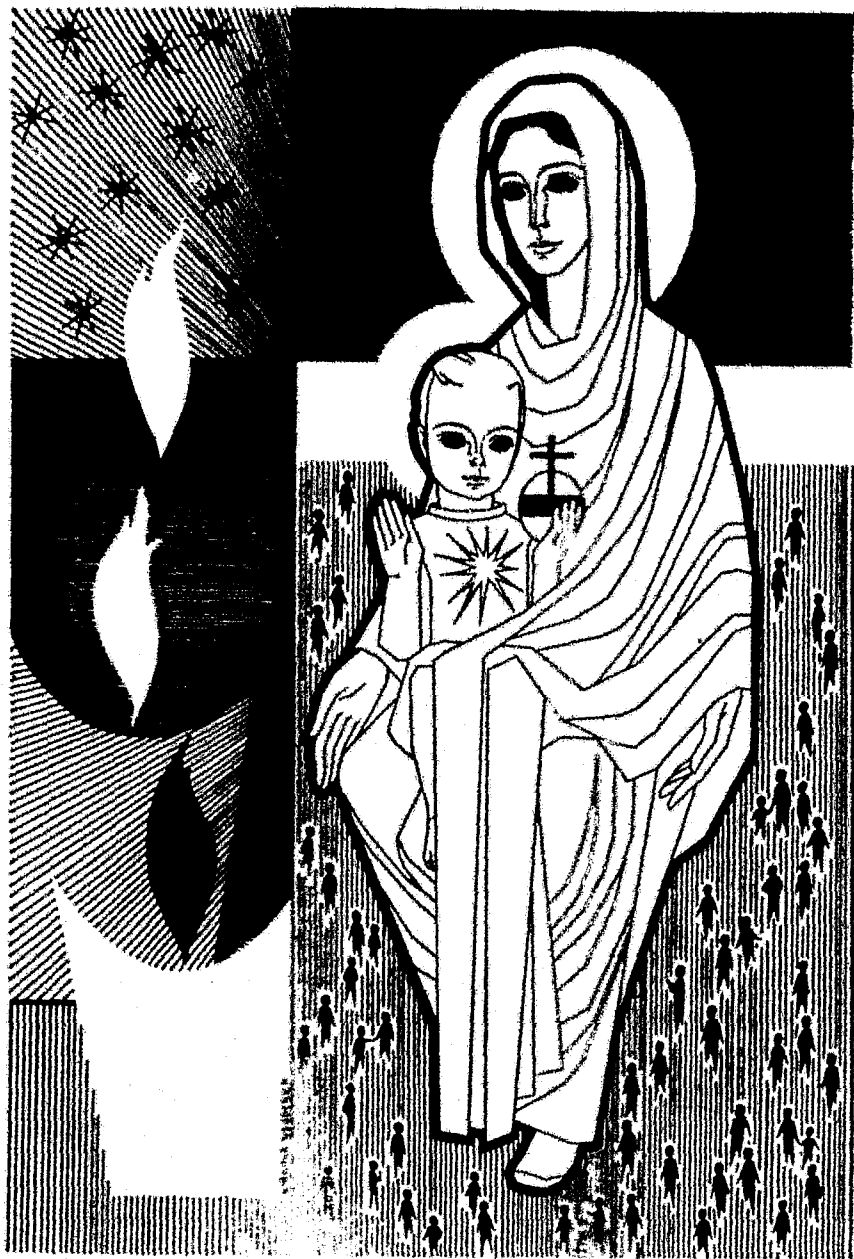


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REV. LLOYD W. TESKE, C.S.C.,
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITOR

MARY AND ECUMENISM



The bright ecumenical climate of the past few years is occasionally clouded, if not quite befogged, by a few vestigial suspicions, probably in large part the inheritance of a cruder polemical age. While some non-Catholics, pointing to countries where their confreres feel inhibited, wonder whether the new Catholic openness may not be only a higher and subtler Machiavellism, not a few Catholics experience twinges of scrupulosity, as they suspect that ecumenism may be leading to "least-common-denominatorism," dilution of dogma, or in any case, a one-sided yielding on their part. One area of concern between Protestants and Catholics (the Orthodox here being linked with Catholics) is the treatment of Mary, the Mother of God.

Has she not become the great unmentionable in our ecumenical dialogue?

A refreshing breath of irenic air has just crossed the ocean and may help Christians to cross a few barriers. It is the newly translated volume, Mary, Mother of All Christians (Herder and Herder. \$4.75). This is no Catholic gauntlet hurled into Protestant faces, still less a manifesto of Protestant intransigence. Its author, Max Thurian, one of the most highly esteemed of Protestant theologians and an observer at Vatican Council II, quite candidly deplores the fact that "Christian reflection on the role of the Virgin Mary" should be "a cause of division among us." Since "we have better things to do than to fight among ourselves at this time when we are maturing ecumenically," he urges the approach best calculated to uncover points of agreement: study of the common scriptural sources that should unite all Christians.

The "anti-Marian Protestant polemic," as he calls it, is a comparatively recent development, based in part on "fear and contrari-

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FROM CATHOLIC TO ANGLICAN

The English poet John Donne (as we read in a new novel Take Heed of Loving Me*, by Elizabeth Gray Vining) had many impelling reasons for changing his religion from Roman Catholic to Anglican. Among other reasons was the fact that his brother Henry, an almost-twin, only ten months younger, had -----
been thrown into prison (to die there) for harboring a priest. His grandfather, the playwright John Heywood had been condemned to death over the religious issue, though he escaped to die in Louvain. Two of his mother's brothers, Jesuit priests, had been condemned to death and had been visited by Donne in The Clink (in Southwark), where Donne conceived the greatest horror of an Elizabethan prison. Added to these persuasive arguments was the fact that no avenue to worldly success was open to him as a Catholic. The abandonment of one's Catholic religion in the days of Elizabeth, therefore, increased one's material prospects considerably.

Donne himself got a taste of the Elizabethan prison when he so far forgot his station in life as to marry above himself without the prospective father-in-law's consent. Elizabeth's Gestapo, "pursuivants" they were called in those days, arrived in the middle of the night to cart him off to The Fleet. "He had seen pursuivants before," writes Miss Vining. "To anyone who had once been a Romanist the sight of ecclesiastical officers in the doorway brought an unquenchable dread. So he had seen his brother Henry led away to prison and ultimately, death; to others whom he had known, it had meant fines, accusations of treason, years of im-

prisonment, disappearance from the world of man."

Miss Vining portrays Donne as having early convinced himself of the truth of the Anglican doctrines. Actually this didn't happen until he was advanced in middle life, deeply in debt, as well as greatly discouraged by his inability to support a rapidly growing family. He then not only accepted the Elizabethan settlement, he also accepted Anglican orders, and from that time on devoted the greater part of his talent to the composition of sermons that made him the most famous preacher of his day in England. This, of course, was a time when courtiers "crowded to hear a sermon as an intellectual entertainment," or, as Bishop Andrewes said, when "they seemed to reckon of sermons no otherwise than of songs: to give them hearing, to command the aire of them, and so let them goe."

Miss Vining paints a very credible picture of this Elizabethan-Jacobean generation, an age that had turned sour. This, she lets us see, was, above all, "An Age for Making Adjustments." One adjusted one's faith to the requirements of secular living. Mental conflicts were resolved by compromises -- and the traditional faith of England finally gave place to philosophies

which called all things in doubt. "The element of fire is quite put out," Donne wrote. "The Sun is lost, and the Earth, and no man's wit can well direct him where to look for it."

--Claude L. Boehm

MOTHER'S DAY NOVENA

The novena should begin today, or tomorrow at the latest, in order to be completed by May 10. Hall chaplains will have special Notre Dame Mother's Day cards on Monday.

MARY AND ECUMENISM (continued from the front page)

ness," which kept many Protestants from "daring to meditate freely on what the Gospel tells us about the Mother of Our Lord." This was not so from the beginning of the Reformation and need not be so any longer. Throughout his volume we find quotations like these: "Mary's glorious privilege in being the mother of His only Son"; "she is called Blessed because she opened the way for God to accomplish His work"; "Mary is the mother of Jesus and the mother of us all"; "we are the children of Mary"; "she is the eternal dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and she remains perpetually holy, the Blessed Mother for eternity." Such texts may cause a certain type of Protestant to gasp; yet they are taken, not from St. Alphonsus Liguori or St. Bernardine of Siena, but from the mature writings of John Calvin and Martin Luther.

Thus, in Max Thurian's view, the proper grasp of Mary's role in the Redemption will only be achieved by a true freedom from controversy and an open approach to the Bible. Emancipated from preconceptions, we find no difficulty, for example, in thinking of the opening chapters of St. Luke as "the Gospel of Mary," since it was she who "transmitted to us the Word of God, the good news of salvation." With Thurian, too, we realize how clearly St. Luke, by his choice of Old Testament texts, related Mary to the Ark of the Covenant; that she "plays a personal and motherly role in the Incarnation"; that she becomes the "type of the Church and the mother of all Christians"; how at the cross "she completed what was lacking of the sorrows of Christ for His Body and for the Church"; and much besides.

If, as Max Thurian puts it, it is our duty to see to it that all generations shall call her blessed, we must make sure that "the fear of excess must not give way to a silence and avoidance of Mary in the Christian conscience that would be unfaithful to the Gospel of Christ." All of us have a great deal to learn from this profound, reflective volume. Its main lesson is that the attitude of Christians toward Mary flows naturally from their attitude toward the Incarnation.

America (April 4, 1964)

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IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Ill -- Harry Flanagan, formerly of Keenan; mother of the late Father John Murphy, C.S.C.; James Swann, '57; friend of Laurence Gott of Dillon. Deceased -- E. J. (Pete) Redden; brother of the late Cardinal John F. O'Hara, C.S.C.; grandfather of James Sak of Alumni.

NEW (OLD) COMMUNION FORMULA

"The Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dated April 25, 1964, prescribes that priests when distributing Holy Communion will say only the words 'Corpus Christi' and that each person receiving Holy Communion will respond 'Amen'. This Decree will become effective in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on May 3, 1964."

Thus, in a notice to all the clergy of the diocese, dated April 28, 1964, Bishop Pursley promulgated the new decree.

The Corpus Christi ("The Body of Christ") and the response, Amen (signifying "I believe") date back to the early Christian era. The use of this Communion formula, discontinued in the Roman Rite during the early Middle Ages, has been retained to this day in the Ambrosian Rite which is celebrated in the Diocese of Milan. The formula elicits a response or the expression of a conviction which is basic to the meaning of Communion.

When the Community of the Faithful (or Believers) receives the Lord's Body together in Communion (communio embraces the notion of mutual participation), it more fully associates itself with the redeeming Christ, and consequently, with the whole Christian community in which He lives. The fact of our association together with Christ in the Eucharist is not only designed to complete the Sacrifice of the Mass, but also to give us the strength to live out and express this Sacrifice or commitment in our daily lives. Appropriately, we say Amen ("I believe") before we receive the Lord's Body. The "I believe" is our affirmation of Christ, our confidence in the value of our fellow Christians, and our belief that the power of Christ is very much present among us.

--Father Berg

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ADDITION TO THE DIVINE PRAISES -- In the same notice in which Bishop Pursley promulgated the decree regarding the new formula to be used in the distribution of Holy Communion, he informed the clergy of the diocese of another decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

"A second Decree of the same Congregation [of Rites], under the same date, provides that the following insertion be made in the Divine Praises: 'Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete', immediately after the invocation 'Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar'. This decree will also be effective in this Diocese on May 3, 1964."