

- 1 Circular issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Ukraine (1923).
- 2 The German hierarchy, *Fulda Pastoral Letter*, (August 1936).
- 3 Count de Salis, British Minister at the Vatican Foreign Office, *Vatican relations with Italy, Annual Report*, (25 October 1922).
- 4 Pius XII, speech to Sacred College and Diplomatic Corps, (25 Feb. 1946).
- 5 Archbishop Constantini, Head of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, sermon in basilica at Concordia.
- 6 *Actes et Documents du Saint Siege*, Vol. 5 No 56 (1 Sept. 1941).
- 7 Reply of Pius XII through his Secretary of State, Mgr Maglione, op. cit. Vol. 5 No 59 (3 Sept. 1941).
- 8 Pius XII, discourse of 13 June, 1943. Reported in '*Osservatore Romano*', (14-15 June 1943).
- 9 See his first encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, (October 1939) for an indication of Pius XII's Thomist philosophy.
- 10 It has been suggested that the Vatican actually gave permission for the negotiations between the two parties (see *Le Monde*, Jan - Feb 1962). The whole tone of *Pacem in Terris* seems to support this theory.
- 11 Address to the Diocesan Synod (31 Jan. 1960).
- 12 John XXIII in interview with Norman Cousins, 12 Dec. 1962. Reported in F. Sweeney (ed), *The Vatican and World Peace*, (London 1970).

## On the Fringe

Edward Quinn

### I

'I wouldn't belong to this bunch of macaroni merchants for another second if it wasn't the way of laying hold on Christ'. My own feelings about the Church are not exactly the same as those of Stanley Morison when he made this statement many years ago to Tom Burns, but something like this principle has enabled me to remain in the Church as the body of Christ, without feeling obliged to belong to the Catholic club, throughout my three score years and ten. Unlike Morison, I am not a convert, but Catholicism intervened effectively in my life only after childhood. And my first contacts were not with an Italian but with what appeared to be a very Irish and clerical institution.

For those inside and outside the Church in 1908 Catholicism in the West Riding town of Keighley was personified by the parish priest, Joseph Russell, a fine figure of a man who until his death in 1945 was always seen outside wearing a top hat (except on one occasion when he realised half-way up Highfield Lane that biretta and frock coat did not go together). After studies at Waterford and Maynooth, he soon made his mark in the Leeds diocese as preacher and administrator, a successful money-raiser who established four parishes from St Anne's in Keighley and largely paid for their churches before they were cut off. He was very concern-

ed for the rights of the Church, reluctant to accept English curates, but on excellent terms with the Anglican rector and active on the local board of guardians. He had a high ideal of the priesthood, but had no doubt that one of the main duties of the curates was to collect money. Admittedly, it was in a moment of exasperation that he said to me once when I called on him during my summer holiday from Ushaw: "You go to college and you learn Latin and Greek and Philosophy and Theology and you come out to collect twopences". It was in fact mainly threepenny pieces which his curates took from all known Catholic households, trudging around their districts in all weathers, from Friday night until Sunday mid-day, with a short interlude of four or five hours of confessions on Saturday and – for the priest on the 11 o'clock Mass – an occasional Sunday morning. They visited also as often as once a week, for pastoral reasons, mainly to discover if the Sunday Mass obligation had been fulfilled, if the children were going to the Catholic school and – as Lent drew on – to check up on Easter duties.

My Father, born in Dublin in 1885, belonged to the institution from the beginning. He was not a particularly fervent, still less a well instructed Catholic. And in those days it was easier than it is now to play truant, so that his frequent absences from school meant that he was not very well instructed in any subject. Mother had been an intermittently practising Anglican, but asked for instruction in the Catholic faith, since she was anxious to avoid the disgrace of a mixed marriage. A double disgrace, first because of the shabby and hasty way in which the ceremony was conducted in those days; secondly, because everyone knew that the only effective grounds for a dispensation was the premature beginning of a family. Father Russell instructed her, quite thoroughly – he would not have agreed with a mere 'I turned for him' attitude. Nor could he be rushed. Mother would appear punctually for her appointment at 2 p.m. but would have to wait until 2.15, 2.20 or even later until the great man emerged from lunch. Not that the priests were living in luxury, but after their morning's visiting they took their main meal in a leisurely way and none of them thought that punctuality was very important when dealing with the lower classes.

After my baptism, rejoicing subconsciously in the infused but not yet active virtues, I must have been taken to church occasionally, for I have hazy memories of figures in coloured vestments moving around a distant altar with troops of choir-boys and servers. I doubt whether my parents attended regularly or kept up Sunday Mass observance at all after a few years. Father spent most Sunday mornings calling on his parents or one of his brothers or sisters, all equally uninterested in church affairs. My older cousins however, mostly attended Mass and the Catholic school and tried

rather vainly to catechise me. I can't say that I had serious doubts as to whether God had made me: it all seemed rather irrelevant at the tender age of four. By this time, of course, the priests started asking questions about my own education. Mother decided that for the time being I should attend the nearby school where she had been herself. She got away with it when talking to the curates, but a vague promise that I would go to the Catholic school when I was older did not satisfy the parish priest, now Canon Russell. He left the house with the angry retort: "I didn't know I was baptising a little Protestant". Some twelve years later, when I asked for instruction in the faith in which I had been baptised, he welcomed me with complete self-assurance: 'I knew you'd come back'.

The priests stopped calling, my parents definitely ceased to practise, and I sank into a pleasantly pagan existence. From the elementary school I passed, with the aid of a scholarship, to the grammar school in 1919. The following four years, though not unclouded, really were among the happiest years of my life. Not entirely at ease in science, quite competent in all aspects of mathematics with the odd exception of geometry, my main enthusiasm was for languages, the joy of mastering their construction, to be able to say more in writing and in speech than was necessary to express conventional needs, above all the wonder of entering into new literary worlds. English, of course, took first place, most of the time under an enthusiastic teacher – F. C. Perry – who inspired me to read far beyond the necessarily limited range of classics studied in school and encouraged what became a life-long absorbing interest in the theatre. French I learned the hard way – a lot of grammar, word-lists – from Marion Whitehead, a lovely brunette, who stole our affections and made even the dullest linguist want to please her. But it was only indirectly – by providing the tools – that she taught me to love Racine and Ronsard, made it possible for me to read Aragon in 1942 and maintain my faith in France, to recognise with Andre Labarthe *une jeunesse qui commence à germer, une annonciation*. Latin occupied only one year, pleasantly enough, without any of Churchill's reservations about addressing a table. It was not lack of enthusiasm which cut short my study of Latin, but the choice offered at the end of that year of continuing Latin or starting German. I couldn't resist the opportunity of breaking into the world of Goethe and of authors still unborn whom I would live to translate. It turned out to be the best of both worlds, when I had to come back to Latin before entering the seminary. Unfortunately, I never really came to grips with the Latin classics, but mastered enough grammar and vocabulary to cope with Augustine and Aquinas when I came to study philosophy and theology.

I left school in 1923, mainly because my working class parents

could not afford to keep me there, still less to support me later at a university. I went to work as a junior clerk with the London and North Eastern Railway and was much happier there than I realised at the time, finding too little interest in the literary worlds I had barely entered but working with the friendliest of colleagues at every level and learning to share their fierce loyalties, even then more to the old Great Northern Line than to the very recent amalgamation. I continued to read widely, especially what was then called “modern” poetry, before T. S. Eliot had changed its course. W. B. Yeats re-awakened my interest in my father’s homeland and – for all his lofty paganism – in Ireland’s chief religion. At about the same time I began to take an interest, at a distance, in a dark-haired young beauty of my own age and similar ancestry. Yeats’ lines to Maud Gonne took on a new meaning for me.

An older loyalty now began to make its claims felt. At the beginning of my railway career, I had been asked for a clergyman’s reference. I had none and was accepted without it. When I began at last to think and read about religion, it was quickly obvious that the only allegiance for me was that which I had implicitly accepted at baptism. It was a very rational process. I had no doubt about Christ’s claims, but the New Testament also spoke of a Church which continued his work in which Peter clearly held the leadership. As the Church continued beyond Peter’s lifetime, it had to be under the leadership of his successors. I also read Newman and was amazed that he had hoped for so long in a *via media* and that his conversion had not been followed by many others. All this coincided with the arrival of a new curate – not a young priest, but a man of nearly fifty who had become too fond of whiskey in Ireland and was placed under the supervision of his stalwart and sober elder fellow-countryman in Keighley. He re-discovered our address and paid a call. Father told him that I was interested, but that none of us had attended for a long time. He immediately won my parents’ love and re-awakened their loyalty by his cheery “It’s never too late to mend”. He was the first of several priests I have known who were relieved of higher office because of their weakness for drink, but who excelled many of their more sober colleagues in winning back the lapsed.

I went to see the Canon in January 1925 (about the same time that I really got to know “Maud Gonne”). After his “I knew you’d come back”, with a great, sweeping gesture, he quickly set about instructing me and preparing me for my first communion in time to make it the fulfilment of my Easter duties. I found my co-religionists mostly closer to their Irish origins than Catholics generally are today, but slightly more remote than many of the clergy at the time. I was welcomed, not as a newcomer, but as a *revenant* and I moved at ease among kind, self-confident people aware that,

among the various Christian sects, they were the right sect. But other friends who had been at school or worked with me, helped me to retain a balanced view of a humanity still untouched by the Church's message. Soon after I returned, one of them who had become a journalist attended with me a triumphalist meeting in Bradford, addressed by G. K. Chesterton. My friend complained of the way in which Chesterton listed a number of great contemporaries, successful in fields which had little or nothing to do with religion, adding in each case: "That man is a Catholic".

Another twelve months passed. I was now more at ease in the Church, attending daily Mass, not because I was particularly devout, but simply because it was so obvious that mere Sunday attendance represented only a minimal participation in the Church's life. But I did not join the "men's confraternity", pledged to go to confession and – as a distinctive group – to receive Holy Communion once a month. Neither then nor later did I ever feel any desire to join any society within the larger society of the Church as a whole. Perhaps the Saint Vincent de Paul Society with its unfussy, dedicated care for the poor of the parish could have attracted me, but Canon Russell tolerated no lay organisation to share in the pastoral work – even in the field of material welfare – of "his" parish. I was still a little out of place as a railway clerk and – apart from an immense enthusiasm for the theatre, both as playgoer and as amateur actor – I was not particularly interested in the spare time activities of most young men of my age. And, in addition to my enduring love of literature, I was beginning to look more deeply into the implications of my renewed faith and to wonder whether I ought to look for an opportunity to pass on to others something of the grandeur of the message I had been given.

At Easter 1926 I consulted the Canon. He welcomed my interest, did not rush me, but tried to arrange an interview with the Bishop. This did not take place for one reason or another, but the Canon was a power in the diocese. He assured me: "The Bishop trusts me." Arrangements were made for my admission to the seminary, Ushaw College, near Durham, the following September. I revised my Latin in spare time under the guidance of the Latin teacher at my former school and continued my work in the railway office. Among other things I was hastily recruited into the Railway Clerks' Association, so that I could take part in the General Strike in May that year.

## II

The day of departure for Ushaw came. Other students from Keighley came to the station accompanied by parents, brothers and sisters. My parents were not there. Parting on the platform, in front of such an audience, would have been too painful. Perhaps I already belonged to what Wolfgang Borchert was later to describe

as a "generation without farewell".

We steal away from it like thieves, because we fear the cry  
of our hearts.

I had also assimilated Max Beerbohm's warning on the wretchedness of seeing people off and the impossibility of correctly timing the last goodbye: "The tension is such that we only long for the guard to blow his whistle and put an end to the farce".

En route we were joined by three older seminarists, already in black frock coats and Roman collars. They were pleasant and friendly enough, but the isolation of the clerical caste became apparent as we arrived in Durham and they left us to join others similarly attired and forbidden further communication with their juniors until the end of term. As we went into supper (cocoa and slices of bread cut very thick to make the most of the small slabs of butter), I was less worried by the meagre fare than by the determined effort to preserve our immaturity. I was temporarily placed in "Big Lads", the final two years of more or less humanistic studies before the six years of philosophy and theology. After a week's retreat, an unfamiliar and somewhat grim experience under the guidance of Father Jagger S.J. but borne willingly enough as part of my training for the priesthood, I expected at any rate to start studies with the rest. But this was not to be. I had to be initiated into the spirit, the customs, the geography and the surroundings of the college for three "play days" under the guidance of two tried and trusted young men who had survived five to six years of what was then beginning to seem like a mixture of public school and penitentiary. And even public school finished at the age of eighteen: ours continued until we were twenty-four, with no real contact with the outer world and permission to walk beyond the grounds granted to the very end only if we went out at least in twos. It was not a question of being segregated only from girls and women; there was no possibility of learning to grow up through conflicts and friendships with all kinds of contemporaries and through learning from them something about other fields of study.

In the end I only had to do one year of "Big Lads" before moving on to philosophy. It was a mixed experience. Obviously prayer was rightly given primary importance, but our initiation was not very helpful. Edward Towers, then professor of dogmatic theology, with a high-pitched squeaky voice, whom I discovered later to be a most helpful spiritual guide and who could quickly win over a congregation when he warmed to his theme in a powerful sermon, gave us a brief and not very enlightening talk on the different methods of meditation. Otherwise, we were given the impression that prayer was a grim business, any joy in it was fleeting and could be deceptive. Among the more secular subjects, the treat-



ment of English and French was utterly disastrous. We had to listen to the professor reading aloud the whole of "King Lear", often in tears, but rousing our laughter with his "Rumble thy bellyful". For our further amusement he also made frequent references to "Kelley and Sheats". The professor of French was more restrained, but also less enthusiastic. Having studied theology in a French seminary even more rigorous than Ushaw, he was held back from the pastoral work for which he had been ordained and expected to impart to us a knowledge of the language and literature sufficient to help us to pass as educated men as well as devout pastors of souls. Latin was treated with greater respect by men who had completed long years of classical studies in the seminary and followed this up by a course at one of the older universities, often gaining an honours degree with quite outstanding success. My limited range of reading made Virgil's *Bucolics* and *Georgics* more difficult than they might otherwise have been, but in Latin prose I was able to compete with anyone in the class. It was decided that I had reached Ushaw too late to begin the study of Greek, so I was left to my own devices during classes in that subject. I spent the time teaching myself New Testament Greek, reading carefully John's Gospel and casting an occasional wistful glance at majestic lines produced by the great pagans. I know how much of Rilke I should miss if I were dependent on translations and it hurts to know that for me the surge and thunder of the *Odyssey* will remain forever distant.

I came to Logic on equal terms with the rest, recited Barbara Celarent with the best of them and won second prize at the end of the year. The professor was thorough and efficient, but made it clear that he had accepted the task with the utmost reluctance, having been sent immediately after ordination to spend three years in Rome taking a Ph.D. and so prevented from undertaking the pastoral work for which he had hoped. Like the rest of the professors, he had to take his turn at singing High Mass on Sundays, a duty he found particularly embarrassing, being quite incapable of singing in tune although his name was John McCormack. In Scripture history too, I was successful, under the guidance of Charles Corbishley, who had been prevented from completing his studies in Bonn because of the outbreak of war in 1914 but wore very lightly and wittily a considerable knowledge of the Bible and of the most up-to-date work on Scripture. He spoke beautiful German.

The next two years, devoted mainly to the study of philosophy, also included an outline of science, Church history and Scripture Introduction, all of which seemed to most of my fellow-students to be rather irrelevant to their future work. During the first year, the President himself, "Bob" Brown, attempted to teach

Church History — progressing uneasily from Pope Honorius III to the eve of the Reformation — to an inattentive and occasionally noisy audience. On Saturday mornings he also attempted to guide our spiritual life and was taken even less seriously as he repeated for the nth time: *Numquam solus cum sola*. Not all our advisers were as crude as this and at a later stage a spiritual director was appointed, to assist individuals and to lecture on the wider issues of priestly life. But there was a curious contradiction between the efforts of most of the professors to stimulate our minds and the general impression given that intellectual attainments were unimportant or even dangerous and that the main test of a vocation to the priesthood was the capacity to live without women. Seeing that a number of students even at twenty or over were a little uncertain of the facts of life and that our segregation from society generally did little to help our emotional development, we were ill-equipped to make a mature decision on this vital issue. Nowadays celibacy is said to be important as “eschatological witness”. In those days we never heard of anything like this — not even when we came to the treatise on *The Last Things* in our theology course.

Having made up my mind to become a priest, I had made up my mind also to accept celibacy. But I had to come to terms with it over the course of the years in the seminary. After one holiday, when I had enjoyed the company of lay-people of my own age and of both sexes, I found Ushaw more than ever cold and bleak. There had been no question of an attachment to any particular girl or of any sort of “emotional involvement”. But for a few weeks I had been with people whom I could love, with whom I could be at ease, could see women as persons who could love me as they loved their brothers and indeed other men and boys, without being determined either to entice me into marriage or tempt me to unchastity. All this was simply the world I had known before entering the seminary, but now it had to be faced with an awareness of its limitations and demanded a discriminating response. Unfortunately, the years between had equipped us only to endure grimly a life without friendships and to beware of emotion. It is true that we were sometimes advised to find our friends among our fellow-priests, but the stern condemnation of “special friendships” made it more or less impossible to build up personal relationships even in the seminary. Outside it was a world of uncertain, even dangerous emotions — one might get hurt — and safety lay only in a purely rational decision: survival as a priest depended on keeping one’s distance.

Certainly intellectual occupation compensated for many of the drawbacks of the seminary. In the first year of philosophy and the first year of theology, William Godfrey — later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster — lectured somewhat monotonously, keeping very



close to Denzinger and the letter of St Thomas, but helped me to find a delight in the great philosophical problems and in faith's continual search for greater understanding of divine mysteries which has sustained me in many a dark hour and still makes it possible to endure serenely the frustrations of old age.

The second year of philosophy was taken over by Robert Meagher and later also my last three years of dogmatic theology, because William Godfrey was first moved up to theology and then sent to Rome as Rector of the English College. Bob Meagher was a friendly person, a brilliant classical scholar who happened to have studied in Rome and taken there the Ph.D. and D.D. which scarcely anyone failed in those days. He was very successful at translating the Latin lectures given by his Roman professors, but not a profound thinker. He spread out our study of psychology over six months, mainly by spending up to half-an-hour of each lecture reading aloud letters to the *Morning Post* composed by old ladies on the marvellous intelligence of their pet dogs. After a rapid survey of the main theses in natural theology, he found there was no time left for ethics at all, but assured us that we would cover the same ground much more thoroughly when we came to the study of moral theology. Our second year of dogmatic theology happened to be on *De Revelatione* and *De Ecclesia* (or Apologetics), now usually treated separately as an introduction to theology as a whole. Here too, he made the most of his classical knowledge and his acquaintance with Roman scandals to prove conclusively over several weeks the thesis – normally covered in one lecture – that revelation of the natural moral truths is necessary if they are to be adequately understood by man in his present state. For the rest of the course, I took such notes as seemed useful in class and then read the best theologians available.

And here let it be said at once that there *were* good theologians available. Billot might be accused of decking out his metaphysical speculations with the odd quotation from Scripture or the Fathers, but he wrote with real love of his subject in brilliant and eminently readable Latin, often with deeper insights than many of his contemporaries. He made a real breakthrough in eucharistic theology by his insistence that the Mass as sacrament was quite unique and could not be treated merely as one species under the genus sacrifice. Dominicans like de Poulpique and Gardeil treated the subject of revelation and the act of faith at a greater depth and with far greater subtlety than Garrigou-Lagrange. Sheed and Ward in England had already translated Karl Adam's book on the *Nature of Catholicism* and Léonce de Grandmaison S.J. on the claims of Christ. Père Prat's *Theology of St Paul* – still mentioned with respect by the best Protestant exegetes – had appeared in French in 1913 and was published in English by Burns and Oates (who also

published Sertillanges' excellent book on *The Church*) before I entered the seminary. Charles Corbishley's lectures on the gospels often sounded rather quaint, but they were lightened by wit (as on the curious nocturnal habits of Palestinian cocks) and drew my attention to Lagrange's commentaries, which I promptly bought and read.

Moral theology under Louvain trained William (Billy) Dunne was taken very seriously. Older men pointed out that this was of the greatest practical importance, because it was so necessary when hearing confessions. Certainly our teacher was utterly devoted and very thorough, but it was hard to see how six months on the varieties of sins against justice, the detailed analysis of ways of breaking the sixth commandment, still more many weeks of dictation on almost all indulgences granted by the Church, could be very relevant to the problems of regular Saturday night penitents or even to the crude but obvious failings of the great sinners. Billy Dunne also explained for the sake of the innocents among us, not without embarrassment, just how the bodily parts were engaged in the act of intercourse. But – to his eternal credit – he did point out that quite a lot of married people were not at it every night. In over forty years of hearing confessions under very diverse conditions and in more than one language, I have faced many a psychological problem, but no theological problem requiring more than minimal knowledge. Here too, however, Arthur Vermeersch S.J. achieved a breakthrough by his positive treatment in *De Castitate* of the virtue as such instead of merely the offences against it.

Among other things, in our final year, we studied Billy Dunne's little book on the ritual, which he corrected in so much detail that a new edition appeared almost every year. We also practised saying Mass, learned the Canon by heart and tried to perform the gestures with the anonymous exactitude of actors in a Japanese "No" play. Bishop Cowgill decided that the needs of the diocese were urgent and called the three Leeds students away from further studies by the end of May 1933.

There had to be a retreat before ordination and for this we went to Sicklinghall, an OMI Retreat House, near Harrogate, but only accessible by public transport twice a week. The superior there told us that we had had enough spirituality in the seminary and he would only talk about practical things. One day he came with a gleam in his eye to announce that Providence had given us a very practical example. One of the nuns had just died, growing cold as he administered Extreme Unction with the short form. Later we helped to carry the body down the steep winding stairs of the convent. As Reverend Mother offered us sherry and other drinks, the lay brother said it was a truly Irish gesture and asked if we were going to have a wake.

I have been back to Ushaw only once, on my way to preach in a Newcastle church. I was received with generous hospitality and in a most friendly spirit. It was long before Vatican II, but some reforms had been introduced and anyway, at its worst Ushaw always had on its staff men of culture, open-minded and quick to consider the interests of their guests. But I could never have faced a "Grand Week", when the men of my own year would turn up *en masse* and remind me too vividly of that September day in 1926 when I stood outside those grim walls and decided – like Jacob for Rachel – that I must endure the seven years for the sake of the vocation which I hoped I had found.

## The Funeral as a Work of Art

Roger Grainger

In the attempt to give order to a diffuse and contradictory experience each individual is an artist, as he or she proposes an ideal solution for a particular difficulty and directs every effort towards achieving the closest practicable approximation to such a solution. Looked at in this way, it might be said that the action of the human mind is inevitably directly towards a synthesis of content and form. Society itself – the arrangements men make in order to live together in mutual security and provide for their well-being in organised interchange – could be considered to be a work of functional art, designed to solve problems and overcome difficulties encountered in living.

The greatest difficulty, the most intractable problem which faces mankind is the problem of death. To say that we are deeply pre-occupied with the fact of our own mortality is not to say, of course, that death occupies the forefront of our conscious awareness all the time. On the contrary, our awareness of the certainty of our eventual death and the accompanying knowledge of the vulnerability of our bodies, a vulnerability which may at any time prove fatal, forms a kind of unacknowledged background to all our thinking, a mental and emotional *sitz-im-leben* which has lost all precise definition because of its sheer familiarity as an idea. In fact, we might turn inside out the arguments of the common language philosophers, who hold that death cannot be thought about because it has never been experienced as a fact of life, by saying, with Heidegger that we cannot contemplate our own mortality because we are unable to distinguish the thought of death from all our other judgments and attitudes, which can only exist as humanly meaningful