

DIPLOMA CEREMONY, ST PAUL'S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, 19 MARCH 1981

YOUR GRACE, MY LORD BISHOP, WARDEN, STUDENTS PAST AND PRESENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SOME MONTHS AGO WHEN THE WARDEN INVITED ME TO GIVE THIS ADDRESS, I CONSIDERED IT A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE BEEN SELECTED - AS A LAYMAN AND AS A CLOSE NEIGHBOUR. WE AT RHODES HAVE BEEN INDEBTED TO YOUR WARDEN FOR DELIVERING THE ADDRESS AT OUR FOUNDERS' DAY SERVICE LAST YEAR AND TO FR. GARNER FOR HIS SERMON AT OUR BEGINNING OF YEAR ACADEMIC SERVICE A FEW WEEKS BACK. FURTHERMORE, BOTH ARCHBISHOP BURNETT WHO IS A RHODES GRADUATE DIRECTLY AND HONORIS CAUSA, AND BISHOP ORAM, HAVE ADDRESSED US AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES, WHILE THE WARDEN DURING HIS STUDENT DAYS ESTABLISHED A REPUTATION WHICH STILL LIVES ON IN OUR ANNALS. THE INVITATION TO ADDRESS YOU TONIGHT WAS QUITE CLEARLY AN OFFER I COULD NOT REFUSE.

THOSE OF YOU FOR WHOM THIS HAPPY OCCASION HAS BEEN ARRANGED HAVE COMPLETED YOUR STUDIES, RECEIVED YOUR ORDINATION AND HAVE STARTED OUT ON YOUR MINISTRIES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. IT IS A KIND OF LIFE OF WHICH I HAVE HAD NO DIRECT EXPERIENCE, AND THEREFORE YOU WILL BE SPARED ANY GRATUITOUS ADVICE AS TO HOW TO MANAGE THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF YOUR CALLING. FOR THE MOST PART YOU ARE NOT SCHOLARS, YOU ARE NOT THEOLOGIANS, AND YOU HAVE AS YET RECEIVED NO PREFERMENT IN THE HIERARCHY. THE MOST REVEREND ARCHBISHOP AND THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON ARE HARD ACTS TO FOLLOW. (IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SOURCE OF SURPRISE TO ME THAT THE CHURCH HAS NOT MADE PROVISION FOR ARCHPRIESTS.) I HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHAT SORT OF ARCHDOM I CAN LAY CLAIM TO. AS A VICE-CHANCELLOR I ALREADY FEEL SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE AMONGST THIS CONCENTRATION OF VIRTUE.

WHAT MESSAGE THEN AM I ABLE TO DELIVER THAT WILL NOT SIMPLY BE LOST IN THE FALLOUT? IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT SEEMED THAT THE BEST STRATEGY WAS TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM BROADSIDE ON AND TALK TO YOU ABOUT ORTHODOXY. THE WORD IS DEFINED IN THE SHORTER OXFORD DICTIONARY AS "BELIEF IN OR AGREEMENT WITH WHAT IS, OR IS CURRENTLY HELD TO BE RIGHT, ESPECIALLY IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS". G K CHESTERTON, ONE OF MY FAVOURITE WRITERS, HAS WRITTEN A WHOLE BOOK WITH THIS TITLE, SUBTITLING IT AS "A PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY". IN THE INTRODUCTION HE STATES THAT IT IS NOT A THEOLOGICAL TREATISE BUT RATHER A SLOPPY AUTOBIOGRAPHY. I AM MUCH INFLUENCED BY ALL THAT I HAVE READ OF G K C: I MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT AT THE OUTSET, AND SO DAMPEN ANY ACCUSATION OF PLAGIARISM. CHESTERTON DEFINES CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY LOOSELY AS WHAT IS CONTAINED IN THE APOSTLES' CREED, AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CHRISTIANS, IN MOST AGES AND IN MOST PLACES. I KNOW HOW SLIPPERY THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS CAN BE. UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES WOULD HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS THE TOUCHSTONE OF ANGLICAN ORTHODOXY. NOWADAYS THEIR IMPORTANCE IS VERY MUCH DE-EMPHASISED. I AM NOT CONSIDERING ORTHODOXY, THEREFORE, IN THE TERMS OF A PARTICULAR SECTARIAN FORMULATION BUT RATHER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CENTRAL CORE OF BELIEFS HELD BY MAINSTREAM CHRISTIANS.

FOR SOME REASON WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND INEXPLICABLE ORTHODOXY HAS A BAD IMAGE. IT TENDS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN ACQUIESCENCE IN AUTHORITARIANISM, WITH SUPPORT OF THE STATUS QUO OR WITH AN UNWILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS; IN SHORT WITH BEING "SQUARE". WHO ARE THE CHURCHMEN ONE READS ABOUT? BISHOP ROBINSON, HANS KÜNG, FATHER SCHILLEBEECKX, NOT EXACTLY PILLARS OF ORTHODOXY. IT IS SOMEHOW FAR MORE DARING (IT CERTAINLY MAKES FOR BETTER MEDIA COVERAGE) TO LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ONE HAS PROBLEMS WITH MIRACLES, THE VIRGIN BIRTH, JESUS AS

TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN, OR EVEN THE RESURRECTION ITSELF THAN TO DECLARE THAT ONE ACCEPTS, "IN THE LITERAL AND GRAMMATICAL SENSE" ALL THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH.

I BELIEVE THAT PART OF THE EXPLANATION LIES IN THE FACT THAT IT IS ALWAYS POPULAR TO ATTACK POSITIONS AND ACTIVITIES THAT ARE NOT REGARDED AS ANY LONGER BEING VITAL, EVEN IF LIP SERVICE IS STILL BEING PAID TO THEM. AN OBVIOUS EXAMPLE: ANY "WITH-IT" AFRIKANER ACADEMIC OR DIVINE WHO EXPRESSES DOUBTS ABOUT SOME ASPECT OF AFRIKANER ORTHODOXY IS IMMEDIATELY ASSURED OF A GOOD HEARING. A STALWART DEFENDER OF THE "OLDTIME AFRIKANER RELIGION" IS NOT WORTH MUCH ATTENTION. OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS IN PRAVDA ARE DULL FOR THE SAME REASON: IT IS NECESSARY TO AFFIRM FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION POSITIONS TO WHICH ONE HAS NO LONGER ANY SERIOUS INNER COMMITMENT.

TO GET AWAY FROM ALL SUCH HYPOCRISY A GOOD FIELD TO TURN TO IS SPORT, WHERE TO BE A TRUE BELIEVER CONTINUES TO HAVE PRESTIGE. ORTHODOXY IN SPORT IS STILL REGARDED AS EXCITING AND PRAISEWORTHY. BARRY RICHARDS IS A BEAUTIFUL BAT WHOM AFICIONADOS FLOCK TO ADMIRE PRECISELY BECAUSE HE IS SO ORTHODOX. GARY PLAYER IS A HIGHLY ORTHODOX GOLFER; NAAS BOTHA IS AN ORTHODOX FLY-HALF IN THE CLASSICAL SPRINGBOK MOULD.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE AS GOOD A PRESS AS RICHARDS, PLAYER AND BOTHA IF PEOPLE TOOK THEIR RELIGION AS SERIOUSLY AS THEY DO THEIR SPORT. IN DAYS WHEN THEY DID THE LEADING ORTHODOX EXPONENTS WERE "TOP OF THE POPS". ATHANASIOUS WAS A FOLK HERO; PEOPLE RESERVED FOR ST BENEDICT, ST BERNARD, ST FRANCIS, ST DOMINIC OR ST IGNATUS LOYOLA THE KIND OF ADULATION THAT ONLY ELVIS PRESLEY, THE BEATLES, PELE OR SIR STANLEY MATTHEWS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COMMAND IN OUR DAY.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD ASPIRE TO ORTHODOXY IN THE SENSE THAT I HAVE DESCRIBED IT? TO ME THE ANSWER IS THAT IF WE WISH TO MAKE PROGRESS IN OUR RELIGION IN THE SAME SENSE THAT PEOPLE WISH TO PROGRESS IN PLAYING A SPORT OR A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE A SENSE OF BALANCE, TO BE ABLE TO COMBINE COMPLEXITIES, SOMETIMES SEEMINGLY IRRECONCILABLE, INTO A DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM. CONSIDER THE ANALOGY OF LEARNING HOW TO PLAY GOLF. HOW DOES ONE COPE WITH, AND INTEGRATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF STANCE, FOOT, KNEE, HIP AND ARM MOVEMENT, BACKSWING AND FOLLOW THROUGH? ONE'S ONLY SALVATION IS TO FOLLOW RELIGIOUSLY THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PLAYER OR NICKLAUS (I WAS ALMOST TEMPTED TO SAY ST GARY AND ST JACK). IN SHORT THERE IS A SAVING ORTHODOXY. FOR THE SAME REASON RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY SETS US ON THE RIGHT PATH TO RECONCILING SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION, FAITH AND GOOD WORKS, ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION, PIETISM AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL, AS WELL AS ALL THE NUMEROUS OTHER PITFALLS FOR THE UNWARY.

LET US ACCEPT AT ONCE THAT IN MANY WAYS IT IS FAR MORE COMFORTABLE TO BE HETERODOX THAN ORTHODOX. IT IS THE LAZY MAN'S WAY OUT. THE HETERODOX GOLFER WITH A BAD SLICE, TO RETURN TO OUR PREVIOUS ANALOGY, TRIES TO AVOID THE SEVERE DISCIPLINE OF CURING IT ACCORDING TO ORTHODOX PRINCIPLES. INSTEAD, HE TRIES TO LIVE WITH IT AND COMPENSATE BY AIMING TO THE LEFT, USUALLY WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS. HE REMAINS PERMANENTLY OFF-BALANCE. SIMILARLY THE ONESIDED SOCIAL GOSPELLER HAS FORGOTTEN, IF INDEED HE WAS EVER AWARE OF IT, THE SOUND JESUIT ADVICE "WORK AS IF EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON YOU; PRAY AS IF EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON GOD". HE ENDS UP MERELY PAYING LIPSERVICE TO PRAYER, AND LIKE THE ERRANT GOLFER, TRIES TO COMPENSATE BY AIMING A LITTLE MORE TO THE LEFT. WE ALL KNOW THE TYPE.

ORTHODOXY, LIKE MOST OTHER FORMS OF BASIC HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, IS VERY HARD TO DESCRIBE ACCURATELY BUT THAT DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY THAT IT IS

IMPOSSIBLY DIFFICULT TO PRACTISE. A FAMOUS SKIER, NOTED FOR THE SWIFTESS AND GRACE OF HIS SLALOMS AND TURNS, WAS ONCE ASKED TO DESCRIBE HIS ACTIONS IN WORDS. HE WAS REDUCED TO TONGUE-TIED CONFUSION. IF WE HAD TO DESCRIBE TO AN INTELLIGENT DOLPHIN WHAT SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS WE EXECUTED IN ORDER TO WALK WE SHOULD FIND IT EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT. NOBODY TO MY KNOWLEDGE HAS SUCCESSFULLY PROGRAMMED A COMPUTER TO CONTROL A HUMANOID ROBOT THAT COULD WALK, PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE DESCRIPTION, AND HENCE INSTRUCTION PROBLEM. NO BIRD COULD POSSIBLY TELL YOU HOW IT FLIES. INDEED AN EMINENT APPLIED MATHEMATICIAN ONCE "PROVED" THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A BUMBLE BEE TO FLY!

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FUNCTIONS OF A THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND A UNIVERSITY IS VERY MUCH RELATED TO THIS QUESTION OF ORTHODOXY. THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE IS SET UP AND MAINTAINED BY A PARTICULAR CHURCH FOR

THE VERY SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF TRAINING ITS FUTURE CLERGY. THOSE ADMITTED ARE RESTRICTED TO COMMITTED MALE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH WHO BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE A VOCATION TO SERVE GOD IN THE MINISTRY. THEY ARE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR LIKELY SUITABILITY. THE TASK OF THE COLLEGE IS NOT ONLY TO PREPARE THEM INTELLECTUALLY BUT ALSO TO DIRECT THEIR SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND TO TRAIN THEM FOR THE PRACTICAL REALITIES OF THEIR CALLING. WHAT IS TAUGHT, WHO TEACHES IT AND TO WHOM IT IS TAUGHT ARE ALL SUBJECT TO WHAT IS THE CURRENT ORTHODOXY OF THE DAY. THE ELEMENT OF SPECULATIVE HYPOTHESIS TESTING SHOULD CLEARLY NOT LOOM VERY LARGE.

AT THE UNIVERSITY THE EMPHASIS IS MUCH MORE HEAVILY PLACED ON THE INTELLECTUAL. IN CERTAIN FIELDS, THE PARADIGMS BEING MEDICINE AND LAW WHERE THE TRADITIONS EXTEND RIGHT BACK TO THE EARLIEST DAYS OF UNIVERSITIES, THE ELEMENTS OF MORAL AND ETHICAL FORMATION AND PRACTICAL

1

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CONTINUE TO ASSUME AN IMPORTANT ROLE. NEVERTHELESS, THE MAIN THRUST IN THE UNIVERSITY AS A WHOLE IS ON THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT. THERE IS NO OFFICIAL COMMITMENT TO A SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY, BUT A UNIVERSITY COULD NOT FUNCTION WITHOUT A LIMITED BUT VITAL INTELLECTUAL ORTHODOXY OF ITS OWN. THERE HAS TO BE AT THE CORE OF ACADEMIC LIFE A COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO WHAT ONE COULD SUMMARISE AS INTELLECTUAL HONESTY, THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF WHICH ARE THE ACCEPTANCE OF EVIDENCE PROPERLY TESTED AND THE DISCIPLINE OF VIGOROUS AND LOGICAL ARGUMENT.

ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIVERSITY, HOWEVER, IS ITS PREDILECTION TO RESEARCH AND SPECULATIVE INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY, THE OUTCOMES OF WHICH ARE BY DEFINITION NOT PREDICTABLE A PRIORI. THESE ACTIVITIES CAN PLACE THE COMMITTED ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN IN AN APPARENT DILEMMA. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE OUTCOME OF HIS RESEARCH APPEARS

12

TO BE LEADING HIM TO CONCLUSIONS INESCAPABLY AT VARIANCE WITH HIS CHRISTIAN FAITH? PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS EXAMPLE IS THAT OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION. THE RESOLUTION OF THIS DILEMMA REQUIRES NOTHING LESS THAN A DARING EXERCISE OF FAITH. TRUTH IS INDIVISIBLE, AND THEREFORE NO ACCURATE AND HONEST INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY CAN BE AT VARIANCE WITH REVEALED RELIGION PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD. GOD IS TRUTH, AND THEREFORE THE TRUTH OF HIS REVELATION AND THE TRUTH ARRIVED AT BY THE EXERCISE OF GOD-GIVEN INTELLECT CANNOT BE CONTRADICTORY. ANY APPARENT CONTRADICTION IS USUALLY RESOLVED BY CLOSER INSPECTION AND ANALYSIS DEMONSTRATING THAT THE INITIAL INTELLECTUAL CONCLUSIONS REQUIRE MODIFICATION. OCCASIONALLY, HOWEVER, THE INTELLECTUAL CONCLUSIONS REMAIN UNSHAKEABLE AND THE AGONISING ORDEAL OF COMING TO THE RELUCTANT BUT INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION THAT WE HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD OUR FAITH FULLY ENOUGH MUST BE ACCEPTED. THE RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY OF THE DAY MUST BE RE-EXAMINED. CARDINAL NEWMAN DESCRIBED ASPECTS OF THE PROCESS

BRILLIANTLY IN HIS FAMOUS TREATISE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE. FORTUNATELY, AN EVENT OF THIS TYPE USUALLY TAKES PLACE ON A FAIRLY LENGTHY TIMESCALE, AND EVEN THE MOST TENDER CONSCIENCE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT. NOTHING IN THIS SUBLUNARY WORLD REMAINS COMPLETELY STATIC. GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH REMAINS IMMUTABLE: IT IS ONLY OUR IMPERFECT UNDERSTANDING OF IT THAT MUST STRETCH AND DEVELOP.

EVEN IN THE PURELY SECULAR DOMAIN REASSESSMENTS OF GENERALLY RECEIVED WISDOM TAKE PLACE NOT WITHOUT PAIN. EINSTEIN'S STARTLING EXPOSITION OF RELATIVITY THREW INTO INITIAL CONFUSION THE SAFE AND ESTABLISHED VERITIES OF THE WORLD OF NEWTONIAN MECHANICS, WHICH HAD REIGNED UNCHALLENGED FOR THREE CENTURIES. AFTER THE INITIAL PANIC IT WAS REALISED THAT NEWTONIAN MECHANICS HAD NOT BEEN OVERTHROWN. THEY WERE RESTRICTED TO THEIR RIGHTFUL DOMAIN OF THE ORDINARY WORLD WHERE VELOCITIES WHICH ARE A SIGNIFICANT FRACTION OF THE SPEED OF LIGHT

ARE NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION. SIMILARLY, SECURE THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS NORMALLY SHOW A GREATER DURABILITY THAN SCIENTIFIC ONES. THE FAULT WILL USUALLY BE FOUND TO LIE WITH US RATHER THAN THEM.

LET US CONSIDER NOW THIS QUESTION OF ORTHODOXY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE LAYMAN IN THE PEW, AND WHAT HE IS ENTITLED TO EXPECT FROM YOU. HE WANTS HIS SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY DECENTLY AND DECOROUSLY ADMINISTERED, AND THE LITURGY OF THE WORD DILIGENTLY PREPARED AND INTELLIGIBLY DELIVERED. HE WANTS A HOLY MAN CLOSE TO GOD, A MAN OF DEEP SPIRITUALITY TO WHOM HE CAN LOOK UP AS A MODEL. HE WANTS A SOURCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE AND GUIDANCE, TOTALLY CONSISTENT WITH THE BASICS OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED IN WHICH THE EBULLIENT MR CHESTERTON SETS SO HIGH A STORE. HE DOES NOT WANT ANY RED DEANS, HONEST TO GODS, SITUATIONAL ETHICS AND OTHER TRENDY FADS. NO ILL-DIGESTED DOUBTS ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH, THE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION OR TRADITIONAL MORAL DOCTRINES SHOULD

15

BE PRESENTED TO HIM IN THE INTEREST OF THEIR SHOCK-THERAPEUTIC VALUE. DO NOT TAMPER WITH THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE OR OF LIFE. IN SHORT "GIVE THEM THE OLD, OLD STORY."

TO MY MIND ONE OF THE BASIC FACTORS OF YOUR LIFE FROM NOW ON IS THAT YOU ARE PROFESSIONALS, AND AS SUCH YOU HAVE THE STRICTEST OBLIGATION TO RENDER THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF SERVICE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR NOBLE CALLING. THE LAYMAN DOES NOT GO TO HIS MEDICAL PRACTITIONER, DENTIST OR ATTORNEY FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN CORRECT VIEWS AND GENERALLY ACCEPTED ADVICE OR TREATMENT. IN SHORT HE PAYS FOR AND IS ENTITLED TO EXPECT ORTHODOX SERVICE. THE PROFESSIONALS IN THESE FIELDS LEAVE THE EXPERIMENTS AND THE UNTESTED VIEWS TO THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OR THE LAW SCHOOL.

16

AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL OF MOTIVATION I VIEW MY PRESENT AVOCATION IN EXACTLY THIS HARD, PROFESSIONAL LIGHT. DAILY I SET BEFORE MYSELF THE TASK OF BEING AN ORTHODOX VICE-CHANCELLOR RUNNING AN ORTHODOX UNIVERSITY, COMMITTED TO ITS ASSIGNED TASK OF PRESERVING, TRANSMITTING AND EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE. ONE ENDEAVOURS TO AVOID COOPTATION BY EITHER THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT OR THE RADICALS, BOTH OF WHOM WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO USE THE UNIVERSITY, EITHER AS PART OF THE TOTAL STRATEGY OR AS PART OF THE TOTAL ONSLAUGHT. ONE OCCASIONALLY ENCOUNTERS SOME EXTRAORDINARY DOCTRINE, SUCH AS THIS SNIPPET FROM A RECENT STUDENT PUBLICATION: "RATIONAL THOUGHT IS A BOURGEOIS HANG-UP." DEFENDING ORTHODOXY IS NEVER DULL WORK.

YOU WILL BE FACING THE THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS EQUIVALENT OF WHAT I HAVE BEEN DESCRIBING. THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN EITHER THE PIE-IN-THE-SKY QUIETISTS OR THE SOCIAL GOSPELLERS, OR PERHAPS BOTH SIMULTANEOUSLY



17

WILL TRY TO COOPT YOU. ONLY AFTER MUCH PRAYER, MUCH RELIANCE ON THE HOLY GHOST AND MUCH PRACTICE WILL YOU ATTAIN THE NECESSARY BALANCE AND SKILL TO RIDE THE ORTHODOX BICYCLE WITHOUT WOBBLING TO ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. IN THE WELL KNOWN WORDS OF THE COMPLINE SERVICE "BRETHREN BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT, FOR YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL AS A ROARING LION WALKETH ABOUT SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR. WHOM RESIST, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH." JUST AS THE GOLFER RECOGNISES EASILY THAT HIS SWING IS FINALLY WELL GROOVED, YOU WILL RECOGNISE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE BALANCE AND A SOBER SELF-CONFIDENCE OF A WELL PRACTISED ORTHODOXY, BUT AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, YOU WILL FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE IN DETAIL WHAT EXACTLY YOU ARE DOING.

SOME EASILY MARKED PRACTICAL BEHAVIOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MATURE AND WELL-BALANCED PRIEST WILL BE READILY RECOGNISED BY HIS OBSERVERS. AS A PROFESSIONAL HE WILL AVOID EXTRAVAGANCES EITHER OF OPINIONS OR

18

EXTERNALS, BUT INSTEAD HE WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE ESSENTIALS. HE WILL BE A MAN DEEPLY INFORMED BY PRAYER AND SELF-DENIAL. HIS PARISH WILL BE ADMINISTERED EFFICIENTLY. HIS DRESS AND MANNER WILL BE SIMPLE AND SOBER, DEVOID OF ALL PERSONAL IDIOSYNCRACIES AND ANNOYING MANNERISMS. HE WILL NOT HESITATE TO ADMONISH WICKEDNESS AND INJUSTICE, BUT HIS STRICTURES WILL BE TEMPERED WITH HUMILITY AND MERCY. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, WEAKNESS AND TEMPERANCE, AS EXPOUNDED BY YOUR OWN ST PAUL TO THE GALATIANS, WILL BE HIS HALLMARK. ST MATTHEW PUTS IT EQUALLY WELL: "LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."

YOU HAVE TAKEN THE FIRST FEW UNCERTAIN STEPS IN A GLORIOUS ADVENTURE, AS GOD'S SPECIALLY CHOSEN FRIENDS. THE PATH BEFORE YOU WILL NOT BE EASY, BUT PROVIDED YOU STICK TO YOUR LASTS, IT WILL FREQUENTLY BE

EXHILARATING. ONE IS REMINDED OF ONE OF THE STORIES TOLD ABOUT ST TERESA OF AVILA, THAT GREAT SPANISH MYSTIC AND WOMAN OF ACTION, WHOSE WORDS AND DEEDS COME ACROSS SO SPARKLING AND ALIVE IN THE WONDERFUL TRANSLATIONS OF HER WORK BY ALLISON PEERS. TRAVELLING ONE DAY BETWEEN TWO OF THE CONVENTS WHICH SHE HAD FOUNDED SHE HAD A NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING IN A SWOLLEN RIVER. "IF THIS IS HOW YOU TREAT YOUR FRIENDS, DEAR LORD", SHE SAID, "IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT YOU HAVE SO FEW."

IN THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES THE FRANKS SO DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES THROUGH THEIR ZEAL AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE SERVICE OF GOD THAT MEN SPOKE IN WONDERMENT OF "GESTA DEI PER FRANCO", THE ACTS OF GOD THROUGH THE AGENCY OF THE FRANKS. IN THE SOUTH AFRICA OF TODAY WE NEED THE SAME MIRACLES OF GOD'S GRACE THAT HE CHOSE TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGH THE DEDICATION OF THE FRANKS. ONE DAY, PLEASE GOD, MEN MAY EVEN TALK OF "GESTA DEI PER AFRICANOS AUSTRALES", GOD'S DOINGS THROUGH THE SOUTH

AFRICANS. ON THIS NIGHT YOU ARE FORMALLY TAKING LEAVE OF ST PAULS TO PLAY YOUR PART IN THIS GREAT WORK. AS YOU DO SO REMIND YOURSELF OF YOUR COAT OF ARMS AND YOUR MOTTO, FIDE STATIS. IN THESE TWO WORDS THERE COULD BE NO FINER SUMMARY OF MY MESSAGE TO YOU.

GODSPEED AND GOD BLESS YOU.

D S HENDERSON

19 MARCH 1981