

Editorial

It cannot (we hope) be too often said that the great need of our time is to form laypeople whose theological education is equal to the standard of their education in general. But how is this to come about? There are books and there are articles (*LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* exists, indeed, for just this purpose) but books and articles are not enough: personal guidance is needed in all teaching. Though the best answer is probably the foundation of Catholic theological faculties at our secular universities, at the moment the chance of this happening seems somewhat remote.

A recently announced project is therefore very welcome. The Newman Association (the Catholic graduate organization in this country, whose unobtrusive work in the last few decades has had far greater influence for good than is generally realized) are bringing together small groups of up to eight people to meet two or three times a term with a priest-tutor. The difference from other similar groups is that each of these people (engaged though they usually are on one of the really full-time jobs, teaching at school or university) puts in several hours of study on the given theme, and submits an essay to the tutor. They do not meet simply to listen to a lecture, then, or to discuss something they know nothing about; they come having really encountered and grappled with difficulties in hope of reaching a common solution. The basis of the work is the invaluable Jerusalem Bible (soon to be available in English) whose notes, without in any sense doing all the work for the reader, give just that guidance needed for tracing out for oneself the great theological themes of revelation.

Of its nature such a project will always be confined to a minority of people. Those who benefit from it will have to see that their new understanding begins to spread slowly through the whole Catholic community. If this could take place there would be more chance of our living to see this a Catholic country.