

1-1-1963

The Marian Forum Volume 3: Vessels of Clay

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The Marian Forum



Volume 3
Vessels
of
Clay

56T1003
I 71

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THE MARIAN FORUM

Volume 3

Vessels of Clay

Edited by

Alfred Isacson, O.Carm.



The Scapular Press
New York

B&T 1003
I 71

Imprimi Potest:

ALOYSIUS R. NAGLE, O.CARM.
Prior Provincial
May 25, 1963

Nihil Obstat:

JOSEPH G. KEMPF, PH.D.
Censor Librorum
June 28, 1963

Imprimatur:

✠ PAUL C. SCHULTE, D.D.
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Copyright, 1963, by The Scapular Press
Printed and bound in the United States of America
by
The Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, Indiana

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Spiritual Direction

Introduction

To gain eternal life, we must die in possession of the precious treasure of sanctifying grace which we received at baptism. Because we bear this treasure in vessels of clay, which shatter easily when we stumble and fall along the path of life, this is no simple task but one which tests the strongest of men.

The life of grace never stands still; it grows or withers. We cannot preserve it as we would a valuable painting but we must cultivate it and make it grow. Unless we continually nourish the life of grace, it grows cold within us and our fervor declines. The Mass, the sacraments, prayer: These are the principle means we have of increasing grace. This year's Marian Forum is concerned with these topics.

Through spiritual direction, we know our purpose and solve difficulties we meet along the way. Holiness is our goal in life and we have Our Lady, the perfect Christian, as a model of this. In praying, we encounter many problems; how to make progress when confronted with them is a widespread difficulty. Then, through it all, we ought to live the Marian life and have a tender devotion to Mary. These are the subjects of this volume of the Marian Forum.

When given, these conferences seem to have been productive of much fruit. May they now in their printed form bring more to know and love him whose mother the Marian Forum honors.

Alfred Isacson, O.Carm.

Spiritual Direction

THIS IS THE FIRST talk of the Forum and we are taking for our topic this morning, as you may have seen from the program, "Spiritual Direction." Father Faber, in one of his conferences, called the subject of the Spiritual Director "the most vexed question of the whole spiritual life." I am very fond of Father Faber, but it does seem to me that whatever problem he is considering is the most vexed for him at the moment. Whatever defect he is talking of in the spiritual life, he always refers to as the most fundamental. "If this goes, he would say, "everything goes"—that kind of thing. Whatever problem he is discussing, I think he seems to consider the most vexed. Nevertheless, it is a problem, and it is also a very vast subject. Hence, our approach to it this morning might more properly be described as selected questions from this general area of spiritual theology, the subject of the spiritual director.

There is, however, very much I would say to Father Faber's comment that it is a vexed problem. There is a personal difficulty I have with the subject of the spiritual director. As with so many other questions in the spiritual life, I find it rather easy to talk with enthusiasm and conviction about them even though, at the same time I might not be putting these things into practice in my own personal life. For example, I think I can speak zealously and with enthusiasm on penance and mortification in the spiritual life, then go home and do nothing about it, but not be bothered by the fact that I do nothing about it. I would not be so bothered that I find it difficult to talk about it again. With the spiritual director it seems a little different. Sometimes it seems that even in talking I am not able to summon up the conviction and the enthusiasm I would like. I'm not able to swallow all that the spiritual writers say, even in theory, about the necessity for a spiritual director. Indirectly, for example, the topic of spiritual direction is frequently treated like a joke. I mean as a joke at the table when you talk about somebody looking for a spiritual director, because it's like labeling someone a "nut," or certainly a member of the lunatic fringe. "He wants a director; he's looking for a director." That is the way we talk about it frequently.

Perhaps, if we were to have a show of hands in answer to the question—"Do you have a spiritual director?"—it would probably seem from the number of

hands waving about that we are very much at variance, at least in practice, with all the theory about the necessity of direction in the spiritual life. Of course we cannot deny all this theory. The fact that there are problems about understanding the need for direction, problems about the kind of people who come looking for direction, the problems about the availability of direction, does not allow us to deny the statements of authorities about the necessity for spiritual direction. Father Garrigou-Lagrange in one of his books quotes from Saint Vincent Ferrer who says that, "He who has a director whom he obeys unreservedly, will reach his goal in life far more quickly and easily than he would if he relied on his own powers, no matter how keen his intelligence, nor how good the books he chooses for his spiritual reading." And, Father Garrigou-Lagrange continues that Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome, and Saint Basil and many other great saints, fathers and doctors of the Church agree that; "No one is an impartial judge in his own case, because each man judges according to his own particular inclination," and therefore, direction is seen as necessary.

Well, perhaps, there is a certain amount of misunderstanding here when we come to the topic of spiritual direction, and perhaps misunderstanding explains our misgivings about spiritual direction. There is a misunderstanding about direction in genuinely odd people who come looking for direction, and that leads us who observe them as "odd" to think that the whole idea of direction is very odd. Perhaps, too, there is some misunderstanding in ourselves about what is exactly our personal need for direction, if any, and what exactly we can expect from the director if we're looking for spiritual direction. Maybe there are misunderstandings about the things like these, and then these misunderstandings lead us to misgivings about the whole topic of spiritual direction. So I would suggest that clarification about this issue of spiritual direction might come from a simple restatement of what a director is supposed to do. For the most part, a director is meant to find himself directing beginners in the spiritual life. Saint Theresa of Avila was a beginner, wasn't she for thirty or forty years. So we will be beginners for a long time and if we go to someone looking for direction, that person is meant to treat us like beginners, instruct us, and guide us about subjects like the following.

First is mortification. The spiritual director is meant to guide and instruct the soul on the subject of mortification because this is very essential and very fundamental in the spiritual life. Nevertheless, it can be a source of many problems in the spiritual life too. Plenty of beginners, such as novices, when they hear about subjects like mortification and things like that, frequently feel that here's an area of spiritual life where I can roll up my sleeves and get to work; this is a place where I can see real progress coming when I push aside the

toast in the morning, and the cereal. They have to be guided and instructed. If not properly instructed, then later on, when they develop a little bit, they will say, "Well that was only kid stuff." If they read that kind of mortification isn't necessary, they will be in danger of chucking the whole idea. So the director has to guide them, and insist on the necessity for some type of external mortification. But he will insist on the superiority and primacy of interior mortification, discipline of the mind, the curtailment of day-dreaming—that type of thing. He'll advise you to use your mind to concentrate when you're reading the paper or dialing numbers on the telephone. That will stand you in good stead when it comes time to pray, when it comes time to read the Office, and when it comes time to prepare your lessons. Don't despise external mortification, but be humble enough to admit that there is very little that you are willing and able to do with great generosity of spirit.

The director is also meant to guide the beginner in spiritual life about the sacraments. Someone who is trying to lead a spiritual life should receive the sacrament of penance once a week and should receive the Holy Eucharist, when it's possible, every day. The director is meant to guide and prepare the soul for the proper and fruitful reception of these sacraments. He's supposed to instruct the individual that the important element of preparation for the sacrament of penance is the disposition of conversion, to want always to be converted to the real life of God. He must instruct the disciple that every Communion received should in itself be a preparation for the next, that Communion is meant for everybody—for the sinners so they can stop being sinners, and for the saints so that they can go on being saints.

He is meant to instruct the beginner also about mental prayer. Saint Alphonsus Ligouri said "that there is no progress in the spiritual life without serious mental prayer." He lays down the very comforting principle that "you will either stop praying or stop sinning." If you're bothered with bad habits of sin, keep on praying and they'll go away. Don't stop praying, or they will get the better of you. So the director would guide us through this practice of mental prayer. He will try to suggest that the individual decide on some period of time to give every day to this practice, time he thinks he will be able to stick to through thick and thin. The director will warn not to decide on an hour a day during a period of fervor, only to find that when the person gets a little tepid, he gives up the whole practice. Whereas if he had settled on five minutes or ten minutes, he might be able in times of aridity, just to set his teeth and hold on for ten minutes. It's not too difficult to do that.

The activity of the spiritual director in this matter of mental prayer, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange, whom I am following at this time, points out, will be

especially important at these very times of aridity. Periods of aridity as we know, mark a time of progress in the spiritual life. Periods of aridity coupled with temptation, serious and constant temptations against patience and chastity, are pointed out by Saint John of the Cross to be characteristic of a sign of progress in the spiritual life. The individual soul doesn't see it that way. He doesn't see it as a time of progress though the director is meant to see it as such. Since it's usually not possible he does not try to convince the disciple of this. At least he instructs the disciple as to his attitudes during these times of temptation, difficulty and aridity.

The spiritual director is meant to instruct the disciple in the method of sanctifying his daily activity by the good intention; by the recollection of the presence of God coupled with renewal, perhaps, of the good intention; by explaining to the soul, for example, that in sanctifying one's daily activities, you don't always have to think about sanctifying them from the outside, like baptizing them by good intention. He sometimes has to recall that these daily activities are already sanctified from within by God; they are already instruments in the hands of God to work out our sanctification. All we have to do is to react towards them properly and erect no obstacles. Throw yourself into your activities, they will sanctify you. If you do that and try at the same time to practice the virtues that seem to be part and parcel of your activities, you are on the right path.

The spiritual director in the ordinary case of the beginner is meant to be on the alert for souls that seem to become retarded in their efforts to lead a spiritual life. Many start out with enthusiasm, and many fall away. Many are called, few are chosen. A spiritual writer applied that text to the souls of beginners who sometimes find that their growth in the spiritual life is stunted. They remain spiritual dwarfs, they don't mature as they are meant to. Well, the director has to be alert for reasons why souls are retarded. The reasons usually suggested are neglect of little things, neglect of the smaller practices of spiritual life. Novices who begin with enthusiasm, for example, become retarded sometimes because they begin to neglect little things, that is, neglect them deliberately, not just forget to hold their hands under their Scapular—if they are Carmelites—but forget about it deliberately. A refusal to make sacrifices that God requests, that is another reason assigned for retardation in souls. They simply refuse to make the sacrifices God asks of them. God reveals some creature comfort, shall we say, in their life as an obstacle. They see that this is interfering with progress, but they are unwilling to make the sacrifice.

The third reason for souls becoming retarded is a certain spirit of ridicule, and a spirit of making fun of the piety of other people, and perhaps of the

manifestation of piety in other people. The director has to be on the alert for the appearance and signs, or causes of retardation in souls so that he can correct them.

Now, as you can see from such a rundown of the activities of the spiritual director in the ordinary case, his activity seems to be very ordinary. It is very routine, and, shall we say, very undramatic. I mean, we've heard all that stuff about mortification and how to receive the sacraments, all about mental prayer, how to sanctify your ordinary activities, how to prevent retrogression in the spiritual life—we've heard all that from the novice mistress or the professed mistress or priests in conferences. So it seems as though there's nothing new here and certainly nothing exciting here. Perhaps then we will be inclined to conclude there's nothing much that we need from spiritual direction, or that we could hope to look for and find in spiritual direction. That's all so much a routine, ordinary and undramatic idea of spiritual direction that it would account for the jokes which we make about odd people showing up and looking for spiritual direction, because certainly, if they are that way, they are not going to be satisfied with instruction about mental prayer or sanctifying their daily activities. No, they are wondering about things like should they move from one apartment to another, or should they resign from the Franciscan Third Order to join the Carmelite Third Order, or "People are talking about me. What shall I do?" Such a routine approach to spiritual direction would be unsatisfactory to such as these. However, even such facts as these, namely that many of the things we might look for in spiritual direction have come to us from sources we don't consider spiritual direction, like class in the novitiate and conferences in the chapel, and the other fact that many people are looking for something in spiritual direction that it is not supposed to give, don't explain away the need for direction. They don't explain away what all the spiritual writers have to say about this great necessity in the spiritual life. Father Faber, when he's considering this question of spiritual direction, proves the necessity of spiritual direction from six different sources. You just can never beat Father Faber. He's always got all the facts down and points about which you never would think. You beat down one argument, he pops up with another. He mentions authority. You can't deny that authority is on the side of spiritual direction. "Why," he says, "some people even think that you find it in the bible." After all, didn't Saint Paul go to Ananias? Didn't Samuel go to someone in the Old Testament? But even if you dismiss that, Father Faber says you have to think of tradition, Christian tradition. Some of the early saints were officially appointed directors of various groups like Saint John Damascene. Besides that, he points out, there were heretics in the Church in the seventeenth century who were condemned

because they denied the necessity for spiritual direction. They were called the illuminated ones—the *illuminati*. They said there was no need for a spiritual director, but that each soul was to trust to the sacred inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and they were condemned. So you see authority is on the other side.

Besides that, Father Faber points out, common sense and the nature of the whole spiritual life are on the side of spiritual direction. The nature of the spiritual life, he points out, would be like the nature of a fish trying to live out of water. People trying to live the spiritual life are trying to live what we call the supernatural life. They are no longer in their own element, so it only stands to reason and common sense he suggests, that they would require help. Besides that the spiritual life is an art. So it would seem to require a teacher, a director. As you don't get very far studying the piano by yourself, or studying music by yourself, you need a teacher. In ordinary circumstances, he says, it would seem that you need one, if the spiritual life is your subject. To wish to walk alone, he points out, is against humility, and the lack of humility bars all spiritual progress. So, if you have this wish to walk alone, you'd better get rid of it, because it seems you're not humble and then you'll never make any progress with or without a director. If you want just to be alone in the spiritual life, it won't do at all.

It is true, of course—at least I think it is true—that not every single person who wants to live for God requires direction. I mean I would never think of suggesting to my sister or my brother that they need a spiritual director. You never have to suggest to your mother or to your father that they need a spiritual director. We know there are people who are much less complicated, much more simple than we who make great progress in the spiritual life. They are very holy, and they don't seem to need direction. That opinion seems to be substained also by spiritual writers. I did, for example, look into Father De Guibert's book on the spiritual life. He's a Jesuit, and he claims that "No, you can't require spiritual direction for everyone." However, he would suggest that for people who do get as involved in the spiritual life as we do, some kind of direction is necessary. It is a fact again that much of what the ordinary beginner might look for in spiritual direction has already been given to us. We have already been in receipt of spiritual direction from various instructors, so we should be happy about that. If we do have a spiritual director and we do still consider ourselves more or less beginners, we can't expect that he will do much more than remind us of these very fundamental points we have just mentioned. We can't expect much more from him than reminders about the necessity for penance and reminders about the necessity for mental prayer, some questions about how we're trying to sanctify our ordinary obligations, some questions about whether we're

making sacrifices, or whether we are looking down our nose and laughing at people who seem very pious. We can't expect much more than that. We can't expect that very much is going to be said. There's not much to say, really, especially to us. That is as it should be, because there is no need for a great deal of talking usually when it is about the spiritual life. There is this from Father Faber:

"There is after all little to be said where growth is so slow as it is in the spiritual life. A conversation between an oak and the woodman would surely soon come to an end, if growth and development, blight, birds, bees, and ivy, were the only subjects of conversation, and it was not allowed to pass into idle and irrelevant matters. For an oak does not make an inch a month, either of trunk or twig, and it could hardly expect to have its bark brushed and varnished, and picked out with gold. So the soul is not revolutionized every day. Today is yesterday's brother, and tomorrow's also. What is there to be said? All this talking leads to our making new starts in new directions after each palaver.

"I never knew," he says elsewhere, "or read of anyone who had a director, and then who suffered because he was too little directed. The souls, however, damaged by over-direction, would fill a hospital in any decently large town." That is what Father Faber says. So there's really not much to say. He would suggest, "there's not too much to say."

However, we may of course need help further than the help already given us by our spiritual guide in the novitiate and later on in the professed life. And if we are looking for a spiritual director, or looking for direction, I would suggest that it is very much like looking for help from the doctor. The director is very much like the physician, and for our ordinary complaint we don't need a specialist. A general practitioner will do, as you know. Also in the spiritual life, we don't have to look always for the extraordinary person to handle our problems, because they will be, most of them, ordinary. Most every priest is equipped by intelligence and spiritual experience to guide us in those ordinary paths of the spiritual life, to do the work of the ordinary spiritual director which we have mentioned about mortification and prayer, sanctification of daily duties, etc.

Perhaps some time we will need a specialist. Then, the ordinary director could probably direct us to some specialist like the doctor does when we go to him and he finds a chronic throat infection and he sends us to the ear, nose and throat doctor. Also, I think that when one is looking for something more special in the way of spiritual direction, one ought to look for that something the way one looks for a friend. We don't go and stop someone on the street and ask him to be a friend. So also, I would suggest that you don't go to someone like that ask him to be your spiritual director. You've got to go to him first, and give

him a chance to get to know you, and to know him, and see if he speaks your language and you speak his language. That's the way you get to be friends with someone. You don't exactly want to be the director's friend, but the same gradual process, I would suggest, is involved. Again, as with the physician, certain health problems of ours do require a different rapport, shall we say, with the physician. For the common cold anyone will do. He'll give us a prescription and off we go, but sometimes we need someone who will reassure us if we think it is an operation or something like that. We will then need a doctor in whom we have confidence, who seems to talk our language and who can inspire us. Well, the same thing is true in spiritual direction.

Among the little items that we mentioned as being discussed here under the general topic of spiritual direction is one about what to do if our director is not available. It would mean, I suppose, from all that we have said that an ordinary director is always available, like the doctor. When he is not, then we might fall back on a spiritual author. I remember one of the first times that I was visited by a Provincial, he asked me among the questions at the visitation who my director was. I said, "I didn't have any." He was shocked. "No director?" "No," and he said, "Well you must have an author—an author should be your director." I've never seen that put down anywhere, but I consider that priest a very spiritual person and learned in the ways of the spiritual life, so I would suggest there is something to that. An author is very handy. I think it should be an author, however, who considers the whole of the spiritual life, an author like Father Boylan. In *This Tremendous Lover* he considered the whole of the spiritual life. An author like Father Garrigou-Lagrange in *The Three Ages of the Interior Life* considers the whole of the spiritual life. Authors like that, who give you the whole picture and perhaps show how individual practices will fit into the whole picture are the best, I think, as a substitute for a real living director. Other authors, of course, have their merit. But to me, to try to take an author who in his book just treats one aspect of the spiritual life can be rather dangerous because it is so much easier for us then to make mistakes than when we have an author at hand who gives us the whole picture.

Finally, if none of these things seem to do: When we can't get the answer from a priest in confession, we can't seem to find a specialist, and spiritual authors at hand don't seem to consider our problem or our difficulty, then I guess as a last resort we have to fall back on God, and perhaps think of ourselves like Isaac going up to the mountain and observing to his father that "Well, we have the wood here, there's the fire, but where is the victim?" And Abraham says "God will provide." So we might say that in our prayers, if all this dis-

cussion about spiritual direction still leaves us with our problems, and all our efforts to solve our problems still leave them intact, we can just say to God, "Here is my good will, my desire, given to me by you. Where is the direction we hope you will provide." He will.

Holiness is Wholeness

IN THE MONASTIC CHOIR through the year of Our Lord, the mysteries of religion are celebrated in cycles endlessly renewed. The choir is the stage on which the dramas of sacred history are re-enacted. But never through the year does the mystery of Christ come into sharper focus; never does saving drama reach a higher pitch than on December 25, when the words of martyrology announce the birth of Jesus. At that moment all the ages of history are marshalled in order; all the seemingly disconnected achievements and failures, triumphs and disasters that marked the path of human destiny are given meaning and purpose. All the haphazard wanderings of humanity are seen in an orderly progress toward a goal set by God in eternity when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. All of the swirling cross-currents of human events; all of the seething waters of human fortune are gathered by the chanter's single tone as by some overmastering power into a vast tidal wave that breaks in the final notes of peace upon the shores of a new world. And, in truth, with the coming of the Son of God upon the earth a new world began and the old passed away. According to the text: "The everlasting God and the Son of the eternal Father, wishing to consecrate the world by his merciful coming, Jesus Christ made man is born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Juda." The divine Word assumed humanity; a creature fashioned a tabernacle for the Creator, and creation received consecration from the Anointed of God. So we are given the reason for God's appearance upon the earth; He came to consecrate and transform all things he had made in the beginning—primarily man, made to his own image and likeness. And secondarily all irrational creation made by him subservient to human needs.

When the word was made flesh, the world was radically transformed. The Son of God consecrated and sacramentalized the world, and on Pentecost he sent his Spirit to carry on this same work, to captivate and revivify all matter. "The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole earth, and he who sustains all things has knowledge of man's prayer." (Introit of Mass for Pentecost) "Send forth thy Spirit," we pray in the Psalmist's words, "and the world shall arise as new. And the countenance of the earth shall be renewed" (Ps. 103, 30.) It is most necessary for the Christians of our times to take a new look at this new world. Man, always fascinated by the world about him, is coming by leaps and bounds to a

fuller and deeper knowledge of created things. Reveling in their new-found knowledge, glorying in their fresh master of creation, men tend to center their lives in things. They make gods in their laboratories, worship at test-tube shrines; they center their lives and the hope for happiness in creatures. In such a world it is incumbent upon the Christian to whom God has given vision to see the inner meaning of things to see the world as it really is, and in the power of the Spirit of Christ, to renew the face of the earth. Let us look at the world, then: The world created, the world fallen, the world renewed.

In the first place, the world is a creation. Because it came from the hand of God it is holy from the beginning, true, beautiful and very good. It is a work of divine love. God is love. But love is an outgoing thing which seeks to give itself and to share its life. In God love was so great that it could not contain itself, as it were, and so it overflowed in creation. With characteristic insight Father Faber defines kindness in men as the "overflow of self upon others." The whole of creation is, then, God's kindness. It is the overflow of himself upon creatures, each of which bears in itself the sign of its origin, the hallmark of God. Creation is a sign of God; things are a material expression of his wisdom and power. The whole of material reality is a distant reflection of the beauty of God; it is alive with his light and his love. The created universe because it is created is one vast summons to love: Our life must be our answer.

Because the love of the Christian is wholly oriented toward God from whom it takes its sole motivation, we have been long considered the sworn enemies of all things temporal. The Christian lives for the next world, they say, he has no interest in this one. He rejects all that makes life worthwhile—ephemeral things, true, but all that we have here and now. He despises art; he cares nothing for human ease and comfort; he is the enemy of civilization. He sees the world as separating him from God; and under the pretense of loving God he is a world-hater.

We have been considered by the enemies of God as the enemies of things, of creation as it is. They put their happiness wholly in the world. We have reacted many times by despising the world, which is God's world, and everything in it is good, as it came from the hand of God. We love these things then as they are in themselves. We don't love our neighbor merely because we find Christ in her, or because she is a creature who came from the hand of God. We have eminently higher motive for loving indeed, but, in the first place, we love things because they are creatures from the hand of God. They are also sounds of God, and so call for our love. The whole of creation is an open book to us that speaks and shouts and tells us of God. It has nothing to say but God. It is a book written for our instruction. We ought to learn all about it, exhaust its pages.

We are the only ones who should be lovers of science seeking the depths of the knowledge of God he has revealed in his creation. We are the ones to whom "inner space" and "outer space" has real meaning. We are the ones, then, who should be pursuing with zest the knowledge that comes to us from creatures as creatures, because they are signs of God. We should see things, Sisters, then with the eye of the poet. It is easy, Sisters, for saints to be poets, isn't it? We have men of the stature of Gregory the Great, who has given us the wonderful hymns for the Divine Office and Ambrose of Milan. We have great saints and great poets, great administrators, great mystics, men of the stature of John of the Cross and Thomas Aquinas who gave us that magnificent office for the feast of Corpus Christi. These men were poets and saints because they saw things with all the simplicity of children and all the deep wisdom of the Sons of God; they saw the earth as the proclamation of God's beauty, of his power, of his love; they saw the heavens as his throne and the earth as his footstool; they were steeped in Sacred Scripture, which is Word of God.

Our daily prayer in the Psalms is cast in poetic rhythm, and speaks powerfully of the wonders of creation. We have only to recite the *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino*, given to us as a thanksgiving after Mass and as the great hymn of praise for Sunday lauds to realize how scripture carries unto the high seas, as it were, of creation, and brings the whole of creation to serve God through our lips.

Which brings us to the next point. Creation not only came from God, but it proclaims God. Light is his vesture, the glory of his countenance. God is light, he shines in the world. The sun is his sign and the moon and the stars speak of him. Water is his light, springing up as a fountain in the desert.

Some years ago, on this occasion, we went with you into the mystery of water. Saint Theresa could only speak of the wonders which came to her in mystical revelation under the symbol of clear water. She admitted her impotence, she could not express it but water says it all. Water of life springing up in the desert. This is God. A tree by running water is the "just man" living in God. Just man shall flourish as the palm tree planted by running water. This is in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament this is brought to reality in Christ: *I am the light of the world . . . the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world . . . who follows me walks not in darkness. I am the living waters springing up into life everlasting. All you who thirst come unto me and drink . . . I am the true vine, and the branch that lives on in me bears much fruit.* Look at the skies and you see Christ. In almost the very last word of divine revelation he says: "I am . . . the bright morning star." And he will come in brightness as lightning coming out of the east and shining even unto the west, and his day will dawn, and when it does, the day star will arise.

Creation too does not stop at things. We know, for a fact, that scientists today are all taking evolution for granted. There is much scientific evidence to back up this theory, which is taken as "stock" in every laboratory as you know. We do not have anything to fear in seeing creation unfold. Creation is not just a stuffy thing; it is dynamic; it presses onto God. It develops. It unfolds and reveals more and more of divine wisdom. Every creature, has a twofold goal: Its own perfection, that it should be a perfect creature. We should be perfectly human. This is our goal, good creatures as we came from the hand of God. And the second, to give glory to God. This is the twofold goal of the whole of creation: To give glory to God, and to be perfect things; perfect humans, perfect water, perfect tree, perfect woodland, perfect beings, perfect metal. In creation then, we recognize a call from God. God calls and the whole of creation answers. God calls and the current leaps out to the sea, a perfect stream of brilliant water. God calls and birds unfold their wings, leap in the air and sing, shout and twitter for the glory of God.

The whole universe, then, can be seen as one immense aspiration in the praise of almighty God. By that very fact man is called. We are creatures. We are indeed the lord of creation, into whose hands creation has been placed for its perfection and for our sanctification. In our nature we, as it were, summarize creation. We, then, creation's masters, have a call from God to use creation well, to beam its light, to channel its currents, to give it heart and mind and voice, to be the priests of our fellow creatures. We can see ourselves, in the place of high dignity, as creatures among creatures, creatures indeed upon whom the likeness of God has been much more deeply impressed; yet creatures we are, and into our hands creation has been given so that we can offer creation to the Father in the power of our priesthood. Mankind is the priest of creation, through whom creation praises the Father, through whom it sacrifices, through whom it proclaims the glory of God. This is our task, that we be priests of our fellow creatures. This is what Saint Francis must have had in mind when he spoke of his brothers. This is not mere poetic imagery, "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon," to speak of the birds as fellow creatures that come from the hand of God. To show the glory of God—they all unconsciously, we with heart, mind, voice, with intellect and memory and deliberate choice—this is our glory.

It wasn't always so. We come after the glory of creation, to speak of creation in its ignominy. Creation that has turned its back on God, fallen creation. The picture we have given will be in its perfection only in the new world, the new earth and the new heaven which will come with the end of time. Meanwhile, we work towards that end. Now we look back to see fallen creation. What really happened?

Being that the idyllic picture of it has been painted for us in Genesis, we find in paradise an order and peace, where the beasts are friendly and Adam calls them all by names, where the earth, while it has to be tended, is yet not the enemy of man, but rather his willing servant. All is in order. Our bodies in the beginning, healthily subject to our higher powers. They were naked and unashamed—and then sin came. With Adam's fall, the whole of creation fell. Adam was the lord of creation. He summarized creation. He was the master of the world, but when he fell the whole of creation fell. In a very real way, not in any scientific way, the whole of creation was affected, and an awful wound was opened in the world, and the seed of sin was sowed in the wound. It festered and rotted so that the earth became the enemy of mankind; so that there arose a certain sullen hostility on the part of creation towards mankind. "Cursed be the ground because of you; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, since out of it you were taken; for dust you are and unto dust you shall return" (Genesis 3, 17-19.)

Creation was reduced to slavery. It was made subject in the servitude of corruption, subject to vanity. It was made a useless thing. We, who are meant to see God through creation, now find it opaque to our vision. It hides God. It leads us away from God instead of leading us to God. It is a thing fraught with temptation, and its very beauty became an enticement that led us away from God. Creation became a stumbling block, and we can well imagine that creation in such a state began even then with man, its lord, to yearn for the coming of a redeemer.

Saint Paul gives us this picture of creation yearning with eager longing for the coming of a redeemer. "For the eager longing of creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God. . . . Because creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. For we know that all creation groans and travails in pain until now. And not only it, but we ourselves also. . . ." (Romans 20, 19, 21-23).

So we have the picture of a world in bondage by reason of man's sin—a world perverted from its original orientation by reason of man's perversion. The lord of creation and the whole universe fell. They turned away from God with all their spiritual powers. Their bodies were affected immediately, and then, the earth at their feet became a mire in which they were all engulfed by sin. The universe was ravaged by sin, so it awaited the coming of the redeemer. And Christ came. With those wonderful words "the Word was made flesh," Christ entered creation, born of a woman, born under the Law. The Word was made flesh and as a new Adam, he took to himself the whole of the universe in muscle,

in tissue, in sinew and blood and skin, every bit in Christ made divine. And in all the interior organs of his human physique the Spirit of God dwelt incarnate in Christ Jesus. All the elements of our universe, the oxygen and the hydrogen, the carbohydrates in our systems, all of these were taken on; all of inanimate creation, all of organic creation, and all of intellectual life—everything was taken up and made divine in Christ Jesus, so that he became the "first born of every creature" as Saint Paul says so beautifully. In his letter to the Colossians, he writes: "He is the image of the Invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For in him were created all things in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible . . . and he is before all creatures, and in him all things hold together. . . . For it has pleased God the Father that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross" (1, 15-20 *passim*.) And the fullness of God dwelt in Christ Jesus, and he summarized it himself "the whole of the universe."

Christ came then taking creation unto himself. He sanctified time. Time can never be the same, since at a midnight hour the Son of God was born to the Virgin; since he was crucified at high noon, and died at three o'clock. Since the Son of God knew years and months and days and moments, time can never be the same. Time has been taken up and transformed. The cosmologists analyze time, and define time. They know all about it, but they know nothing of it until they know that it is the springboard of eternal life, that every moment is fraught with divine life, that every moment is sacred unto the Lord God, that every moment is sacramental if we use it, as Christ used it, for the redemption of the world. In one of the orations in the year of Our Lord, we are challenged to redeem the time. Christ redeemed it, yes, but redemption goes on, and every day and every hour must be redeemed by the Spirit of Christ that grows out of us and flows in through time, from the ringing of the first bell in the morning through every moment of our days. He walked in our space. We say so much about space these days, and how it confines things. He was wrapped around by our atmosphere, this Son of God. Place is holy, atmosphere is sacred—it has been redeemed—the whole surface of the earth, because it felt his footprint, because out of its bosom grew the wheat that nourished the flesh of the Son of God. Time and place, bread and water have been made sacred. Every event, because he faced them, becomes a divine encounter, becomes a sacred meeting between God and man. Every circumstance of our lives becomes a thing, then, of divine life and of eternal significance if only we see it as a stepping stone to intimacy with God. I mentioned this before, he sanctified sleep which recoups our physical strength, eases our nerves and enables us to face a new day, fight a new

fight and to meet new circumstances, and grow in wisdom and age in grace. We cannot do it without our sleep. He needed sleep and he slept sound sleep. Yes, he slept redeeming slumber, the Lord, our God. So our sleep becomes a sacred thing. Our Lord did sleep in a boat—do you remember?—and he slept well and soundly in the midst of a storm. He was showing himself to be what he was, a man of flesh and blood saving the world even as he slept. When you see him poring over the word of God in the sacred scriptures, unrolling the parchments and the scrolls, studying his very own words, he saved the world by reading them; by getting up on a rostrum and facing the hostile crowds. This is the best way he saved our world. Every human contact, every personal necessity—Christ had to trim his beard—became a saving thing. He labored under all the necessities of human nature. He ate, slept, he wine and dined, and when he was sad, he did what a man would do; he sat down and cried, and by his tears he saved the world.

What I am trying to drive home to you is that all of these things, all of these events, all of this expenditure of energy in the intellectual realm, in the physical realm worked toward the salvation of the entire universe. So with Christ, a new world began. Even up till now, everything that Christ began in his physical life, he goes on doing in his mystical life. Redemption was begun and totally accomplished on the Cross, and yet he has sent his Spirit to carry on until the end of time and to extend the redemptive value of the Cross through us to every age and race and culture. So it is our task to redeem creation, to love it, to bring it to perfection, to mold it, so that it takes on an impression of human nature. Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, says of the teacher's vocation that this is the highest artistic vocation in the world, because it is yours to fashion and to mold the clay minds of students, and to bring out in them the likeness of Christ.

The material universe itself, by reason of the love made known in Christ Jesus, is alive with light and love. Having fallen with us in our human failure, it summons us to redeem it. The whole world has one great yearning cry, and our every human effort, groping but glorious, is our response to its unceasing call. We come to the fullness of Christ's stature not by shying away from the world but by coming to grips with all its wonderous force, by throwing ourselves into our daily tasks with zest and enthusiasm, by transforming and humanizing this universe of ours, in all its things, in all its events, in all its people.

We are not, then, world-haters. We are the only true lovers of the world. What, then, must be the characteristic of our love? We come to God as human beings wrapped up in flesh and blood with all of our passions and all of our personalities, all of our queer quirks and idiosyncrasies, all of our blood pressure and bile flow and various incisions. We come to God just in this way, and in no

other way. We must love these things and the tools of our trade—our thermometers, our scalpels, our textbooks, our plans for class, and our apple pie a la mode on Sunday in Lent. Our love of these things must be real and positive, not something that is vague and unformed. Creatures come from God, they are good in themselves, and God saw that creation was good. In fact this is the endless refrain of the story of creation, "God saw that it was good." Every creature is good and nothing is to be rejected, but all is to be received with thanks. Human knowledge is good. The beauty of the human body is good. Sex is sacred. Scientific knowledge and artistic accomplishment—art, music, literature, science, social science—all of our efforts to grow in community, are all mechanisms that draw us together into Christ. Rule and constitutions and hierarchical ordering of community, all of these things are good in themselves, because they draw us close to God. We should love them with a deep and real love. It is true that sin has wounded things, but sin has corrupted nothing. We have to remember too that our love for things as they come from God is not governed by any abstract principle. Christ is the law of our love. To see how he loved, we have but to look at the cross. He loved creation so much, he died to redeem it. We at least can apply this redemption through the effort of our love.

Mary the Perfect Christian

CHRISTENDOM IS AWARE today as it has not been for centuries of Our Lord's prayer at the Last Supper, that all may be one. The presence of Protestant observers as honored guests at the Vatican Council has made a deep impression. The Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, headed by Cardinal Bea, the renowned German-born scripture scholar, is bringing about conversations between Catholics and Protestants that would have seemed impossible even a few years ago. These past few days a select group of invited guests have been meeting with Cardinal Bea in an ecumenical dialogue at Harvard University.

A large portion of the Christian world still finds itself unable to consider the mother of Jesus as our spiritual mother, as the divinely appointed mother and model of the Church. Yet there are encouraging signs of appreciation of Our Lady also in Protestant circles. Pope John in his address on December 8, 1962, the closing of the first session of the council, reminded us that nothing of importance takes place in the Church except under Mary's protection.

Legend relates that Mary sewed for her Son the seamless robe that was stripped from him on Calvary, a garment so fine the executioners dived for it rather than divide it. Why does Saint John in his Calvary scene note this apparently irrelevant detail: "Now the tunic was without seam, woven in one piece from the top" (19, 23). In the third Book of Kings (11, 29-31) a cloak is divided into twelve pieces as a sign of the impending division of Solomon's kingdom. But the kingdom of Christ is to be undivided. The seamless robe is a symbol of the one Church of Christ. For centuries now there have been tears and rents in the robe. Mary, the mother of Christian unity, will prepare the beautiful seamless robe of unity once again for the mystical body of Christ, the Church.

It is our privilege today to speak of Mary as the perfect Christian. No one else ever followed Christ so well as Mary his mother. It would be a joyful task and an endless one to speak of all the ways in which Mary is model of Christian life. Her virtues are an example to every human life, for Our Lady was virgin and mother, married housewife and consecrated virgin, laywoman and religious.

"She combined effortlessly states that would otherwise seem incompatible" (H. Urs von Balthasar). And this is yet another respect in which she shares in the

life of Jesus Christ who is the one master and model for all men, in every vocation, in every walk of life.

In his story of the sower, the Savior spoke of the seed that fell upon good ground and sprang up and yielded fruit a hundredfold. When the apostles asked him to explain the parable, Our Lord said that the seed is the word of God, and the good ground are they who with a right and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast and bear fruit in patience. Our Blessed Lady is God's virginal soul. God enriched the pure body and sinless soul of Mary by his gifts of grace. He prepared this soul to receive his word. The seed fell upon good ground, sprang up and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Indeed we, who are the privileged brothers and sisters of our elder brother, Christ the Redeemer, form part of Mary's hundredfold, we are her spiritual sons and daughters.

We are going to consider Mary as the perfect Christian on two levels. The first will concern Mary in herself, especially her faith. Our second level will be Mary as the model of the Church, or the Church discovering itself in Mary. In both approaches, which are meant to complement each other, we will call upon the insights of recent Catholic scriptural scholarship.

In considering Mary in herself as the perfect Christian in herself we take Saint Luke as our guide. The parable of the sower influences Saint Luke's description of Our Lady, and this theme is sustained throughout his gospel. At the Annunciation, Mary's reply to God's invitation was her wholehearted: "Be it done unto me according to thy word" (1, 38). And when she arrives at the house of Elizabeth, her cousin greets Mary with the words: "Blessed is she who has believed, because the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished" (1, 45).

Mary's answer to Elizabeth is the *Magnificat*. Here the inspired writer looks into Our Lady's soul and describes her reaction to God's word, to that eternal Word made flesh she was carrying in her womb. All the hopes of Israel, beyond that, all the longings of humanity through the uncounted centuries from the dawn of the human race, reach their final expression in the humble handmaid of the Lord. The obedience of Mary, her humility, her complete consecration to God are reflected here. If 'all generations shall henceforth call her blessed,' it will be because they will see in her the authentic Christian sense of holiness—"Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11, 28), or in Elizabeth's beloved phrase, "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Lk 1, 42).

An outstanding aspect of Mary's holiness is her great faith. The closing lines of the *Magnificat* say: "He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy—even as he spoke to our fathers—to Abraham and to his posterity for-

ever" (Lk 1, 55). Abraham had been called from paganism to the knowledge of the one true God, and even though Sara and he were childless for many years, God had made him a paradoxical promise that his descendants would outnumber the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea. Even when God gave the mysterious command to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise, Abraham's faith in the divine promise did not falter.

The total commitment of Abraham was surpassed in Our Lady. Humanly speaking, the glorious destiny the angel announced for her Son was incapable of realization, yet the power of God was greater than the human impossibility. "Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—But as many as received him, he gave the power of becoming sons of God; to those who believe in his name . . ." (Jn 1, 12-14). The first to receive him, the first to believe in his name, the first child of God, the first and perfect follower of Christ was Our Lady—"Blessed is she who has believed, because the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished" (Lk 1, 45).

The fundamental truth about Our Lady is that she is truly mother of God. The role of faith in Mary's maternity is paramount and therefore Catholic tradition has always stressed Mary's free consent. God respected in Our Lady the deepest values that are found in human motherhood. The perfection of human maternity is far more than a mere physical matter. The good mother desires her child, and the more fully her maternity is an integrally human act, the more perfect it is.

Mary's maternal consent was at the same time an act of faith, of complete dedication to the will of God. With all the freedom of her spirit, independent of any impulse other than the mysterious invitation of God made known to her by the angel, in the deep obscurity of faith, Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word" (Lk 1, 38). We do not know, it is true, to what extent God opened the identity of the Holy One to her understanding at that moment. The gospel emphasized Mary's faith; from the start her faith is perfect both in strength and quality, though not necessarily in the completeness of its knowledge.

There are indications in the gospel that Our Lady knew of her child's uniqueness as 'Son of God.' It might strike us as obvious that 'son of the most high' must be God; yet neither 'son of the most high,' nor 'son of God' meant of necessity God himself. But there are other indications of Our Lord's divinity, though it may seem to us that Saint Luke presents them in a rather round-about manner. To begin with, Saint Luke describes another annunciation, the announcement to Zachary of John the Baptist's birth. Zachary protests that he is old, and

he asks for a sign that his son will be all the angel claims for him. The angel tells him, "Thou shalt be dumb and unable to speak until the day when these things come to pass because thou hast not believed my words" (Lk 1, 20).

Our Lady's response to the message of Gabriel is altogether different. Although "She was troubled at his word, and kept pondering what manner of greeting this might be" (Lk 1, 29), the 'pondering of Mary' (also a favorite expression of Saint Luke for her) is in perfect faith. To the maid of Nazareth, the angel says in all deference (contrast this with the stern reply to Zachary): "Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus . . ." (Lk 1, 30-31). The angel says further: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God. . . . For nothing shall be impossible with God" (Lk 35-37 *passim*).

A great deal of Old Testament thought and history is compressed into that single sentence of Saint Luke. Modern Scripture scholars now recognize that a common way of writing in the gospels is to describe a New Testament event in Old Testament language. By this means the authors of the gospels show how close a bond exists between the old covenant and the new, that Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill. Everything that happened to the Jews of old, everything written in their sacred books, could contribute to a better understanding of Christ and his message.

Saint Luke uses this technique to help us understand that Mary is truly the mother of God. In the history of the chosen people, God had made himself present in a mysterious cloud of glory, in the Holy of Holies, the innermost sanctuary of the temple. The word used to describe this presence was 'overshadowing.' Gabriel uses the same word: "The power of the Most High shall over-shadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God" (Lk 1, 35). Mary is the new dwelling place of the divine presence; this is Saint Luke's way of informing us that the Son of Mary is God-made-man, that Mary is the mother of God.

And however much or however little Mary may have known at the Annunciation or at Bethlehem about the divine identity of her Son, we must never forget that for her, as for us, faith means walking in darkness. Only in heaven is the veil of faith lifted and sight takes its place. "The Gospels depict Mary as always on the lookout for some enrichment of her knowledge of faith from the happenings in the life of her Son" (Voillaume).

The Scriptures show us Mary's faith not simply as an act of the intellect by which she accepted what God said, but as her whole attitude of life. The just

man lives by faith, and this just woman, the mother of Jesus, welcomes God's living word in faith. God's greatest revelation is his word, his word made flesh. After the Annunciation the bible offers us few statements from Our Lady, but what the evangelists tell us of Mary's actions and reactions show her living by faith.

Shepherds and Wise Men tell of extraordinary signs that brought them to Bethlehem. And all who heard marvelled at the things told them by the shepherds, notes Saint Luke (2, 18), and then he adds: "But Mary kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2, 20). When Mary and Joseph bring the Christ-Child for the first visit to his father's house, Simeon hails the infant as the "light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for thy people Israel" (Lk 2, 32). The reaction of Mary, and of Joseph too, is again the same: "And his father and mother were marvelling at the things spoken concerning him" (Lk 2, 33). Then Simeon goes on to associate Mary his mother to the child in terms of the hidden future: Behold... thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Lk 2, 34-5 *passim*).

In many respects faith was more difficult for Mary than it is for us. Our Lady needed faith all the more since Jesus was her own Son, flesh of her flesh. When God came so strikingly into her life, the whole situation changed. As we know from the Church's teaching, Mary came to understand that she was to remain always a virgin. She—and Joseph too—had to make a decision about their marriage. Apart from the Annunciation, the great signs were for others—shepherds, Magi, Saint Joseph, not for her. Our Lord had no need to do extraordinary things for his mother's faith and love to grow.

The quiet years at Nazareth are interrupted once only. The boy Jesus remained behind in the temple at the age of twelve. When Mary and Joseph find him, the words of Our Lady reflect her mother's sorrow—a touch of realism characteristic of Mary in the gospels. "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow thy father and I have been seeking thee" (Lk 2, 48). There are likenesses between this account of the three day loss of Jesus in the temple and the three days he will be lost in the tomb, and Saint Luke may deliberately wish to extend the parallel to Mary's words. On the cross Christ will cry out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27, 47). Here Our Lady says in agony of soul: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow thy father and I have been seeking thee" (Lk 2, 48).

Our Lord's answer is mysterious, even seemingly harsh: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2, 49). How did Mary and Joseph react? Saint Luke tells us simply: "They did not understand the word that he spoke to them" (2, 50). But when the boy Jesus

went down with them to Nazareth and was subject to them, Saint Luke adds his tribute to Mary's faith: "And his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart" (2, 51).

From the public life, Saint Luke records for us two incidents which mention Our Lady. On one occasion a woman from the crowd, carried away by the preacher's message, could not keep herself from honoring Jesus by praising his mother: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts that nursed thee" (Lk 11, 27). Our Lord's reply was: "Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11, 28). On still another occasion when Our Lord was preaching they told him that his mother and brethren wished to see him. He answered: "My mother and my brethren are they who hear the word of God, and act upon it" (Lk 8, 21). What is the meaning of these 'hard sayings' of Jesus? In both cases Our Lord is steering his hearers towards a correct understanding of their attitude to himself. Spiritual relationship counts more than mere physical ties. The same Saint Luke who alone saves both these sayings from the public life of Christ has already made it abundantly clear that more than anyone else, Mary has heard the Word of God and kept it.

In recent times the topic about Our Lady that has most engaged the attention of theologians is the relationship between Mary and the Church. Since World War II there has appeared an immense literature on the Mary-Church analogy. The event of the ecumenical council and the common concern of all Christians for unity have also called attention to the intimate bond between Mary and the Church. To a degree that may surprise us, responsible non-Catholic thinkers have seen in our concept of Mary a reflection of our notion of the Catholic Church itself. Such is the mind of the great Swiss Protestant theologian, Karl Barth. A typical expression of this Protestant outlook is: "In the Roman system everything hangs together by the most solid logic. The Church of Rome by a deep internal necessity, is all at once the Church of human cooperation in the redemption, the Church of merits, the Church that dispenses salvation—and the Church of Mary" (Pastor Maury of France).

The gospels consider Mary not only as the individual holy virgin mother of the Savior, but also as the model to the Church of a perfect response to Christ and his grace. For example, the first two chapters of Saint Luke contain not only the historical narrative of the events of Our Lord's infancy and childhood, but also reflect in symbolic fashion the early days of the Church itself, imitating the infant Christ in its own beginning struggles and persecutions. From this point of view Mary represents the Church. Both Old and New Testament often speak of God's people in terms of a woman, the spouse of Yahweh, the God of the Jews, and the bride of Christ. Everything that Christ expects of his bride the Church,

the new people of God, is foreshadowed, symbolized, realized in advance and all-perfectly in his blessed Mother.

Allow me to illustrate this from Saint John's gospel. In a very profound way, Saint John is as much concerned with the mother of Jesus as Saint Luke is. To Saint John we owe also the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelations, which was written before Saint John's gospel, even if it happens to be printed in the last place in our bibles. The twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse tells of the dramatic battle between the woman clothed with the sun and crowned with stars who is about to bring forth a male child and the great dragon who is lying in wait to devour her son and who then pursues her and tries to seize the rest of her offspring.

Catholic experts are divided as to the primary identity of the woman clothed with the sun. For example the American Father B. LeFrois, S.V.D., earned his doctorate in sacred scripture a few years back in Rome with a long study that set out to prove that Mary was the first meaning of the woman of Apocalypse. According to Father LeFrois Saint John has in mind both Mary and the Church, Our Lady in the first place, the Church in second place. What is written of Mary applies also to the Church—because the Church is the mother of the brethren of Christ, because the Church wages war through all its history with Satan, etc.

The other Catholic view regards the woman figure as being first of all the Church, the new people of God, and only secondarily Mary, the mother of Jesus. For this group of scholars, the woman of Apocalypse is first and foremost a personification of the people of God; like the 'daughter of Sion' of the Old Testament this woman brings forth messianic salvation. At the same time, these authors, proponents of the 'collective' interpretation, admit that Saint John also had Mary in mind. The individual woman and mother who is Mary is Saint John's deliberate model for the woman clothed with the sun who is Mother Church victorious over Satan through her offspring.

Saint John's gospel strengthens the conviction that for Saint John, Mary is deliberately introduced not alone for her own sake, but as the model of the Church. In the structure of his gospel, Cana begins and Calvary closes the public life of Christ and in both scenes the mother of Jesus is there. In both instances also, she is addressed as 'woman' and there is immense theological meaning to her presence. By the miracle of the water turned into wine Christ saved a country wedding feast and gave his blessing to marriage, but he did far more, as Saint John notes carefully at the end of his account of Cana: "This first of his signs Jesus worked at Cana of Galilee; and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him" (Jn 2, 11).

In 'this first of Christ's signs' in Johannine theology there is also ecclesial

significance—e.g., in the careful emphasis on the exact number and measure of the stone water-jars that were used for the Jewish religious purifications, there is clear allusion to the new dispensation of the Christian religion which would replace the old as marvellously as the good wine, the best wine, replaced the water. Mary's role in the scene shares this ecclesial sense. I will not develop this point here, although studies have been done on it.

Instead we will give our attention to the Calvary scene, and to Our Lord's words to Mary: "Woman, behold thy son." And then to John, the beloved disciple, "Behold thy mother" (Jn 19, 27). It is beyond question that the gospel is giving us more than a simple domestic detail. Christ, good son that he was, would not have neglected to provide for his mother's care until this last moment on the cross. If this had been Our Lord's intention, he would in any case have spoken first to John; instead, he speaks first to Mary: "Woman, behold thy son," although John's own mother was apparently there at the cross herself. Moreover every single event that John tells us about Calvary has a reference to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

What are we to understand by the words: "Woman, behold thy son?" Our Lord is proclaiming the spiritual motherhood of Mary. This interpretation is well backed by Christian understanding developing over the centuries, and has been strongly supported by the popes. When God became man he took to himself a perfect human nature, body and soul, in Mary's pure womb, but he also formed for himself a no less real but hidden or spiritual body which we know as the mystical body of Christ.

In the mystical body which is the Church of Christ he is the head—like the head in a human body—and we are the members—like arms and hands and other members of a human body, joined to the head. At the Annunciation Mary became mother of Christ in his totality—both of the physical Christ-Child and spiritually mother of the mystical body of Christ. (I recommend you read Saint Pius X's great letter about this, *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904). In the agony of Calvary, Mary brought forth her spiritual children, the rest of her offspring who are the brethren of Christ. John, the beloved disciple, stands for all the disciples of Christ. Jesus is offering his mother another son, another Jesus, in place of himself—this other son is the mystical Jesus, or the whole Church, represented by John.

Saint John provides us a key to the meaning of the spiritual motherhood of Mary and through her of the Church's spiritual motherhood in a statement made by Christ as the Last Supper. At the Last Supper Jesus had said: "A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while you shall see me. Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and

you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." And then, to prepare the apostles against the difficult days to come, Our Lord used an Old Testament manner of speaking: "A woman about to give birth has sorrow, because her hour has come. But when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the anguish for her joy that a man is born into the world" (Jn 16, 19-21). In the Old Testament the coming of messianic times, of the promised redeemer, is described in terms of an agonizing child-bearing by the 'daughter of Sion,' the people of God of the Old Covenant. Then Christ applied this example to the Apostles: "And you therefore have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall take from you" (Jn 16,22).

In his preaching Our Lord often referred to his 'hour' that was to come, meaning his passion and death; he used the same term as for labor pains. Both Mary and the Church are associated with him on Calvary in Christ's hour of life-bringing agony. 'The woman about to give birth' is Mary, in the mystical child-bearing of Calvary, where she is involved in Christ's sacrifice as the new Eve associated to the new Adam. But the 'woman about to give birth' is also the Church, the bride of Christ, who must enter into the sufferings and death of Our Lord, in order to know the joy of bringing into the world through the sacraments the brethren of Christ.

Christian thought has recognized many likenesses between Mary and the Church. In early times, writers speak of Mary as prototype of the Church comparing Mary, virgin and mother, to the Church, virgin and mother. Saint Augustine, for example, said: "Mary gave birth in body to the head of this body; the Church gives birth in spirit to the members of that head. In both [Mary and the Church] fertility does not displace virginity."

Mary is herself a member of the mystical body—its most glorious member, Pius XII reminds us; for she is completely dependent and fully responsive to Christ the head, who is her Son. In another sense Mary is mother of the mystical body, spiritual mother of the other members, under Christ, and because this is God's will. The Church is likewise mother of the members of Christ, who are the faithful.

Repetition has robbed the phrase, "holy mother the Church," of its strength, yet these words are not mere rhetoric, the restored Easter Vigil shows strikingly. The baptismal font is the maternal womb of the Church, for here her children receive divine life, become sons of God and co-heirs with Christ. In a fifth century sermon Saint Leo said: "The same fruitfulness which he gave to the womb of the Virgin, he has given to the fountain of baptism; he has bestowed on the water what he bestowed on his own mother!" At baptism Christ is born

again in the new Christian, for to be born to the life of grace is to be born to the life of Christ. Mary, mother of Christ and mother of all Christians, is the model of the maternal activity of the Church.

A favorite title for Our Lady in early times was 'new Eve.' Through Mary's obedience in faith at the Annunciation God became man. Through the new Eve Christ, the new Adam, came to restore the human race to friendship with the Father. Equally ancient was the use of the term, new Eve, for the Church.

In the book of Genesis the meaning 'mother of the living' is given for the name of Eve; the Church was called 'new Eve,' because mother Church is likewise mother of all who live again through baptism. Gradually Christian thought joined the double 'new Eve' tradition and began to speak of Mary also as 'mother of the living,' and to regard the Church as imitating Mary both in virginity and maternity.

How does the Church imitate Mary's virginity? Mary's virginity was physical, as well as spiritual; it was miraculously preserved in the conception and bringing forth of the Christ-Child. On the spiritual plane Our Lady's perpetual virginity signified her total and loving dedication to God's service. When the Church is called virgin, the emphasis is on the faith of the Church which has always preserved Christ's doctrine free of corruption. Here again Christianity took over the Old Testament notion of the marriage relationship between God and his people, so that a falling away from faith in God was described as a breaking of marriage vows. Infidelity or heresy was adultery. The Church of the New Testament is a virgin espoused in spotless faith to Christ, the divine bridegroom. In purity of faith, the Church, chaste bride of Christ, brings forth the children of God by the action of the Holy Spirit at baptism. The virgin Mary is model of the Church's fecund virginity—she received God's word with faith so great that the Word was made flesh, "conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary."

Still another point of likeness between Mary and the Church is holiness. 'Holy Mary' is as characteristic a description of Our Lady as Catholic piety knows, and the same is true of 'Holy Church.' This is only to be expected, for Christ, the holy one of God, was the Son of Mary, and the founder of the Church, which is his mystical body, sharing his very life. Here again Mary is the great model of the Church; she is the one human person in all history with whom God had his way completely. The saving grace of Christ reached a unique fullness in Mary. She was holy in her Immaculate Conception, full of grace through her life on earth, and this not in any static sense but with a constant progress in faith and love; and she has already achieved in her assumption, the fullness of union with God, body as well as soul. The Church is the spotless

bride of Christ, who delivered himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water by means of the word; in order that he might present to himself the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5, 25-27). The Church possesses the means of holiness—the Mass, sacraments, purity of doctrinal and moral teachings. There are scores of saints in the calendar of the Church. Yet the members of the Church remain weak human beings and often fall into sin. The Church, solicitous mother, rescues them by the sacrament of penance, and builds up their strength, especially by the bread of life which is the Holy Eucharist.

Mary is the pattern of what God intends for his Church. What he did for her through the Immaculate Conception, he does for the rest of men through baptism; Mary alone was 'full of grace' yet all are called to follow Christ and achieve holiness as members of the Church. The Church will reach its final perfection when Christ the bridegroom comes in triumph at the end of time to claim his beloved, the Church. Meantime, the Church contemplating Mary in the scriptures, and guided by the Holy Spirit, discovers more and more Mary is the perfect realization of the Church. As Rupert of Deutz expressed it in the twelfth century, "Nothing is unfittingly applied to Mary of all those things which can be said or sung of the great and holy love of the Church which loves Christ and is loved by him." The Church rediscovers her own features in Mary's. And thinking of Mary in the glory of her assumption, the Church contemplates in Mary its future glory and final union with Christ. The heavenly completion Mary already has in union with the risen Christ, the Church will achieve in its glorified members at the end of time.

Our final consideration is of Mary and the individual Christian in the Church. Authentic piety must avoid dangerous extremes in Marian devotion; there is a danger here, as there is also in other forms of devotion, of a sort of 'rugged individualism' that neglects the social sense of liturgical prayer. The Christian is never an 'only child.' At the same time we must be equally careful not to regard the mother of Jesus as so exclusively the figure and archetype, the model of the Church, the community of the saved, that we forget she is the individual, Saint Mary, who is our spiritual mother in a most intimate and personal way.

Recent writings concerned with the Vatican Council, Protestant as well as Catholic, have discussed the apparent conflict between the so-called Marian movement and the liturgical movement. It has been said in an oversimplified fashion that the liturgical movement is more ecclesiological, more aware of the Church, therefore more objective and sacramental, while Marian piety is subjective and personal. The ugly word, Marianism, has been coined to describe

what is regarded as an excessive concern with Marian doctrine and devotion. Some are suggesting that in the interests of ecumenism the Church should say less about Our Lady. It is obvious, however, to anyone who reads Pope John's addresses to the council in full—and here the reports and the commentaries on the papal talks have been regrettably remiss—that the Holy Father does not share the fear that stressing the Church's clear teaching about Mary will do a disservice to Christian unity. A French Protestant observer, Yves Chabas, reporting a few weeks ago in a Protestant weekly, *The Christian Century* (February 13, 1963), did call attention to Holy Father's insistence on Our Lady's role; he wrote: "John XXIII's theology offends us because of the Marian note it invariably stresses." Unfortunately, our separated brethren do not share our Catholic outlook on the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Yet we know at the same time that they do not wish us to wear a false face before them. Certainly we should be careful when we describe Catholic doctrine about Mary, and not give needless offense by making a display of the sometimes exaggerated language of devotion. Yet, as reported so well in this week's *America* magazine (March 30, 1963, p. 247) from a pastoral letter of Archbishop John Murphy of Cardiff, Wales, we must not play down the privileges of the mother of God "as if they were merely devotional decorations which the Church bestows or withholds at will." These privileges the bishop said, "are not pinned on the mother of God by a dotting papacy or a pious episcopacy." They are "already there in essential revelation. All the Church did was to discover them." Archbishop Murphy makes a further suggestion—that the World Council of Churches, including many Anglicans and Orthodox, who are devoted to Our Lady, make "some statement on the position of the Mother of God."

When the Vatican Council resumes in September, the mother of God and mother of men is one of the first items to be taken up. It is impossible to guess what statement the conciliar fathers may make, but under the leadership of Pope John, who has so often spoken of Mary's spiritual motherhood, it may be that the council will say something about the sense and significance of Mary, mother of God and mother of the Church.

In the meantime, we must beware of becoming so involved in 'types, figures, archetypes and prototypes' as to forget that Mary is a human person, whose relationship with God and with each of us is an intensely personal one, while the Church is an organism consisting of many persons. The social aspect of the Church is of immense importance, but so is the personal relationship to Jesus Christ which we achieve through the maternal offices of the Church. We must avoid turning the mother of Jesus and our mother, into an abstraction, into a personification at the expense of her personality. Speak of her as type, symbol,

figure of the Church, in her response to God's grace, but do not forget she is mother of the Church, physically mother of the Head, spiritually mother of the members. Men and women in the pews or school children at their desks, and even the theologian or teacher cannot love a mere type, and he finds it no easier to love an archetype or a prototype. Mary, the model of mother Church, is also mother Mary, the mother of God and the mother, whom we love.

There is no true clash between authentic Marian piety and genuine liturgical piety; they complete each other. Father Godfrey Diekmann's address at the Pittsburgh liturgical week of 1960 on "Mary, Model of our Worship," showed this very well. Pius XII in his encyclical letter of 1947, *Mediator Dei*, said of the Church's praise: "Among the holy citizens of heaven the virgin mother of God receives honor of a special kind. By reason of her God-given function her life is most closely interwoven with the mysteries of Jesus Christ; and assuredly no one better or more closely followed in the footsteps of the Word Incarnate, no one enjoys greater favor with the Sacred Heart of the Son of God, and through it with the heavenly Father. She teaches us all the virtues," added the pope, "she gives us her Son and with him all the helps we need for God has willed us to have everything through Mary." And then, to join Mary to the liturgy still more closely, the Holy Father added: "Along this path of the liturgy which year by year opens out before us, under the sanctifying influence of the Church, helped by the assistance and example of the saints and especially of the immaculate Virgin Mary, let us come forward with sincere hearts in the full assurance of the faith . . . to the great priest."

All true Christian spirituality is Marian spirituality, not in the sense of one or another form of devotion but in the sense of Mary's complete openness to God. This is not substituting a creature for God, because it was through God's free gift, that the virgin of Nazareth was made 'holy Mary.' It is worthy of note that the documents of both the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption have the same keynote. In 1854 Pius IX's document defining Mary's freedom from original sin began with the words, *Ineffabilis Deus*, "the God who cannot be expressed in human words"; and *Munificentissimus Deus* the opening words of Pius XII for the Assumption definition in 1950, mean "the most generous God." In both cases it is the work of God we are praising in saluting Mary his mother.

We saw in the first part of our lecture how perfectly Mary answered God's invitation. It was part of the perfection of God's dealings with her that he respected fully her human freedom and that she accepted God's word so faithfully and so lovingly. In our Christian lives we, too, walk the dark road of faith; at times we can only pray with the father of the epileptic and possessed boy: "I do

believe, Lord, help my unbelief." At all times we must say with Mary: 'Lord, behold your handmaid; do with me as you will.' Because of the religious vocations we have accepted in faith, the whole course of our lives has been changed—but ultimately like Mary we discover God's demands upon us only in the events of day to day. We must learn to say to ourselves what Mary said to the waiters at Cana, but what she had first practiced in her own daily life: 'Do whatever my Son tells you.'

My dear sisters, you represent many religious congregations, each with something characteristic and some assigned vocation in the Church. Even in the New Testament we find a variety of spiritual gifts, and the foundation for different Christian spiritualities. But there is a danger now, as there was then of dividing Christ, of focussing interest on private peculiarities to the neglect of the true object. A prayerful approach to the meaning of Mary can save us from fragmenting the total Christian outlook. True Marian spirituality is not simply one among many spiritualities in the Church; every authentically Christian spirituality must be Marian. We mean of course not merely enthusiasm over Mary. Genuine Marian spirituality is the meeting point between the word of God revealed in the Church and the response of the individual human person. There are not individual spiritual doctrines corresponding to the individual. Each of us shares in the spirituality of the Church; like Mary each member of the Church must assimilate God's word in the life of faith, love and hope.

Mary as an individual person had her own intimate relationship to God, unique to her, yet her response to God was so perfect and complete as to make her the model of the Church and of each single member of the Church in a way no other human persons can be. As perfect Christian Mary shares in her Son's mission of being master and model to all. "She 'dissolves' the individual differences of the different schools of spirituality in the all-inclusive spirituality of the Church, the bride of Christ. The special note of Mary's spirituality is the renunciation of any particular spirituality, because she was utterly overshadowed by the God, by the indwelling of the divine Word." (For this sentence and for most of the thoughts in this section we acknowledge our indebtedness to Hans Urs von Balthasar). From a human viewpoint, her cooperation was the service a mother renders her child, aware only of the child's needs, without any self-conscious reflection on the obligations of 'motherhood.' Thus Mary's consent had the boundless sincerity that made it the perfect example of the consent of the Church and prototype of the consent of individual believers.

I would like to close these remarks with a quotation from Cardinal Frings; it is from an address he gave at Genoa in November, 1961 as one of a series of lectures preparatory to the General Council:

"Our Lady . . . is a sign announcing the Church, that holy people made one through the common worship of the liturgy. On the basis of such considerations, it may well be the task of the coming decades to integrate the Marian movement into the liturgical and to subordinate the former to the great theological motives of the latter. The Marian approach would be able to give the liturgically-minded something of its heart-felt warmth, of its fervor and feeling, of its readiness for penance and atonement, whereas it would receive from the liturgical movement something of the latter's sacred sobriety and lucid clarity. The strict serenity characteristic of the ancient laws of prayer and liturgy will keep within limits the rambling imagination of the loving heart and assign it to its proper place" (*Catholic Messenger*, Davenport, Iowa, April 5, 1962).

Progress in Mental Prayer

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN this whole problem of progress and mental prayer with a little anecdote which is supposed to be a true story told by a graduate of Notre Dame. This gentleman graduated, he said, in 1933, when the motto of the class was, "W.P.A.—here we come," and he said, in that day it wasn't too well organized—you had to hold a shovel. The very first Sunday morning after he received his diploma, he sat down with his mother and the *New York Times*. His mother asked him when they had gone through the "Wanted" column, "Can you do this," and he would say, rather glumly, "No." And she went down the whole list of various jobs that were open, and he kept answering in the negative. Actually he happened to have majored in Latin, and minored in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy. So when his mother pathetically said at the end of it all, "What can you do?" he said, "About the only job I can perform is to be Emperor of the Roman Empire. And unfortunately, Benito Mussolini is doing a good job of that at this time." Perhaps some of you feel the way this gentleman did because of the background of religious in the United States today, and also because of the demands placed upon them. The feeling we are neither in one camp or the other, that we are not totally as professional as we ought to be, nor are we as religious as we ought to be. This is a disturbing factor, I believe, in at least the minds of many, if not in actual fact.

Perhaps some of you already have had the chance to read J. F. Powers' prize winning novel, *Morte d'Urban*. In this particular novel the protagonist, Father Urban, is a man who is five dimensional. By this I mean he comes through the novel as a man with many natural virtues, and Powers seems to highlight some of those virtues which we would be most sympathetic towards, namely, his concern and distress at the problems of others. Also, he has a very sure sense of respectability. We might call them the gentleman's virtues, but something is wholly lacking in Father Urban, and I think this is the essence of the whole novel. It is a well-drawn masterful commentary, I think, and told in understatement. It is a wonderful commentary on motivation of, namely, the priesthood.

Father Urban, unfortunately, goes through the motions of acting like a priest without actually having, I might say, the heart of a priest. He is a man and he is also a functionary; someone wearing the tasks and the duties of his job. There

is something wholly lacking in Father Urban, and it is all brought out very nicely in a final scene towards the end of the novel in which he is speaking with another person about how he is disappointed with other people when they tell him that they can get along without God. The other person says, "Why are you disappointed?" The answer was "Well, I am not so disappointed with them as with the reasons they give." I think we have here a stressing of the main point of the whole novel when the other person asks him, "Did it ever occur to you that others are disappointed by you and your reasons, but even more by you?" This is the whole theme, I think, of the novel, and even when Father Urban is kicked upstairs, as we say, becomes a provincial at the end of the book, he is fumbling with a half-learned lesson, and knows that he ought not to change things radically in his community. He knows he must not change things but he does not know the reason why. So we lay down the novel more disgusted, I think, with this man than you would be with Father Kennedy in *The Edge of Sadness* by O'Conner, or by the priest in Graham Green's *The Power and the Glory*. Both of these men were real priests at the core, but Father Urban is just walking in a world of appearances. He does not come to grip with reality, his life is earmarked with failure—not with the failure of defeat, but with the failure of mediocrity. If you have read the commentary by Father McCorry in *America*, you see that he underlines this idea of mediocrity.

So you have this problem of dedication to a real vocation or the simple acting and playing the part of a functionary, which is Father Urban's problem. Now many reviewers, it would seem, have been stung to the quick by the implication in this novel in the sense that they wonder, 'is this meant to be a sort of mirror, not only of the priesthood in the United States today, but of the religious life, because Father Urban, it is insisted upon throughout the book, is a religious and is always working, seemingly, for the good of his community. He wants to see it grow, and half the time you're wondering why he wants it to expand. It doesn't seem to have any function or be fulfilling anything so far as he knows about. This is the tenor of what they take out of this book, and we ought to wonder to ourselves, 'Are we like that?'

I think this is highlighted for you as nuns today in the United States for the simple reason that today the nun is looked upon in a very different way than she was formerly. When we were all growing up, the impression was that when Sister entered the convent, she automatically became something rather ultra-mundane overnight by putting on the habit. Then she went about her work which she was perfectly equipped for by means of obedience and just a few directives. At the end of the day either in the hospital or in the classroom, or the orphanage, she went behind her cloister doors and there was suddenly absorbed in the things

of God. Everyone might wonder about it, but no one ever questioned whether or not this was a right way of doing things. But we've come a long way since those days. Today we've moved up to the age of efficiency. Today the teacher can no longer be satisfied with the idea that she has been placed in a certain task by means of obedience. She realizes all too well that she may not be equipped for this job, not professionally, and she is working shoulder-to-shoulder with so many who are acutely conscious of the demands for professionalism of today. Lay people will not ask, "Does Sister teach the fourth or the twelfth grade or the second year of college?" but, "Is she equipped to teach at all?" They are questioning this, and I think it is a tribute to the great effort that has been made in the active apostolate by the nuns in the United States that Sisters are no longer unaware of this particular need. She is too intelligent, I think, too educated and too cultured a woman not to realize that she can no longer go along with the cramped perspectives she once might have had. Today there is a very intelligent approach to the Sister formation which is doing a tremendous job as you all know, and will do even more. Not only are nuns today taking on more tasks but they see their tasks in a better light. They realize, I think, it is necessary to give sound education on the natural level before you try to wed that to Christian theology, and this is just to speak about teaching.

With all of these demands, there is this danger. Let me quote a man who is now considered a classical writer in the spiritual life, Father Edward Leen, the Irish Holy Ghost Father. He says:

Whilst the work of modern religious societies is to meet human needs, it must not be forgotten that the chief end of religious life is not to meet human needs, but to be concerned with God. Providence, when calling souls to the cloister, will direct them to that form of religion which will be suited to their natural and supernatural gifts. Because it is so suited, it will hold for them the most apt means to acquire union with God, and then this union with God will find an outlet in activity in harmony with the soul's aptitudes. There is a danger, by no means an infrequent or a small danger, which arises through preoccupation of mind and especially through the insistent demands of the particular work in which the society is engaged to which they belong, so that religious may lose the proper perspective of things, fail to maintain themselves consistently on a supernatural level, and to keep unflinchingly to a supernatural outlook. The loss of perspective appears in this, that subordinate and secondary objectives push their way in the foreground of consciousness, asking from primary objectives for their possession, and gradually pushing them into the margin or even the background of consciousness. The subsidiary supplants the essential; the means take the place of the ends.

What I am going to say in this particular forum is that I believe of the many means at your disposal to remedy this situation, or to safeguard against the possible danger in this direction, the most important is to undertake more sincerely in your own private lives the practice of mental prayer. I would say, making a personal confession on this point that I changed my mind several times in a short life. This seemed a very important thing to me once, as a young religious, and later on I thought it might be dispensed with in some way, and I've since come around again. If I may humbly use the comparison, it is like Saint Thomas Aquinas changing his mind on the Immaculate Conception. This is what it amounts to, that one learns by experience what is utterly essential and what is not. And I would go so far as to say that this is so important that it is absolutely essential and it cannot be substituted for in any way whatsoever—not by anything. I have put it this way when teaching college women. Every year at least once, sometimes twice or three times, I used to say in class: "Please put down your pencils and paper. No more notes. Listen to me carefully because this is going to mean something to you when you are thirty-five." Because about this time I find that most women living in the world have difficulties about finding meaning in life, and I only know one way in which they can capture meaning in their lives and that is by becoming women of prayer. Not women who pray, because they have already been doing that, but women of prayer whose lives are permeated by the state of prayer in which they find themselves. Let me quote just one more man before going into various aspects of the prayer problem. This quotation is taken from the Venerable Augustine Baker, the Benedictine who wrote the book called *Holy Wisdom*, with which perhaps you are familiar. He asks a question: "What is it that a soul truly called by God to enter into religion looks for? Surely not corporal labors, not the use of the sacraments, not the hearing of sermons, *et cetera*, for all these she might have enjoyed, perhaps, more plentifully in the world. It is, therefore, only the union with the spirit of God by recollected constant prayer to the attaining which divine end, all things practiced in religion do dispose, and to which alone so great impediments are found in the world." So, his thesis is that the reason you come into religious life, along with other motivations, was particularly to find this practice, and to find it consistently, namely, the practice of what I would call mental prayer.

I mentioned the problem of substitution, and here I am going to borrow heavily upon a circular letter written by our own Father General, Father Kilian Healy, and I just want to go over this in very brief fashion. First of all let me say what I mean by mental prayer. By mental prayer I mean the whole spread of interior prayer from its most primitive and preliminary form, the meditation, which is the prayer of the neophyte, up to including what is called by the mystical writers,

mystical union, or mystical marriage, the final state of mystical union I should call it. What is mental prayer? It is simply the heart-to-heart, intimate contact between a spirit and a spirit, namely, between God and the spirit of man. The common element in all of it is the heart-to-heart contact with God. And we ought to see, I think, all of mental prayer in that way. Is it so necessary that you can't find a substitute for it? Well here are the arguments that are given by some. They say that spiritual reading will do the trick, and their idea is that if you spiritually read, you are nourishing your soul with thoughts and these in turn will help you, as it were, to stop and converse with God from time to time. If it is made properly, it may be good mental prayer, and this will be sufficient for the soul's nourishment. Another argument comes from the liturgy. In other words, by our intelligent participation, in the liturgy, day-to-day, this should be quite sufficient to see us through, and help us to attain union with God which, of course, is the aim of mental prayer. Others cite the possibility of the presence of God, coupled with aspiratory prayers. This will bring union with Almighty God. And, finally, you always have the school that says: "Is not my work a prayer? Can not I make my good intention in the morning, and by renewing this thinking of God from time to time during the day, coupling with it perhaps the presence of God and an aspiratory prayer? Isn't all of my work prayer?" I would say these are the general answers given as substitutes for mental prayer. The whole answer is that each of the arguments somewhat misses the point. It goes off the tracks of the real essence of the problem, I feel. I like to put it this way, mental prayer stands in the middle of any one of these programs that we speak about.

Let's take by way of example what certainly seems to be the answer, intelligent participation in the liturgy and in liturgical action. I think that if you do participate in liturgical action properly, it will flow into the intimate contact and conversation, fact-to-face, person-to-person with God that is mental prayer. Mental prayer certainly will rejuvenate the spirit, and give it vigor for participating more intelligently, but even more important, more fervently and with more heart in the worship which is liturgy, worship in truth and in spirit which God is looking for. I would dare say that anyone who tries to dispense with mental prayer and hang onto the liturgy, will find that the liturgy becomes sort of an appearance, something which lacks heart. It will then lack true spirit and vivification. You will find that the person, who is animated by the true spirit of mental prayer in the sense that they have actually practiced it sincerely, will find it a great help in their liturgical prayer for getting to God. At least they notice in faith. If there are those of you here who enjoy higher states of prayer in which you find difficulty in participating in the liturgy because it has too much movement, too much activity, I sympathize with your problem. This is a very real problem which you

have and the only thing one can do is by faith try to participate as well as one can. But the real essence of worship is there, the essence of wanting to give oneself completely to God. The faith that is required here is the blind faith of uniting one's self with this action that is going on, that one believes is the action of Christ here and now. This is a very definite problem faced by those in the higher states of prayer, and I don't have any solid answer for it myself personally, and I haven't been able to get one from anyone. So I just present that for what it's worth.

The other matters we mentioned, I think, can be looked upon in the same way. Spiritual reading will nourish one's thoughts. At least for a certain time in one's spiritual life. We always have to go back to it. It will nourish mental prayer. A person who is fervent in mental prayer will try to read more about the spiritual life and about God, even though they realize they are not getting much out of it at certain stages. The same applies to work. I read an article recently on spirituality for the layman which I don't agree with at all. The author emphasized making one's duties in life one's spirituality while understressing the life of interior prayer or mental prayer. I think this is impossible. The layman, to have true spirituality, must spend some kind of time regularly, preferably each day, if only for a quarter of an hour, in some kind of form of mental prayer. The author emphasized retreats, but this is not enough if a person is to stay consistently up on the supernatural level.

I was talking to a fellow professor one day at this college where I taught; maybe you know her, Dr. Helene Margaret. One day I was having lunch with her in the cafeteria, and I said: "Helene, what do you get out of these teachers' conventions that you go to? I just went to one and, boy, it left me cold. I didn't learn anything." She said: "Yes, you did, Father. You learned they didn't have anything to teach you." So, I hope that some of these things will seem a little bit new, but perhaps you will disagree with me, and that is also good.

Let's take up under the problem of the period of daily meditation. Let's take up the word meditation, and see what is ordinarily meant by that term. I think we all know it refers to the plan or the work upon which we place our person-to-person contact with Christ or with God or with our Blessed Lady to whom we may be speaking in mental prayer. That is what it brings, I think, to mind. And its aim, its total purpose is to bring about the conversation. What happens, however, with meditation? I think you will find in general that novices are inclined to hang onto the structure or the plan of the conversation, and sort of let the conversation go when actually it should progress the other way, so that gradually we let go all of the plan and make it more simple only to lose it altogether and hang on to the personal element of conversation, face-to-face contact with God.

By the way, let me point out that this is the only time that you meet God face-to-face during the day. The only place you really know yourself is in mental prayer. A good proof of the pudding is to be found in the fact that many of us, when prayer gets a little difficult, will scurry for our books because we want to get away from intimate, face-to-face contact with God and with ourselves. Something is bothering us and so we try escaping, as one spiritual author calls it, through a trapdoor to get away from this. Doing this turns mental prayer into something it is not, and I will say what it is not in a few seconds.

Remember then the aim of meditation is this conversation with God. I, if you notice, always use the term, meditation when speaking about this mental prayer and this is because my novice master always spoke about meditation. Naturally I went through my young religious days thinking that this was to be my whole life, meditation, and I don't know about you, but this sort of aggravated me, the idea that I would have to do all that thinking. I don't like to think any more than anybody else, and so I mention this to see if it squares with your own private experience in this regard. Is meditation the only thing you think in terms of? If you call it mental prayer with emphasis upon the word mental or interior prayer then the important feature of person-to-person contact with Almighty God is brought out. This is the more important thing. Then I become involved, and it is not merely a matter of framework that I have to be careful about. Mental prayer means, I speak to God in my own words. For those, who may not have thought of it that way before, notice these words that they speak about may be just simply a lull without any expressed words. We can hardly exist for a moment when we are awake without some kind of image, or maybe words flitting through our minds of which we are not conscious, but it is not necessary in prayer to say anything as long as you just want God. That is a spiritual act of the will, and not of the intellect. As long as that urge is there, that is perfect prayer if you can maintain it. The trouble is that most of us can't maintain it until we reach a certain level in the spiritual life. Notice also that the method itself, the schematic approach, is more or less necessary for those who have had little piety before and who move on to a religious life of some sort. They need this method to help them to converse with almighty God because they aren't used to this. It brings into operation the intellect which we need though I have said the essence of meditation is the will, and its conversation with almighty God in a personal way. We cannot depend upon the will to carry itself alone. We need the intellect, we need reason, we need the imaginative and the intellectual memory to help us get started, to feed us material for conversation with almighty God. So I would agree completely with Saint Theresa that, "let's not make a sharp distinction and say this is prayer, and that is not." Now, we need the intellect with the will, but let's remember

what she said: "The point is not to think much, but to love much. That is what matters."

A choice of methods—I am just going to treat this briefly. Most novices are tied down to a directory as to methods. Fine, the important thing, I think for anyone beginning prayer. One, who having spent so many years in religious life and decides to start all over again, should go back to a method. They should certainly go back to a method, and I always like to repeat something Saint Vincent de Paul used to say to his daughters. He used to say: "How do I know that one of you there isn't another Saint Theresa of Avila? Remember, it took her a couple of years to wake up." She was, I think, twenty when she received the prayer of quiet. After visiting her uncle who put a book on mystical prayer in her hands, she went back to the convent, fell back into her former imperfections and lost the gifts of mysticism. She didn't regain them until the age of forty. We have to learn the art of prayer. It is an art and it is a laborious art. If we had all been born in the garden as our first parents were born; in intimate friendship with God, then prayer would be a spontaneous activity as it was on the part of Adam and Eve. They lost that by original sin. We have lost that contact and it takes a great deal of labor to get back the art of prayer, and it is an art.

With regard to method, let us remember that basically it only comes down to three things. It comes down to getting into prayer. All methods have some kind of introduction, and then a getting ready for prayer. You've got to have something to tie yourself down to in order to start the conversation. Finally, there is praying itself. Until you come to this point, you haven't come to the real kernel or essence of mental prayer. Maybe all of that sounds idealistic, but I hope not.

There are problems arising from the term meditation itself. When you use the word meditation, you seem to be stressing considerations which I just mentioned and which are not the essence of mental prayer. Mental prayer consists in the conversation, which is done under the impulse of the will. Of course, the intellect had to give the will some kind of an object to converse about, but the converse is the important thing. The older spiritual authors spoke of the spiritual life consisting of reading, reflection and prayer. And what one can say here is, why don't we pray when we pray, and read when we read, and reflect when we reflect in the spiritual life. It's just a way of bringing out what I think is a way of misconception of mental prayer. Mental prayer is definitely not spiritual reading. Unfortunately today, in order to streamline everything, we've thrown everything into the mental prayer period of the day. But it is not spiritual reading; it is not a time for examining one's conscience; and it is certainly not a time for

making resolutions; but that is what you will find in all of the methods. Now if you read a book at this particular point, there is nothing against that if you are just using it as a starter—and Saint Theresa for many years did use a book we know. So it is not spiritual reading, spiritual reading should be done at other times. Time of mental prayer should be a time of prayer, conversation with God. Secondly, it is not for the sake of making resolutions. Undoubtedly resolutions will come out of one's desire to get more and more intimate union with God. Some of the things you talk about will be "Lord, I won't do that again," or "I will do this," or "I'm willing to give up this." These are resolutions. But to make clear, persistent drives at making resolutions, you can see becomes very artificial, and wearisome to the soul because it comes five minutes before the end of the prayer period.

No, if you pray when you are supposed to be praying, in that itself you are achieving what you came for when you came to mental prayer. This will be the essence of your progress: If you are making progress in conversation with God, you are achieving the purpose of mental prayer. It has no other purpose and though at times, it may seem you are getting nowhere, if you persevere in your intention to converse with God in the period of mental prayer, then you are certainly drawing closer to him. After all, what else really matters.

The Marian Life

AS WAS NOTED ON the program, our topic this morning is the Marian Doctrine of the Venerable Michael of St. Augustine. He was a Carmelite priest who lived in the seventeenth century; born in 1621, died in 1684. He wrote a short dissertation or treatise on Marian devotion, which he called *The Marian and Mariform Life, in Mary, for Mary*. This treatise of his, short as it is, is regarded by authorities of the Carmelite Order as a center of information about how many souls, Carmelites in particular, might foster devotion to the Blessed Mother. There is no need to argue the necessity for Marian devotion of some kind in the spiritual life. We might quarrel about the need for such Marian devotion to be explicitly and very dominant in one's spiritual life, but we could not quarrel about the necessity for some type of devotion to Our Lady. Father Faber suggests that spiritual progress is impossible without some devotion to our Blessed Lady, and he suggests that perhaps the need and importance of this devotion can be obscured by the vehemence with which those outside the fold attack it. He uses this argument to emphasize and justify this exactly.

At any rate Father Michael of Saint Augustine was a member of the Touraine Reform in the order of Carmel. The order has had other reforms, as you might know, besides the reform of Saint Theresa and Saint John of the Cross. The particular reform to which the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance, as we call ourselves, look to with a certain amount of affection is the so called Touraine Reform which has left its effect on Carmelites living in the present day. Such a little effect as not eating meat on Wednesday and Saturday in addition to Friday, was re-emphasized by the Touraine Reform; so it has left its mark on Carmelites even to the present day. Though Father Michael of Saint Augustine was one of those Carmelites who adopted this reform, not everyone did. Apparently not even every one in every province of the order did. Father Michael of Saint Augustine became provincial of the Belgian province, and he made some attempt to prescribe the reform of Touraine for all Carmelites under his jurisdiction. He met with the misunderstanding and lack of sympathy that a reformer might expect, even in the present order of things. He had a very unpleasant first term as provincial, and only one term, as I recall it, the first time out. But then later on people did show respect by their devotion and

application to the serious observances of the Carmelite life when they couldn't seem to get as good a provincial. A little later on, after a recess and time to think things over, he was elected again and then under his guidance this nation and the Carmelite communities, who adopted the reform of Touraine, listened very seriously, we imagine, to what he had to say, about Marian devotion which is essential in the life of the Carmelites.

Father Michael of Saint Augustine also worked as a spiritual director. He had the fortune to have under his direction a member of the lay Third Order, who is also a venerable now, like himself, Venerable Marie Petyt of Saint Theresa. She was a soul who walked in extraordinary paths of the spiritual life as a lay woman and Carmelite Tertiary. She was not the type of person it is our fortune to meet every day, and not the type of person that the ordinary spiritual director considers it his good fortune to meet at any time. These people do possess their own peculiar property, and, as Father Pascal Parente used to say in class, "From souls who walk in extraordinary paths of sanctity, deliver us O Lord." Well, Father Michael did have Venerable Marie of Saint Theresa under his direction and she assimilated his teachings about the Marian life, and many of her mystical experiences concern our Blessed Lady. So while Michael guided her, as we might also surmise, he was fostered then by her toward the possibility of mystical experiences concerned with Mary, accompanying the very mystical experiences that are associated with such unions in the spiritual life as the transforming union itself.

As I have termed it, Father Michael's treatise on the Marian life is, you might say, very brief; fourteen chapters, not too well organized I would say as a bit of writing. It was my good fortune to translate the work of Michael of Saint Augustine on the Marian life from Latin into English in 1953 under the guidance and encouragement of Father O'Callaghan. He published this translation on the Marian Life, and we called it *Life With Mary, A Treatise on the Marian Life* by the Venerable Michael of Saint Augustine. I put in a little sketch of Michael of Saint Augustine as an introduction to the text. Then the actual fourteen chapters appeared in this little booklet, and I added what I call the "Schema of the Marian Doctrine of Michael of Saint Augustine" precisely because he did not seem to my mind to write or present his details in too organized a fashion. You can find, for example, his talking about the purpose of the Marian life, in Chapter 1, but also in Chapter 10 and Chapter 9 and Chapter 4; about the purpose of the Marian Life in Chapter 14 as well as in Chapter 1; about the sources of the Marian Life in Chapters 2, 3, 5, 8, 12. You see many of his ideas re-emphasized here in the text. Finally, I placed a kind of commentary on the text with new suggested prayers.

In this text about Marian life, Father Michael of Saint Augustine places rather heavy emphasis on the theology behind this type of Marian devotion that he has suggested. He has suggested really a devotion which would be the major devotion in the personal life of an individual. He thought of Marian devotion as a simplifying, unifying element for one's whole spiritual life. He is suggesting not a type of devotion that will fill one little compartment of a person's spiritual life, but a devotion which would be the central one, which will provide the individual with his overall motivation characteristic of persons devoted to the service of God. That is not the usual approach to the devotion to Our Lady. It is the approach of others but it is not an approach that is of obligation, even Michael of Saint Augustine would say it is only a suggestion. No one is under an obligation to feel that his interior life must bear this particular emphasis on Our Lady. However, Father Michael feels constrained to justify that type of life. He seems to have in mind frequently during his writing critics who say that such approach to the spiritual life is faulty, that such an approach to the spiritual life obscures the person of Christ and obscures a more spiritual fear of God himself. He feels constrained then to show how Marian devotion is based on the very fundamental principles of doctrine, and he points out that the three principles of doctrine on which a whole spiritual life centers around the Blessed Mother can be developed on the doctrine of her maternity and her queenship from which would flow also her mediation. He points out in many places throughout his treatise that the divine maternity of Our Lady and her spiritual maternity can be considered what was in that day the fundamental principle. A fundamental principle in Mariology is a principle that explains all other graces, all the other privileges given to the Mother of God. Because Mary was to be the mother of the Lord that she was conceived immaculate. It was because Mary was destined to be the mother of the Lord that she was given this great privilege of leading her life without deliberate and semi-deliberate sins. It was because Mary was the mother of the Lord that it was unfitting that her body should be corrupted in the grave, and so she was assumed into heaven. It is because she is the mother of the Lord that she is the spiritual mother of Christians—the spiritual mother of all who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, and he died for all men. That is what people mean nowadays when they speak of the divine maternity as being the fundamental principle in the study of Mariology. They mean that it is the principle, in the light of which all the other principles flow. They don't mean exactly that it is the principle from which all the other privileges of Our Lady had to be viewed, but that is the principle in the light of which all the other principles can be explained. For example, when we're studying God in philosophy, the philosophers tell us that

the fundamental principle in the study of God is that God is a self-existing being, and because God is a self-existing being, you can find out that he is eternal, infinite, incomprehensible and so on. All these things follow from the fact that he is a self-existing being, but sometimes people get the idea that when we speak of the divine maternity as a fundamental principle in Mariology, we mean that when you know the divine maternity, you would automatically know the other privileges, and that is not true. That is not exactly what is meant. When we speak of the fundamental principle, we mean that this is the reason, it provides the explanation for all the other facts about Our Lady. We know the true facts from other sources. It explains the Immaculate Conception. When we already know about the Immaculate Conception, we can see why God gave us Mary, his mother. It explains the Assumption. When we know of her sinlessness from another source, we can see how it was fitting as the theologians say, because of her position as the Mother of God. Michael of Saint Augustine doesn't go into all that, of course. He simply lays down the principle that if Mary is the mother of God, and the mother of men and their queen, it is right, meet and just, we might say, to want to base one's approach to the spiritual life on Mary, and devotion to Mary.

The soul who loves God, he points out in Chapter 1, lives a supernatural or divine life by faithful cooperation with grace, which goes before the soul to prepare a way for it, excites it to action, accompanies it and aids it in action, and even follows after it to support it in action. As Father Michael says, "But according to the minds of the Fathers of the Church, God has decreed to give no grace to men, which does not pass through Mary's hands." Because she is the mother of men and the queen of men, she is also now the dispensatrix, the mediatrix of grace. For this reason, Michael pointed out, they called Mary the "neck" of the Church. They don't call Mary the "neck" of the Church any more. All graces coming to the members of the Church are necessarily derived from Christ, who is the head through the "neck." They don't use that term any more, but the fact which that term is meant to emphasize, of course, remains a fact and is emphasized even more now than it was in the time of Michael of Saint Augustine. All grace comes from God, through Christ, through the mediation of Our Lady. All grace that has been won for us by Christ, and is now given to us by Christ, is also won for us in some way by our Blessed Mother. At least in the very same way, for example, that we can win grace for one another by our prayers and good works. At least in that sense all grace, not only some grace, but all grace was won for us by the meritorious activity of Our Lady. So it is in her hands that God has placed the dispensation of grace, because of these privileges then.

Because of these very same prerogatives of Our Lady Michael of Saint Augustine says that it is only right that she should be central in our thinking, as she is central in the thinking of God. The spirit of God, he suggests in another chapter, produced in the soul of Jesus Christ supernatural love and the human soul of Jesus Christ had love for God the Father, had love for Mary, his own Mother. Christ by the activity of the Holy Spirit of God, without one obscuring the other, did this. So it does not seem difficult, he suggests, that the same divine Spirit might produce in a soul, love for God and love for Mary, without the love for Mary obscuring, let us say, dedication to Christ or concentration on the love of God above all things, but rather contributing to concentration on Christ and love of God above all things. It appears grace, which is the principle of this life, can bring about in any soul many of the same experiences, attitudes and dispositions which it brought about in the human soul of Jesus Christ. The Christian is meant to be like Christ; Christ was devoted to Our Lady. You can say that she was in many ways the center of his life—a point brought out to justify devotion to Mary for men—the central predominant spiritual attitude of the whole approach to spiritual life. Those two points then we have mentioned: The basis of his Marian life is the same as the basis of Mary's privileges, namely, her position of the mother of God and the mother of men, and her position as our queen; and the principle of this spiritual life is the principle of all spiritual life, grace. Grace is given to us under the influence of Mary, the mother of God.

Father Michael of Saint Augustine has also attempted in this treatise to justify his explanation of Marian devotion by emphasizing the purpose of such a Marian life as he suggests. Complete dedication, complete preoccupation with Our Lady is simply to bring about conformity between the individual will and the will of Mary. The will of Mary is always at one with the will of God. You can't quarrel, he suggests, with such a fact of this devotion, which has as its goal the union of the individual will with the will of Our Lady which is at one with the will of God; this is what is called the union of wills. Wills are spiritual things certainly. If one will did step in the way of the other, the union of one will with the will of Our Lady would in some way obscure, prevent or damage the union of one will with the will of God. To contribute to the honor of God through the union of wills and to the honor of Our Lady, such is the purpose of this Marian life that Michael of Saint Augustine sets down at the very beginning of his treatise. We have said that he points out we must live Dei-formly, that is conformable to God with pleasure, and according to the commands of his divine will. Well, in like manner, it is fitting for us to live Mari-formly, that is, conformable to the good pleasure of Mary, the mother of God. This is the reason why those who profess to be Mary's most dear children use one and the

same eye of discretion to judge whether all that they do and omit be according to the perspective of God and their beloved mother. In all their actions they try to have their minds fixed at one and the same time upon God and his most holy mother, so that they may most promptly and joyously do what Jesus wants and carefully avoid whatever he does not want. Very simple, you might say; very difficult at the same time, you must admit.

I mentioned earlier that Michael of Saint Augustine had acquaintance over a period of sixteen years with the Venerable Marie of Saint Theresa, who had extraordinary mystical experiences from God. In his treatise on the Marian life he points out frequently in about half of his fourteen chapters how even in mystical union with God such an orientation, a Marian orientation in spiritual life, does still obtain. He knew from his experiences with Marie of Saint Theresa that such experience does obtain. You cannot argue that as a fact it is impossible for the extraordinary types—of mystical union with God to fit together with a mystical union of will and spirit of Mary. Let me point out that it is possible that this type of Marian life of which we speak, dedication to Our Lady, resignation to do the will of Our Lady, thereby contributing to her honor and to the honor of God might be infused into the soul by the Holy Spirit by an action in which God, the Holy Spirit, takes more of the initiative than he does ordinarily in the distribution of grace. It is possible that a Marian life might originate through such immediate activity on the part of God. It is possible, in other words, for such an attitude towards the spiritual life to be produced even in a person who makes no effort to acquire this outlook on life. It is even possible for me to be interiorly revolting against such an outlook on the spiritual life, and nevertheless adopt such an approach because God would infuse this gift into my mind and will. That's possible but it is not the ordinary way. The ordinary way is that it is realized through a habit that is cultivated and repeated over and over again—offer attention to Mary, offer obedience to her will and meditate and consider her privileges and prerogatives. From acts like these a Marian life, of which Michael of Saint Augustine speaks, can arrive, and it is through practices like these that a Marian life is formed in the soul. Again, they are attention to Our Lady, obedience to her will as well as consideration of her prerogatives. Perhaps that last should really come first. The least we can do is give thought and spend some time considering the privileges of Mary, then spend time and do a little thinking upon her position as the mother of God, meditating upon her cooperation in our redemption, meditating upon her mediation of grace. If we do, the chances are that we will become more attentive to her, more mindful of her wishes, and more attuned to her will.

In addition to meditation and consideration of her prerogatives, it requires a

practice of what you might call an interior life, the practice of what you might call the presence of Mary. This is also called practising attention to Our Lady. So we might say that in practice, the exercise of a Marian life would require no more skill, or no less skill than the practice of the presence of God. I think if we find the practice of the presence of God rather easy, and I think we do, we can find the practice of the presence of Our Lady that easy too. If we find the practice of the presence of God difficult, we will also find the practice of the presence of Our Lady difficult. The idea of believing in someone's presence, even though we don't see them, presents its own problems. We don't think usually that the practice of an interior life is a practice that is natural to us. Nevertheless one spiritual writer does point out that there is a kind of interior life that is natural to everybody, even to the most unspiritual. I think it is Father Garrigou-Lagrange who suggests that each of us, when he ceases meditation and talks to his neighbor, ought to be occupied with some work of mental concentration just in order to carry on some interior conversation with himself. This is just like an interior life. You are not externally active but some activity is going on. You are thinking about something, maybe planning the future, reliving the past, mulling over about something, picturing yourself in dramatic situations. It is a rather selfish form of interior life, but it is an interior life. Now a way to lead the interior life that the spiritual writers suggest is to introduce God into the picture of interior musing or day dreaming. If we are reliving our past, we would relive it with God; or if planning for the future, we would bring God into our plans; or if we are picturing ourselves on the center of the world stage doing dramatic things, we would picture God in the audience. There's a question in leading an interior life of the presence of God being more indirect in relation to God. It's not a matter of thinking about God directly, which is rather difficult and frequently impossible as we have to think of ourselves and what we are doing directly, but in thinking of him rather indirectly, referring whatever we do or think about to him. It's a matter of having him not in the front, but somewhere in the back of our minds, like a bit of good news that we might have received earlier today, or bad news even, that remains always in the back of our minds and is the symbol of all things that do occupy our minds during the day. When we get upset in the morning, we all know the experience that we are never quite the same during the day, and though we are not thinking about that unpleasant event, nevertheless, it has its influence on whatever we are thinking about and it rather spoils things unless we are made of steel nerves. That is a rather popular experience, I would imagine. Well, if we have a holy thought, a thought about God uppermost in our minds, it will make a difference in what we think about. That is the idea in the practice of the presence of God. The idea that we should

try to have the attitude which the dog has to his master—not one of always thinking, but one of reference—the dog doesn't seem to be thinking of you all the time. But you are his master, he refers whatever he does think about to you like if you have him out for a walk, he picks up food or something like that and refers it back to you. You are not in the center of the stage all the time for him, but you are only off the center, and you give meaning to everything that gives him his life. Such is God for holy people like the saints. He is not the center of their attention at all times, but he is not very far away either, and it is in his life that all their attention is eventually directed.

Well, that is the interior Marian life. That is the presence of Our Lady which brings her into the picture again. There's a little difficulty how exactly one might think of Our Lady. After all, as difficult as it might be for me to walk in the presence of God, nevertheless I know that I am in the presence of God, even though I don't think about it, and as hard as it might be to remember that God is dwelling in my soul by grace. I know that he is, and when I start to think about it, I don't feel that I am using only my imagination. I don't feel that I am just supposing that God is there. I might feel that way if I were attempting to practice the presence of Our Lady. I'd feel that her presence is something that is merely imaginative. We're perhaps inclined to say, "Well, let's suppose that Mary is here, think of her, refer your activities to her, ask her to show you what is her will and so on." If that's not quite true, it is true, of course, that the presence of Our Lady is not physical. But as you know, many things are real that are not physical. Her presence would be described as abstractive or like the presence of people who love one another. Lovers, as we well know, eagerly desire to be physically present to each other, so that separation causes them real pain and heartache. But who would say that the union of the wills and souls of lovers is dissolved by physical separation? Who would say that their presence, one to the other, then becomes purely imaginative? Rather must we say that their mutual presence remains real, though not physical, and this form of presence is commonly called affective or moral. By it the one loved is in the love; the lover is in the object of his love. In this way, by a real, affective—though not physical—presence, are Mary and the devout and certainly in contact with each other. Moreover, in the case of Mary and the devout soul, this affective union is far more lofty and perfect than in the case of two earthly lovers. For the earthly lover can never be certain that his beloved is actually thinking of him, at this moment; he knows, in fact, that she cannot be conscious of his every need, that she does not appreciate the present danger or difficulty which may confront him. Mary's child and subject, on the other hand, can rest secure that Mary is at every moment aware of him, mindful of his interests and needs, attentive to his

least desires; he can be certain that the heart within the glorified body of his mother and queen is aflame with supernatural and efficacious love for him.

Some may wonder at an exposition of Carmelite devotion to Mary, such as the treatise of Michael of Saint Augustine, which contains no mention of the Scapular. We feel that Michael, having set down the essentials of life with Mary, thought, and rightly so, that any unbiased reader would readily sense the position which the Scapular should hold in such devotion. As a recent writer has put it: "The whole Marian life is contained in devotion to Mary through the Scapular."

The truth of this last statement is especially evident if we consider how the Scapular, having become the essential part of the Carmelite habit, is, consequently, the apt symbol of its wearers' total dedication to Mary, in virtue either of their actual profession or their affiliation with the Order of Carmel. Members of the First, Second, and Third Orders have, it is clear, formally dedicated or consecrated their lives to God in virtue of their profession. But confraternity members also, by their holy desire to be more or less directly affiliated with the order, have, in a very real way, made a similar dedication of their lives. Now it is the function of any religious garb to signify the interior transformation which has been wrought in those who wear it by their having completely and, as it were, ritually ordained their lives to God's service. Such dedication, as we well know, is not an empty formula; on the contrary, it gives a new spiritual and supernatural value to all one's future actions. The religious habit, consequently, signifies that those whom it clothes have, in the eyes of God, have been elevated to a new spiritual status. What is worthy of particular note in regard to this symbolic function of the Scapular, however, is the extraordinary aptness with which it designates, at least since the time of Our Lady's apparition to Saint Simon Stock, the exact orientation of the Carmelite life. For the Carmelite life, though its essential action is the work of prayer, in its very *being* is Marian, that is directed to Mary's honor and glory, as is more than patent from the words of the profession formula. Since the Scapular has been used by Mary herself in the solemn promulgation of her promises, we see immediately the special efficacy which it has to represent our Carmelite aim of glorifying the mother of God.

It may be objected that such reasoning, while valid for professed religious, would scarcely hold true for simple Confraternity members. Such an objection fails to take proper account of the ceremonial which, in times past, accompanied the clothing of the faithful in Our Lady's Scapular: ceremonial which, if we are to believe our Ritual, should be observed even today. This ceremonial bespeaks the fact that an interior transformation of soul is to take place, that one is to be spiritually renewed and elevated, that one's future is to be carried out in Mary's

honor. Certainly, therefore, the sincere practice of the Scapular devotion will coincide with the Marian life of which Michael of Saint Augustine has written so inspirationally.

With Michael of Saint Augustine should we pray that our mother Mary and her Divine Son, who implant in our hearts the desire to live this Carmelite Marian life in its fullness, may bring it daily to great perfection in us until we are ready to share it with them in heaven forever.

The Ecumenical Councils

Part I

From Nicea to Vienne

IT IS GOOD TO BE with you once again. This time it is for a talk that is somewhat different than the ones I have previously given. Before they were always on Our Lady. Even when they were slide lectures, they were of Our Blessed Lady or Saint Bernadette or the story of Our Lady of Lourdes. Now this time I come to you with another on the councils of the Church. It's a mixture of Church history and our faith. This topic was chosen because we are in the midst of the Second Vatican Council. We've got to put that Vatican Council in perspective, and I thought it might be wise to call upon your indulgence, and explain to you the history of the Church in those great high-water marks that are known to you as the general councils, the ecumenical councils.

You know there are all kinds of councils in the Church. There is a council which a Bishop calls, and those attended by the priests of the diocese. This is a synod. Then there is a provincial council, which an archbishop calls and which the suffragan bishops attend. Just for instance if the cardinal archbishop of New York should call a council—a provincial council—then the bishops of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo and the north country, Ogdensburg, would be the suffragan bishops and they would have the right and obligation to attend. In the United States we have three plenary councils. Those were the three councils of Baltimore which met in the nineteenth century from 1852, which was the first to 1884 which was the third. They gave us the Baltimore Catechism from which we have been teaching many, many years. Then there the episcopal conferences, most of the bishops in a nation meeting yearly or at stipulated intervals. These we are accustomed to, because of the annual meetings in November at Catholic University of the bishops of our country; this year the meeting took place in Rome. Now such episcopal conferences are something new; in fact they enjoy no authority whatsoever in Canon Law. Presently they will. They will when the Second Vatican Council is over. The nation that started these episcopal conferences

was the United States. They caught on, and they will be made part and parcel of the Church's ordinary way of teaching and instructing.

Beyond all of these there is the ecumenical or general council. This is something which grew out of history. If you go through the code of Canon Law today, you can find a nice, neat definition of what an ecumenical council is. That definition is the outcome of twenty centuries of work. It says that "an Ecumenical Council is one to which the bishops of the world have the right to attend." It doesn't necessarily mean that they all must attend but it means none can by right be excluded. Just for instance, if the Archbishop of New York called a council of his suffragan bishops, those across the river in Newark, Paterson and Trenton could not come, could not vote. That would certainly be excluded—that council could only be local. It also could be ecumenical, even when there are only eighteen bishops in attendance, as happened in one council in the eighth century of the Christian era, but nevertheless, all bishops could have come.

The second characteristic of an ecumenical council is that it speaks to the Church universal. It speaks to all Christians, not just one group, not just one nation, but all. Lastly, when the council becomes ecumenical, then somehow it is accepted by the Pope. There were councils which were never originally convened by the Holy Father; the first eight great councils of the Church were convoked by the emperors. There are councils which are ecumenical, which took place without even the pope knowing they were being held. And yet when a report of one of those councils was sent to Rome, the acceptance of the Holy Father would have made that council ecumenical. Sometimes that acceptance had to wait two hundred years. For the acceptance by the Holy Father of the decrees and statements of such councils of bishops is really the distinguishing mark which makes those councils ecumenical. It was only with Saint Robert Cardinal Bellarmine in the sixteenth century that a list of the ecumenical councils as we now have them was drawn up. The number was seventeen, Trent, making it eighteen, and leaving out, of course, the two that were to follow Trent, the two Vatican's. But Saint Robert Bellarmine's list is not an absolute one. The Church has no absolute list of what ought to be considered the ecumenical councils. In the list I give to you we follow the general opinion of Church historians.

We are now going to look at the first councils of the Church which took place in the east under the Eastern Roman Emperor; there were eight. Then the councils that took place, provoked immediately and directly by the Holy Father in the heyday of the Middle Ages, the councils of the Lateran, Lyons, and Vienne. When a council is called it is because something is not clear, not

well-defined. The council is called to make clear statement as to what the truth is, or to legislate against abuses to give the Church an up-to-dateness relative to its own problems. The first eight councils were chiefly dogmatic, later councils chiefly reformatory.

Let's take a look at these councils. There is a statue of Saint Peter which was found in the crypt of the Basilica of Saint Peter. This is not the same as the bronze statue in the nave of the basilica that is kissed by the pilgrims—whose foot has been worn away by such kisses—but rather it is a marble statue down below in the crypt. You've heard how the Church has baptized things of the past; this statue is an example of it. The main portion of that statue, the whole body, was originally the statue of a Roman philosopher. The Christians just chopped the head and hands off, put on the head of Saint Peter, a little nimbus, and put on the hands, one pointing in a blessing and the other holding keys. Saint Peter was a bishop and his successor is a bishop, Bishop of Rome, and the body that governs the Church is a collegiate body. It is the bishop in union with the successors of the other Apostles. The bishops do not get their authority and jurisdiction from the Holy Father. They get it immediately and directly from their succession from the apostles, and therefore it is only their pope, Bishop of Rome, and bishops of the world united in teaching common doctrine which constitutes the ultimate magisterium or teaching authority. The best and most universal expression of that is, of course, to be found in an ecumenical council when pope and bishops meet.

The first council of the Church took place in the east in the town of Nicea not too far from which was the summer residence of the emperors of Constantinople, which was the seat of the eastern empire. The first council met in the year 325 and the second in the year 381. They had one job: trying to make clear what is the faith that had been handed down from the Apostles concerning the Holy Trinity. The Council of Nicea was concerned with the divinity of the second Person, the Word; the Council of Constantinople with the divinity of the third person, the Holy Spirit. Pope Sylvester the First, was the pope who was reigning over the Church at the time when the Emperor Constantine convoked the first ecumenical council in order to put an end to the dispute which arose in Alexandria when a well-spoken and rather learned man named Arius began teaching his doctrine. He said this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God and the Word was with God." Added to that we have the word of Saint John against the word of Saint Paul, who had written "Christ is the first born of creatures." So for Arius, Christ was a creature. He was the first manifestation of divinity and so in a sense he was the creator of all other things, but still himself, the first creature, the

greatest creature, but creature nevertheless. Arius was a good propagandist. He got all the dock wallopers in the City of Alexandria—the men who moved the ships in and out—and taught them chants on his doctrine. You could hear the streets ringing in the songs that Arius taught in order to promote his doctrine concerning the non-divinity of the second person of the Blessed Trinity. This was disturbing the empire very much and so the Emperor Constantine called a council at his summer residence in Nicea in the year 325. There were more than two hundred bishops from the whole Mediterranean basin who had come. Arius had a promoter, a patron at the council; a man named Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea. Eusebius led the Arian party. There was a second group who wanted nothing done; who said, "Leave the faith in scriptural terms. Don't try to put it into the popular language." Then there was a third party. This party was led by Athanasius, who was only a deacon from Alexandria, who had come, as you might say, as a proponent of orthodoxy. Athanasius and Arius had it out, and it was suddenly declared at the Council of Nicea—the first of the Church—that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, born, not made, of one substance with the Father." These verses appear in the Creed which is said at Mass. You don't put to death an idea simply by declaring it to be false. Arianism lived long, long after condemnation. In fact Constantine, on his deathbed in the year 337, was actually baptized by the Arian bishop, Eusebius. Eusebius hounded Athanasius of Alexandria and forced him into exile in Germany. Eusebius visited Constantine, who was only half Christian and who murdered his own wife and one of his sons. With his help Arianism caught on like wildfire. Saint Jerome could later write, "The world groaned and marveled to find itself Arian." This was chiefly because many of the barbarian tribes, the Goths and Visigoths were coming into Africa and into Spain, took up Arianism. In the fifth century there was a church built in the north of Italy by the Arians which had a most beautiful dome in mosaic depicting the baptism of Christ. In the back of the figure of Christ is a dove. Now, what's the meaning of a dove to an Arian? It's this; that Jesus Christ became the Son of God when he was adopted by the Father. He was only an adopted, not a natural son, and that adoption was manifested at the baptism when a dove appeared over the figure of Jesus Christ, and the words were heard, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Why would the Father have chosen this creature as his Son? Because he saw from all eternity that this creature would never sin, and that he was so pleased with his sinlessness that he adopted him as his son, though Jesus Christ, the Son, was only a creature.

In a king's work, yes, but it was a creature that was born. And this mosaic depicts that Arian belief.

The emperor, Theodosius the First, was the man who convoked the second ecumenical council which met in the city of Constantinople in the year 381. You can well imagine that as the divinity of the second person was first called into question, and then finally settled by dogmatic definition at Nicea, it would not be long before the divinity of the third person would be questioned. This was done by that heresy known as Macedonianism, after a patriarch of Constantinople named Macedonius. It was he who said that the third person, the Spirit, was nothing but the power of God. "The Spirit is not a person, the Spirit is not divine." And such a misconception of the Christian faith, tremendous political and you might say human implications in the Mediterranean world resulted: so much so that peace and concord was being disrupted. Our council was necessary in order to bring about a clear statement. At that council our faith was clearly affirmed.

In the second sentence of the Nicene Creed, we say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit, in the Lord and the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who is glorified and adored with the Father and the Son, who spoke through the prophets, and yet who proceeds from the Father." We say the creed, we read "*patre filioque procedit*"—"from the Father and from the Son." The delegates from Constantinople did not say "and from the Son." That was to be brought up, dredged up, five hundred and seven hundred years later as the occasion for the disruption between the East and the West. It was to be used to justify a schism that was completed in 1054 and has not yet been healed. With that the Creed of the Council of Constantinople was added to that of Nicea and entered the Mass.

There is a sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum, dating from the middle of the third century, called the Dogmatic Sarcophagus, which is the first representation of the Most Holy Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit are depicted in human form. They are separated from the rest of the figures on that sarcophagus by distance, and also by the fact that each is wearing a beard. They are depicted in the act of creating Adam and Eve. This is the first dogmatic representation. Other representations, after the Council of Constantinople, were to show the Holy Spirit not in human form, but in the form of a dove.

The reality of the risen Christ, or the living Christ is such that it takes a long, long time in order that living with him, you might really and truly know who he is. You may love him, and out of your love comes your knowledge, but your knowledge in this case is personal knowledge, not necessarily a clear, intellectual knowledge. It takes time to hammer this out in short, well defined

words who and what is Jesus Christ. Once the mystery of the trinity had been laid forth in dogmatic definition, the movement of thought went immediately to the person of Christ, and in the next four councils, the Council of Ephesus which met in the year 431, in answer to Nestorianism; the Council of Chalcedon which met in 451 concerning the duality of nature in Christ; the Second Council of Constantinople, which met in 553, was to condemn some Nestorians and then the Third Council of Constantinople in 680, which met to declare that in the person of Jesus Christ we have two natures, one human and one divine and two wills, one human and one divine.

The Third Council met at Ephesus, a famous city in antiquity. It was the home of the great Diana, the goddess of the Athenians. You remember from the Acts of the Apostles the trouble Paul got into by preaching Christianity in the city of Ephesus. He found that men were opposed to him, simply because as Christianity triumphed the silversmiths, the makers of the little images of the temple and the images of Diana, the men who lived off the tourist trade, would then soon go out of business. So, they raised hue and cry against Paul, and there was a real riot in the city of Ephesus. In the city of Ephesus was one of the seven great wonders of the ancient world, the temple of Diana, and this Diana was not the chaste Diana of Roman mythology—the Huntress—but a many breasted mother goddess of all living things. Well, it was in this city that the council met in the year 431.

The ruins of the church of Saint Mary in the city of Ephesus alone remains of the church where the council met in the year 431. The church had been built over the ruins of an ancient Roman edifice. It was a large church—800 feet long, and it had three naves running down the center. What brought it about that this council should meet was that Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople had a theory about Christ. He thought there were two persons: There was the person of Jesus, and the person of the Word. The person of the Word possessed divine nature, the person of Jesus possessed a human nature. When the Word became Incarnate, what actually happened was that the person of the Word attached himself to the person of Jesus, so that what Mary brought forth, was not really the person of the Word—not the Son of God—but the human nature of the person of Jesus to which was attached the divine person with the divine nature. Two persons, two natures. He said Mary, therefore, is the bearer of the Christ. She is not *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. And it was this attack upon our Blessed Lady that caused the people of the city of Ephesus to be very, very disturbed at the city of Constantinople, and they petitioned the Holy Father if he would summon a council in order that the truth about our Blessed Lady, and about the person of Christ be made

known. That council met in the year 431 in that church of Saint Mary at Ephesus. You know the answer. The council defined in clear and unambiguous terms that there is but one person in Jesus Christ; that the person of Jesus and the person of the Word were one and the same, and that this one person had two natures, a divine nature and a human nature; that Mary gave birth to the person of the Word in his human nature. This nature terminates in a person and not just in a thing. Mary could likely be called *Theotokos*, the mother of God. From the time of the council, there has come down to us from the people of the city of Ephesus the second part of the Hail Mary, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Liberius, in the year 432, one year after the council, built a basilica in the city of Rome to Mary called Saint Mary Major, the Liberian Basilica, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Snows. On the triumphal arch that concludes, as it were, the nave of the building, there is a whole series of mosaics depicting the life of our Blessed Lady. The most famous is the mosaic inside in the dome. It is actually from the Middle Ages and it depicts the Coronation of Our Blessed Lady. To commemorate the council, Pope Sixtus III commissioned these mosaics. They still exist today.

The great protagonist and promoter of Christian faith at the Council of Ephesus was Cyril of Alexandria. He had a strange way of writing. He was right in his interpretation of what he meant, but his words were ambiguous and gave rise to trouble. In speaking of the person of Jesus Christ, he said there is one Jesus or nature, just the one nature. Now he meant the term nature in that instance as relative to personality. But there were others who did not so understand him. One of them was an abbot near Constantinople named Eutyches who figured: "I know there is one person; Cyril said there is one nature. And maybe for one person there is one nature, and that the human and the divine natures are mixed together, mingled." This caused trouble and so in the year 451, a council was called at Chalcedon. Chalcedon is the little town across the Bosphorus from Constantinople. This council, as all the ones before it, and many of the ones after, was under the control of the Emperor.

In Rome at the time there was one great pope named Leo—one of the three whose name was *Great*—Leo sent a letter called "*Tome of Leo*," or the "*Dogmatic Epistle of Leo*," in which he clearly stated that though there is but one person in Jesus Christ, there are two natures which are distinct. Though these natures were not to be separated, one from the other, each retaining its own distinctness—a divine and human nature. Now at this council, due to

the influence of the Emperor, we have the definition of duality of natures in the person of Jesus Christ.

In the City of Constantinople another council met concerning the person of Christ, the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. More than a hundred years had passed since Nestorius had been condemned, more than a hundred years since Chalcedon, but all those who had said "there is but one nature in Christ" again were not put to rout simply because of a dogmatic definition. And that doctrine of the Monophysites "of but one nature in Christ," a mixed human and divine nature, remained on for more than a hundred years to plague the Church. Justinian, the famous lawmaker of Rome, was a very Christian man. His wife, however, wasn't. His wife was secretly a heretic. She was the cause of much of the trouble that necessitated this council. There existed at the time what are called, "*The Three Chapters*." They are the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and a letter of Ibas of Edessa. Now Theodore of Mopsuestia was actually a heretic who had lived more than a hundred and fifty years before. He was the teacher of Nestorius. Theodoret and Ibas were contemporaries of Nestorius. Their doctrine was wrong, but as soon as the men themselves saw that their doctrine was a sort of Nestorian, they rejected it. Now the Monophysites wanted to get back into power; they wanted to knock Chalcedon, which said "two natures in one person." They couldn't do it directly, so the way in which they were going to do it was not Nestorius', who held "two natures and two persons;" They hoped rather to sneak in the back way. So it happened that men, dead for more than one hundred years, were actually condemned in the Second Council of Constantinople. It was a political move. The Emperor Justinian called this council in 553. His wife, the Empress Theodora, was a very clever and quite intriguing woman, intriguing in the sense of manipulating. It was she who favored, secretly the Monophysite element and caused the council to meet. It met in the Church of Saint Sophia the church of holy wisdom of Constantinople. The pope at that time was Pope Virgilius. The outcome of the council was a re-condemnation of Nestorius and a condemnation of the "*Three Chapters*" written by Theodore, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa.

As we move on in history, we find the question of Christ still not absolutely clear. We know now he prayed in the Garden, "Father, not my will, but thy will be done." How is it that Christ could say "not my will." How many wills does Christ have? The initial answer would be "I don't know perhaps how many wills Christ has—but whatever he willed he willed wholly and entirely." The unity and yet multiplicity of wills in Jesus Christ. Did that mean there was only one will, a human or divine will? Did that mean that there were

two wills, a divine and a human? Could Christ in his human will be free? If he could be free, he could sin; if he could sin, the second person of the Blessed Trinity could sin; but if he didn't have a human will, have you been redeemed; because if you were redeemed by the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, then he must have willed it in his humanity. If he didn't will it in his humanity, there was no redemption. And if there are two wills, could they be opposed?

To answer these questions, the Third Council of Constantinople was called. After some research in God the Father they declared, "... we proclaim that there are in him [Jesus Christ] two natural wills and two natural operations, without division, conversion, separation, or confusion, and these two natural wills are not opposed."

As Islamism spread during the eighth century throughout the fertile crescent bordering the Mediterranean, they found allies among Christians and formed an unwritten alliance with them against images. Particularly in the Church in the near east was there always present a certain abhorrence for images. The Moslems had this as a tenet of the faith. The alliance of both succeeded in having images banned in the eastern section of the empire. Politics and religion have never mixed and in this instance, their mingling only added fuel to the fire. Finally a council was called for Nicea in 787 where many years before Mary had been declared the mother of God. The traditional teachings of the Church about statues and images were re-affirmed and peace was secured. It would last for some years before the same heresy would flare up from its smoldering ruins.

Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was excommunicated by Pope Nicholas I for tampering with the teachings of the Church and distorting them. He replied by calling a synod at Constantinople and deposing the pope. He and his followers brought a schism into the ranks of Christians. Nicholas' successor, Hadrian II, called a council which met at Constantinople in 869 and had as its aim the healing of the breach. When Photius refused to appear before the council, he was anathematized. The Church's doctrine on statues and images was re-affirmed.

The next councils are the four called Lateran from the name of the basilica in which they were held. The two Councils of Lyons of 1245 and 1274, and the Council of Vienne (1311-1312) are concerned with the rights of the Pope against the Emperor, the rights of the state. The heyday of the papacy was reached under Pope Innocent III; he reigned about thirty years and died in 1216. He called a council, the Lateran Council, 1215, concerning the reform problems of the Church. The Church of Saint Francis at Assisi has a fresco depicting a dream of Innocent the Third. He had a dream in which he saw a

brown robed figure holding up the Church. He did not know its meaning or import until Francis of Assisi came down seeking papal approbation for the society that he wanted to found. When Innocent recognized the brown robed figure, readily and willingly did he give approbation. It would be the mendicant friars, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustinians and the Carmelites, who had just come to Europe from Palestine, and others who would make effective the reforms of the Lateran Councils. By living their community life and living the vow of chastity, they would remind, you might say, priests living in parishes and taking care of souls of their obligation of celibacy; the priests who vowed poverty would remind the rich clergy of the need for frugal Christian living. So there is Francis upholding the Church, and it would be this, that the Fourth Lateran Council would commission the Dominicans and the Franciscans to preach the doctrines of the Council.

Pope Innocent IV was negotiating for months with Frederick II to resolve the difficulties which had arisen between empire and church in Italy. Innocent finally had to flee and went to France. At that time France was controlled by Saint Louis IX. Later, in the city of Lyons, which was under French protection and which was a sort of independent city, there met the first and second Councils of Lyons in the cathedral church. They were concerned with the enemy of the the Church, the German emperor, Frederick II. Laws, judicial procedure, papal election, the Crusaders and reunion with the Greeks were the main subjects dealt with.

South of Lyons is the town of Vienne. It was there that the seventh council met, the Council of Vienne. It was called by Clement V and concerned the relations between the Church and the emperor Philip IV, Philip the Fair. Philip the Fair of France was a man who did make the French people into a nation, something like what Charles de Gaulle is trying to do. He made them really a nation and was a strong emperor, a strong king. But the strong king fell out with his Church. He fought bitterly with Boniface VIII. Boniface refused to give in. Boniface was older than Philip and when he died, Philip wanted his vengeance. He fought the Pope to call a council, which met in Vienne and there was a trade that was made. Philip wanted to denounce Boniface. He wanted, as it were, the dead body of Pope Boniface VIII dragged out of the tomb and condemned by the Council of Vienne. Clement refused to do it, but Clement had to yield on something else. He gave up a religious order, sold it down the river. Orders are expendable—the Jesuits were, they were a pawn in politics. This time it was the Knights Templar. Philip had them questioned. He charged them with all sorts of crimes. They were tortured. They confessed to anything to get off that inquisitorial rack. They were condemned and Clement did nothing

to protect them. He figured: "I let Philip get the Templars, and I will save Boniface." So there was a compromise, and that's what happened. When they first started, the Knights were so poor that they had only one horse for two men. As time went on things changed. They were the protectors of pilgrims to the Holy Land. They grew very strong in members and grew strong in power. They had the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience—the same vows religious have. They lived in community life. On the whole they were good men, but they were strong, were very powerful. Philip wanted their territory. He wanted their lands, he wanted their gold, he wanted their palaces. He couldn't get it directly so he wanted to institute a new group of knights who would get the lands and territory of the Knights Templar. Then he would be able to take them away from the new group. But Clement foxed him a bit even here. He gave them to the Hospitalers of Saint John, the Knights of Malta. They got all the territory of the Knights Templar. That was the Council of Vienne. It simply was a compromise, the end of the Knights Templar.

The situation was changing. The next council that would come would be the time of trial between pope and Church. Who is the stronger? The bishop, and bishops together, or the pope? The emperors went by the boards when the Church asserted its rights, but now there would be council and pope. Then come the councils of union and the councils of reform.

The Ecumenical Councils

Part II

From Constance to Vatican II

WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR fifteen different councils. The first eight councils took place in the east; they were concerned with great theological questions concerning our faith, the two great mysteries: The mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the most Holy Trinity. They ended in the middle of the ninth century in the Fourth Council of Constantinople. Besides the councils being in the east and being concerned with great mysteries, the leading figure in all of them was an eastern emperor. He was the one in many cases who convoked them, who very often presided over them, and in any case his presence was keenly felt by all participants. The next seven councils, beginning with First Lateran and ending with the Council of Vienne were of entirely different composition. These took place in the Middle Ages. They were concerned with the discipline. They were under the patronage of the Holy Father directly and immediately, and their concern was reform, reform of the Western Church. One of the great problems that these councils had to meet was the relationship between the Church and the Holy Roman Emperor, trying to keep the emperor from meddling in Church affairs. That last council—the Council of Vienne—was convened in 1311 and was the last council we looked at. At it a Frenchman was elected Pope, and he chose to live at the French city of Avignon.

There began what would last for the next seventy years and what is known in Church history as the Avignon Papacy or the Babylonian Captivity of the Avignon Papacy. It was a papacy that was strongly in control of the French Church and the French king, and when towards 1375 Pope Gregory decided to leave Avignon to go to Rome at the insistence of Saint Catherine of Siena, he did travel to Rome but lasted only a short time. The Church found itself bereft of a pastor, so they elected a new man, an Italian, Urban VI. The Italians in the city of Rome had wanted a pope and they wanted one quickly. So within a month or so Urban had been elected, and the French Cardinals, who at this time were in the majority, decided they had received too much pressure; they had been

coerced into electing an Italian. They thought they were getting an easy man. When they found that Urban VI was a blunt man bent on reform, they left the city of Rome, made their way back to Avignon, and there in conclave elected an anti-pope, Clement VII. Things went from bad to worse. Pope succeeded pope in Rome—there were four Roman popes—and pope succeeded pope in Avignon—there were two—until the year 1409 when the Church decided something had to be done about this, and called, under the emperor, a council to meet in the city of Pisa. That council, instead of resolving matters, added to the troubles by electing a third pope. So in the year 1409 there were three popes, Gregory XII in the city of Rome, Benedict XIII in the city of Avignon and Alexander V in the city of Pisa. Something had to be done to reform the Church, to end the Great Schism. Underneath all of this was the idea that the bishops gathered in assembly were in one sense the voice of the Church. They were the ones who could call a council; they might even be able to depose the pope. This idea is known in Church history as conciliarism.

The next few councils, Constance and the tri-city council of Basle, Ferrara and Florence were to be concerned with the problem of the pope and the bishops, not the pope and the emperor, but pope and bishops. Who rules the Church, pope or all the bishops in council? That is the background for these councils of the Church that we are now going to discuss.

These are conciliatory times of union and Church reform. The Church reform was, of course, primarily to get rid of conflicting popes. This union was to look to the union of east and west, for the Orthodox Church severed its connections with Rome. This bothered Rome very much and attempts were made to try to heal the breach and bring about re-union. The councils we are going to concern ourselves with are the Fourth Council of Constance from 1414 to 1418, and the tri-city council of Basle, Ferrara and Florence, 1431 to 1442, and the Fifth Lateran Council which met on the very eve of the Protestant Reformation, 1512 to 1517.

There is really no question that the Roman man, Gregory XII, was the successor in the corrupt line of the Roman papacy. At that time the Christian world was very much divided. They knew there was only one pope, but the question was which one was it? The Emperor, Sigismund, who was most instrumental in bringing about the Council of Constance, which met in the city of Constance in Switzerland on the lake that bears the same name in the year 1414. To this city came not only the representatives of the three different obediences from Avignon, Pisa and Rome, but the nations met as the representatives of the national church. There was a question about how they were to proceed in voting. The Italians outnumbered all the others, so the Germans, the English and French got together and decided the vote would be by national group instead

of individually. The Italians then would have but one national vote, the English one. The English, however, would include the Welsh, Scotch and the Irish. The French would have a vote. The Germans would have a vote. The Germans would include the north Europeans, the Dutch and so forth, and they would all vote as one bloc. There was one group which was not yet represented, the Spanish, simply because the Avignon pope, Benedict XIII, had not sent representatives to the council but had fled into Spain to the region of Barcelona.

There is a woodcut made in the city of Constance which tells the whole story of the council. It shows Pope John XXIII, the Pisan pope, who is the one who also admitted that the council should meet and try to resolve the question. Actually what did happen in the course of time was that John XXIII was the first one to capitulate, He resigned any title to the papacy, fled from Constance, was brought back and imprisoned for a while but then, when he finally agreed he would not claim to be pope, they let him go and he returned to his status of cardinal and he continued on for three years under the next pope, the legitimate one, Martin V. John continued as a cardinal and as a bishop in a northern Italian city. John was the first to resign. The next one to resign was the Roman pope, Gregory XII. Gregory resigned on one condition, that John XXIII would not be in any way in a better position of obtaining the papacy. When John had given up the tiara, Gregory was assured and resigned the papacy to continue as a cardinal. The last and longest holdout was Benedict XIII, the man who had left Avignon, crossed over the Pyrenees into the Barcelona area. He held out until late in that October of 1417. The council had gone on two years, and finally he agreed. By the time he did, nearly everyone had left him. Even the Spanish people had given up all hopes in regard to Benedict, and they had joined the council as the fifth great nation in the bloc of votes. While these negotiations were going on, there were some matters that had to be discussed. One of them was the influence of a very important rector of the University of Prague, John Hus, in what was then known as Bohemia. And John Hus was greatly influenced in his theological opinions by an Englishman of an earlier generation, John Wiclif. John Wiclif was dead at the time of the Council of Constance, and only his doctrines were condemned. John Hus was alive, and John Hus got an assured passage from the emperor so he could come from Prague to the council unmolested. He was excommunicated and was suspended; as suspended, he was forbidden to preach, forbidden to perform sacramental rites and so forth. Unfortunately for John Hus, once he got to the City of Constance, he continued his preaching and continued to administer the sacraments. So John Hus was brought before the council, was condemned as a heretic, was handed over to the civil authorities and was burned at the stake. John Hus and John Wiclif, an

Englishman and a Bohemian, were both in great measure the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation. The central ideas that both had, namely, about the invisible nature of the Church, about the sacramental system and about grace were ideas Martin Luther was very definitely to develop one hundred years later.

The difficulties about the papacy were brought to a conclusion when, with all three claimants resigning, the cardinals there at the council elected Oddone Colonna, an Italian Cardinal from the House of Colonna in Italy, as pope. He was elected on November 11, 1417, and so took the name of the saint whose feast it was, Pope Martin, and he became the fifth one of that name. Now when they elected the new pope, they presented him with some acts of the council, acts of reform. One of these acts was that the new pope must call a council in five years, one after that in seven years, and still another one after that in ten years; also, every ten years there would be a new ecumenical council. The idea underneath it all was still this idea: Council over the pope. A council had called for the deposition of John, Benedict and Gregory, and the council, still flexing its muscles, placed conditions, as it were, on Pope Martin V. He took the conditions, left the city of Constance, but only put those into effect which he felt necessary. He knew he had a strong need to assert the rights of the papacy over the council, but he couldn't blatantly go against the council. It had to take time. The man who had been elected was Martin V and the Great Schism of the Church had ended, but troubles were brewing, troubles about the strength of the council in relation to the Church.

Another question has not yet been resolved, namely, the relationship between the bishops and the Holy Father. In fact, they bypassed it at Trent because it seemed it would explode the Council of Trent; they didn't have a chance at Vatican I to complete it because the Franco-Prussian War broke out two days after the Papal Infallibility definition, and then two months later, in September of 1870, the Piedmontese army moved down on the city of Rome. So they have not definitely solved that question, and it is up for discussion in this present Vatican Council II. In accordance with the wishes of the Council of Constance, a meeting was attempted within five years. Only about twenty bishops showed up, so they gave up and eventually in 1431, they called the Council of Basle. It's part of a tri-city council most commonly termed the Council of Florence, because it was in Florence that the council finally wound up its sessions. It first met in the city of Basle and the man most influential here was Eugene IV. It had not been called by Eugene, but he saw to its completion anyway. He recognized that in Basle they were so very much anti-papal; he was afraid the council would come out with heretical views concerning the position of the Holy Father in relation to the Church. So he adjourned the council; he sent it out of Basle to the city of Ferrara. He sent it to Ferrara because it was not too far from Switzerland and it

was hoped there might be less anti-papal feeling there. However, it was a small city of just about 6000 people, and when you had an influx of a few hundred extras, bishops, cardinals, and the retinue of an emperor, the city was quite straitened in providing lodgings and accommodations. So Florence put in a bid, and the council moved on from Ferrara to Florence, a very beautiful city.

It was there that a group of easterners came. There was quite a good number of them and they came to help set a unity between east and west. They came, however, with very mixed motives. Some of them came for religious reasons. Joseph II, Patriarch of Constantinople, was an old man, and he, like the Holy Father, was very much disturbed by the breach or separation between the east and west. He wanted to know how to heal it. He knew it would be the last great attempt in his lifetime. He knew that he was very soon to die. In fact, he died before the council ended. But his motives were very, very good. There was another man, the Emperor John VIII. John came for mixed motives. He came because he had a religious desire that unity would be brought about in the Church of Christ, but because he wanted the help of the west against the encroachment of the Turks. Remember it was in 1453 that the Turks were to take Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire was to go the way of all flesh. These Turks were very strong, and with them hammering at Constantinople, John wanted the assistance of the west in fighting them off. There was a third group, the group of reluctant. They came only because the emperor demanded that they come, but they came, as it were, committed to insuring that as far as possible, little or nothing would be done. So the council did meet, they did resolve on paper some of the difficulties, the question of the *filioque* being added to the Nicene Creed was discussed at length. It was shown to the Greeks that their statement of the truth "that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father" did not necessarily oppose the western statement "that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son" as from one principle. Unity of principle was the point at issue, and it was resolved. So both sides signed the decree of union. Pope Eugene IV and the emperor, John VIII, signed. Subsequently, the different bishops signed but there was one holdout who absolutely refused to sign, this was the Bishop of Ephesus. Well when they went home, there was only unfortunately a paper union. And then their troubles began all over again. The union was never really effective, especially after the fall of Constantinople. But the strong man, Eugene IV, was able to gain gradually the support of the different nations and despite an attempt to elect an anti-pope, and to hold a counter council to the one at Ferrara and Florence, Eugene succeeded. He had brought an uneasy, temporary peace to the Church.

Time went on. In something like 180 years, Julius II called the Fifth

Lateran Council. The council opened in 1512; he died in 1513. Leo X became the new Pope. The council went on from 1512 until the summer of 1517. From all reports it seems to have been nothing but a mutual admiration society, sorry to say, where the cardinals simply praised the Renaissance popes for all their building projects, for all their advancement of humanism and so forth, and the idea of reform was put very much in the background. Nothing really came of this council, and it seems to have been carried on in a very great unawareness of what the times were demanding because on October 31 of that year, Martin Luther hammered his thesis to the church door at Wittenburg and the Protestant Reformation began.

A great turning point in Church history was, of course, the Council of Trent. It was the nineteenth council of the Church, the twentieth being Vatican I, and the present one being the twenty-first, Vatican II. There were many attempts made to form a council beginning in the 1520's. Momentum increased in the thirties, but nothing was actually done until 1545. The council lasted for a period of eighteen years. There were three major sessions. They all took place in the city of Trent. Trent is up in the north of Italy, not too far from Austria, and just over the Brenner Pass would be Innsbruck. The first session of the council had to dissolve because of war between the emperor and the Schmalkaldic League of northern Europe. The second session of the council had to break up because the soldiers returning from the war brought with them the typhoid epidemic.

The third session in 1562 was the most fruitful and important of them and ended a few months later in 1563. But what kept a council from meeting between 1517 and 1545? A number of things. One was the unclear situation in Germany and the Diet of Worms, the Diet of Augsburg, which were previous, little attempts to resolve the problems on a local level, the German level, and they issued in failures. Then when the movement began for a real full Church council, the Germans asked for a free council, a Catholic council, a non-papal council. A free council would mean one without the pope. A Catholic council would be one in which not only ecclesiastics were represented, but even laymen, and in imperial or German lands this would mean that the emperor would be in charge, and not the Holy Father. So it was a question of time to pick a city that somehow might have some of these conditions, and Trent was eventually chosen.

Henry VIII, who broke away from the Church in 1534, did not want a Church council, because he felt the European countries would do to him what Charles DeGaulle did just a few months back. He felt that a Church council meeting on the continent of Europe would bring about a unity within Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and they would all mount an armada against England. France did not want a council, because it wanted the Emperor Charles

V to have plenty of trouble in Germany. The more trouble Charles V of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor, had in Germany, the less a strongman he was. Keep him bothered so that Charles wouldn't get too big was their policy. Charles wanted it because he had to bring about unity in his own country. The northern Germans didn't want it for economic reasons, because they were going into a league with shippers. The southern Germans wanted it, so the country was divided. All of these political and economic factors operated to keep the council from meeting until 1545, but when it finally did meet, it met not so much to answer Protestant positions, but rather to do something that had been needed for centuries. The great theologians of the Middle Ages had given theological clarity to the doctrines of the Church, but these were only theological opinions. They were not the official statements of the Church. Therefore, what was needed was teaching on the sacraments, on the question of bishops, on the question of preaching. The council had a twofold purpose: To give clear statement and to initiate the long awaited reforms. When it met in this northern city in Italy, Trent, at first the council took place in the bishop's palace because there were only about thirty bishops who first attended. As more and more came, the council moved to the Church of Saint Mary Major. The man who was the most influential in the whole thing was the Holy Father, Paul III. There were three successive Papal Legates to Trent. At one time Cardinal Pole, the Englishman, who had been exiled because he would not take the oath of allegiance, served. He presided as a Papal Legate and to him we owe the very famous statement: "It is not for us to ask for a sound reason for the Reformation, we must recognize ourselves as having been guilty." The Jesuit Fathers, who were to be one of the great instruments for carrying out the reformation of the Church, the Counter-Reformation, served well at the council. Charles Borromeo, who was made a cardinal at the age of seventeen simply because he had an uncle in high places was prominent there also. He was also the one who, you might say, really set the pace for all the bishops of Europe on how to effect the reforms initiated at the Council of Trent. It was truly a turning point in Church history.

The next council took place 300 years later. Word was sent out to the Catholic princes about a council, but they were forbidden to come. When they were not asked to attend, some were going to force an entry, but happily the thing passed off. That was 1869. That was the First Vatican Council which met in the year 1869, on December 8 and went until July 20, 1870. An awful lot had changed in the 300 years. It was the longest span of time between Church councils ever, and the face of Europe had changed. The great states had come into existence and full power; the empire was broken asunder, and secularism, the age of reason, rationalism, the great German philosophies of idealism, had all made their impact.

The Church seemed to be in a very beleaguered position. It was such when the council convened that it was said, "Don't ask for whom the bells toll; they toll for thee." That was to be in the eyes of some the death knell of the Church. It was burying itself, putting on a shroud and going the way of all flesh. It didn't turn out that way probably because of the personality of one man, Pius IX. He had been Pope for twenty-three years and would go to have the longest reign in Church history, from 1846 to 1878. He started out as a very great liberal, but he had a very rough awakening. 1848 was the year of revolutions in Europe, and revolution affected even the city of Rome. The Holy Father had to flee from the city but he was brought back by the armies of the empire of Louis Napoleon, so he got a distaste for everything that smacked of liberalism, of modernism. He issued the *Syllabus of Errors*. The cardinal who prompted him on this was Cardinal Pecci, who was to become Pope Leo XIII. It was an indictment of the modern errors, and it was harsh medicine. In fact it seemed to become completely and totally reactionary. It seemed to have "damned" and "anathema" and everything of that sort. I just read one comment on it by a Lutheran minister. He said: "Now it is possible for us to go back on the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pope Pius IX and see how far in advance of his time he was, because he condemned all those things that gave rise to communism, that gave rise to relativism, that gave rise to Naziism; all the socialisms were condemned. He indicted all the bad philosophies, but he was not appreciated in his time."

Pius was the pope who called the council. It took him five years to get it ready. At first he had spoken to a few cardinals and they wrote around to a few bishops and so forth, but finally about 800 bishops gathered in the Vatican. The question that was much agitated was, of course, the question of the relationship between the pope and the bishops, and, in particular, who is the spokesman for the Church? Or, is the pope infallible? The question at issue was the pope and papal infallibility.

You know Father Hans Küng, presently lecturing in the United States. He is regarded as one of the outstanding theologians of the present Vatican Council. He is a young man and has spoken to various groups of American Bishops and other national groups of bishops. He is *the* great man it seems to some. Well, for the First Vatican Council, there was another man, a German, who was not called to the council. He was one of the men who was not behind it; he worked in opposition to it. Father Döllinger, a great Church historian had as his position, "History says absolutely nothing about the infallibility of the pope. The only thing that is infallible is the Church itself." Döllinger had people behind him, and some opposed to him. The leader of the opposition was Cardinal Manning of England and Wilfrid Ward, the layman of England. He was pushing in his

Catholic papers for papal definitions. He expected them to come out, one for each morning for breakfast. It was said he wanted papal infallibility defined so we could have absolute dogmatic definitions. In opposition was not only a man like Döllinger, who was not at the council, but also great men such as Bishop Ketteler, leader of the Church's social teaching in Germany in the nineteenth century and the opponent of Bismarck in the Kulturkampf. There were actually two different types, strongly opposed, and when the bishops met in council for the first session, they received the *schema* of the council, the list of subjects to be discussed. It was sort of all pre-planned and some of the bishops threw it right back into the lap of the *curia* just as they did at the Second Vatican Council. They fought it out on national lines and on dogmatic lines, and it was a long and hard fight. There was only one matter the Vatican Council ever really defined and Cardinal Manning was pushing for it by acclamation. They weren't even going to vote on it. He wanted it to be by acclamation that the Holy Father would be declared infallible, and there were all kinds of "behind-the-scenes" partying, dickering, and so forth, compromises made and wording changed. One American bishop from Savannah, Georgia,—this was just four years after the Civil War—made a comment that reminded me so very much of a comment that appeared recently in *Time* by a Jesuit. The Bishop of Savannah commented: "Here we are talking about Church reform and position of bishops and the position of the Holy Father when it might do us and the world good to define the fact that Negroes have souls." In other words, get down to something more fundamental. The Bishop of Savannah was with the other Americans in middle ground and they eventually voted all for papal infallibility except Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock. He wasn't against papal infallibility but he was against defining it right then. So the word went out, "Little Rock against the big Rock." The last session took place amid one of the worst summer storms the city of Rome had ever experienced. Thunder and lightning and tremendous darkness covered the face of the city at midday. The peals of thunder were tremendous, and one could hardly hear the Holy Father reading. They had to hold tapers up to the page so that he could see. Take it as you wish, "an approval by heaven," or, you might say "a wonderment or letting the world know that something was brewing." Actually the definition revived the whole papacy even though Father Döllinger walked away from the Church, and began the Old Catholic Church in Germany. The bishops who were opposed to it came around very quickly. Mostly they were opposed to it because they felt it was not time. Vatican I made no reform decisions, issued nothing but that one great teaching about papal infallibility. Two days later the Franco-Prussian War broke out. Two months later the Piedmontese army moved against Rome and the Vatican Council ended without a day for further convoca-

tion. It never was officially closed. So there's the basis for wonderment if this Vatican meeting would be a continuation of the previous one, but it is not. It is a separate one entirely. All the recommendations that had been made at the Vatican Council were kept. And when the Code of Canon Law came in 1917, it was in great measure the embodiment of the recommendations made at the First Vatican Council.

Then the Second Vatican Council, the one that we are concerned with, 1962. It was first broached around January, 1959 by Pope John. He mentioned it to his confidants, thought it was an inspiration by God and as things have turned out, it certainly seems so. It was two and a half years in preparation—a great deal of work had to go into it and the Roman Curia is the one who said it could not get ready in time. They told Pope John they wouldn't be ready till the year after next. So he told them: "Well, you be ready next year," and they were. Something like 2500 bishops were present for the opening. The ones who had the right to vote would be all bishops, resident, titular, archbishops, and of course, patriarchs and cardinals; then the superiors of religious orders, of some of the major religious orders, and the primate abbots of some of the great monastic orders, and they are the only ones who have the right to cast a ballot. There are, however, any number of experts or theologians who are called in for consultations; the place of the experts is up in the tribunes. A little altar was erected in the center of the nave of Saint Peter's. It is the altar of the Sacred Scripture. At the opening of each session, the bible is placed there in an honored position because it is from the bible that we get our faith. To either side, between the altar of the Sacred Scripture and the main altar is the place for the secretaries. You know from your reading about the spacing of microphones, translation and that anyone has the right to speak although this has been somewhat limited. One of the great things about this council is the fact that so many non-Catholics are among those present. They have a very special tribune close to the main altar. I think there are roughly about twenty-eight international religious bodies represented, and, God willing, I think that not only the Russian Eastern Church, but maybe even the Greek Eastern Church will be represented at the next session in September. America's Cardinal Spellman is one of the eleven presidents of the general session. The presidency takes turn. Cardinal Bea has spoken the most and Cardinal Spellman second, he has spoken seven times, but he shares it with someone else. Another man is Cardinal Leger of Montreal, one of the, if you wish, liberal wing or progressive wing and very much interested in the position of the layman in the Church. He has been working so hard he just had to get away from the see of Montreal. He had to hand over to an auxiliary the running of the diocese, he was so run down from work in the preparation and from work

during the Council. Another man is Cardinal Ottaviani, the so-called arch-conservative, a man, however, whose job it is as Prefect of the Holy Office to insure the purity of the faith and to see to it that the desire to express the truths of faith will not in any way go contrary to, you might say, the statements of the other councils that go all the way back to the Council of Jerusalem. He is, as I said, the arch-conservative, but take it for what it's worth.

Cardinal Bea heads the new congregation that was established during the council, the Congregation for Christian Unity, and it is this congregation now that is having to do the bulk of work, between sessions. All the reports from other commissions come up to him and his commission. They have to reword the language to see to it that in no way would anything be said which would hinder the possibility of re-union.

This is not a council for re-union with non-Catholics. It is a council for reforming the Church itself and for its renewal in today's world. Without Pope John XXIII there would have been no council. Without his spirit there would not have been this freshness. The man who said of himself, "Me, I am just a learner," has closed no doors but has opened windows, as he himself said, "to let a breath of fresh air in." Despite his many years, he is the most youthful figure the Church has possessed. John XXIII is the one who has given us Vatican II.

Salvation-History and the Bible

LET US BEGIN BY defining the notion of salvation-history, or *Heilsgeschichte*. For the Old Testament, this means the inspired record of Israel's experience of Yahweh (the name by which God revealed himself in the Old Testament) as a savior-God. This history came to a climax in the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ, as portrayed in the kerygmatic discourses of Peter and of Paul in Acts (e.g., Acts 2:22f., 3:12ff., etc.). And this history is still unfolding, for it will not be completed until the *Parousia*, the second coming of Jesus in glory. We will restrict ourselves to the first part of Old Testament record.

Perhaps one of the least appreciated aspects of our Christian heritage is the deep roots we have in the Old Testament. For the Christian, history begins with Abraham, not merely with Our Lord—it begins with a man to whom God made promises, and a People with whom God made a covenant on Mt. Sinai. The Old Testament is the record of Promise and Covenant, as they were realized within this people. Hence we should turn our attention to the kind of record that it is: A creation of many kinds of literature, put down in writing over the course of some 1200 years.

The Jews who returned from exile in Babylon to Palestine in the years after 539 B.C., quickly became the "People of the Book," that is, their sacred traditions now became foremost in their practical life. The Book was divided into the Law, the Prophets (earlier and later), and the Writings. Chief among these was the *Tora*, or the Law, making up the first five books: The Pentateuch of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which they associated with their great Lawgiver, Moses. It would be a mistake to imagine Moses sitting down, like a modern author, to compose the Pentateuch. Rather, this is a synthesis of traditions which grew up around him and his activity; the Promises to the Fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the deliverance from Egypt of the children of Promise, the Sinai Covenant, and the leading into the Promised Land. This is Israel's glorious heritage concerning its beginning; a people "of mixed ancestry" which came out of its slavery in Egypt and met with God in the Sinai desert, became the people of God, bound to him in the covenant and as a witness to his fulfillment of the Promises.

"For you are a people sacred to the Lord, your God; he has chosen you from all the nations on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own. It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity to the oath he had sworn to your fathers, that he brought you out with his strong hand from the place of slavery, and ransomed you from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt" (Dt. 7:6-8).

The classical formula of Old Testament salvation-history is to be found in the vest-pocket statement used by Israelites in the liturgy. On the pilgrim feast of the harvest (feast of Weeks) one would come to the sanctuary and present before the priest the first fruits in a basket and then recite before Yahweh, who was present in the sanctuary:

My father was a wondering Aramean who went to Egypt with a small household and lived there as an alien. But there he became a nation great, strong, and numerous. When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and he heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression. He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm, with terrifying power, with signs and wonders; and bringing us into this country, he gave us a land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore I have now brought you the fruits of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me (Dt. 26:5-10).

Following upon the Pentateuch are the books of Josue, Judges, and Kings, which make up the Deuteronomistic history—so-called because the commanding point of view in these works is that of the book of Deuteronomy: God's reward for Israel's fidelity and his punishment for her wrong-doing. This is the principle, but not the spirit of Deuteronomy; the spirit is one of generous exhortation to the people, urging them to respond totally to the God who has saved them. The principle can be seen at work in the second chapter of Judges. The period of the Judges (about 1200-1050 B.C.) was the age of the loose tribal federation. The only bond that united the tribes was religious; the central sanctuary with the ark where Yahweh was enthroned. When one or other of the tribes was subjected to raids or to plundering peoples, there was little concerted defensive action among them. When the people cried out, Yahweh raised up a military hero (such is the Old Testament meaning of Judge) to save them: Gedeon, Debora, Jephthah, etc. These early stories have been combined and edited in order to highlight the theme of God's dealing with his people: Sin—punishment—appeal to Yahweh—salvation. The rhythm of this history is neatly summarized in the story of the first Judge, Othniel:

"Because the Israelites had offended the Lord by forgetting the Lord their God, and serving the Baals and the Asheras, the anger of the Lord flared up against them, and he allowed them to fall into the power of Chusan-Rasathaim, King of Aram Naharaim, whom they served for eight years. But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, he raised up for them a savior, Othoniel, son of Caleb's younger brother Cenez, who rescued them. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the Lord delivered Chusan-Rasathaim, king of Aram, into his power, so that he made him subject" (Jgs. 3:7-10).

Because of the pressure of the Philistines, who nearly conquered Palestine and the Israelites, the appeal was made to Samuel, last of the Judges, to anoint a king. In these trying circumstances, the kingship began: Saul, David, Solomon.

The historian of the books of Kings lingers long over these three men. The life of David has been described in a wealth of detail: his days as an outlaw pursued by Saul, his gradual return to power, the strategic choice of Jerusalem as the capital of the young kingdom, the extension of the national boundaries into Syria in the north, into Transjordan, and into Moab and Edom in the south. One of the most remarkable literary pieces in the entire Old Testament is the "court history" of 2 Samuel 9ff., the story of the succession to David's throne, which was finally attained by Solomon. But the key event of salvation-history is the oracle of Nathan to David, the so-called dynastic oracle, in 2 Sam 7. This is a divine guarantee that the dynasty of David will ever possess the throne of Israel—a promise that forms the basis of the royal Messianism that develops in the prophets (e.g., the "Emmanuel" section of Isaiah, cc. 7-11) and in the royal Psalms (2, 71, 109, etc.). Even though under Roboam, son of Solomon, the kingdom split into the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Juda), there always remained a descendant of David on the Jerusalem throne—a pledge of the future—down to the end in 587.

But the real purpose of the historian of the books of Kings is to explain *why* everything came to an end; for Israel in 721 with the fall of Samaria, for Juda in 587 with the fall of Jerusalem. The reason lay in the infidelity of the Chosen People. They consistently broke the terms of the Covenant, despite the warnings of the prophets.

We should not reduce the important role of the prophets to mere prediction. Predict the future, they certainly did; but they accomplished far more than that. They were, first and foremost, the revealers of God's will to their people. In the eighth century Amos warned the northern kingdom of impending doom ("Will not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, gloom without any brightness?" 5:20). Osee communicated to the same people a new dimension of Yahweh's

love ("How could I give you up, O Ephraim, or deliver you up, O Israel? . . . I will not give vent to my blazing anger. . . . For I am God and not man, the Holy One present among you" 11:8f). In the repeated crises of the kingdom of Juda, Isaia threatened and cajoled, but already the sluggish heart and sealed ears of Israel were being revealed. The sufferings of Jeremia mark the end of the southern kingdom in 587. This tender-hearted man found the courage to deliver the divine ultimatum to the people he loved, but no avail ("You would be in the right, O Lord, if I should dispute with you; even so I must discuss the case with you" 12-1). During Jeremia's ministry, Ezechiel was over in Babylon with the first waves of exiles (captured in 598), preaching to them that Jerusalem *would* fall, according to its deserts, and then encouraging them after 587 to believe that Yahweh's designs included a restoration ("Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life. . . . Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel" 37:411).

Humanly speaking, one man is the key figure in bringing about the restoration; the unknown prophet whose oracles have been gathered together in chapters 40ff of the book of Isaia. In unsurpassed beauty of language and with unconquerable enthusiasm he encouraged his oppressed brothers to return from exile. Yahweh himself would lead them; Cyrus the Persian, conqueror of Babylon, would be his agent:

Be strong, fear not!
 Here is your God—
 He comes with vindication,
 With divine recompense
 He comes to save you (35:4)

Listen to me, you fainthearted,
 you who seem far from the victory of justice:
 I am bringing on my justice, it is not far off,
 my salvation shall not tarry;
 I will put salvation within Sion,
 and give to Israel my glory (46:12f).

This would be a *new* exodus, marked by signs and wonders in the tradition of that first great saving act of Yahweh:

Awake, awake, put on strength,
 O arm of the Lord!

Awake as in the days of old,
 in ages long ago!
 Was it not you who crushed Rahab,
 you who pierced the dragon?
 Was it not you who dried up the sea,
 the waters of the great deep,
 Who made the depths of the sea into a way
 for the redeemed to pass over?
 Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return
 and enter Sion singing . . . (51:9-11)

It is really the prophet's vision of the Messianic realities to come (although the time of this was unknown) that justifies the enthusiasm of his description.

In fact, the restoration was a relatively modest affair, as the waves of exiles began the trek to Palestine in 538 B.C. The new beginnings were marked by severe trials, and especially by opposition by neighboring peoples. But the urging of the prophets Aggai and Zacharia led to the rebuilding of the temple in 515, and the reforms of Ezra and Nehemia in the following century established the people in a rigid practice of their faith.

It is not surprising then, that their Seleucid overlords (the Greek authority at Antioch that succeeded to power after the death of Alexander the Great in 323) failed in their persecution of the Jews. In 167 B.C., the Maccabees began the successful revolt against the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, that led to their political independence in 142 under Simon Maccabee. But before the finale in the salvation-history, Juda was to lose its independence to Rome, under whose Procurator, Pontius Pilate, the Son of Man was to die.

We may not close the salvation-history recorded in the historical and prophetic books without mentioning the wisdom literature: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. These books portray a practical philosophy of life, inspired by the principles of Yahwistic faith and by sharp observation of the human scene. They urge the homely virtues: diligence, honesty, self-control, avoidance of evil companions. But the deep problem that exercises the wisdom writers is *life*. First of all, the good life of this world—this is the reward that God gives to the virtuous man:

The just man's recompense leads to life,
 the gains of the wicked, to sin (Prv. 10:16).

Virtue directs toward life,
 but he who pursues evil does so to his death (Prv. 11:19).

Secondly, how are the contradictions to this doctrine of "reward" to be explained? Actual experience shows that the deserving man is not always rewarded with the good life, and that the evil man often triumphs. This was the dilemma confronted and debated by Job and Ecclesiastes:

"Because the sentence against evildoers is not promptly executed, therefore the hearts of men are filled with the desire to commit evil—because the sinner does evil a hundred time and survives. . . . This is a vanity which occurs on earth: there are just men treated as though they had done evil and wicked men treated as though they had done justly" (Eccles. 8:12-14).

It was only solved by a larger notion of life—by the extension of life beyond death into the eternal life with God. Israel came to know that Yahweh was truly the God of the living, not of the dead. He was not a God who would tolerate his faithful to eke out a bleak existence in Sheol, or the nether world, which Ecclesiastes had described: "There will be no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the nether world where you are going" (9:10). The deeper insight into this bond between Yahweh and Life is hinted at in the Psalms:

For with you is the fountain of life,
and in your light we see life (35:10).

You will show me the path of life,
fulness of joys in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever (15:11).

The Book of Wisdom presents the solution in the ringing phrase: "justice is immortal" (1:15).

Looking back upon this record of Yahweh's dealing with his people, we see the forward thrust that carried them into the New Testament fulfillment. Yahweh revealed himself as a Savior throughout Israel's history, down to the climax in Jesus Christ. The Messianic hope was nourished by the central fact of the Davidic Dynasty in Jerusalem; God was going to achieve his work, despite the end of the monarchy in 587. The development of the concept of eternal life throughout the wisdom literature issues into the eternal life of which Jesus spoke: "Now this is eternal life: to know thee, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" (Jn. 17, 3).

Questions and Answers

Does the Scapular Medal take the place of the Scapular? If so, must the medal be worn around the neck?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Yes, it does. The Scapular Medal has all the blessings and privileges that the cloth Scapular has with one exception, that is the 200 days indulgence for kissing the cloth Scapular which does not apply for kissing the Scapular Medal. The Scapular Promise of salvation and the Sabbatine Privilege of speedy release from Purgatory can be obtained by wearing the Scapular Medal instead of the cloth Scapular. It is not required that the Scapular Medal be worn around the neck, but simply be carried on the person. Hence it would seem that it would be sufficient for gaining the blessings attached to the Scapular, including the Sabbatine Privilege if you carried the medal in your pocket or purse.

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Is it correct to refer to Mary as the "neck" when explaining her position in the Mystical Body?

FATHER MCGINNIS: This question arose probably because we did read a quotation this morning from Father Michael of Saint Augustine, who mentioned that people were referring to Our Lady as the "neck" of the Mystical Body to illustrate her role in the distribution of grace. However, as far as I know, it is not proper so to speak of Our Lady now that the nature of the Mystical Body of the Church has been explained in Pope Pius XII's encyclical. It doesn't seem quite in order to try to apply the comparison of various organs of the body, in this instance, to our Blessed Mother. The fact emphasized, of course, remains a fact, that Our Lady has a unique role to play in the distribution of grace. That she be emphasized, I think, as the mother of Christ, is more important than trying to draw out the analogy by calling her the "neck" of the Mystical Body.

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Some one asks whether it is permissible to place a halo on statues and pictures of the beatified, for example, Mother Seton.

FATHER MCGINNIS: I don't see any reason why not. I know of no legislation on this point, but it seems all right as far as I can see.

A question about fulfilling the Mass obligation: Has a person fulfilled his obligation to hear Mass when he comes in after the offering of the bread, but before the offering of the chalice; are you considered late when not present for the entire Offertory?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Such people coming in the midst of the Offertory, are considered late just like anybody who comes in after the beginning of Mass is late. Technically it would seem that they are fulfilling their obligation for being present for the principal parts of the Mass. Such a person is there for the Offertory since the Chalice is being offered and he is present, but I would urge him not to have such an attitude to try to make it at just that point.

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Why does the Church attach such a severe penalty to the deliberate breaking of some laws, such as missing Mass on Sunday and eating meat on Friday?

FATHER BURKE: Let me clarify. There is no penalty for those sins. Penalty in the technical sense of the term is punishment added by mother Church to a particular sin. As for the instances given—missing Mass on Sunday, eating meat on Friday—no penalties as such are attached to them. Now, then, you might interpret the question as this: Why does the Church make it so important? Under pain of mortal sin we abstain from meat on Friday and go to Mass on Sunday because going to Mass on Sunday is a Commandment of God, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day." Now you see the question posed two things to us as Christians, the worship of God, and in the worship of God sanctification itself. The great means of sanctification is mortification, so the worship of God and mortification. Now, in order to help us know exactly how we can best fulfill the serious obligation of the worship of God and the obligation of mortification, the Church has kept us from uncertainty by carefully defining for us that worship of God means the minimum, Mass on Sunday, and mortification means at a minimum, Friday abstinence. The Church has simply made these ways by which we can fulfill this already existing grave obligation. To prevent us from wondering how to mortify oneself and observe the Lord's day, the Church spells it out.

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Is there more than one interpretation of Canon Law? To what extent does the vow of obedience oblige us to accept the interpretation of one canonist?

FATHER BURKE: Yes, there is more than one interpretation. Sometimes one canonist may speak with a certain authority. He may state something which is

contained in Canon Law itself, or already obligatory, so he is not speaking on his own authority. But most of the time he is giving his own interpretation. Now, what weight does he carry? It depends on how smart he is. Just because one canonist says something, we don't always have to buy it. In fact, if we want the opposite view, we can go looking for a good, reputable canonist who will tell us that. Cappello is a renowned canonist who always bends to the side of leniency. And he's reputable and a good canonist. But if you don't know the quality of a canonist, this could be dangerous. You do not have to follow any one canonist. If you can get a good, reputable canonist who will give you different opinions, you can follow that as a reasonable opinion unless, of course, in various cases it's no longer a matter of opinion because the Church has spoken. When the Church has spoken that's *the* interpretation.

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If a confessor advises a sister to do something which is not against the rule, and the superior will not permit it, may a sister follow the confessor's advice if she sincerely believes his advice to be the more prudent?

FATHER BURKE: Well, ultimately, "He who hears you, hears me," and in the external form, the one who speaks with the voice of Christ to us, is willingly our superior. Prudently, even though it is not always easy, we never go wrong, from the Christian point of view when we follow the superior. The superior may be wrong but not we. Now, from a very practical point of view, if the superior has said "No, you can't do that," I think you would be liable to get into trouble if you went against your superior's judgment despite the fact that your confessor might have okayed it. Figure it this way, "Father Confessor was probably right, but under the concrete circumstances it might be wrong for me, troublesome for me, and then I'd lose more by following his advice and getting into trouble because then I'm liable to feel a sense of martyrdom when the superior comes down on me. That would not help the virtue of obedience. I would say that it is more prudent to obey the superior.

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A retreat master once told us that all letters, even though containing spiritual matters, should be handed to the superior opened. The spiritual director claims these should be sealed before handing them to the superior for mailing. Which is correct?

FATHER BURKE: I presume, honestly, that if it is a matter for spiritual direction, it quite reasonably and legitimately can be sealed. Now, of course, it depends

largely on the superior. If she raises her eyebrows—"Oh, I thought they were to be handed in unsealed"—she's telling you then. Normally, I'd be inclined to think they could be definitely sealed, despite what the retreat master said.

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Would you please define the term "indeliberate venial sin?" Is there a distinction between an indeliberate venial sin and an imperfection?

FATHER BURKE: Now when you say indeliberate, of necessity you say no sin, because the elements of sin would be matter, knowledge and will and if it is indeliberate, knowledge is absent. Indeliberate venial sin would be matter which, if you really knew what you were doing, would have constituted a venial sin. If, for instance, you nibbled on a bologna sandwich this afternoon, a day of abstinence, and just took a bite. Say you knew and enjoyed it. If you ate that deliberately knowing that certainly it could never be seriously sinful, you would have committed a deliberate venial sin. Not knowing, it is indeliberate venial sin. An imperfection then would be matter which is not sinful at all.

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There's a question asked about a person who has made the heroic act of charity for poor souls, and if such a person can still gain the remission of temporal punishment due to sin in the sacrament of penance.

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, the answer is yes, that one who has made the heroic act of charity can surely still gain the removal of temporal punishment due to sin in the sacrament of penance. Sacramental graces are not transferable in this way. The grace that comes to me from the sacrament by receiving a sacrament cannot be transferred by me to someone else in spite of my heroic act of charity as part of the condign merit, as they call it, which is attached to any act. There is a certain type of merit attached to every good action I perform that cannot be transferred. It is not lost, consequently, as a result of making the heroic act of charity. The heroic act of charity is in itself such a meritorious action that it will bring merit which is not transferred to the other souls for whom I make this act of charity.

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There is a question asked about suicide and the old condition of a captain going down with his ship. If this matter comes up, and some pupil reminds Sister of the old tradition of the sea "that the captain goes down with his ship," what should she say about it?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, it always seemed to me meant that the captain sees to the safety of other people first, before he thinks about saving himself. Perhaps that's a misunderstanding on my part of this tradition. But I think the tradition was not that the captain always goes down with the ship, but that he does not leave before women and children. These people are taken care of first. If he decides, in spite of a possible rescue to go down with the ship, I think it's rather silly.

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Then in a question about spiritual direction, someone wrote this quotation from Cardinal Cajetan: "Let spiritual directors note this and let them see to it that their disciples are first of all exercised in the active life before proposing to them the heights of contemplation. One must, in fact, tame one's passions by habits of neatness, patience and so on in order to be able, once the passions have been dominated, to rise to the contemplative life, or the quest of men would not direct them in the apostolic life first, then in our lives." Would we not judge that by reading the quotation of Cardinal Cajetan that the active life is first in importance.

FATHER MCGINNIS: I would say, no, that Cardinal Cajetan's remarks, as far as I can figure them out, refer not to the apostolate, but to the ascetical life as it might be distinguished from the mystical life. That is, when Cardinal Cajetan says "that one must be exercised first in the active life," he means the ascetical, spiritual life disciplining the passions by habits of patience, neatness and so on. Later, perhaps the soul may become more passive than active and there will be certain extraordinary graces received for example like the grace of infused contemplation. One begins by the exercise of mental prayer and a quiet contemplation—that is the way you direct a soul first—I think that's the advice of Cardinal Cajetan. You don't expect a soul, right off the bat, to be given the grace of infused contemplation, so I would say that his remarks of the active life don't refer to the apostolate, but to the active form of the spiritual life, when the initiative seems to come from the soul rather than from God.

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And then this same questioner asks about the virtues of humility and charity. This statement says: "When we contemplate on one hand humility, poor appearance, abasement and on the other hand love in its brightness, pride and longing for expansion, may I ask then how the assertions of the saints comparing and uniting these virtues can be justified? It is right to say that these two virtues are compound forming one virtue? Does the Church constitute them as two distinct virtues?"

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, I would simply say that humility and charity are distinct virtues. The problem perhaps in seeing them as distinct is simply this, they are always found together. All the virtues are found together. Where you have one virtue, as you know, you have them all, and they all grow together. As Saint Thomas says: "Like the fingers on your hand they grow together." When you have charity, you have humility; without humility, you can't have charity. So I suppose the fact that we always find them together might lead us perhaps to think they are not distinct. Yet they are. The virtue of charity is that virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. The virtue of humility is that virtue which leads us to appreciate the position in which we stand in relation to God and our fellow men and to act accordingly. So they are distinct even though they are always found together. I don't think the assertions of the saints combining them need to be justified, because the fact is that they are always found combined in one's spiritual life.

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I made a statement when speaking about spiritual direction that every priest, in my opinion, can give ordinary directions, but that there will be times when special direction is needed, and the questioner asks if I would give examples of times when special direction would be needed.

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, first I would say that my meaning was that I feel every priest can give ordinary direction. I suppose, we would not be able to say that every priest *will* give ordinary directions, but *can* give ordinary directions. The time when special directions are needed, I would say, will be decided by the priest who is giving ordinary directions to the individual. If he feels that something a little bit above and beyond the ordinary is required probably beyond that of which he feels capable, he would suggest that to the soul under his guidance. It should be his decision, I would suggest, more than the decision of the individual that he or she needs something special in the way of direction.

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There is a question about when a priest might refuse Communion to a person at the altar rail.

FATHER MCGINNIS: I would say that ordinarily it would have to be a case of a public, unrepentant sinner. The question does mention certain habits of individual priests about questioning people at the communion rail and sending some away. Well, we know there are various practices, but this seems to be, if not the principle involved, at least a principle involved: If the public sinner was

well-known and was known to be unrepentant, he or she would be refused at the communion rail. This would be, however, very extraordinary.

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A very brief question. Someone asks why the priest at the high Mass this morning put the wine and water in the chalice before the Gospel?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, that's just the Carmelite rite. At a low Mass we put the wine and water in the chalice at the start of the Mass. At high Mass we put it in the chalice before the Gospel.

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Father, in September I was assigned to work I find unbearable. I've done my best, but as the year ends I am very upset. I cannot become reconciled to doing this work for the rest of my religious life, and since I am going on to my major in college in this field, I am reasonably sure this is to be my life. May I represent without feeling that I am not accepting the will of God? I have had no peace since the year began, though I am faithful to my affairs and religious exercises.

FATHER BURKE: Well, I suppose everyone of us reaches a point where at some time or other we feel we are dragging ourselves. Now here a Sister is faced with a task of work that she doesn't particularly care for. Two solutions come to mind: If the type of work itself seems beyond her normal capacities so that she recognizes, objectively speaking, she's not up to it, well then it is only legitimate and necessary, I think, to lay the cards on the table and to tell the mother superior that and then hope and pray that a change will be effected. If on the other hand, it is not a question of competence—the Sister does have the intellectual ability and yet we'll say for the sake of an example that it is mathematics she is majoring in but just has no love for math—well, I would say that very often one of the best ways that we can find something interesting is not to do it reluctantly, but to go after it enthusiastically. In other words, psychologically there is a bit of a barrier and if you just keep touching it and never give yourself a push, everything is a drag. But all you need is just to get over that little barrier, give it the extra effort and you will find that even in such a dull, impersonal, uninteresting subject as math that the world can open up.

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I have heard it said that when we confess imperfections alone, one does not receive the sacrament of penance, but only a blessing. Is this true?

FATHER BURKE: Yes, the sacrament is supposed for only sin and since im-

perfections are not sin, hence no absolution, no grace. When a person makes a confession, they usually end up with a formula that offers matter. Such would be, "I am sorry for all the sins of my past life especially for my sins against _____." If we use such a form in going to confession, then we insure ourselves of presenting sufficient matter to the priest for a valid reception of the sacrament.

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Is it essential to mention a particular sin in one's past life?

FATHER BURKE: The answer is no, it is not necessary to mention a particular sin. One could be sorry for sins of disobedience without specifying any one in particular, or even for the sins of my past life. Now if that is the usual formula we tack on, we've already offered matter, even though these sins have already been absolved in previous confessions. It is still sinful matter, and absolution is given.

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Father, do you expect the Ecumenical Council to discuss religious communities of women with regard to adapting themselves to the times? Would you expect the Council to suggest changes in the habits, clothes, etc?

FATHER BURKE: Well, with regard to the enclosure, perhaps yes, perhaps no. I would say that the most the council would ever do in that section dealing with religious is to lay down some norms about the necessity of adaptation while retaining the spirit of both of the religious life and of the particular institute or congregation. Then the whole matter will be given over to the Congregation for Religious, which will then, in the course of the next decade, probably issue some directives. The council will spell out nothing for us, certainly not with regard to habit or anything else. They may make recommendations, but not to any specific congregation. Then it will be up to the superiors of the various orders and congregations to canvass their own members, to come up with some ideas and send them back to the Congregation for Religious for approval or rejection. Then, probably, specific directions would be given.

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In the parish where I am located, there is a divorced woman who has remarried, and has several children in our school. She is always the first to offer her services when help is needed in the health pool, or with her car or something like that. Some parishioners have criticized us for accepting her help. I think that she may do this as a sort of reparation, a request for prayer. What do you think?

FATHER MCGINNIS: I would say, that in accepting her services you are certainly doing right. It would seem to me there is no reason for us to penalize people who have made certain mistakes. There is not any such situation which has just one right way of being handled but in the way it is being handled here—in accepting this lady's services—it will give her the opportunity to do good, and perhaps make some kind of reparation. When you see a person like this, you know, one who tries to do so much in her own way, that may be a mark of desperation because of her position, and a reminder perhaps to pray for her that some solution be found.

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Do God and his Blessed Mother make up for all our deficiencies, especially when you ask them, like at Mass when you do not keep up with the priest?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, I would say that God and his Blessed Mother do make up for some of our deficiencies especially when we ask them. About your task, well, I don't think it is a deficiency if you don't keep up with the priest in getting through the prayers in the missal. I don't think that's a deficiency which God and his Blessed Mother have to supply. We don't have an obligation to do that. The priest has the obligation to do that, and well, whether we get them in or don't get them in, we can leave that to God. I don't think we need to view this as a deficiency. Enter into the spirit of the act that is taking place instead of being engaged in missal searching and trying to keep up with the priest.

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Where are we supposed to imagine that purgatory is?

FATHER MCGINNIS: Well, I don't really think we are supposed to imagine where purgatory is. Following the language of the catechism, I think of it more as a completion of being, a completion of suffering and purification than an actual place situated up or down, or in the middle of the earth or some place like that. I don't think we are supposed to imagine definitely that it is anywhere. If you'd like to imagine, you are certainly free to keep imagining.

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Was it really the Jews who killed Our Lord?

FATHER CARROLL: It was all of us who killed Our Lord. As far as the legal responsibility goes, the legal question is highly involved. The matter has not been satisfactorily solved. As far as the academical approach, especially in teaching others, we cannot do better than to follow the lead of Pope John, who has

no limit to that good heart of his; he welcomed a Jew recently as, "My brother Joseph." A way of teaching would be to make the responsibility as one belonging to all. It was for all of us that Christ died, and whatever our social status or social order, it would be wrong to place the responsibility on any one group, whether they be Jews, Romans or Pilate. As far as human responsibility goes, we are all responsible, and that is the question as put: Was it really the Jews who killed Our Lord? Surely not, not simply the Jews, but also the Gentiles and all in the human rainbow—not any one group.

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Will the Council say anything about Our Lady?

FATHER CARROLL: There is a schema prepared—a short one I'm told—by those who have seen it and it is called "Mary, Mother of God—Mother of Man." I've been told that there's nothing very new in it. It is extremely unlikely that any dogmatic definition would come out of the council. I don't think so but opinions differ about whether or not there will be any definition. My hope is that the council might make some statement about the spiritual motherhood. Pope John on many occasions had made statements in this respect.

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KNOWING your weakness and the frailty
of the vessel you carry,
you should fear going along with the crowd
when you are in the world
lest you fall and be shattered

Institutes of the First Monks