

SURVEY OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
IN CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION TEXTBOOKS

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Sister Margaret Anne O'Shaughnessy was born in Brockville, Ontario, 1922. She obtained her B.A. from the University of Ottawa in 1956, and her B.Ed. from Toronto University in 1957.

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INTRODUCTION

Our century is witnessing a new approach to Christian catechetics. This catechetical renewal is prompted by the need of our times as well as by the new pedagogical and theological insights of contemporary scholars. In it is seen the dynamic work of the Spirit of God in a living Church which is continually growing and developing. Biblical, liturgical and theological renewals have accompanied and aided this catechetical development. Closely related to it, is the concept of God Our Father; nearly every description of the new catechetics will contain some mention of God the Father. This almost constant allusion to God the Father has prompted the present inquiry.

Catechetics in every age aims to communicate the eternal Christian message to God's people and to evoke from them a joyous response in living faith. Our age, too, must strive to impart the essential message of Christ in a way that is meaningful to people today. This is aggiornamento, the up-dating of our presentation of the unchanging Christian message. At the opening of Vatican II Pope John made a universal plea:

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. . . it is necessary . . . that the Church should never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers. But at the same time she must look to the present.¹

His successor, Pope Paul, citing this message recalls "the perennial vitality of the Church, her continuous awareness of ability to study the signs of the times and her constantly youthful agility in 'scrutinizing it all carefully and retaining only what is good' (1 Thess. 5:21) always and everywhere."²

Several decades before Vatican II the forces of renewal were already at work. Catechists, aware of the problem that was theirs, were searching for a solution. One of the leading catechists, Father Hofinger, reviewed the situation:

An uncompromising Christian life in the midst of a secularized society has become more difficult. Since it is no longer protected by powerful tradition, it calls for deep convictions and dynamic motives in each individual Christian.³

1 John XXIII, "Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council," in Documents of Vatican II, trans. from the Latin, ed. W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 714.

2 Paul VI, His Church: Ecclesiam Suam, Encyclical Letter, Vatican Translation, St. Paul Edition, Boston, Mass., Daughters of St. Paul, 1964, p. 26.

3 Johannes Hofinger, "Modern Catechetics," in The Good News Yesterday and Today, ed. Josef Andreas Jungmann, New York, Sadlier, 1962, p. 172.

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The present-day catechist has a problem quite different from that of earlier times. Other factors, too, have added to the difficulty of the task. Bishop Carter alludes to them in this remark: "In a world where living has become so complicated with technology, the need for simplicity is becoming the characteristic need of the Church."⁴ Moderns demand a deeper understanding in order to acquire a total view of religion. This same idea is expressed by Father Jungmann of Innsbruck, one of the inspirers of the catechetical renewal:

Today religious teaching must lead the faithful to a vital understanding of the content of faith itself that they may interiorly grasp it and thus grow to spiritual maturity and proper independence in religious life.⁵

This catechetical revival favours a return to concepts in religious instruction which prevailed in the early Christian community. During the centuries, the refutation of heresies and the defence of doctrine may have somewhat dissected the deposit of faith, obscuring its primary message. If catechists of the twentieth century are to get back to the true message, emphasis

⁴ G. Emmet Carter, The Modern Challenge to Religious Education, New York, Sadlier, 1961, p. x.

⁵ Josef Andreas Jungmann, The Good News-Yesterday and Today, trans. and ed. by William A. Huesman, New York, Sadlier, 1962, p. 7.

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must be placed on the essentials. Father Jungmann has expressed it this way:

What is needed is not a knowledge of "the many" but of "the one"—the unity that lies behind "the many" the all-embracing plan of God which with its light and strength provides an answer to the needs of man today.⁶

At the dawn of this century a significant effort was made to improve the method of teaching religion. This was the "Catechetical Movement" which arose almost simultaneously in Munich and Vienna around 1900.⁷ Jungmann gives the following account of its valuable contribution:

What the movement had aimed at was an improved method of catechesis, through which the subject matter of catechesis should not only be imprinted on the child's memory but also be grasped by the understanding. The catechist was warned not to begin with the catechism text and then to explain it, question by question, but he was advised to use as his starting point an example which appealed to the children and from it to develop the text of the catechism.⁸

This text-explanatory method was replaced by the text-developing method which was called the Munich Method or the Psychology Method.⁹

6 Ibid., p. 8.

7 Johannes Andreas Jungmann, Handing of the Faith, New York, Herder and Herder, 1959, p. 32.

8 Ibid., p. 33.

9 Johannes Hofinger, ed., Teaching All Nations, New York, Herder and Herder, 1961, p. 12.

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Both of these methods were aided by studies in educational psychology current at this time.

By the time of the catechetical Congress held in Vienna in 1912, the first objective in catechetical renewal had been reached. Here "the relevant suggestions received their definite formulation."¹⁰ However the Catechetical Movement continued even after World War I. It became evident that the more the religious milieu broke down, the more it became necessary to instill personal conviction in the pupils.

To accomplish this, the newer methods used in teaching secular subjects were applied to the teaching of religion. Catechists endeavoured to make the teaching of religion more active by applying Dewey's principle "to learn by doing."

This involved a teaching method based on the knowledge that children learn not only by hearing, but also by doing; that they are formed not only by words, but also by life itself.¹¹

More emphasis, at this stage, was placed on the formative work of catechesis; in this the liturgy played a role.

The whole question of method was settled at a second catechetical congress, held at Munich, in 1928.

10 Josef Andreas Jungmann, op. cit., p. 33.

11 Ibid., p. 33.

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This brought to an end the first phase of the catechetical renewal.

At last the stage was set for the second and more important phase—an improvement in the doctrinal content itself. For this much credit was given to Father Jungmann whose book The Good Tidings and Our Profession of Faith, published in 1936, forcefully stated the problem and proposed a solution. Foremost was his proposal for "a more dynamic presentation of the Christian message."¹² In his thinking, this involved a shift of emphasis from method to content.

The message, or kerygma as it came to be known, is that central mystery which tells of the loving call of the Father for us to share in the divine life through Jesus Christ. It emphasizes the key events of our Redemption and presents them as Glad Tidings. It is a joyous message expressing the inner nature and worth of Christianity. It is the core of the good news of the gospel. Father Hofinger summarizes the kerygma thus:

¹² Josef A. Jungmann, The Good News—Yesterday and Today, trans. and ed. by William A. Huesman, with essays by Johannes Hofinger, New York, Sadlier, 1962, p. 172.

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It consists in the incomparable good news of the eternal love of God, Who, through His only-begotten Son, has called us to Himself and enables us to reach our true home.¹³

Since the time of the early Church this had been the guiding message of apostolic teaching. St. Peter in his first sermon (Acts 2) concentrated on the heart of the message. As to St. Paul, his catechesis "always showed us Christ as the great Gift of the Father's love, proclaiming how he invites us to share in the life and glory of His only-begotten Son."¹⁴

At the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics held at Eichstätt, Germany, July 21-28, 1960, this theme was accepted as the basic principle of modern catechetics. It was formulated in these words:

Our religion is an organic unit, in which we must discern a fundamental core which we have to proclaim emphatically (kerysso—to proclaim). This core is the message of Christ, "the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations but now is manifested to his saints" (Cor. 1:26). Our way back to the Father is in union with Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit. All the other truths of our religion have to be explained from this standpoint and with this perspective. What we have to teach is the gospel—the good news that Christ is among us.¹⁵

13 Johannes Hofinger, The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine, Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame, 1962, p. 6.

14 G. Emmett Carter, op. cit., p. 40.

15 Johannes Hofinger, ed., "Modern Catechetical Renewal and the Missions," in Teaching All Nations, trans. by C. Howell, New York, Herder and Herder, 1960, p. 13.

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God is not merely "an idea or a remote and silent being, but a living and personal God, the Almighty Creator and eternal Father."¹⁶ In this perspective the Old Testament is a salvation history leading up to the climactic act of Christ. From this time on, men are saved by Christ and in Christ. It looks to the second coming of Christ as the consummation of salvation history. In the whole story we see the action of "a Father all-powerful and all-kind who led and protected the children of Israel as a father watches over his family, who sent His Son Jesus to redeem us, and who continues, in His Church and through His Spirit, to be present among us."¹⁷

This drama is kept alive for us by the reading of Sacred Scripture and by participation in the Liturgy. Theologians today emphasize the "living" word of Scriptures and the personal encounter with Christ in the Liturgy. Thus we find a biblical-liturgical orientation in contemporary catechetics.

This loving call of the Father invites a response of faith. The answer is the filial response of a child to his loving father. Father Hofinger states:

¹⁶ Johannes Hofinger, The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine, p. 266.

¹⁷ Pierre Ranwez, "General Tendencies in Contemporary Catechetics," in Shaping the Christian Message, New York, Macmillan, 1959, p. 117.

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The ideal teaching of Christian truth must result above all in grateful recognition of these incomparable gifts that we have received from our loving Father through Christ: the divine life to which we are reborn in Baptism, which increases and grows strong in us by means of the sacraments; membership in the community of the Church; and the pledge of eternal happiness to which we look forward in hope.¹⁸

The Eichstätt Study Week pointed out this core idea in modern catechetics; it also worked out details for presenting it, even including suggestions about textbooks. One of these concerns our present topic.

The lessons in the book should have an organic unity. Catechetical books should not present the content of faith as a series of disconnected units, but as an organic whole, as an unfolding of God's great plan of salvation with Jesus Christ as its heart and centre.¹⁹

Further suggestions explain how the topic of the lessons "should stress the message of salvation, not mere moral obligations."²⁰ These textbooks must also be "based on sound psychological principles."²¹ These recommendations have left us with a problem. How are they to be carried out in High School religion courses?

18 Johannes Hofinger, op. cit., p. 5.

19 Johannes Hofinger, "Some Suggestions for Those Compiling Textbooks of Religious Instruction," in Teaching All Nations, ed. Hofinger, trans. by C. Howell, New York, Herder and Herder, 1960, p. 406.

20 Ibid., p. 407.

21 Ibid., p. 408.

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Out of the rich concept of the Message of Salvation this essay will point out the idea of God as our Father. Without shifting the emphasis from Christ, the centre of the message, it will look to the Father the origin of our relationship with Christ. The theme, God Our Father, will be sought for in high school religion textbooks published since nineteen sixty. The result of this survey will possibly suggest a better course for the future.

Preliminary to this, the current emphasis on the concept of God our Father will be reviewed. Then theology will be consulted for a deeper and clearer understanding of God's relationship to us as Father and our privileged kinship with Him as adopted children. Finally the essay will submit conclusions concerning the possible use of the theme God Our Father in future textbooks.

The topic for the present dissertation grew out of personal interest in teaching and in theology. The teaching of religion to adolescents today has become a challenge. A solution to the problems and needs of these students was seen, dimly at first, to be contained in the notion of the Fatherhood of God. Research into the fields of catechetics and theology has made this supposition a conviction. The study of the theme has proved to be a valuable help to the writer in the apostolate of teaching

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religion to high school students and in the writer's own approach to God in the spiritual life.

CHAPTER I

CURRENT EMPHASIS ON THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Although the concept of the Fatherhood of God is not new, a current emphasis on it is noteworthy. Recent studies in the field of catechetics have resituated it. The liturgical renewal of our times has reminded us anew of the Father's place in our worship. Vatican Council II has consciously or unconsciously stressed the idea of God our Father. Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI have pointed to our membership in the Family of God and lovingly related all mankind to our common Father. Finally, our cold, impersonal world is searching longingly for the brotherhood of man—a relationship made possible only by an understanding of the Fatherhood of God. Modern man cries out for a personal relationship to his fellow man and to a personal God—God Who is a Father. "The drive for personalism is everywhere apparent today. It is a reaction against the impersonalism of our age."¹ Today man is becoming more conscious of God's Fatherhood.

We will examine each of these in turn in order to acquaint ourselves with this recent emphasis on our relationship to God which concerns this present thesis.

¹ Alfred McBride, Catechetics: A Theology of Proclamation, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1966, p. 14.

1. Contemporary Catechetics.

Scanning the field of catechetics in general, we find many contemporary authorities emphasizing the place of the Father in religious instruction. Father Alfred McBride, in his book Catechetics writes:

Religious realities arrange themselves in a hierarchy at the summit of which is the Father. If we have been remiss in situating the Father properly, we must not be so now. He is fundamental to our catechetical work, for it is to the Father that we are sending the child.²

This author insists that the Old Testament is a gradual unfolding of the mystery of God Our Father. The basic revelation in all its events is the Father's intention to save. Current emphasis on this as salvation history also makes this point clear. In the New Testament, Jesus Himself is the revelation of the Father.

The doctrine of the Father, the same writer continues, is one of the principal searchlights that help the Church know the spectrum of the Christian mystery. Speaking of the Church, he says:

² Ibid., p. 16.

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God is the Father of the members of the Church because He is the Father of Jesus. Like Christ, the Church must reproduce the activity of the Father, becoming as perfect as He is. The Father and Jesus confer the Holy Spirit upon the Church, which must mediate God to the world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).³

He points out that to enter the Church is to assume a filial relationship to the Father. He makes reference to the term "child" used by Christ in the New Testament (Lk. 10:21). The name "brother" is significant. He remarks that in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans the word "brother" is used for Jews twelve times and for Christians one hundred and seventy-four times.

Father Nebreda, catechist and missionary in Japan, lays stress on this theme. First he speaks about the necessity of simplifying the teachings of Christianity: "We must cut away what is accidental to our faith and concentrate on its essentials—the very core."⁴

This simple core, he maintains, is the plan of a Person—God the Father Who in Christ through the Spirit has called us to share his own life. He remarks that his students in Japan were happy to learn that God was a father. This concept, however, must be understood

3 Ibid., p. 22.

4 Alfonso m. Nebreda, Kerygma in Crisis, Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1965, p. 23.

correctly:

God is Father, not in a paternalistic or grandfatherly way, treating the child almost as a kind of pet. He is a real father who in His Son, through his Spirit invites us to live his own life.⁵

To prove his statement, he quotes the words of St. John: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are" (Jn. 3:1). Thus, he says:

Christianity is simple. It is a beautiful circle of love coming from God to man and returning from man to God with Christ as its centre.⁶

In this perspective, then, he sees the sacraments as what God did and does for us in Christ. The Commandments become a way to express our love for our Father. Prayer is a communion of love. Father Nebreda concludes: "When we think of God, we must think of him as Father . . . unless we stress this, nothing is really clear."⁷

Marcel Van Caster, of Lumen Vitae Centre for Higher Catechetical Studies in Brussels, insists that the task of catechesis is to induce a conscious relationship with God. He remarks:

5 Ibid., p. 25.

6 Ibid., p. 27.

7 Ibid., p. 133.

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Catechesis has the task of initiation into the mystery of God. . . . It is an initiation that is an invitation to share actively in the activities of Jesus Christ in his Church, especially that of knowing the Father.⁸

He stresses that this implies a person-to-person communication; it is a matter of God's invitation and man's response. He points out:

We [the catechists] should show in every lesson, according to the subject matter treated, how God enters into relation with those who hear his word and how they "believe" or refuse to believe.⁹

The Father here takes the initiative, he explains, in Jesus Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the "witness who came from the Father bringing God's invitation to men."¹⁰ Again he recalls: "Salvation consists in our participation in the life of Christ. Through the action of the Holy Spirit we become children of the Father in and with the Son."¹¹

In order to awaken a consciousness of the love of God in children, Father Van Caster suggests that catechists use the image of a father's love as a starting point. They must then lead the child beyond—to the love of our

8 Marcel Van Caster, The Structure of Catechetics, New York, Herder and Herder, 1965, p. 14.

9 Ibid., p. 115.

10 Ibid., p. 35.

11 Ibid., p. 38.

Father in heaven. "A child can at a very early age 'start' to commit himself to a kind of love which is essentially one of 'mystery'."¹²

He stresses the importance in Christian living of 'openness' to each other; this presupposes a personal relationship with God. He comments: "Each creature in existence has a degree of perfection corresponding to the richness of his relationship to God."¹³

In general it can be said that Father Van Caster, while not stressing directly the notion of the Fatherhood of God, has contributed much to the current concept of this thought by his insistence on an 'interpersonal' relationship with God.

Even more emphasis is given to this idea of the Fatherhood of God in a recent book produced by the Higher Institute of Catechetics of Nijmegen, Holland. When presenting the characteristics of our age it mentions the growing unity which man experiences. First it is found in man himself, between soul and body; then in the world around him; then with his fellow-men and finally with God. Christian charity today wants to break down all walls of

¹² Marcel Van Caster, Themes of Catechesis, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966, p. 178.

¹³ Marcel Van Caster, The Structure of Catechetics, p. 129.

separation. Arising perhaps from the insecurity of our age, there is a greater sense of human fellowship. "All men are essentially equal in value, as children of one common Father."¹⁴

Also stressed in the same book is the necessity of giving religious instruction a more personalistic orientation: "Formerly there was a great stress on knowing doctrine and observing commandments and precepts; now there is a greater stress upon a more personal life of relationship with Christ and through him with the Heavenly Father."¹⁵

Those catechized are to be taught not God in general, but God as Father:

It is for this purpose that catechetics wants to illuminate their life and show it as a salvific activity of God, in order thereby to bring them face to face with God who holds their whole life in His hand. Here it is not a question of God in general but of the Father towards whom they are on their way and with respect to whom their heart is restless until it rests in Him. It is concerned with the Son, their fellow-man who shows them how to be a man and so to come to the Father. It is a question of the Holy Spirit, in whom they cry with a heart full of desire, "Abba, Father", the Spirit by whom they are one with Christ in faith and are solidary with all men who place their hope in Him.¹⁶

14 The Higher Institute of Catechetics of Nijmegen Holland, Fundamentals and Programs of a New Catechesis, Pittsburgh, Pa., Duquesne University Press, 1966, p. 29.

15 Ibid., p. 28.

16 Ibid., p. 130.

Throughout the whole book there rings one message: catechists must stress that we are on our way with Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit. "Our own life, too, is an ascent to the Father, but it is this only insofar as it is one with that of Christ."¹⁷

Typical of the Nijmegen book is this over-all picture of salvation; here too the Fatherhood of God is central:

For Jesus has saved us by accepting the salvific action of the Father in His regard, that is, He has made it possible for all of us to obtain access to communion with the Father. For the communion of the Man Jesus with the Father is rooted in His communion with the Father as God the Son. Jesus is thus the only man who could open that gate for us. It is only through Him, who is always with the Father, that we have access to the Father. That is why Jesus not only makes the salvation of communion-with-God possible for us, but it is also through Him that the Father fulfills that salvation in us — according to the measure of our acceptance. God's plan of salvation aims at bringing the universe and mankind together under one Head in Christ (Eph. 1:1) and thus leading us to a community of love with Himself.¹⁸

Guided by the suggestions and urgings of the leaders in the catechetical renewal, progress has been made in improving religious instruction in elementary school programs and texts. Thus, in the United States

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

the On Our Way Series of Maria de la Cruz¹⁹ presents the theme "The Fatherhood of God." The idea that we are on our way with Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father is the key message throughout. Grade One book begins with the words: "God is my Father. God gives me many things." Throughout the series evidence of this theme is found in such chapter headings as "Toward God Our Father," "The Power of Our Father," "Back to the Heavenly Father," "The Kingdom of Our Father," "One Family in Christ" and "The Law of our Father."

A more recent textbook series, published in Canada, The Canadian Catechism,²⁰ the first book of which is titled Come to the Father, aims at developing in the child a filial relationship towards his Heavenly Father, and a fraternal relationship towards Christ his Brother and towards his fellowmen as brothers. In outlining the purpose of the course for children, the textbook states that it is "to help them enter a personal relationship with the triune God by initiating them into the fundamental

19 Maria de la Cruz, On Our Way Series, 8 vols. New York, Sadlier, 1957. For the individual titles, see the Bibliography.

20 Reginal Marsolais et al., The Canadian Catechism, Grade 1, Come to the Father, trans. from the French, Toronto, Paulist Press, 1966, 127 p.

Grade 2, Celebrating God's Mighty Deeds, to be published in April, 1967.

movement of Christian life: to go to the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit."²¹

This new catechism seeks to bring the child to a knowledge of "the three divine Persons through their works: "the Father who gives us all good things and to whom we are going; the Son who tells us about the Father and leads us to the Father; the Holy Spirit who teaches us to pray and love like Jesus as children of the Father."²² Emphasis is placed on what God does rather than on what God is. For example: God the Father gives us His Son; Jesus reveals his Father to us; the Holy Spirit helps us understand the words of Jesus. In this way, the child acquires a growing awareness of a personal call to a loving relationship with God his Father.

As an aid to reaching this goal, however, the teacher makes use of the child's experience to help him discover the signs of God in his life. For example, each day the child experiences his parent's love and tenderness. (In unusual circumstances this may be lacking, in which case it may be found in some kind friend or relative.) From this the teacher helps the child discover the Father's love surrounding him at each moment.

21 The Canadian Catechism, Teacher's Manual, p. 9.

22 Ibid., p. 14.

Different facets of his relationship to God are discovered. The child comes to know that:

God my Father keeps me alive, makes me
capable of thinking and loving.

He wants me to live with Him always. He
invites me into his home.

He looks upon me with love.

He calls me in silence. He asks me to love
him.

He gives me the Holy Spirit to help me
answer him.

He invites me to work with him.²³

The Person of Jesus is presented to the child as the Son of God, the Messenger of the Father and the Saviour. Jesus came into the world for all men. He is the joy of his Father because he always does what the Father wants. He has returned to the Father but will come back to us.

The Holy Spirit is presented as the one sent by God the Father and His Son, Jesus; He helps the child imitate Jesus. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in love.

A year's experiment was conducted with this text. Catechetical authorities, parents, and teachers found the results eminently gratifying. The tests taken with the pupils at the end of the year indicated why.

²³ Ibid., p. 19.

The syllabus really seems to have fulfilled our hopes with the majority of the children, in being a path towards God, a spiritual initiation, something that favours spiritual growth, that is the development of their theological life, their life of personal relations with the three Divine Persons.²⁴

While at present only the Grade One book has been published in English, the first three books have been available in French.²⁵ Work is being done to continue the series for the other grades, including the High School.

From what precedes, it can be seen that there is a current emphasis on the Fatherhood of God in the teaching of catechetics today. The elementary school textbooks surveyed agree in having the Christian message centered on the Father. It begins with the Father who loves us; it brings all back to the Father. It is focused on Christ as the Way. He is the means for bringing all back to the Father. Our response to the call is one of children, calling God Abba (Father), and obeying His commandments through love. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help us become true sons of God.²⁶

²⁴ L'Equipe Catéchétique, "Viens vers le Père," in Lumen Vitae, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 57.

²⁵ Intended for the first three grades, the titles are, respectively, Viens vers le Père, Célébrons ses merveilles, and Rassemblés dans l'amour. These are published in Montreal by the Office catéchétique provincial.

²⁶ For a similar summary, see Theodore Stone, ed., The Art of Teaching God's Message, Outline of Father Hofinger's Catechetical Conferences, Manilla, East Asian Pastoral Institute, 1963.

2. The Liturgical Renewal.

The work of catechetics in the Church is closely associated with the function of the liturgy. "Catechetics tells us about the gift which is Christ, liturgy actually gives us the Saviour . . . Catechetics is the servant of the Liturgy."²⁷ In a certain sense, however, liturgy "constitutes a natural and very human method of religious instruction, enabling the Christian to relive the great mysteries of his religion."²⁸ Nevertheless this is incidental to its primary function which is profoundly defined by Pope Pius XII in Mediator Dei as:

the public worship which our Redeemer, the head of the Church, offers to the heavenly Father and which the community of Christ's faithful pays to its Founder, and through him to the eternal Father; briefly it is the public worship of the body of Jesus Christ, head and members.²⁹

The liturgical renewal of our day has brought about, first, a deeper knowledge of the whole meaning of liturgical worship, culminating in Vatican II's

27 William Sherzer, "Liturgy and Catechetics: Inseparable Partners," in Pastoral Catechetics, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1964, p. 47.

28 Josef Blomjous, "Basic Links Between Liturgy and Catechetics," in Teaching All Nations, ed. Johannes Hofinger, New York, Herder and Herder, 1960, p. 223.

29 Pope Pius XII, Mediator Dei, in The Church: Papal Teachings, ed. The Benedictine Monks of Solesme, trans. Mother E. O'Gorman, Boston, Daughters of St. Paul, 1962, pp. 630-631.

Constitution on the Liturgy; secondly, a greater understanding of our supernatural brotherhood through dynamic communal worship and, finally, a fuller application of the liturgy to daily living through the message of the living word spoken more directly through the vernacular. All of these have directed attention more forcibly to God our Father. This essay will now examine this contemporary liturgical movement in view of this current emphasis.

It has been said that in the last few centuries liturgy, like catechetics, was influenced by the spirit of the times. This spirit, it is stated, sometimes allowed the glad awareness of membership in the living Body of Christ to be pushed in the background. Christ was often looked upon as God offended by our sins instead of "our Elder Brother who bore our sins and united us into God's family."³⁰ Emphasis was placed on man as a sinner. Grace was understood chiefly as actual grace, rather than as sanctifying grace—the sharing of God's life by his adopted sons."³¹ The children of God were living in terms of Old Testament times: God's Servants, rather than His sons.

30 Godfrey Diekmann, Come Let Us Worship, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962, p. 17.

31 Ibid., p. 18.

Instead of being characterized by a joyous awareness of being a holy people of God, living in Christ and with Christ, Christianity became predominately a moralism — a command to obey the Ten Commandments with the help of God.³²

This attitude naturally affected the worship of God in the liturgy. The Mass, it is said, came to be looked upon as a good work but there was little participation in it by the faithful. There was a reaction to this spirit, but because of the form that the Reformation took in the sixteenth century, the Catholic solution to the problem was delayed for centuries. The liturgical movement of our times has attempted to right all this.

The ferment began in Belgium in 1909.³³ It soon spread to other countries. It received an initial consecration through Pope Pius X who defined active participation in the liturgy as "the first and indispensable source of the Christian spirit."³⁴ In 1956 the movement became so international as to lead to the International Congress on Pastoral Liturgy which was held at Assisi-Rome.³⁵ The international Study Week on Missions and

32 Ibid., p. 18.

33 Josef A. Jungmann, Public Worship : A Survey, trans. by Clifford Howell, Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1957, p. 31.

34 Pius X.

35 Johannes Hofinger, ed., Liturgy and the Missions, the Nijmegen Papers, London, Burns & Oates, 1960, p. 1.

Liturgy, in September 1959, at Nijmegen and Uden, Holland, was an outgrowth of this Congress. At its conclusion a report was sent to the Sovereign Pontiff expressing the hope that "additional faculties and concessions"³⁶ be given to help the spiritual life of the missions.

Meanwhile the vast research of scholars made possible a series of reforms in line with the Church's deepest tradition. Speaking of this movement, Father Jungmann says: "Its aim is to make the people more familiar with the Liturgy, above all with the Mass. . . . The active participation of the faithful in the liturgy was the next objective."³⁷ Its main purpose, however, is to lead the faithful "to a deeper apprehension of worship. It is not only the mystery underlying the worship of the Church, but the mystery which enables us to worship the Father 'in Spirit and in truth'."³⁸

When Vatican Council II, then, turned to the liturgy, all the basic work had been done. No wonder that the first completed task of the Council was the Constitution on the Liturgy. It came into force on the sixteenth

36 Ibid., p. 288.

37 Josef A. Jungmann, op. cit., p. 31.

38 Louis Bouyer, The Liturgy Revised, Notre Dame, Indiana, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1964, p. 42.

of February, 1964. Its implementation is to a great extent a long-term programme.

Without going into detail on the different points of the Constitution, it can be noted how this document has made us more conscious that God is our Father.

First of all, it awakens us to the whole meaning of Christian worship. Briefly, it is defined as the mystery of salvation proclaimed by Christ and now accomplished in us. This is effected by the Paschal Mystery of Christ's "blessed passion, resurrection from the dead and glorious ascension, whereby 'dying, he destroyed our death, and rising, He restored our life'."³⁹ The Constitution puts emphasis "on the living unity of a saving event which has to become ours in the Church, through her sacramentality."⁴⁰ We, by our faith are in some mysterious but real way brought into this event—this Paschal Mystery.

By baptism men are plunged into the Paschal Mystery of Christ: they die with Him; are buried with Him, and rise with Him; they receive the Spirit of adoption as sons, 'by virtue of which we cry : Abba Father' (Rom. 8:15) and thus become those true adorers whom the Father seeks.⁴¹

³⁹ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, par. 5, The Documents of Vatican II, trans. from the Latin, ed. W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 139.

⁴⁰ Bouyer, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴¹ Op. cit., par. 6, Documents, p. 140.

Not only by Baptism, but by all the sacraments and in the Mass are we united to Christ in His Paschal Mystery. "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows."⁴² This two-way movement, from the Father to us and from us to the Father, is stressed in all liturgical worship today. Charles Davis comments:

The divine love of God the Father is communicated to us through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, and that Divine love, present and active in us, by the gift of the Spirit, draws us back through Christ to the Father, where we rest as his sons in Christ and share the inner life of the Godhead.⁴³

Through the liturgy, revivified by the Constitution and revitalized by the writings of contemporary liturgists, we have become more aware of God's relationship to us as Father:

The liturgy of the Holy Catholic Church begets sons and daughters of the heavenly Father and makes us brothers of Jesus and of all our fellows who have also been reborn of water and the Holy Spirit; and it gives foundation to our hopes.⁴⁴

42 Ibid., par. 10, p. 142.

43 Charles Davis, Liturgy and Doctrine, London, Sheed & Ward Stagbooks, 1960, p. 24.

44 William Sherzer, "Liturgy and Catechetics: Inseparable Partners," in Pastoral Catechetics, ed. Johannes Hofinger, Montral, Palm Publishers, 1964, p. 49.

Thus, we are more conscious today of directing our worship to the Father in a truly filial manner as Christ did. We perceive the Father as the "ultimate source of that boundless love which lies at the origin of our salvation."⁴⁵

The worship rendered to God by the Church cannot be other than a participation in the worship rendered by Christ to His Father.⁴⁶

In the second place, the current liturgical renewal has given us a new sense of community and brotherhood by its emphasis in liturgical worship on "full, conscious and active"⁴⁷ participation of the Christian people who are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Pet. 2:9). Aware of the privilege that is ours, we experience a new spirit of joy in being God's children. Christian people today are encouraged to come "around" Jesus Christ, their eldest brother, to continue what he has delivered to them:

Every man has his own personal relation to God, but the experience of God that is common to all believers binds them together into the People of God. The one God removes the walls of separation and makes all men His children, to be brothers and sisters around the Firstborn Christ.⁴⁸

45 Charles Davis, Liturgy and Doctrine, p. 29.

46 Vagaggini, Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy, Collegeville, Minn., The Liturgical Press, 1959, p. 148.

47 Op. cit., par. 14, p. 144.

48 The Higher Institute of Catechetics, op. cit., p. 130.

This whole liturgical renewal is designed to restore the communitarian soul to the liturgy. Vagaggini, of the Regina Mundi Roman Institute, says: "Today it is the liturgical life of the parish that ought to be the normal expression of this communitarian spirit of the faithful."⁴⁹ Our Liturgy is spoken of as:

the human family's encounter with the Father in order to hear His voice, to offer Him the sacrifice and to receive His gifts of grace and pardon. This is always effected through the mediation of Christ, the Firstborn, among many brothers.⁵⁰

It is not the prayer of an individual, even though it requires the participation of mind and heart, but the prayer of the community. "The Sunday Mass is truly the assembly of the human family in the house of the Father."⁵¹ The Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II reminds us that:

The goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's Supper.⁵²

49 Dom Cyprian Vagaggini, Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy, Collegeville, Minn., The Liturgical Press, 1959, p. 164.

50 Pietro Gheddo, "Interview with Cardinal Lercaro," in Worship, Vol. 37, No. 8, 1963, p. 55.

51 Ibid.

52 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, par. 10, The Documents of Vatican II, trans. from the Latin, ed. W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 142.

This communitarian sense of the liturgy is one of the key points of the renewal. Holy Communion is shown to be not only a communion with Christ but also communion with our brothers. "Hence the liturgical preparation for communion begins with the Our Father and it is completed with the breaking of bread."⁵³ This is an action which Jesus commanded; it was so important in early Christian times that it gave its very name to the Eucharist. This breaking of bread is therefore a communication action. Speaking of this aspect of liturgical worship, Cardinal Lercaro says: "The liturgy forms fraternal communities united in adoration of God and in the charity of Christ."⁵⁴

Finally, it can be said that the use of the vernacular transmits to us more directly the Word of God, with its Glad Tidings of the Father's love. We listen to it intelligently; we can praise our Father knowingly; we can petition and thank Him heartfully through Christ Our Lord. Thus the new Pentecost, so ardently desired by Pope John XXIII, speaks to us in our own tongue "the wonderful works of God" our Father (Acts 2:11).

Thus the current Liturgical Movement has aided us to reestablish the emphasis on the Father in our Christian

53 Pietro Gheddo, loc. cit.

54 Ibid.

worship. Likewise, several other documents of the Council have referred directly to God our Father or have indirectly related us to Him by speaking of our position as sons of God, brothers of Christ and members of God's family. These we shall next examine.

3. The Divine Fatherhood Theme in Vatican II.

"The Constitution on the Church" places emphasis on our supernatural sonship through grace. God's plan of grace is put forth in the second paragraph of the document.

By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father created the whole world. His plan was to dignify men with a participation in His own life. He did not abandon men after they had fallen in Adam, but ceaselessly offered them helps to salvation, in anticipation of Christ the Redeemer, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15). All the elect, before time began, the Father "foreknew and predestined to become conformed to the image of the Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).⁵⁵

The Church's members will be gathered together at the end of time "with the Father."⁵⁶ For this purpose the Son came on mission from His Father:

55 Vatican Council II, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," par. 2. The Documents of Vatican II, trans. from the Latin, ed. W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 15.

56 Op. cit., par. 2, p. 16.

It was in Him, before the foundation of the world, that the Father chose us and predestined us to become adopted sons, for in Him it pleased the Father to re-establish all things (Eph. 1:4-5 and 10).⁵⁷

The documents then go on to explain how Christ, fulfilling His Father's will, inaugurated the kingdom of God on earth and told us about His Father. The Church is the kingdom of God in mystery which now grows visibly. In the power of the Spirit all believers have access to the Father through Christ. The Spirit "bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons" (Gal. 4:6).⁵⁸ The Spirit also gives unity of fellowship to the children of God.

Various images taken from Scripture are presented to clarify the Mystery of the Church. All of them point to the unity of the Church. The Church is the house of God in which dwells His family. This family is "the People of God." "The heritage of this people is the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple."⁵⁹ This Spirit, whereby they become "children of God," they receive in baptism.

57 Op. cit., par. 3, p. 16.

58 Op. cit., par. 4, p. 17.

59 Op. cit., par. 9, p. 25.

The lofty work of the priests is associated with the Father:

They present the needs and prayers of the faithful to God the Father. . . . Exercising within the limits of their authority the function of Christ as Shepherd and Head, they gather together God's family as a brotherhood all of one mind and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ to God the Father.⁶⁰

Priests are united with their bishops and the Sovereign Pontiff to strengthen this closeness "so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of the family of God."⁶¹

Unity is also pointed out as an ideal, in the chapter on the laity. For, "they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same 'filial grace' and the same vocation to perfection."⁶² Therefore, it goes on to say, the laity have "Christ for their brother."⁶³ They also share brotherhood with "those in the ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ so feed the family of God."⁶⁴

60 Op. cit., par. 28, p. 54.

61 Op. cit., par. 28, p. 55.

62 Op. cit., par. 32, p. 58.

63 Op. cit., par. 32, p. 59.

64 Op. cit., par. 32, p. 59.

The "Constitution on the Church" makes several references to our dignity as sons of God.⁶⁵ In speaking of our relation to Christ, the expression "brother of men,"⁶⁶ "brother in Christ,"⁶⁷ "brotherhood of charity"⁶⁸ are found.

Finally there is pointed out to us "the supreme worship which we give to God the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit."⁶⁹

For as long as all of us, who are sons of God and comprise one family in Christ remain in communion with one another in mutual charity and in one praise of the Most Holy Trinity, we are responding to the deepest vocation of the Church and partaking in a foretaste of the liturgy of consummate glory.⁷⁰

Another document of Vatican II, "The Church in the Modern World," looks to the human brotherhood of man as a basis for supernatural brotherhood: "Let us . . . work as brothers in rendering service to the human family. For in Christ Jesus this family is called into the family of the sons of God."⁷¹ It speaks of the Church's

65 Op. cit., par. 36, 37, 40, 51, p. 62, 64, 67, 84.

66 Op. cit., par. 36, p. 62.

67 Op. cit., par. 37, p. 64.

68 Op. cit., par. 41, p. 69.

69 Op. cit., par. 51, p. 84.

70 Op. cit., par. 51, p. 84.

71 "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," par. 92, Documents, p. 306.

awareness of its mission to stand forth "as a sign of that brotherliness which allows honest dialogue and invigorates it."⁷² This dialogue is to reach out to all men without exception:

Since God the Father is the origin and purpose of all men, we are all called to be brothers. Therefore if we have been summoned to the same destiny, which is both human and divine, we can and should work together.⁷³

This same universal call is repeated several times: "God who has fatherly care for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood."⁷⁴

This Constitution points to Christ as a model of brotherly human relations:

In His preaching He clearly taught the sons of God to treat one another as brothers. In His prayers He pleaded that all His disciples might be "one" . . . He commanded His apostles to preach to all peoples the gospel message so that the human race might become the Family of God in which the fullness of the Law would be love.⁷⁵

Our mission, then, is to continue the work that Christ began—that is, to bring all men into the family of God. Speaking of this work of the Church in the world, the

72 Op. cit., par. 92, p. 306.

73 Op. cit., par. 92, p. 307.

74 Op. cit., par. 24, p. 223.

75 Op. cit., par. 32, p. 230.

Constitution says:

The Church . . . is composed of men . . . who have a call to form the family of God's children during the present history of the human race, and to keep increasing it until the Lord returns.⁷⁶

Men are urged to work for a wider brotherhood, a universal brotherhood. Finally, the Constitution concludes with this message of hope:

Now the Father wills that in all men we recognize Christ our brother and love Him effectively in word and in deed. By thus giving witness to the truth, we will share with others the mystery of the heavenly Father's love. As a consequence men throughout the world will be aroused to a lively hope — the gift of the Holy Spirit — that they will finally be caught up in peace and utter happiness in that fatherland radiant with the splendour of the Lord.⁷⁷

The Council's "Decree on Ecumenism" is a natural follow-up to the document on the Church and the modern world. It has been seen as the beginning of a new era of positive action directed to uniting all men in a Christian brotherhood under the fatherhood of God, one aspect of dialogue with the world. Christian people are invited to work from their common heritage to a fuller union in truth. They are asked to work together, to talk together, and to pray together. Christ's prayer to His Father expresses this desire for unity: "That they all may be one

⁷⁶ Op. cit., par. 40, p. 240.

⁷⁷ Op. cit., par. 93, p. 307.

even as thou, Father in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn. 17:25). This longing for unity the Church reiterates today as she points to certain "helps, pathways, and methods" to effect it.

This Decree recalls the fact that Christ came from the Father into the world to give new life and unity to mankind. He left to His Church the sacrament of the Eucharist as a sign and a help to unity. He commanded His followers to have mutual love. Finally, He sent the Spirit to be bond of unity. Today the Church invites all her children to fellowship and dialogue "as she makes her pilgrim way in hope towards her goal, the fatherland above."⁷⁸ She exhorts all "the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to participate skillfully in ecumenism"⁷⁹ this excellent work which will effect "the spirit of brotherly love and unity."⁸⁰

The Council's "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" contributes to our notion of the goodness of God our Father. It rules out the notion that God is the Great Unknown; He has revealed Himself to men:

78 "Decree on Ecumenism," par. 2, Documents, p. 344.

79 Op. cit., par. 4, p. 347.

80 Op. cit., par. 4, p. 348.

In His goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and comes to share in the Divine nature.⁸¹

In the Old Testament God revealed Himself as a provident Father; in the New, He revealed Himself through Jesus.

All of Scripture reveals God to us as a Father:

For in the Sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life.⁸²

Although other documents, too, from Vatican II allude to our relationship to God our Father, the ones we have just mentioned are most important and give sufficient evidence to prove that the idea of God our Father is current in the teaching of the Church today.

4. Recent Pontifical Statements.

Two Popes of our era, John XXIII and Paul VI, have reminded the world repeatedly of the Fatherhood of God and its necessary consequent the brotherhood of man. This they have done in pleas for peace, for unity and for the

⁸¹ "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation," par. 2, Documents, p. 112.

⁸² Op. cit., par. 21, p. 125.

cessation of human conflict. Representative quotations will be brought forth briefly.

Pope John, at the beginning of the new year, expressed the desire that all men "be convinced that they are bound to each other as brothers, since they are all children of one and the same Father in heaven who loves them very much."⁸³

He spoke in a similar manner to a group of workers: "Be strong and generous: never forget your grandeur as Christians and as children of God. Only thus will you feel guided by the hand of the Divine Providence of the Heavenly Father."⁸⁴

On numerous occasions he addressed his hearers as brothers. Typical was his spontaneous talk to the crowds outside St. Peter's on the eve of the Vatican Council: "Fratres Sumus."⁸⁵

Pope Paul speaks no differently. Typical, perhaps, are the concluding words of his address to the United Nations' General Assembly in New York, October 4, 1965.

83 Pope John XXIII to the College of Cardinals, Jan. 16, 1961, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1961, p. 45.

84 Pope John XXIII, Address to a Group of Dock Workers, April 23, 1961, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 7, 1961, No. 2, p. 119.

85 Pope John XXIII, Impromptu Talk in St. Peter's Square, Oct. 11, 1962, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1963, p. 219.

We believe, as you know, that these indispensable principles of superior wisdom must be founded upon faith in God, that unknown God of whom St. Paul spoke to the Athenians in the Areopagus; unknown to them, although without realizing it they sought Him and He was close to them, as happens also to many men of our times. To us, in any case, and to all those who accept the ineffable revelation which Christ has given us of Him, He is the living God, the father of all men.⁸⁶

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations, he stressed the same idea: "(If) men are sons of the same Father and nations are part of the single great human family, all have the grave duty of promoting peace, defending it, proclaiming it . . ."⁸⁷

In his efforts to effect unity with the Greek Orthodox Church, he again called upon God our Father. This he tells to the Council on his return from his blessed meeting with Patriarch Athenagoras:

Together we read again the solemn prayer Christ made to the Father before His Passion, to ask for the unity of His disciples, and to ask that the world might believe. Together we recited the Pater Noster whereby we call on God as our Father and which teaches us mutual forgiveness.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Pope Paul VI, Speech to the United Nations, in The Ottawa Journal, Oct. 5, 1965.

⁸⁷ Pope Paul VI, To the United Nations, June 24, 1965, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1965, p. 209.

⁸⁸ Pope Paul VI, Address to the Bishops of the Council on His Return from the Holy Land, Jan. 1964, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 9, 1964, No. 3, p. 289.

This message of God's fatherhood and man's response in brotherhood has always been uppermost in the mind of Pope Paul. In his very opening address to the world, he made a plea for fraternal charity and brotherly love. He said:

This age of ours in which roads to outer space have been opened will abound in God's most wonderful gifts if we recognize each other as brothers rather than rivals . . .⁸⁹

Not only does he address this message to the adult world but also to youth. In a letter to an international Boy Scout Jamboree, he praised the Scouts for "respect for honour and loyalty, service of one's neighbour in a spirit of brotherly devotion . . ."⁹⁰ He remarked that this could be "an inducement to move forward in the ways of the universal brotherhood taught by Christ and based on the recognition of the one Almighty God, Father of all men."⁹¹

89 Pope Paul VI, First Public Address, June 22, 1963, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 9, 1963, p. 80.

90 Pope Paul VI, Letter Addressed to Archbishop of Athens on the Occasion of the International Boy Scout Jamboree, Marathon, Greece, July 20, 1963, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1963, p. 106.

91 Ibid., p. 106.

A very brief but important sentence of Pope Paul's at the opening of the Second Ecumenical Council recalls Pope John's words. Speaking of the renewal in the Church, he says:

Only then, when the Church has completed this great work of her own interior sanctification will she be able to show her face to the world and say: "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father."⁹²

And thus we see that the Church, in her Visible Head, is ever continuing the work of Christ upon earth—that of leading all of God's children to the Father.

5. Contemporary Personalism.

Modern life has become devoid of personal relationships and lacking in a natural interest in people. To this extent it has become an unreal and unhealthy life:

The process of "massification" in civil and political life is levelling down the personal element and evoking a counter movement devoted to the cultivation of the unique life of the individual person.⁹³

This new and deeper study of the individual has resulted in much theoretical and practical investigation. Men like

⁹² Pope Paul VI, Address at the Opening of the Second Session of the Ecumenical Council, Sept. 29, 1963, in The Pope Speaks, Vol. 9, 1963, No. 2, p. 133.

⁹³ Josef Goldbrunner, Cure of Mind and Cure of Soul, Notre Dame, Indiana, Notre Dame Press, 1962, p. 12.

Martin Buber, Josef Goldbrunner, Gordon Allport and C.G. Jung have pointed out to educators the importance of the individual and his personal relationship with others. "Every person is unique and irreplaceable."⁹⁴ He is a self-contained whole but not independent of others. In fact he must relate to others. This relationship of one person with another, Martin Buber calls the I-thou relationship. All real living, he would say, is meeting: "The 'thou,' to employ the terminology of personalism, is prior to the 'I' and implies a 'we.' It is precisely here in this union of two spirits that the individual discovers his own spiritual resources."⁹⁵

And so an awareness of the "I" in relation to the "thou" calls forth a growth in man. Indeed personality only finds meaning in relation to the "thou". Only when "thou" arises can the "I" come into existence fully. This horizontal relationship of man-to-man is the foundation from which develops the vertical relationship of man to the eternal Thou.

In that process by which man is made aware of another, he dimly becomes aware of the eternal Person. In each "Thou" he addresses, ultimately, the eternal "Thou."⁹⁶

94 Ibid., p. 13.

95 Barry McLaughlin, Nature, Grace and Religious Development, Westminster, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1964, p. 12.

96 Ibid., p. 84.

Thus living relationships between human beings help to develop an encounter with God. This God, the eternal "Thou," is no distant God or abstract idea. He is a loving Person—a Father who has revealed Himself to man and who calls him individually by name. Our relation to Him should be personal. He is not a stranger but has revealed Himself to us in the Old Testament and in the New.

The reason why the image of the God-Father has failed to come to life is that the Old Testament has been explained more as the history of the people of Israel rather than God's way with man.⁹⁷

Once the Old Testament is seen in the light of the Gospel, greater importance will be attached to the personal relationship of God the Father.

This will make it easier to appreciate the symbolic representation in the sacraments of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. The teaching of the faith is God's call to me; the sacraments are meetings with God; ethics tell me the will of God, His wishes for me.⁹⁸

This allows for a more personal relationship with God.

Goldbrunner states that the task of religious education is helping the "children of God" to ripen into "sons" and "daughters" of God. Just as the concept "child of God" occupies a key position in pastoral theology by reason of the emphasis laid on the reality of

97 Goldbrunner, op. cit., p. 125.

98 Ibid., p. 126.

baptism, the concepts "sons" and "daughters" of God must also be taken seriously. The religion teacher is thus preparing them for encounter with the eternal "Thou."

The reality, difficulty, sobriety and fulfilment of a relationship between the Father-God and the human being raised to the status of son or daughter should be regarded in the light of the natural, cultivated relationship between a father and his grown-up children.⁹⁹

Thus every natural personal relationship is an opportunity for the actuating of the person, the training of character and the first step towards the reality of the relationship towards God who shows his paternal status in revelation.

Evidence, therefore, from modern catechetics, from the liturgical renewal, from Vatican II, from the messages of our Holy Fathers and from the modern trend towards personalism have been sufficient to show that the notion of God our Father is a current emphasis today.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL ELUCIDATION OF GOD'S FATHERHOOD

Although our age is stressing anew the idea of God's Fatherhood, this concept is not just a passing notion or a wistful longing; it has a basis in fact. God is really and truly our Father: "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying: 'Abba, Father.' So that he is no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God" (Gal. 4:6-8).

For the explanation and clarification of this idea, theology is called upon to play a part. Without a solid basis from this source, it could not be considered as a worthwhile theme in modern high school catechetics. The authority chosen is Matthias Joseph Scheeben whose name, according to Cyril Vollert, the translator of some of his major works, "is rightly associated with St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus."¹ His writings stress the doctrine of divine adoption and hence our right to call God, Father. In them he has "unveiled the image of the true man who is the deified

¹ Cyril Vollert, Foreword to his translation of M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Book Co., 1954, p. xv.

man, a child of the heavenly Father and a member of the Incarnate Son."²

1. Scheeben as a Spokesman for Sonship.

Scheeben³ has been referred to as "the foremost theologian of the nineteenth century, whose writings did more than those of anyone else to prepare the dogmatic foundations for the liturgical movement."⁴ Martin Grabmann goes further and praised Scheeben as the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century "and indeed of recent times."⁵ Within the last score of years there has been a remarkable growth of what only can be called a Scheeben cult. Pope Pius XI himself publicly delivered an eloquent appreciation of Scheeben's theological merits on the occasion of the centenary celebration of his birth.⁶ "Especially after World War I when a renewal of interest in liturgy grew, the liturgists depended more and more on

2 Ibid., p. xiv.

3 Scheeben was born on March 1, 1835, in Meckenheim, near Bonn. His chief works were written between 1861 and 1887.

4 G. Diekmann, ed., Footnote to "The Splendours of Grace by Matthias Joseph Scheeben," in Orate Fratres, Vol. 17, Nov. 1943, No. 1, p. 13.

5 Martin Grabmann, "Theological Syntheses in W. Meyer and Others," in The Pastoral Care of Souls, St. Louis Mo., Herder, 1944, p. 97.

6 G. Diekmann, ed., op. cit., p. 13.

Scheeben who had become their favourite theologian."⁷ Cyril Vollert refers to him as "the chief theologian of the supernatural order."⁸ He points to the unity which Scheeben gave to the study of theology. "With consummate skill, Scheeben displays in a masterly synthesis the richness and variety of the Christian revelations as a unified system of truths flowing from the mystery of the Trinity."⁹ This unity of his thinking is especially valuable to the topic of the present thesis.

John Courtney Murray, who refers to Scheeben as "the forerunner of modern theologians,"¹⁰ points out this synthesis in Scheeben's presentation of God the Father:

The God who speaks is no far-off abstract Deus verax, but a loving Father, who enters by His word into the very heart; the one who hears is no disembodied, critical reason, but a child; the message spoken is no catalogue of theses, but a promise of eternal life in the vision of the Father's face; and the child's answer, faith, is no carefully calculated admission of what cannot reasonably be denied but a gladly obedient acceptance of a new dignity and destiny.¹¹

7 E.H. Palmer, Scheeben's Doctrine of Divine Adoption, East Milton, Mass.; Kampen, Holland, 1953, p. 11.

8 Cyril Vollert, loc. cit., p. xv.

9 Ibid., p. xi.

10 John Courtney Murray, "Roots of Faith," in Theological Studies, Vol. 9, No. 44, March, 1948, p. 20.

11 Ibid., p. 44.

In an age when rationalism and moralism affected theology, Scheeben "brought all truths together and coordinated them in a vast synthesis."¹² He made "the drab naturalistic world of the nineteenth century glow again in the light and beauty of grace."¹³ "In his setting forth a positive theology in all of its beauty, greatness and deepness, he made one of the best possible attacks on the existing rationalism."¹⁴ Edwin Hartshorn Palmer, a non-Catholic scholar, refers to his genius:

He thought the traditional problems through for himself, criticized them where necessary, gave penetrating new insights into old problems, presented old truths in a new light, was fresh in his thinking and related dogmas and their parts in an ingenious manner: in short he was original in the traditional.¹⁵

"He was a genius of the first order, with an exceptional genius for speculation."¹⁶

12 Cyril Vollert, "Matthias J. Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," in Theological Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4, Dec., 1965, p. 479.

13 Cyril Vollert, Foreword to his translation of M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. x.

14 A. Kerkvoorde, "Introduction," in M.J. Scheeben, Le Mystère de l'Eglise et de ses Sacrements, Paris, 1946, p. 11.

15 E.H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 1.

16 Cyril Vollert, "Matthias J. Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," p. 454.

Scheeben "never wearied of pointing out that the Christian life is a participation in the divine life."¹⁷ This is the Glad Tidings which he emphasized in his writings—almost a hundred years ago. This is the same message of Salvation that has become so popular today. Scheeben made us "realize the magnitude and munificence of the divine plan for us and thereby aroused in us a greater love of God."¹⁸

Scheeben's dynamic message could have gladdened a pessimistic world of the late nineteenth century with a note of optimism. The rediscovery of his message almost a hundred years later alerted the world anew to the splendour and vitality of Christian life:

In Scheeben's view, the essence of Christianity is primarily, not a doing but a being. To be a Christian does not mean to conform one's way of thinking to God's way of thinking, or to make one's personality according to the precepts of the New Law. Christianity implies the replenishing and pervading of our spirit with the Holy Spirit and in the engendering of the divine life in our persons. This new state of being, produced by God, Scheeben calls divine filiation. The child of God is the only true man. When the child of God is born, that is, when man receives the new divine state of being, nothing human or natural is lost. On the contrary, in divine sonship, all that is truly human and natural is preserved, transfigured and divinized.¹⁹

17 Cyril Vollert, op. cit., p. 480.

18 Ibid., p. 479.

19 Ibid., p. 479.

Scheeben synthesizes all the teaching of Christianity with this concept of man as a child of his Heavenly Father through grace. His emphasis on the idea that Christianity is a being, not a doing is the key idea in the presentation of the doctrine on the Fatherhood of God. An examination of all the aspects of God's Fatherhood in the light of Scheeben will elucidate our thoughts.

2. Aspects of God's Fatherhood.

God's Fatherhood and man's sonship by grace, Scheeben points out, is a New Testament concept. Israel was only a type of this relationship. The servitude of the Old Testament is similar to man in his natural state. For God is the Lord and Master of all creatures in the fact that He created them. "By nature we are subjects of God, the great King Who rules this world, not children of the royal palace reigning with the Father."²⁰ Scheeben emphasizes the fact that this servitude is not the result of sin but simply the outcome of our position as creatures. "How could mortal man presume to say 'Father' to the King of immortality who dwells in inaccessible light?"²¹

20 M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Book Co., 1954, p. 122.

21 Ibid., p. 123.

As creatures of God we are created for His honour; to serve and glorify Him. Because our master is no tyrant but a kind master, he deserves our love and service. Furthermore, man is a spiritual and rational being; he has personality and he resembles God in a special way. In virtue of these characteristics, Scheeben brings out the point that natural man might lay claim to the dignity of sonship of God. "But this type of natural sonship is not the rich full sonship that comes by grace in adoption."²²

Out of man's natural state of servitude God has adopted him as a son.

3. Origin in the Blessed Trinity.

For the origin of this supernatural sonship Scheeben refers us to the Trinity. This mystery stands first in all his theological discussions.

All the other supernatural truths revolve around this centre, the three divine Persons Who in Their love reach down to man and raise him up to Their sphere. This supernatural communication of the divine nature is effected in three stages: by the substantial and total communication of the divine nature to the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, by the hypostatic union in the Incarnation, and by the participation of rational creatures in the divine nature in grace and glory.²³

²² E.H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 13.

²³ Cyril Vollert, "Matthias J. Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," p. 474.

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4. Father by Nature.

Scheeben goes on to say that only the eternal Word is the Son of God by nature and is therefore the Only-begotten of the Father. The Son is generated by the Father. He has divine life from the Father and shares it with Him. The Son is the Father's heir and received all of His inheritance. He explains it thus:

The only-begotten Son of God is eternally and indescribably born from the Father's bosom; He alone is the likeness of the Father's essence; He alone has divine life from the Father and shares it with Him; He alone is one with the Father and creates, rules, and governs with Him.²⁴

No created being, not even an angel, is a son in this way.

5. Man's Sonship by Grace.

But the Father was moved by His joy in His Son to adopt children by grace so that He might extend to them the love He has for His only Son. By His freely bestowed love He has become our Father and placed us at the side of His Son. This is the heart of Scheeben's message.

Only because God has a Son in Whom He takes infinite pleasure and Whom He loves with an infinite love, can He have a reason to multiply outside of Himself the image which He bears in His bosom, and therefore to glorify the more His infinite generative power, as well as His Son Himself who is reborn in every one of His brethren.²⁵

24 M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. 123.

25 M.J. Scheeben, Mysteries of Christianity, St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Book Co., 1946, p. 142.

He is able to embrace His creatures with fatherly love in His only-begotten Son alone. "Only the love which He bears for His Son can become so fruitful for creatures that it raises them up to His bosom and forms them to His supernatural likeness."²⁶ His creatures are raised to this divinized state and become members of Christ.

If men are members of Christ, the divine dignity of the Son must in some way pertain to all His members and the Father extends to all the love He bears His Only-begotten Son. Further, the divine dignity conferred on men gives them the right to a glorification in soul and body.

6. Through Christ.

Scheeben states that God could have adopted us without the Incarnation as He did Adam. Without it, however, "our divine sonship would be less perfect and would lack a basis on the side of nature."²⁷ It is through Christ, by the hypostatic union in the Incarnation, that God contacts man.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 142.

²⁷ Cyril Vollert, "Matthias J. Scheeben and the Revival of Theology," p. 476.

With the Incarnation Scheeben ties in the Mystical Body. He maintains that the purpose of the Incarnation is not just the restoration of the supernatural order overthrown by sin. The Incarnation is the most complete communication of God to His creatures, and the best means of revealing His perfections.

In virtue of the Incarnation we men become the Father's own sons because we become members of the Father's own Son; and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Son becomes the Spirit of the members of the Son.²⁸

It is by way of the human nature of Christ, then, that divine life is given to men. This life is imparted to all who become members through faith and the sacraments. The only body formed in union with Christ is the Mystical Body, the Church.

7. Brothers of Christ.

Christ took on our nature in order to share His nature with us. "He became our brother in human form to make us His brothers in divine glory."²⁹ He taught us to call His Father 'Our Father.' He told us that He came into the world to share His divine life with us. Canon Cuttaz, a present-day authority on grace, expresses the

²⁸ Ibid., p. 476.

²⁹ M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. 124.

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same idea as Scheeben:

The Fatherhood of God is the principal object of His (Christ's) teachings. This is the good news—the Gospel—He came to announce to men, the great innovation of His religion, the source of the uniqueness of the kingdom that He came to found. His disciples were to adore God as a Father, and their worship was to be penetrated with tenderness, trust, self-sacrifice and filial sincerity.³⁰

Christ prays to the Father that we may be one with Him.

"Hence He wishes us to share the heart and love of the Father and also to have part of His inheritance."³¹

8. In the Holy Spirit.

Since we participate in the divine nature, not by natural generation, but by love and grace, we find the basis for this kind of communication in the procession of the Holy Spirit. He is the exemplar for the external outpouring of love in us. At the same time He is the motive for still further revelation to creatures of the love of the Father for the Son.

The procession of the Son is above all the exemplar which determines the nature and conceivability of the relationship into which we are to enter with God as co-heir of the Son, whereas the procession of the Holy Spirit is

30 F. Cuttaz, Our Life of Grace, trans. Angeline Bouchard, Notre Dame, Indiana, Fides, 1960, pp. 66-67.

31 M.J. Scheeben, Mysteries of Christianity, p. 144.

chiefly the motive and standard which determines the way that relationship is realized.³²

It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that the Father has raised us to the position of adopted children. He is sent by the Father and the Son to bring us into filial relationship with the Father and fraternal society with the Son. "By Him the Father has raised us to the condition of adopted children."³³

9. Adoptive Sonship.

Scheeben insists that our sonship by grace is entirely different in nature from that which belongs to the Only-begotten Son of God. The term "adoptive" is applied to our sonship. Although it is not entirely analogous to human adoption, it is somewhat similar to it. Human adoption is a moral act by which someone is called a son although he is not really made a son. He does, however, obtain the right to the father's inheritance. But in the case of God "He can not only give him a legal title to an inheritance; He can also make him inwardly worthy of the title."³⁴ When we are adopted by God, we really become His children and God endows our nature with all the

32 Ibid., p. 144.

33 M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. 125.

34 E.H. Palmer, op. cit., p. 15.

qualities to be so in very truth. Our nature becomes empowered to receive the inheritance—perfect truth and perfect love.

When man loves in a natural way it is because he sees goodness in the one he loves; when God loves, He puts goodness into the one He loves. He is able to make man conformable to the image of His Son. "For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made comformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

This goodness is a new higher life, "a life for which no seed is produced by us but has to be planted in us. This seed is the Spirit of divine life."³⁵ We are reborn of God the Father in the Holy Spirit. By the work of the Holy Spirit, the soul takes on a new life resembling that of the divine nature. Thus we are reborn as a child similar to the Father in His glory. We are adopted children of our heavenly Father.

10. Sharing in Divine Life.

This new life is the divine life possessed by God Himself and communicated in its fulness to His Only-begotten Son. Scheeben refers to the analogy of the vine and the branches to explain this communication of life

35 M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. 128.

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whereby the sap from the trunk flows out to all the branches.

Similarly he cites the comparison of the Mystical Body as indicating clearly our relationship to Christ. We are the members; He is the Head. In Him is found all the vital powers for the body. Both analogies emphasize the fact that the life which the Son of God communicates to us must be like His own life.

Our generation from God is infinitely inferior to that of the Eternal Word. Yet in a certain sense it is higher than that of animal generation. Scheeben explains it thus:

In communicating divine life to the created spirit, God draws the spirit closer to Himself, pervades it with His divine power as with fire or an ointment, and endows it with an energy that does not arise from the created essence but comes immediately from the divine essence by which it is continually supported and sustained.³⁶

In this way the spirit is raised up to God. It is at one and the same time wedded to God and born of God. By this union the soul receives a sort of seed from the divine life it is to develop and it is itself born of God since this seed of life is that which makes him a child of God.

This new life implies a kind of generation. In this act God bestows on us a higher godlike nature which

36 Ibid., p. 130.

is an image of the divine nature. "It is a vital power and tendency enabling us to lead and attain a life that in itself belongs to the divine nature alone."³⁷ Therefore it is analogous to natural sonship among men. By this generation we are born of God and we share His life.

11. Effect in Man.

Scheeben then explains lucidly how certain other facts come from this relationship. The principle is that our relationships to God take on a likeness of those which the Only-begotten and natural Son of God has to His Father.

The first of these is unity between Father and Son. The Saviour prays to the Father that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. He has taken the first step since He shares with us His divine nature. Our unity with God is not the same as that of the Son since we do not possess the fullness of the divine nature but only participate in it. "We become like God, the Father of light when he enkindles in us a light similar to His own."³⁸ This light is a divine power of knowledge

37 Ibid., p. 131.

38 Ibid., p. 134.

by which we, knowing the divine essence, reflecting it and expressing it, in imitation of God's Only-begotten Son Who proceeds from Him as His Word and likeness, receive His image and so are "made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). John Courtney Murray makes comment on this explanation: he explains that faith, according to Scheeben is "a participation in the knowledge of God, operated by God's own light. With the entrance of this light into the soul is begun its transformation into a 'child of light,' image and heir of the 'Father of light.' And by effecting in the soul a likeness to God's power of knowing Himself, the light of faith confers upon it an anticipation of Heaven's blessed vision."³⁹ The beauty of the soul becomes the same in nature as the beauty of God.

Scheeben then goes on to explain how we may work to increase our union with God. He says that God is present in all creatures by His activity and His power. Therefore He is also present in them by His essence since His activity and power are His essence. "He is more perfectly in them the more He acts in them and the more He allows them to share in His essence, that is to imitate

³⁹ J.C. Murray, "The Roots of Faith," in Theological Studies, Vol. 9, March, 1948, No. 1, p. 21.

Him in their degree."⁴⁰ He embraces them together with His Son and presses them to His fatherly heart.

Again, God is one with His creatures in that He bestows on them faculties and powers which emanate from His essence. Their union with God is such that the divine essence becomes the centre of all the activities of their higher faculties. God's creatures can, since a higher unity with God already exists in them, increase this unity and union by the activity they direct to God, especially love. "Thus the creature can love the Father with the same love as that with which the Son loves Him and with which He loves Himself, with the love which terminates in the Holy Spirit and is infused by Him into our hearts."⁴¹ Thus the child of grace is made mystically and supernaturally one with the Father. This is a physical, rather than a moral union and in this way it is similar to that of the Father's Only-begotten Son.

And so we are made one with God by unity of nature and by union with Him. This union is accomplished in two ways. The Father unites Himself to us when He communicates His life to us by drawing us to Himself. Secondly, when we make God's essence the object of our activity,

40 M.J. Scheeben, Nature and Grace, p. 137.

41 Ibid., p. 140.

there is union with God. "In this way we share with the Son the nature, the heart, and the love of the Father."⁴²

Since there is a personal unity between the Son of God and the Father, the Son then has a right to the Father's inheritance. This is not something external but consists of a sharing in the infinitely rich and happy life that is His.

For the Father's adopted children the inheritance is nothing else than the full flowering of the seed of divine life which we receive from the Father for His glory and beatitude and which we are to share with Him.

The initial stage of this life invests us with a dignity belonging to the children of God; the final stage is held out to us as the inheritance to which we have a title and which we are to merit. Scheeben remarks that we are like small children clasped to our Father's heart and clinging to Him with childhood love; but later we shall be perfect sons and grown men, displaying in ourselves all the majesty of our Father. He quotes St. John: "We are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be" (1 John 3:2). Our regeneration at Baptism is a pledge of future glory.

42 Ibid., p. 140.

Scheeben then goes on to emphasize our dignity as sons of our Heavenly Father. We have become brothers of Christ Who was sent into the world to give us His life, His truth, and His love. "The grace of divine sonship and the life of the children of God consists mainly in their reception of truth and light by which the Word is the natural Son of God."⁴³ The Son of God alone revealed the Father to us; He let us know that we too are His children who share His fatherly love. He taught us to know Him by faith. He will finally reveal Him to us in the beatific vision when our faith will be replaced by glory. Through faith we know God as our Father.

Our relationship to God, Scheeben concludes, is therefore similar to that of a child to his father. It is even more complete not only than that found in adoption among men, but even than that found in natural sonship. Scheeben recalls the words Christ addressed to His Father at the Last Supper:

The glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me (Jn. 17:22).

Christ was the gift of the Father to us His children. It

43 Ibid., p. 147.

is by Him and with Him that we can really claim God as our Father.

Such was the joyous message revivified for us by Scheeben. His presentation of it brings forth the inner nature and worth of Christianity while at the same time he synthesizes all its teachings under the concept of father-child. Is this not the Glad Tidings of Salvation? Although some may not have recognized it:

It seems to us, . . . that Scheeben deserves credit for having realized the kerygmatic ideal long before it was labelled in his Mysteries of Christianity.⁴⁴

44 G. Diekmann, "Teaching the Good News," in Worship, Vol. 29, No. 3, February, 1955, p. 131.

CHAPTER III

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD IN CURRENT TEXTBOOKS

This chapter will examine the theme of the Fatherhood of God in current high school religion texts. Because of the large number of recent texts, the scope of the investigation is limited to those published since 1960 with mention of one important text published prior to this date.

Before examining the books, we shall recall the recommendations made at the International Study Week for Mission Catechetics held at Eichstätt, Germany, in 1960.

Religious instruction at every level should unite "the several elements of Christianity in a single light"¹ and be imbued with a sense of annunciation. The Father's love for each one of us (is) to be declared in terms of inviting a personal response of loving appreciation and service.²

This unifying theme we conceive of as the Fatherhood of God. This presupposes that all our religious instruction be Trinitarian—to or from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. It unifies all religious

1 Domenico Grasso, "The Core of Missionary Preaching," in Teaching All Nations, p. 40.

2 Michael Tynan, "Teaching the Faith," in Irish Ecclesiastical Record, Vol. 97, April, 1962, p. 225.

instruction under the key concept of our dignity as children of God.

This report on post-1960 textbooks will examine the Divine Fatherhood in them under five headings: first, its general presentation; then, as related to the sacraments, the Church, the Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer.

To begin with, comment must be made upon a somewhat earlier book, the catechism approved and adopted by the bishops of Germany in 1955, after eighteen years of preparation.³ Father Gerard Sloyan remarks that all the catechisms which follow it will be "deeply indebted to the German bishops for their splendid contribution."⁴ It introduces a radically different approach to religious instruction, one of which is a departure from the traditional exclusive question and answer form.

Few will deny that the German Catechism does manage to achieve a synthesis and unity in the light of the historical development outlined by Father Grasso and the other speakers at Eichstätt.⁵

³ The American edition appeared under the title Catholic Catechism, New York, Herder and Herder, 1957, 448 p.

⁴ Gerard Sloyan, "A Catholic Catechism," in Worship, Vol. 32, No. 5, April, 1958, p. 308.

⁵ Michael Tynan, "Teaching the Faith," in Irish Ecclesiastical Record, Vol. 97, April 1962, p. 226.

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It situates our salvation "in Christ" but it is wholly Trinitarian in the presentation of the doctrine relating all mysteries and all response to the Father. It is God-centered rather than man-centered. God is shown to rule over us like a kind father. Everything is seen to come from our Father's hand:

He has made us because of his love, He has redeemed us through His Son, and made us His children. . . . He wills that we call Him Father and trust Him with child-like confidence.⁶

Christ is presented as carrying out the mission of His Father:

The Son of God became man in order to carry out the great design of His Father; He was to announce the joyful news of the kingdom of God and to show us by His word and example the way to the Father; He was to free us from sin and make us once more the children of God.⁷

The sacraments are presented as a share in Christ's redemption. Some are orientated towards the Father more than others. Baptism sets us free as children of God. The Holy Eucharist in uniting us with Christ unites us closely with our Heavenly Father. Penance portrays God's fatherly love in manifesting God's desire that all sinners should find their way home to Him. Holy

⁶ A Catholic Catechism, New York, Herder and Herder, 1957, p. 35.

⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

Orders and Matrimony are social sacraments for God's children. Last Anointing enables us to die as God's children.

In teaching the Church special emphasis is placed on the work of the Holy Spirit: "The Father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit to bind us together with the Father and the Son and to set us alight with the fire of their own love."⁸

The Commandments are presented with a positive approach: "Because God is our Lord and our Father, we must keep His commandments."⁹ Students are here reminded that God gave us the Ten Commandments "out of fatherly love."¹⁰

In presenting the Our Father, emphasis is placed on our attitude towards God. "Because we are children of God we may speak with God just as children speak with their father."¹¹

The whole content of this catechism centres on our personal relation with the Father in Christ. The sacraments are no longer presented after the Commandments. They come before, and not so much in support of our moral

8 Ibid., p. 103.

9 Ibid., p. 297.

10 Ibid., p. 300.

11 Ibid., p. 201.

effort as the objective means of our union with Christ who is leading us in the Holy Spirit to the Father. The section on moral conduct takes third place, being our response under the influence of the Holy Spirit to God's fatherly love.

Despite its tremendous merits, the German Catechism is not the perfect answer. There have been some suggestions of weakness:

It deals with all the important questions in the life of the modern child or adult including those of social morality satisfactorily but with a certain detachment where it might have indulged in some intensity of feeling to convey a spirit of urgency.¹²

Since this catechism precedes Vatican II, we can expect a revision of it. However, even in its kerygmatic approach there is room for improvement: "the spirit is not quite the joyous and confident one of Peter and Paul and the other apostolic heralds."¹³ Dr. Tilmann, its chief editor, made it clear that the final product represented much compromise. Even the editors themselves were less than satisfied. Nevertheless it was a monumental work. It has served as a model and a precedent for the revision of older texts and the writing of new ones.

12 Gerard Sloyan, op. cit., p. 308.

13 Ibid., p. 308.

Among the many new texts published since 1960, the first series examined in this survey was "The Challenge of Christ Series."¹⁴ We can say that in general it does not present the theme we are looking for. The chief stress is placed upon the duty of the adolescents to live up to the challenge which Christ gives them. The whole presentation does not follow the new trend and is inclined to be somewhat moralistic and apologetic. However good principles are enunciated and much valuable information is imparted. No overall view of God's love is stressed. For example, all the attributes of God are studied before mentioning His fatherly love.

The sacraments are presented in a dogmatic, orderly fashion under the headings of: their nature, their reception, their administration and their number. There is no link made to God our Father.

The Church is studied under the title of the Mystical Body of Christ. Other concepts, such as the Kingdom of God on earth, the People of God and the Bride of Christ, are also developed. There is no reference to the Church as the Family of God.

¹⁴ Francis Kelly et al., The Challenge of Christ Series, 4 vols., Dubuque, Iowa, The Priory Press, 1960- , Book One—Your Vocation From God, 621 p.; Book Two—The Christian Combat, 702 p.; Book Three—Victory of Christ, 695 p.; Book Four—The Christian in the World, 527 p.

The Commandments are shown to be God's law given to Moses for God's people of all time. They are said to be a statement of the most general truths about right and wrong in our dealings with God. No emphasis is placed on relationship to God.

The Our Father is not presented as such, but in teaching prayer attention is drawn to the fact that Christ taught us to address God as a loving Father Who will not deny His children the things they need.

Next to be surveyed is the "New Loyola Religion Series."¹⁵ Here the whole Trinitarian aspect of our faith is presented. This is especially true of Book Three which is based on Vatican II's "Constitution on the Church." The missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit are shown to be part of God's plan. The Father sends them. Books One and Two present religious teachings in terms of a vital personal relation between Christ and us.

The Sacraments are found principally in Book Two; they are shown to be our participation in Christ's Paschal Victory. However, reference is also made to the Father's life, initiated, increased or restored through Christ by

¹⁵ Mark J. Link, The New Loyola Religion Series, 4 vols., Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1964- ; Book One—Christ Teaches Us Today, 277 p.; Book Two—We Live in Christ, 239 p.; Book Three—We Are God's People, 226 p. Book Four—to be published.

the Spirit in Baptism, Confirmation and Penance respectively. Through Matrimony, the natural life of the Church is increased; through Holy Orders the supernatural growth is provided. The Anointing of the Sick gives a fuller share of Christ's life. The Eucharist strengthens the bond of union between Christ, our neighbour and us.

The presentation of the Church is said to be related to the whole plan of God's salvation. Thus it is Trinitarian. The Father is the one sending, while the Son and the Holy Spirit are the ones sent. The Father prepared for the Church in the Old Testament; Christ inaugurated the Church in the New Testament and the Holy Spirit completes the Church in modern times. The Church is the sign and the instrument by which mankind today is united in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to the Father.

The Commandments are presented as God's gift of love to us. Christ brings the Commandments to fulfilment. This text explains them in detail but in a positive way. They are all shown to relate to the Law of Love.

The Our Father is pointed out as the only prayer Christ prescribed for the members of God's kingdom. Note is made how it speaks of God as our Father and not my Father. This is shown to emphasize the community aspect of it rather than the individual one. One petition is that the Father's kingdom would be established. Attention

is drawn to the fact that the prayer of Christ to His Father in His agony is basically the same as the Our Father.

Although we would expect a greater emphasis on the Father's love, in this series we do see evidence of the Father's plan for our salvation throughout these books.

Next to be surveyed is "The Lord and King Series."¹⁶ Jesus Christ is presented as the centre of the program so that in the Holy Spirit He may lead each student to the Father. Salvation History is presented in such a way that Christ is seen to be the apex of it. He affected Old Testament times by the promise of His coming; He established His Kingdom on earth when He came and He still acts today in our lives, preparing the people of God for the day of the Lord. History both before and after Christ takes its meaning from Him, from His death, His resurrection and His ascension to glory. Mention of the Father is not excluded from this plan of God. Christ is said to be God the Father's ambassador-extraordinary, appointed to a task which no one else could accomplish.

16 Vincent M. Novak, Lord and King Series, 4 vols., New York, Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1964- ; Volume One—Jesus Christ Lord of History, 340 p.; Volume Two—Jesus Christ Our Life and Worship, 396 p.; Volume Three—The Church: The People of God, not published yet; Volume Four—Christian Vocation: Calling of the King, not published yet.

Divine adoption is introduced early in the text at the beginning of Salvation History—before the Fall. At the end of the book it is again presented when speaking about the Church. The relationship of brothers of Christ and sons of God is explained.

The Sacraments are presented as perceptible signs through which the Glorious Christ makes personal contact with each of us within the Christian Community. By them Christ acts upon us and He teaches us how to worship the Father. The liturgy of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist provides the way to worship the Father in spirit and in truth within Christianity.

Baptism is referred to as the sacrament which enables us to join God's family. It unites us to Christ through His gift of grace, thus making us children of God and heirs of heaven. In presenting the effects of Baptism, no real emphasis on divine adoption is stressed. Confirmation is presented as the sacrament in which Christ sends the Holy Spirit to help us live faithfully as valiant soldiers and witnesses to Christ. The Father's place in the distribution of this grace is not included. The Eucharist is presented as a sacrificial meal. Mention is made that in the Mass the prayers are directed to the Father, but the sacrifice is offered to all the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. By Holy Orders the newly

ordained shares in the priesthood of Christ. The laity receives some share in the priesthood through Baptism. The Sacrament of Penance is shown to be a contact with our forgiving Lord and a reconciliation with His Church. No truly Trinitarian aspect is presented. Neither is this evident in the presentation of the other two sacraments. Marriage is spoken of as a symbol of God's love; it is a meeting with Jesus Christ and the union of husband and wife in Him. The Anointing of the Sick is defined as a sacrament by which Christ comforts and strengthens the seriously ill, bringing them health of soul and sometimes of body. From the prayers presented for the anointing, we see that some are addressed to the Father, some to Christ and some to the Trinity. No comment about this is made.

The Commandments are explained as a manifestation of God's fatherly love. In the Old Law they were a part of the Mosaic Covenant; this was only a preparation for the New Covenant in Christ. The author sees the Commandments as linked to the Mass which renews our Covenant with God. The Decalogue is shown as God's gift to man enabling him to live up to the Covenant which brings salvation. They are, therefore, not to be omitted from our lives. The text presents them in a positive way. In the sixth commandment, for example, the beauty of sex is emphasized.

In summary, then, the commandments present a way of life which enables us to live as Christ's brothers and sons of God the Father in His family. They are blessings, not burdens.

In presenting the Church, this text uses the chronology of the events following the Ascension—the coming of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the Apostles, persecution, the conversion of St. Paul. This last event is used to explain the Mystical Body of Christ. "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). From this sharing of the life of Christ, the members of the Church are seen as brothers of Christ. Then, sons of God by adoption is the next relation. St. Paul's words (Rom. 8:14-15) are then pointed out as a proof of this.

The Our Father is presented within the structure of the Mass. Its pivotal importance in the Mass is pointed out. The seven petitions in it form a plan of life for a member of the family of God. It is shown to be a pledge to live the Eucharist in our personal lives. The Father's place in this presentation is understood.

On the whole we do find the Fatherhood of God present but not fully emphasized and developed in this religion series.

Another set of textbooks is the "Living With Christ Series"¹⁷ with a Christocentric orientation. Christ is spoken of as the sacrament of God. His life and work are presented biblically. The Old Testament is presented as Bible History; Christ's life is followed as in the Gospels.

The Church is referred to as the sacrament of Christ. Christ did what His Father willed; He hands on the continuation of this work to His Church. The Church as the Mystical Body is a major theme. The New People of God and the Kingdom of God on earth are other themes.

The sacraments, signs of Christ, are classified into four groups: the two sacraments of initiation—Baptism and Confirmation, the two sacraments of service—Holy Orders and Matrimony, the sacrament of reconciliation—Penance, and the sacrament of the sick. Christ is said to act through each of the sacraments. In the presentation of each of them, we find the following approach: the Old Testament idea of it, the New Testament presentation, the liturgy of the sacrament today. In general we may say that the sacraments are shown to be encounters with

17 Christian Brothers, Living with Christ, 4 vols. Winona, Minn., St. Mary's College Press, 1964- ; Course One—15 Pamphlets, revised 1964; Course Two—15 Pamphlets, revised 1966; Course Three—to be published; Course Four—to be published.

Christ. However we do find the following explanation regarding Baptism: "Through the waters of Baptism the Holy Spirit acts to form Christ in us. In union with Christ we are able to worship the Father. The worship expresses our dedication to God which is the result of the Spirit's activity in us."¹⁸

The Commandments are first seen in their Old Testament setting. They are shown to be a response to God's love. To make this fact realistic an example is cited of a father who gave his son a new car. With the car the father warns the boy to drive carefully. To the boy, the car is a sign of the father's love and for this reason the son obeys. God's laws are for us warnings of His love. At this point the text explains the meaning of grace; through it we become sons of God. Our response to God's law should correspond to our dignity; it should also be permeated with grateful love.

The Our Father is presented in the context of the Mass. The seven petitions are explained and interpreted in detail. The point is made that when we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others, we are looking to Him as Father. Appreciation for this prayer is fostered by recalling that in the early Church the early Christians were

¹⁸ Course One, Living With Christ, p.

not permitted to say this prayer until after Baptism. It was officially said for the first time during the Baptismal ceremony.

Another textbook surveyed is "Roots of Faith."¹⁹ It has portrayed in an excellent manner the love of God as a Father. In doing this, it first examines love from every facet. The modern idea of personalism, with the I-thou relationship touched upon. Love is a oneness: the giver must give and the recipient must receive. Then it goes on to state that God is love. The human love of a father is used as a starting point in illustrating this love. For the benefit of the few who have not experienced this love, the television program "Father Knows Best" or other good father-son relationships are pointed to. From human fatherhood, the pupil is led to the love of Christ for His Father. The mutual giving of love between the Father and the Son is shown to be the way God loves. Christ's obedience to his Father is an expression of the free homage of love. Finally, we are told that Christ wants all of God's sons to be as devoted to the Father's Will as He is.

19 L.G. Henry, The Roots of Faith, Pittsburg, Pa., Diocesan Association of Religious Teachers, Office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, 111 Boulevard of the Allies, 1964. Book One—God Gives His Word, 1964, 151 p.; Book Two—Encountering Christ, 1965, 107 p.

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Even before Christ came, in Old Testament times, this text shows, God's personal relationship with Israel was that of a father:

A child in His father's arms doesn't need a proof of the father's presence. Neither did the biblical man feel any need for rational proofs of God's existence. God was. He had proved it by His great and gracious deeds and this was all the certainty they desired.²⁰

God is presented as a personal being who loves, forgives and cares eternally. Yet, we are here told, this relationship did not assume its true character until the Son of Man came and revealed the "mystery which had been hidden from eternity in God." St. John's Gospel, and quotations from Louis Evelyn,²¹ as well as meaningful pictures portraying a human father's love help the student to realize the Father's love for Christ and through Him for us. Then the author goes on to say that Christ's love is not a reflection of the Father's love in the Flesh; it is the Father's love with all its power, munificence and universality.

The sacraments are presented as signs of Christ. The two-way action—God's love to man and man's response of love to God—is shown. By this response of man, we are

20 Roots of Faith, p. 45.

21 Louis Evelyn, We Dare Say Our Father, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1965, 129 p.

told, man is lifted out of his narrow self-centeredness to become one with Christ, Who died for his salvation, so that together with His new brethren, He may give glory to the Father.

The social aspect of the sacraments is emphasized. Indirectly they are related to the Father, but this is often implied rather than stated. In the presentation of Baptism, reference is made to rebirth of the spirit. St. Paul's idea of being "grafted onto Christ," and thus becoming sons of God, is used. We become one family with Christ and thus resemble our elder Brother. This resemblance grows with the sacrament of Confirmation—the sacrament of maturity. The anointing of the sick allows the sick person to enter into the redemptive victory of Christ.

The explanation of the Mass places the Father in His true perspective. In the Mass, we are represented as offering Christ to the Father and the Father giving us Christ as the bond of union in communion. By participation in this sacred meal, the ties that bind us to God's family are more closely knit. The other three sacraments are explained solely in relationship to Christ without relating them to the Father.

When the author speaks of the Church as the Family of God, he suggests God's Fatherhood. In it the Holy

Spirit is the principle of unity, as the soul is for the different parts of the body.

The Commandments are first presented as guidelines given to the Israelites as part of the Covenant. Greater stress is put upon the New Law of Love. The Christian life is said to be a witness to Christ. No special relation to the Father is noted here.

In this series, the presentation of the Father's love for us is excellent. This idea is not developed sufficiently in relation to the Church and the Sacraments. The Trinitarian aspect is not adequately presented but the overall idea of the Father's love is well portrayed.

In another series, "Through Him, With Him and To Him,"²² by Father McGloin, the Fatherhood of God is in general specifically presented. One of the subtitles used is "God, the Father of Mankind."

The story of Salvation History, in Book One, presents God as "a very patient Father"²³ Who has made a covenant with mankind. He is also described as our loving

22 Joseph T. McGloin, Through Him With Him and To Him: A High School Course in Religion, 4 vols., Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co.; Book One—Living in God, 1965, 409 p.; Book Two—Christ Lives On, 1966, 485 p.; Book Three—The Life of Man in Christ, to be published; Book Four—Living in the Kingdom, to be published.

23 Living in God, p. 7.

and indulgent Father. In His revelation, God has shown that He is "a Person and not an abstraction, and that He is our Father." The Israelites "felt His fatherliness and His nearness to them."²⁴

Following this presentation, the idea of why and how He is our Father is developed. This includes the story of Creation. The Fall and the Redemption. In the account of the events following the Fall, we are reminded that God is man's Father, not his executioner—a Father Who gives mankind another chance.

The explanation of sanctifying grace states that God "in adopting us as His children, pulls us up to the level of His own nature so that we can live in this state of friendship with Him—now by faith, later 'face to face'."²⁵

In reference to death, the author states that "since God is our Father and since we are going to Him as to our only destiny, then it follows that we are going home."²⁶

While this idea of God's Fatherhood is presented thus as a general theme, it is not consistently or often

24 Ibid., p. 69, 72.

25 Christ Lives On, p. 359.

26 Ibid., p. 44.

enough pointed to throughout the text. True, God is referred to as Father but the whole implication of this relationship is not developed sufficiently.

The presentation of the Sacraments reminds us that the life of Christ comes to us through the sacramental system. By it we are born to Christ, strengthened in Him, matured in our love for Him, live our vocational life with His grace and are prepared to meet Him soon by the unique graces of His sacrament of the anointing of the sick. Although God's Fatherhood is here implied, it is not specifically stressed.

The Church is examined from many aspects. However, the title of Book Two, "Christ Lives On" indicates the chief concept. The life of Christ, then, is available to mankind through the means of His extension, the Church. The closest reference to the theme we are seeking is expressed thus: "Through God's grace we have been called to become members of Christ's Body, which means that, with Christ, we are sons of the Father and heirs of heaven."²⁷

In a more detailed study of the Church, the Constitution on the Church is examined. Then an apologetical approach is made to it. The modern authenticity, its perpetuity, and its early history are then taken up

27 Christ Lives On, p. 352.

in detail. In this study no reference is made to God our Father or to our membership in the Family of God.

The Commandments are presented with some reference to God our Father, but not as a unifying theme.

The first three are explained as our duties to our Father and Creator. In reference to the second commandment, for example, we read: "... Since God is supreme and perfect and our Father, He deserves, of Himself and without commanding it expressly, the greatest respect."²⁸

The last seven are explained as our duty to God through our neighbour. The detail of each commandment is worked out, presented in a positive way, first, and related to our times. The negative aspects are considered at the end.

Although good human behaviour is stressed, no suggestion is made that this is the conduct expected of good children of God our heavenly Father. The whole of our relationship to God as Father might be better developed. There is a certain detachment in this whole presentation.

In his treatment of the Our Father, the author himself admits that his whole treatment is rather sketchy and intended only to lead to further study. The topic is

28 Living in God, p. 368.

presented under the heading of Prayer and Union with God. The introduction to this is directed to our attitude towards God. For it says:

Christ wants all of us to become as children—not childish but child-like—so that we have a child's idealism, his simple faith, his energy in right causes, his unquestioning generosity.²⁹

The fatherly love of God is stressed with the authority of many examples from Christ's teaching: Lk. 11:1-4; 5:8; 13. The importance of the word "kingdom" in the Our Father is brought out. Finally relationship to our neighbour is emphasized, "If you examine the 'Our Father' carefully enough you will find, too, that it contains the precept of love for our neighbour in God."³⁰

The next series that was examined is "To Live Is Christ."³¹ In general, we find that, although there is seemingly no purposeful plan to relate all things to the Father, nevertheless, reference to the Father is not entirely lacking. The general theme is centered around Christ and the Mystical Body. The love of God is spoken of as "friendship." A Covenant of friendship binds man to God. The idea of God as Creator is most fully developed.

29 Living In God, p. 214.

30 Ibid., p. 216.

31 Brother J. Frederick, F.S.C. and Brother H. Albert, F.S.C., To Live is Christ, Vol. 1, An Overview, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1965, v-202 p.

The Sacraments are introduced by the subject of Grace. Here emphasis is placed on how God has made us "graceful." By citing Scripture (1 Jn. 3:1-2) the idea of sonship of God is brought out. The author explains this sonship as a consequence of our union with the Whole Christ. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on our contact with Christ in the sacraments. The relation to the Father is implied but not expressed.

The Church is shown as Christ in the world today. The Holy Breath of Life has been breathed into its members. Sometimes the Church is spoken of as the Family of God or again as the Covenant Community. The Mass is referred to as God's family action. Because the community eats at the same table, it is one family, the body of Christ. In order to explain the sacrificial aspect of the Mass, the text presents it as the Whole Christ worshipping the Father with Christ's sacrifice. The family spirit of the Mass, we are told, is to be carried into the world. Sin is refusing to belong to God's family while penance is belonging again to it.

There is no stress on the Ten Commandments as such. They are all said to be present in the basic Law of Love. This law includes worship and right social action. A very positive approach is thus taken to God's Law.

In the presentation of the Our Father, stress is placed on the filial attitude accompanying its recital. This is the simple, direct, trusting attitude of a child to his father. Such a spirit, the text points out, is the accompaniment of all prayer to God our Father.

Thus, while we do find a definite orientation to the Father, in many parts of this text we do not find it as a unified theme.

The last set of texts to be examined was the "Light and Life Series."³² The first book was published in 1966; from it may be gathered the general theme of the whole series. It is Christ-centered but it does not omit the Father. It is truly Trinitarian. We may summarize the whole plan of God presented thus: "Out of His infinite goodness and love, God the Father has invited us to share with him his own divine life through Jesus Christ, whom He gave a ransom for sinners."³³ In presenting the Father, this text first points to the greatness of God in creation. Then it shows the fatherly care of God in the Old

32 William J. Reedy, Life and Light Series, 4 vols. New York, Sadlier. First Book—The Story of Salvation, 1966, 449 p.; Second Book—The Friendship of Christ, to be ready 1967; Third Book—Growth in the Spirit, not yet published; Fourth Book—The Father's Call, not yet published.

33 William Reedy, "The Mystery of Christ," in Pastoral Catechetics, ed. Johannes Hofinger and Theodore Stone, Montreal, Palm Publishers, 1964, p. 110.

Testament. Next it presents the revelation of the Father by Jesus. Finally, the doctrine that God is really our Father is explained:

God is our Father. He has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts at Baptism transforming us in such a way that we are reborn and can truly call God "Father." Together with the Son of God, Christ our brother, we form one family of God.³⁴

The many references of Jesus to His Father are then sought for in Scripture and filial sentiments are suggested. The life of Christ is shown to be Father-centered. Attention is then drawn to the various ways that God has revealed Himself to us especially in History. All creation is said to be made for Christ who has redeemed it for the Father.

The only one of the sacraments presented in the First Book is Baptism. By it, we are told men become sons of God. As members of His family, we place ourselves under the direction of Christ.

The Church is presented with its origin in Israel and its fulfilment in Christ. The notion of the Church as the Family of God is introduced early in the text. From the concept of "family" we move to "people" and "assembly." Israel is seen as the Church-before-the-Church, the Assembly of God. The creation of man as a

³⁴ William Reedy, The Story of Salvation, Part 1, Life and Light Series, p. 35.

worshipper is placed in the first three chapters. Thus the Church and worship are complementary ideas to the Christ-centeredness of the course. This worship is directed to the Father.

The Commandments are interpreted as the constitution of the people of Israel. This is the law imprinted in men's hearts but made known specifically by God out of love. God's law was a way of life for His people. Christ perfected the Law. In one word, love, He summed up all law. Christ acting in us enables us to keep this law.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the notion of God our Father is clearly emphasized in this book. However the love of the Father, and our filial love in return, might have been brought out more tellingly.

After the survey was completed a choice could be made of the best presentation of the Fatherhood of God under the above headings from the texts surveyed. The following conclusions are offered.

In the general presentation it was found that our personal relationship to God as a Father was best revealed in the Roots of Faith Series. For the presentation of the Fatherhood of God in salvation history, the Lord and King Series and the Through Him, With Him and To Him Series are good. The Life and Light Series explains well how Christ's life is Father-centered.

In presenting the sacraments, the Roots of Faith Series points out the two-way action to and from God our Father. The German Catechism explains how all the sacraments are Trinitarian. The Lord and King Series shows how the Liturgy of the sacraments is a worship of the Father. The text To Live is Christ speaks of the Mass as the action of God's Family.

The Church is best seen under our theme in the New Loyola Series, Book Three, although the Roots of Faith Series also presents an excellent treatment of the Church as the Family of God.

The Commandments are best presented as a response to God the Father's love in the Living With Christ Series and as manifestation of God's fatherly love in the Lord and King Series.

The Our Father finds its best presentation in To Live is Christ. Here the filial attitude is emphasized. The Loyola Series and the Living With Christ Series also have some excellent ideas in presenting this prayer to our heavenly Father.

The German Catechism is the best guide for the order of presentation and for the theological outline for all of these topics.

CHAPTER IV

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD PRESENTED TO HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

1. Unifying Theme Found in the Fatherhood.

The survey in Chapter Three gives us some insight into how this theme the Fatherhood of God has been retained as a whole in current high school textbooks while at the same time it may be presented under various significant aspects.

Revelation is a unity. It is the story of God the Father revealing Himself to mankind through His Son in the Holy Spirit. In imparting this message to High School pupils we do not lose this synthesis if we present it under the aspect of the Fatherhood of God.

Let us begin with God Our Father who sent us His Son, Jesus Christ, to reveal His love to us and who revealed Himself also to us and then left us the Holy Spirit. "The person and actions of Jesus Christ attract; man follows, going with Him to the Father."¹ The whole theology of divine adoption as explained by Scheeben might be used by the teacher to deepen his own understanding of the doctrine.

¹ Gerard Sloyan, ed., Modern Catechetics: Message and Method in Religious Formation, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1962, xi-381 p.

The work of the Holy Spirit leads to the study of the Church which is presented under the analogy of the Family of God. "Through Jesus Christ we have been made members of the Family of God. We are joined to Christ and to one another in a union which is far closer than any union on earth."²

With a realization of the Fatherhood, prayer becomes an expression of a personal relationship to God Our Father through Christ. We can teach our students to communicate with Him in an intimate way as He wants us to. Thus prayer becomes a privilege rather than a duty.

Our initiation into the Family of God presupposes the sacrament of Baptism. A deeper study of Baptism leads to an inquiry into the powers conferred by this sacrament. This brings us to the study of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. The other virtues are now studied in their turn. All of them are looked at in Christ whose life we learn from the New Testament.

Each of the sacraments has its place in the family life of God's children. By them we encounter Christ and grow up into mature members of the family. The Eucharist in particular is the greatest expression of the love of

² James Killgallon and Gerard Weber, Life in Christ, Chicago, 720 North Rush St., 1958, p. 287.

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God for us; it is God's gift to man. By means of the Eucharist, Christ continually re-offers Himself to the Father through the ministry in the Sacrifice of the Mass. This, we inform our students, is our gift to God. We return Christ to His Father by allowing Christ to live in us—by living the Christ-life more fully. At the same time the Eucharist is the Sacrament of Unity uniting us to Christ and to our brothers in Christ.

The love of Christ is the greatest moral force the world has ever known. Yet in much catechetical instruction the word and idea never appear.

We are, in too many instances, still at the "You shall not" stage. How much more attractive to face our duties towards our fellow men in the same light of love.³

A positive approach should be taken in the teaching of the Commandments. By keeping these laws we are preserving God Our Father's love; we are following more closely the example of His Son, Christ. We must imitate Christ who always did what was pleasing to His Father. How much easier it is to avoid sin with this motivation!

The Great Commandment of love requires that we act towards God as His children and that we treat our

³ Emmet Carter, The Modern Challenge to Religious Education, p. 302.

fellow men as brothers—children of the same Father. In them we see Christ.

By the Fourth Commandment God reminds us that, as His children we must respect authority within the family by honouring and obeying our parents. He reminds us too that we must respect and obey His other representatives, those in the larger family of man, the Family of God.

Brotherly love is the positive approach to the other Commandments. In the sixth and ninth Commandments the High School teacher can present the wonderful power of sex whereby God gives to man a share in His fatherhood; a share in the creation of new human beings, destined to share His happiness for all eternity in Heaven.

When the adolescent perceives that his keeping of God's law, his keeping of the Commandments, is not merely a negative thing but an actual proof of his love for God, a way of dedicating himself to God, his life takes on new meaning and purpose. He is eager for action in line with this new purpose,—action not planned and directed by another, but that which he himself initiates, undertakes and carries through.⁴

The present chapter does not aim to present all the application of this theme. It simply points out the fact that the Fatherhood of God embraces the whole of

⁴ Sister Jane Marie Murray, The Christian Formation of the Adolescent, Chicago, Fides Publishers, 1958, p. 12.

God's revelation to man and of man's response to God. At the same time it sets norms for our relationship to each other. In this way then it synthesizes the whole of catechetical instruction. Thus, our relationship to God as His children deserves our further attention.

2. Spiritual Childhood.

Strange as it may seem, many of the profound truths of our faith are paradoxes, such as "He who would save his life will lose it" (Lk. 9:24), and "Unless the grain of wheat die, itself remains alone" (Jn. 12:24-25). So too "Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 18:3). Spiritual maturity is arrived at only by becoming a child in the Family of the Trinity—a child of God our Father.

This "spiritual childhood" associated so closely with the life of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, has very often been misunderstood. Pope Pius XI wrote to the Bishop of Lisieux, warning against this misinterpretation:

Say and have it given out, that the spirituality of the little Saint has been made a bit too insipid. How masculine she is, and how virile nevertheless! St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus is a 'great man' whose whole doctrine preaches renunciation.⁵

⁵ Father Lucien Marie de St. Joseph, "Childhood and Maturity," in Spiritual Life, Vol. 111, June 1957, p. 110.

Pope Pius XII reaffirmed the same idea when he said:
"Genuine spiritual childhood is distinguished from the other variety by its maturity of judgment, supernaturally inspired by the Master; 'Brethren do not become children in sense,' says St. Paul, 'but in malice be children' (1 Cor. 14:20)." ⁶

Spiritual childhood is a disposition of the heart which makes us humble and little in the arms of God, conscious of our weakness and trustful to the point of audacity in God's goodness as Father.

This childhood is "timeless." It seems to be an awareness of what grace is. Without it we can do nothing. It is God who gives us the power to exist, to love, to act supernaturally. He takes the initiative. We simply place ourselves in His hands. "For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Spiritual childhood is not contrary to spiritual maturity. In fact it cannot be fully understood or accepted except by a mature person. It is an aid to maturity. Let us examine this idea of maturity more closely.

We say that dependence marks childhood and autonomy is the sign of maturity. Now the recognition of one's

⁶ From an autograph letter to the Bishop of Lisieux, Aug. 7, 1947, in Spiritual Life, Vol. 3, June, 1957, p. 110.

dependence on God is, nevertheless, a sign of maturity because it is the admission of a fact that is true. So much more is the actualization, the living out, of this condition a facing of reality and therefore a sign of maturity. This is the essence of the virtue of humility. St. Thérèse recognized her own littleness in contrast to the greatness of God; in doing so she exercised autonomy over her own false feeling of pride. This child of God was, in very truth, mature.

Adolescents today, can be directed along the road to maturity if we make known to them the doctrine of spiritual childhood which points out to them their true relationship to God and teaches them, in their state, dependency on Him—a dependency which seeks His aid along the difficult road to maturity.

The idea of spiritual childhood and that of the Fatherhood of God include each other. They are more than analogous terms; we are indeed children of our Heavenly Father.

3. Related to Adolescent Psychology.

In presenting this doctrine to high school pupils we must be concerned not only with content but also with presentation. Here pedagogy tells us that teaching must conform to the psychology of the child. How, therefore,

is the Fatherhood of God to be presented in keeping with the psychology of the adolescent?

To begin with let us look at this concept of God in the mind of the child. Much discussion has been made of late by psychologists about the "father image" which the child has. The ideal image, they say, is the sum total of the qualities of a good father. He is kind, loving and, to the child's mind, perfect in every sense of the word. With the child a transfer of these qualities to the concept of God, his Father, is easily made. For the child who has not experienced the love of a good father, the building up of an image of God his Father is not had as easily. However parents and educators must make known to the child that the finest human father is a "fallible human being." His paternity, his power and his authority are but relative to the paternity of God. In other words, God is the Father of all, including human fathers. His paternity is transcendent.

It is absolutely necessary that the father of the child himself be fully aware of the exact proportional worth of his own position. It is essential that he should know, and that he should make his children realize that he is an authority, but that he is not absolute. He should make them understand very early that like themselves he, too, is capable of making mistakes; and that he, too, is

engaged in the endless search for perfection. It is necessary that he should know enough to apologize formally to his children, even when they are very young, for faults he has committed or mistakes he has unwittingly made:

The way is thus opened for the search for that Father who does not make mistakes and whose love is so great that He has given His Son to the world in order to save it. It is opened also, to the greatest possible extent, to the mysterious action of the God now conceived as transcendent in the child's mind, in other words to grace.⁷

As the child matures, his faith deepens and this image of God develops. The older he gets, the more he is able to de-personalize the paternal qualities from his father and personalize them in God his Father. In the fearful, insecure years of adolescence it is necessary to have the concept of the All-Powerful and All-Just but at the same time All-Merciful God Who is a Father.

Adolescence is a time of transition, of turmoil, of contradictions. Love and hate somehow act simultaneously. This is a period of adjustment—a time of break-away from the dependency of childhood to the autonomy of adulthood. And yet this very striving for independence can result in a wonderful spiritual growth. One of the most serious responsibilities of Catholic parents and

⁷ Marc Oraison, Love or Constraint?, Glen Rock, N.J., Paulist Press, 1959, p. 124.

teachers today is not to overcome the adolescent's eagerness for independence but to foster and guide it. He must teach him to turn to God his Father and Christ his Brother with a personal love.

The crisis surrounding the ties of human dependence (family, teacher, Church) and of the forms of authority (an obligatory religion) make possible a new bond with Christ freely chosen in the degree that this bond can be made to seem personal.⁸

Romano Guardini, in his book The Life of Faith says that to the extent that our image of God is simpler and more meaningful, our faith becomes simpler and more meaningful.

The faith of those who are mature, the God of grown-ups who are on the road to holiness is completely simple. But it is the simplicity of light which contains in its clearness the whole spectrum of colours; the end not the beginning.⁹

The "simplicity of light" which Guardini speaks of here could be the concept of God our Father. And the whole spectrum of colours could be the summation of all that revelation and human reason have made known to us, about God. All of these, presented to our high school pupils

8 A.M. Henry et al., The Virtues and the States of Life, Vol. 4, Theology Library, trans. by Robert J. Olsen and Genevieve T. Lennon under the direction of Louis J. Putz, Chicago, Ill., Fides Publishing Co., 1959, p. 34.

9 Romano Guardini, The Life of Faith, Glen Rock, N.J., Paulist Press, 1961, p. 127.

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in the unity and simplicity of the theme of the Fatherhood of God, bring to them an awareness of "what is" the mystery of the soul under the grace of God and the love of God our Father who has really made us His children.

Thus, from the unity of doctrine which the theme presents, from the excellency of the way of Spiritual childhood and from the suitability of the theme to adolescent psychology, the Fatherhood of God is seen to be of real worth in the religious instructions of high school pupils. If the teacher can present God to them as a Father, as is already being done in the Canadian Catechism for elementary school students, he is simplifying and unifying all instruction, all conduct and all life itself.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has presented a survey and an evaluation of the theme the Fatherhood of God in current high school religion texts.

In Chapter One, the importance of this theme was pointed out by showing its place in the recent history of catechetics. Here it was offered as an answer to the quest for a unified theme, a central idea, and a personal relationship with God.

The Fatherhood theme, furthermore, was shown to have played an important role in liturgical renewal. It pointed out the fact that all our worship is to be directed to the Father who is the source of all blessings. Mention, too, was made of the significant place that this theme has had in the documents of Vatican Council II. The Council frequently and explicitly spoke in terms of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Again, the pleas and admonitions of recent Pontiffs frequently refer to all men being brothers, and all children of the same Father.

Finally, the present theme was shown to hold out to the children of our impersonal world the personal love of a Divine Father.

In Chapter Two, the doctrine of God's Fatherhood was elucidated by the theology of Matthias Scheeben. His

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writings offer profound insights into the mystery of supernatural adoption and rebirth.

The survey proper, Chapter Three, showed that there is a definite development discernible in the presentation of this concept of God's Fatherhood. While we noted an absence of the theme in the earliest book we examined, we traced a definite presence of it in later textbooks.

Chapter Four offered suggestions as to how this theme might be presented to high school students. The Fatherhood of God was shown to provide a vivifying theme for religious instruction. Then it was suggested that it ties in with the doctrine of Spiritual Childhood—a way of life recommended by Pope Benedict XV, Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII. It was furthermore seen as a concept of God which would meet the dependency and insecurity of adolescents.

Finally, the value of this theme was noted in the new Canadian Catechism for elementary grades. Assurance was expressed that the same value would be found in a similar approach to God in high school religion texts.

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