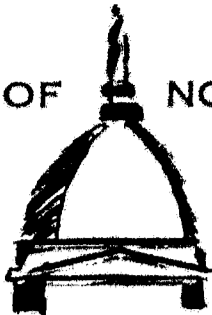


RELIGIOUS BULLETINVOL. XLIV, NO. 8
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1964REV. LLOYD W. TESKE, C.S.C.,
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITORSIDE-STEPPING THE "EITHER-OR"

In last Sunday's gospel Jesus eluded the trap set for him by the Pharisees -- watchdogs of the status-quo -- by rejecting an either-or. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; to God what is God's," is not an invitation to divide our lives into compartments, but a recognition that life is the sort of thing that demands pursuit on many levels. Indeed, if life means anything, it captures this aptitude to organize disparate concerns into one. What cannot adapt must be programmed; what can adapt signals it is alive; what can decide and discriminate announces its humanity.

Yet we are continually hiding behind either-or's as though we were neither alive nor human. One excuses himself from leadership because he has to study, another from time for prayer because his job is to work. And most insidiously of all, we still hear echoes of a faded and discredited either-or of a century ago: the individual or the state. Every concession the individual makes to society, we are told, endangers his autonomy, threatens to swallow him up in "the state". We know today, of course, that these are exaggerated polarities, that political and social life is more subtle, more intertwined than this. Every one of us is at once an individual and caught up in a web of social relations. These are simply the facts of the case. Our task is to find successful formulae for pulling both facets together.

The most enlightening way of looking at the Council is as a struggle to give both facets of man their due. The poles here are law and conscience. Life demands both spontaneity and boundaries; without law it turns malignant, without its characteristic elan, it is indistinguishable from death. The Council Fathers are espousing the truth that change is normalcy, avowing that we must experiment to find the patterns respecting at once law and conscience, protecting the full range of man's freedom.

In worship the poles are public and private; and the task of our day is to rediscover the public face of prayer. But try as we might, this strikes us as a contradiction. And it is not simply that we have always been used to praying in silence, but also that we cannot help associate the public with the superficial. Politics strikes us as somehow dirty; no one considers it as an occupation! We are content to think of a job and a family. Anything more is somehow superfluous.

But look around at the impasse this kind of thinking has brought
(continued on page three)

About Books.....

A MESSAGE FOR ALL TIMES Prejudice hampered an understanding of our faith in the beginning of Christianity, says Fr. Domenico Grasso (one of the contributors to the new P.J. Kenedy publication, The Word*), "but its very novelty stimulated men to try to understand it, especially after the first persecutions had proved its vitality."

Today, Fr. Grasso says, the situation is reversed. In the eyes of our pagan contemporaries, Christianity often appears worn out, antiquated, a thing of the past. "There was strong prejudice against Christianity in the first centuries," he says, "but today prejudice is not only stronger, it also results in a different kind of opposition. In the early centuries prejudice was the result of plain ignorance -- people didn't know what Christianity was. Nowadays they think they understand it only too well and proceed to condemn without bothering to study what they are rejecting." In the time of Tertullian, he says, the Church was condemned without being known at all. Now it is considered to be fully known and is rejected in view of that supposed knowledge.

"When one reads some of our modern writers," he says, "and sees what ideas modern pagans have of religion, of Christianity in particular, one is simply amazed. The best face you can put on it is to say that for them religion is merely a collection of pretty tales and religious practices." They miss entirely the idea of revelation as a decisive historical event, the idea of God entering into history to lift man up to the level of a divine life -- a life centered around the person of Christ and unfolding the whole mystery of Christ.

On the one hand, human beings today seem to lack a religious sense, seem to lack that kind of hearing by which a person takes God's revealing speech into his own personal inner life, in order to make decisions on the basis of that revelation-- and yet on the other hand, as another writer (Fr. Augustin Leonard) says in the same book, "Our age seems to have been given the grace to begin anew to listen, with greater attention, to the living and efficacious Word of God," that Word of God which is the first and fundamental reality upon which the whole Christian mystery depends.

Fr. Grasso speaks of the need for adults to "ratify" by a study of the Word of God, the faith they have received in infancy--to ratify by understanding afresh and living anew, in a manner befitting a mature person, what was previously understood and practiced with the mind of a child and adolescent. This ratification, he says, is not an act which the adult makes only once. A person can go on ratifying his faith as long as he lives, because his faith takes on greater meaning day by day. The Word of God, he says adapts itself to all ages and conditions of men. Every stage of mankind's spiritual development brings with it greater insights into the riches of the Word of God.

--Claude L. Boehm--

*P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1964, \$4.95

us to: personal wealth and public poverty, cities gleaming with urban blight, families settled down in splendid isolation. We are gradually beginning to dig out of the debris, beginning to assume community responsibility on limited yet meaningful scales. The Christian Family Movement has shown how families must needs band together to fulfill their role of nurturing values; urban renewal programs have begun to elicit the confidence and contribution of those who once disdained politics.

As a nation we are beginning to explore the areas of responsibility for the common weal that we must adopt as persons -- both individual and social -- and which remain possible of part-time achievement. Liturgical renewal is but one of these many first steps to re-discovering the social dimension of man. Like the other steps, this one -- our faltering responses and hesitant singing -- is halting and awkward. Any attempt at renewal demands patience, confidence. But all of these steps have a deep claim upon us. For with each of them in a different way we are seeking the way out of the easy myths and tired slogans of another century and trying to reconstruct the person at a time when life in its fullness is in danger of being flattened into one or maybe two dimensions. Surrounded by either-or's -- sports or study, affluence or commitment -- we are trying to show that the human response, the Christ-like answer is to sidestep the dilemma, and take both. But this demands experimentation, creative effort. And it demands prayer to feed us in times of frustration -- prayer which is truly personal, and hence at once individual and social, prayer which unites us to Christ's members, our brothers, in reaching out for Christ Himself.

--David Burrell, C.S.C.

* * * * *

THE VIEW FROM THE OUTSIDE

"My husband and I have just returned from Notre Dame where our son is a freshman. We attended the 8:30 Mass and found it entirely different from anything we have known. I went to the next Mass and sat up in the front section and loved this Mass even more because I understood why the host was on the table at the entry. I think the congregational participation makes you feel so close, and the young man (the commentator) did a beautiful job in leading us..."

A parent from Los Angeles

* * * * *

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- Thomas F. Konop, dean of the College of Law, 1923-41; father of Rev. Paul E. Waldschmidt, C.S.C., president of the University of Portland; grandfather of John Swaner of Sorin; Charles A. Finkel, '34. Ill -- wife of Leo J. Scanlon, '30, and mother of Sheila, St. Mary's, '64; Robert F. Martin, '43, brother of John J., '40 and Francis, '48.

". . . For He knew what was in their hearts." For many who came in contact with Christ during the years he covered the Galilean countryside preaching the coming of God and the Kingdom, of a sudden there came the realization that this man knew them for who they really were -- no words, no gestures, no evasive measures whatever could fool this man or turn aside his gaze as he saw the so-long hidden depths of their hearts and knew them for the persons they were. It was a startling experience. Nathaniel immediately proclaimed him son of God; the Samaritan woman at the well dropped her pitcher and ran shouting to the village: "Come quickly; the Messiah is here" -- despite the fact that he had revealed to her his knowledge of her as a sinner; and then there were others... they could not stand the purity and force of his gaze into their hearts -- so "they plotted against him."

Redeemed by him and alive with the life of the risen Lord Jesus, we realize within us these same reactions whenever we have the courage to turn fully and look into the face of Christ -- and begin to see there our true identities: we revolt as we see there the man who must die to himself in order to rise to a newness of life in him; we rejoice humbly over the vision of the sinner, forgiven in the love of the Savior; we exult in recognition of the effects of that forgiving love, the man sincerely struggling to walk in the "Follow me" direction, toward greater union with him.

First on the worksheet of the Bishops and uppermost in their minds is the task ". . . that the Church become more aware of herself." They have been called to an awesome vocation: to look upon the Face of God -- to look upon the Face of Christ and there see the face and the personality of the Church, the Whole Christ. But no one sees God and lives. The Bishops (and all of us with them) are coming to know that death, and the risen life that fills the void. Despite the headlines of the world's newspapers, despite the rather cold, detached and speculative way we might look upon their work, they are struggling to fulfill the call of Christ; they are fighting to allow the Face of Christ to shine upon and through the Church. Christ Jesus has gazed into our hearts, into the heart of the Church, and he has spoken to us in that unique knowledge that is his:

". . . what do you say about yourself? What is your faith about your own nature, founded by Christ and continuously revived and sustained by His Spirit? What are you confessing before God about the tragic mystery of our Christian divisions? What is your answer to the call of God in this pluralistic, planetarian world of ours? What are you saying about the scandal of hunger, poverty, cruelty, and war between Christians, between human beings, all of them called into the brotherhood of Christ, as sons of the Father through the Power of the Spirit?" (Pope Paul in his opening address to the Council)

--Father Langdon, C.S.C.