

## EXTRACTS

PÈRE BENEDICT LAVAUD, O.P., introduces his article on 'Life in God and Death to Self' in the June *Cross and Crown* (Chicago) with the following important remarks:

In the New Testament we look in vain for a clear-cut distinction between such terms as moral, ascetical and mystical; between what is speculative and what is practical. Instead, the New Law is the complete revelation of the 'mysteries of God' and of 'God's Kingdom', of life in God from its lowest to its highest degrees. Although the word 'mystery' is fairly often encountered, one never finds the term 'mystic', either as an adjective or as a substantive; nor is there mention of contemplation. But all of those states which are fairly familiar to us as grace, prayer, contemplation, life and the mysterious forms of man's contact with the intimate life of God and of his Kingdom, as well as the 'charisms' or gratuitous gifts which accompany or dispose thereto: these are to be found in countless places. . . . The profound principles of contemplation are the very same as those of a simple Christian life; but in contemplation they are fully developed. Among these principles is the grace of filial adoption . . . the indwelling and presence of God in the soul. . . .

The author goes on to elaborate the mystery of life in God as the foundation to any Christian way of life and the complementary mystery of death to self.

In this issue of *Cross and Crown*, which provides the reader with a plentiful variety, is an article on hermits which begins with the story of a young hermit in Brooklyn who was eventually discovered by the police, made to wash and shave and handed over to the psychiatrists.

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THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART encourages religious periodicals nearly every year to return to the sources of the devotion—a necessity when devotions are so prone to cut adrift from the anchor of dogma upon which they depend for spiritual security. The editor of *La Vie Spirituelle* realising, as he says, that a great deal of the trappings of this devotion embarrasses those who are looking for a life of prayer that is biblical and liturgical, has devoted his June issue to the Mystery—*Le Mystère* once again—of the Sacred Heart. There are articles on the Scriptural and Doctrinal foundations of the devotion as well as on the seventeenth-century setting when it was brought into prominence at Paray-le-Monial. Père Heris, O.P., whose book on the Mystery of Christ will always remain a classic of the thomist exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation, deals with the 'doctrinal foundations' concentrating in

particular on the different aspects of Christ's love. But in view of the title of the whole issue it is a pity that more space was not given to the patristic teaching on the mysteries or sacraments that flowed from Christ's pierced side. However, in his article on 'the Heart of Jesus and the Trinity', Père Jacques, S.C.J., sums up much of the tradition of the Church in this respect:

The divine love, as possessed by the Word, according to the special relation which characterises him, is the divine love of the Son of God. It can only be a filial love. And this filial love of the Word is necessarily continued in Jesus, in the created order, in his human love which is thus clothed with characteristics proper to a truly filial love. Consequently this love is pure, disinterested and truly sacrificial, all of which is specially emphasised by the worship of the Sacred Heart. . . . And just as in the Trinity, the Father and the Son give themselves to each other in the Holy Spirit, so in the Incarnation the Father gives himself to the Son also in his human nature, and the Son gives himself here also filially to the Father. The Holy Spirit, proceeding as a person in the trinitarian life of mutual divine love, completes with his own fullness the humanity of Jesus and consummates also in him the unity of the Son-made-man and the Father. So the Holy Spirit within the realms of this personal divine love fulfills all Christ's actions, while yet the unique Person of the Word remains the ultimate author of those actions.

So it is that the mystery of the Trinity is to be found most tangibly at the Crucifixion and the wound in the side, as it were, gives an exit to all the mysteries of the Godhead which pour out in the torrent of the divine self-giving love. Fr M. J. Lapiere, S.J., writes in *Review for Religious* (St Mary's, Kansas; May), of the historic choice of St Margaret Mary at the time when Jansenism was undermining the true teaching about divine love; and Fr A. J. Goodman, M.S.C., in *Sponsa Regis* (Collegeville; June), applies the doctrine to modern life and incidentally emphasises the connection between this devotion and the fact of the Blessed Sacrament, a point which is worth developing. For the Blessed Sacrament is enshrined in the Mass and necessarily forms the centre of the life and prayer of the Church. It raises the idea of a 'devotion' from that of a prayer of personal choice, often largely bound up with emotions, to that of the prayer of Christ with his Church which sanctifies the roots of the soul.

So the Liturgy must form the foundation of all prayers and devotion; and modern conditions demand that the liturgy be made more real to the Christian. In the *Downside Review* (Summer 1952) Lancelot Sheppard concludes a challenging demand for 'Liturgical Reform' by these wise remarks:

Before details of reform can be usefully discussed certain principles require first to be accepted. . . . Once the implications of 'worship rendered by the Mystical Body in the entirety of its Head and members' (*Mediator Dei*) are grasped, other things like congregational singing or answering at Mass will follow. Secondly there is a need for an authentic expression of worship. Modern man is endowed with an irrepressible need of sincerity, especially in matters of worship and his relations to God. 'He asks for an altar that is an altar and not a pedestal of flowers . . . a Mass that is truly the praise and sacrifice of a community one in faith, and not a mere rite rolling by for its own sake . . .' (Père Congar). The third principle is . . . that the liturgy is the life of the Church and the food of the faithful. . . . The worship of the Church is not a fossilised relic of former practice. . . .

What is surely needed, therefore, is a marriage between the principle popular devotions, which do not lack vitality but are often in danger of lacking the fullness of Christian doctrine, and the Church's liturgy, which often lacks popular vitality while retaining the source of all true Christian life. Fr O'Connell, S.M.A., has made a general outline of the way the devotion to the Sacred Heart could be reintegrated into the liturgical life of the Church in his article on 'Devotion to the Sacred Heart' (*Doctrine and Life*; Cork; June):

Through our adoption of sons we are always *in Christ Jesus*; Saint Paul is never done affirming this. We never go to the Father alone, and our prayers and our good actions are never merely ours. They always share in the dignity of the prayers and actions of our Head. This is especially true of our liturgical actions, above all of our part in the Mass. The Mass is the re-enacting of the sacrifice of Christ; it is the renewal of the gift of himself in love that the Sacred Heart made to his Father on Calvary. And the Mass is the sacrifice of the whole Christ, Head and members.

It is in this context that the love of 'reparation', which takes such a central position of the devotion of the Sacred Heart, may be seen in its true context.

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Just when the English Episcopate issued the joint Pastoral re-affirming the Church's teaching repudiating divorce and when the Archbishop of York had at the same time made a stand for the Church of England against the new divorce laws that are threatened, *Lumière et Vie* (Saint-Alban-Leyse) produced its fourth issue (June) which is devoted to 'Indissoluble Marriage'. True to its character the journal takes the teaching on the subject back to its sources in the Bible and the tradition and law of the Church. This number provides a most important foundation

to the present campaign against the relaxation of marriage laws. Cardinal Saliège introduces the number.

AT A LEVEL, K. Truhlar in *Revue d'Ascétique et Mystique* (December, 1951, Toulouse) writes of Mystical Experience, which he describes as a new and superior knowledge with a new and superior love or elsewhere as 'contemplation', in its relation to the virtues, both theological and moral, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the nature of grace and phenomena such as 'confirmation in grace'. The article is of value particularly in its analysis of these aspects of the gracious life.

*Tijdschrift voor Geestelijk* (February, 1952; Louvain) carries an article on the Kingdom of God by the late Fr von Hulse, O.P., in which he distinguishes the domain over which God rules and which is threefold, his own being, creation, and man by grace, and the dominion which God exercises over these three realms. A useful distinction which is made here very actual by applying it to the whole of modern life—'the Voice of God in the drone of engines and the screech of sirens'.

Fr J. D. Crichton in the *Westminster Cathedral Chronicle* (May) shows how the Divine Office is essentially Scriptural. In a short but very comprehensive article he succeeds in showing how the Office integrates the whole Bible into the Christian year and teaches the user how to interpret Scripture according to its different sense. 'The Divine Office is the ministry of the Word'—this is a complementary aspect of the prayer of the breviary and a very necessary one.

SERMONS FOR EUCHARISTIC DEVOTIONS. By The Revd John B. Pastorak. (B. Herder, London; 56s.)

A book of sermons on the Blessed Sacrament which has practically nothing to say about the Mass might seem to be wanting in proportion, but these thirty sermons (preceded in each case by a detailed outline) on such subjects as 'Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament', 'Blessed Imelda' and 'Eucharistic Congresses' are a faithful enough record of eucharistic devotion, and should be useful to those who find books of sermons a help rather than a hindrance for their own efforts.

EVE AND THE GRYPHON, by Gerald Vann, O.P. (Blackfriars; 6s. 6d.), now in its third impression, treats of Christian women, models particularly of life in the world rather than in the cloister. The book is a proved favourite.

THE CISTERCIAN MONKS OF MT SAINT BERNARD'S ABBEY, by Fr John Morson, O.C.R. (1s. 6d.), shows the history of the monastery together with the lives of the monks. Admirers and critics of Thomas Merton should read this.