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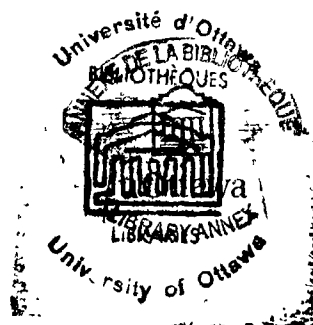
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THE KERYGMATIC APPROACH TO LAY THEOLOGY
ON THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

by Cyril G. Middendorf S.M.

This thesis is presented to the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Religious Studies.

*Degree granted
October 13, 1967
M. Beauchamp, Sec. - Secretary*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was prepared under the supervision of Fr. Maurice Giroux, O.M.I., S.T.D. director of the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, of the University of Ottawa.

The writer is indebted in a very special way to Fr. Walter Bedard, O.F.M., S.T.D. of the Faculties of Ottawa University and of Loyola College, Montreal for his helpful assistance. Fr. Joseph Dooley, S.T.D., Ph. D. of long standing on the Faculties of the University of Ottawa and Marian College, Indianapolis, also read the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. Deep thanks must be extended to the Library staff of Sedes Sapientiae in helping in the research, and to Miss Mary Heilker for her long hours of typing.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Cyril G. Middendorf was born on August 11, 1923 in Covington, Kentucky. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy from the University of Dayton in 1944. He was ordained a priest in 1953 after following the seminary course of studies from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Fr. Middendorf began his studies for the Masters in Religious Education from the Catholic University of America in 1955. He successfully completed his studies and received his Masterate in Religious Education in 1960. He continued his studies for the doctorate program at the University of Ottawa in 1961 and received his doctorate in 1967.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	vi
I (UNIT 1).- GOD CALLS MAN --- MAN'S RESPONSE	1
LESSON I - GOD'S CALL TO HOLINESS --- TO GODLINESS.	1
LESSON II - MAN, GODLIKE IN NATURE.	12
LESSON III - THE LAITY AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD. . .	29
II (UNIT 2).- THE LAYMAN'S APPROACH TO GOD -- THERE IS A DIFFERENCE.	44
LESSON I - THE GREAT MEANS TO GODLINESS ARE THE SAME FOR ALL	44
LESSON II - THE DIFFERENCES IN SPIRITUALITIES . .	68
LESSON III - THE LAYMAN, PONTIFF OF CREATION. . .	87
LESSON IV - TO GOD THROUGH CREATION --- THE LAYMAN IN THE WORLD	106
LESSON V - HOW THE LAITY CAME TO IGNORE THE SECULAR WORLD	121
LESSON VI - THE EARLY CHURCH -- THE CATHOLIC GHETTO TODAY?	136
III (UNIT 3).- MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH.	155
LESSON I - THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH: A COMPLETE ECCLESIOLOGY	155
LESSON II - CHRIST, A PRIEST BY HIS VERY CONSTI- TUTION. .. THE LAYMAN, A PRIEST BY GRACE.	168
LESSON III - HIGHEST ACT OF THE LAY PRIESTHOOD: THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE	180

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

LESSON IV - A PROPHET IS A WITNESS TO CHRIST - THE LAYMAN AS WITNESS	194
LESSON V - A WITNESS TO CHRIST IN THE SECULAR WORLD	206
LESSON VI - THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH AND WORLD . . .THE LAY- MAN'S ROLE.	221
IV (UNIT 4).- THE LAYMAN'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE COM- MUNITY OF THE WORLD.	235
LESSON I - THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AND SPIRITUAL YOGA	235
LESSON II - THE WORLD LOOKS TO MAN, NOT TO GOD, FOR DIRECT FULFILLMENT	263
LESSON III - CHRISTIANITY BROUGHT ABOUT THE SECULARITY OF THE WORLD.	284
LESSON IV - SECULAR CITY ASCETICISM.	298
LESSON V - SECULARIZATION IN THE DAILY LIFE OF T OF THE STUDENT	.324
CONCLUSION	.339

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to propose and justify certain relatively new materials for an upper-class high school course in religion. The material will comprise a theology of the laity, stressing the layman's membership in the community of the Church and the community of the World.

The material itself will take shape in an eight weeks course, which will be outlined with some completeness. Presentation cannot be separated from material -- particularly with a high school audience; hence, the outline will offer the presentation to set off the material. Here the so-called kerygmatic approach will be used to present and develop the topics considered.

With the information available to the writer, no course of lay spirituality in this form exist at present. Catholic colleges across the U.S.A. at the moment are offering courses in lay theology. The content of such courses have been given a great impetus by the Second Vatican Council. The writer feels there is an urgent need for such a content course, on the high school level, especially for the upper-classmen.

There is at the present moment high controversy both over the catechetical program in general and the validity of the kerygmatic approach where the modern secular-city students are concerned. Even the expression "lay theology"

has become a controversial issue. There is a certain small group of writers who refuse to accept the validity of classifying a special theology for the laity.¹ The expression, lay spirituality might be more accurate and more to the liking of those who oppose the term and concept of lay theology. What is meant by lay spirituality is brought out by Fr. Congar in his book, Lay People in the Church.

A primary truth governs the whole question, and it is this: there is only one Christianity, one obligation to seek union with God in Christ, and so to tend to holiness; it is not the onerous privilege of priests and religious alone, it is the obligation of all Christians whatever in virtue of the one Christianity that is common to them all. But their vocations are diverse, their states and conditions of life are diverse: and accordingly, while it is true that there is no spirituality proper to the laity because theirs is the common Christian spirituality, it is also true that there is a spirituality proper to the laity because there is a spirituality of lay life, as there is of priestly life, or monastic life.²

Thus it is the hope of the writer, following the lead of Fr. Congar, and departing from John Cogley, to

1 John Cogley, who it might be added, is not the least among today's distinguished laymen writing on theological questions strongly opposes the term "lay theology". Mr. Cogley does not feel that all the emphasis on externalization of Religious as witnesses in contrast to the less manifest forms of witness of the laity should call for or warrant a whole new theology, lay theology. His objections can be found in Commonweal magazine, December and January issues, 1964.

2 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, London, Geoffrey, Chapman, 1959, p. 379.

present a course of lay spirituality which departs sharply from the conventional spirituality found in current high-school texts and sometimes labelled "monastic spirituality".

According to recent publications, it is becoming more and more obvious that today we are in a crisis of Catechetics.

One has only to be personally involved in the program, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, (C.C.D. a gigantic organization in scope, to teach the some 48% of our Catholic students who are now not in our Catholic schools) to confirm the above statement. Reports are coming from the religion teachers, lay and religious who agree that all is not well. "We are just not getting through to the kids." This is an everyday comment one hears on both the grade school and the high school levels. Even teachers of long standing, priests, brothers, nuns, and laymen throw up their hands in despair over making the catechetical program relevant. Says Mary Perkins Ryan: "But the fact that this need exist in the religion class shows why it is that the catechetical crisis will be solved only if we begin to realize that 'we're all in this together.' "³

The above noted author was referring to the article by a certain William Jacobs who wrote of the C.C.D. crisis

³ Mary Perkins Ryan, "Catechetics: We're all Involved," in Ave Maria, May 8th, 1965, p. 8.

particularly on the high school level.⁴ The present crisis calls for a closer look. There are possibly three reasons why the religion courses are suffering today. The crisis stems from either (a) the teacher presenting the message, or (b) from the recipient of the message, the student, or (c) from the content itself, the message. Probably and more realistically the crisis stems from a combination of the above three factors each in a greater or lesser degree.

Considering the teacher and his problems . . . a nun who has been teaching over twenty-five years writes: "Proof par excellence that we have for a long time failed to really give the true beauty of our Faith and its living to our young Catholics is that so many are living on the surface of their Faith."⁵ Reports Mrs. Marie Flynn: "My oldest now 19 attends Stonehill College. His complaints for the four years of high school was 'it's boring -- we learn nothing -- it's a complete waste of time.' My 17-year-old senior . . . echoed the same complaint. My freshman daughter, 'ditto.' "⁶

⁴ William Jacobs wrote of the C.C.D. crisis in the January 23rd issue of Ave Maria, 1965. Two years later Jacobs writes on the same topic and has this to say: "For all of the crisis and stress and apathy reported in recent years, it is still possible to report some favorable signs from the field."^{4a}

^{4a} William Jacobs, "A Survey of C.C.D.," in Ave Maria, April 22, 1967, p. 17.

⁵ An Editorial (unsigned) "Catechetical Crisis," in Ave Maria, March 6, 1965, p. 6.

⁶ Loc. cit.

In addition to the crisis experienced in the teacher and the student there is the problem of the message or content of the religion course. To use the kerygmatic approach in presenting Christian truths is often not sufficient. Too often we have been serving up the wrong content. Not only have we been offering the wrong content but we have been rather calloused to the mind of the student himself. "What the students think is important, but it is even more important how they think."⁷ (We do not intend to get side-tracked here and go into this whole new, vast and still in many respects uncharted area of how students think and how they develop their attitudes.)⁸ We are keenly conscious of the correct content. Often, it is said, we have forced the student into a kind of Disney Land, religious world which does not exist. And we wonder why the student finds the content so dull and impractical.⁹

7 Gabriel Moran, "Catechetics for the Real World," in America, July 16, 1966, p. 58.

8 Concerning the manner in which students think. . . two books might be suggested which are considered "musts" in our present day when it comes to the transfer of knowledge and the media for this: Pierre Babin, Options, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966, p. 206; Marshal McLuhan, Understanding Media, New York, Signet Pub. 1966, p. 104.

9 This point has been made recently with increasing persuasiveness by Gabriel Moran. Gabriel Moran, Catechesis of Revelation, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966, p. 174; Gabriel Moran, "Catechetics for the Real World," in America, July 16, 1966.

A theology of secularity will be developed in this thesis. This would be most practical today to prepare the student to live in the secular city.

Christian theologians in recent years have been engaged in the most serious examination of their basic concepts. They have been asking whether or not there are religious or Christian things at all, and how God's revelation-redemption is related to the whole temporal order. . . It seems to me that, generally speaking catechetics is still engaged in trying to construct a world outside the real world of existing people.¹⁰

It may be a legitimate conclusion that the student is often not ready to appreciate salvation history simply because he must first be introduced to the revelation of God's works. And this could be more correctly referred to as God's intervention in history rather than salvation history.¹¹

If one accepts the general conclusion of such writers as Gabriel Moran, it would seem that a high school presentation of religion should avoid overstressing Scripture and biblical modes of thought. (Creeping biblicism is the expression often used). There is a similar possibility of overstressing the liturgy. Since we are not trying to encase the student in an unreal world but preparing him for the secular city we ought to use material of the very world in which the student finds himself.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Revelation as history is currently receiving greater attention in theology, particularly in the writings of such men as Gerhard Von Rad and B. Pannenberg. Cf. Time, July 14, 1967.

The Church can no longer be treated as a refuge of defense against a non-Catholic world of error. Today the Church's stance must be one of universal ecumenism, meeting men where they are and searching with them in a spirit of free inquiry for the truth that goes beyond any of us. Such a position neither affirms the rightness of everything going on in the modern world nor denies the Church's claim to uniqueness before God. But it seriously questions the notion that the catechist should form his students with all the right answers taken from the Bible and the liturgy. . . . The word that is effective may or may not be a biblical word.¹²

A FURTHER PRECISION

In the present day then the terms "catechetical" and "kerygmatic" are on the lips of all who seem truly interested in reaching an audience that at times seems almost unapproachable -- the high school student. To the earnest teacher, the kerygma seems to be one of the more effective ways of presenting the Christian message. Because of the great number of people who use these ideas, the terms have taken on different shades of meaning. There is the strictly kerygmatic approach, and there are its various modified forms. The present dissertation will follow the so-called Adaptive Way which has to a great extent been associated in the United States with the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart. Two of their more basic books are: Adaptive Way of Teaching Confraternity Classes and Course for Training Religion Teachers.

¹² Loc. cit.

In summary: the purpose of this thesis is not to develop in a comprehensive manner the problems facing high school religion teaching and the catechetical content and methods now used. But it does seem quite obvious from the above brief treatment that serious problems face the teacher of religion both on the primary and secondary levels. Of the many varieties of ways of presenting the kerygma we have chosen one. This method could be sharply contested, but we are making use of a method of Catechetics which has been over the years tried and accepted in many circles.

A LIMITATION OF SCOPE

A thorough and comprehensive treatment of lay theology would call for a course which would take up one full year. Such is not the goal of the present proposed work. The applied part of the dissertation is limited to twenty lessons, covering eight weeks, or one quarter of the school year.¹³ There is reason for this limitation. There is hardly room in the present high school curriculum for a complete and extensive course in lay theology. And such a drastic change could hardly be hoped for at the moment.

¹³ In the United States high schools the scholastic year is often divided into four quarters. There are variations however. Typical, nevertheless, would be religion text books which are divided into quarters covering various facets of the Faith. One quarter of the senior year might be devoted to marriage, another to the four last ends of man, still another to Apologetics, and the last quarter to the social doctrine of the Church.

Yet many people see the need for this new outlook, for breathing some fresh air into the often stuffy existing program. Many religion teachers would no doubt welcome a current treatment of the laity, a topic which should truly hold the interest of the student. Replacing one existing quarter of the above mention sections of the Faith (Apologetics might well be the first to go or to be replaced since many informed persons in the field feel, in the age of Ecumenism, that Apologetics hardly has a place), would seem possible, appropriate and practical.

FOLLOWING RENEWAL IN THE CHURCH

People who are vitally aware of the message of Vatican II admit that great emphasis has been placed on the role of the laity in the Church. The Council's Constitution on the Church with its chapters on the "People of God" and "The Laity", make it clear that direct attention to the layman and his role in the Church and world is no longer a question of mere choice but one of obligation. Then there is the special call to holiness which the Council made to the laity. All this impels the religion teacher to instruct the student on his role in the renewed Church.

ORIENTATION TO KERYGMATIC THEOLOGY, TO THE ADAPTIVE WAY

This new form of theology is not considered a new branch of theology. Kerygmatic theology, according to Fr. Joseph Hofinger, one of its chief exponents is rather

"the functional orientation of theology, especially of dogmatic theology, moral and exegesis, towards the living appreciation and, as a consequence, to the vital and effective teaching and preaching of the faith."¹⁴ The kerygma, literally the announcement or the message, refers to the fundamental core truths which were proclaimed by the Apostles at Pentecost and the subsequent teachings as found in the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁵ Hence kerygmatic refers to both orientation (towards² living appreciation) and content (core truths). Some may think that this new approach is simply a more practical approach to religion. Not so. Kerygmatic is far more than simply multiplying examples and up-grading, the present religion course with numerous applications. The message of the Apostles at Pentecost and thereafter, the Scriptures in general, are not something to be attached or tacked on as some sort of after-thought or appendage. Nor must the Word of God be used to simply prove the doctrine at hand. The Scripture must impregnate the very doctrine, the very message. . . it must be the very source of our teaching. . . truly and integrally part of the matter. The truths proclaimed by the Apostles to the world were truths which were indeed proclaimable and able to be lived. This is, in fact, a departure from the old format of religion

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 247.

textbooks which had a preponderance of scholastic theology which excelled in formulas, divisions, and distinctions.

Unlike scholastic theology, kerygmatic theology proclaims the glad tidings, the good news of salvation as truly 'glad' and as 'good news'. The message must be an attractive one. It must be so, for it was the message of Christ the Savior. "Although the Word must be at the core of the message," writes John Muller,

there is still room and there must be maintained a balance of Scripture and the systematic teaching of doctrines of our religion so that it does not overshadow, nor is it overshadowed by the Biblical and Liturgical teaching. There must be a happy blend and well-ordered balance between the doctrinal presentation and the Biblical-Liturgical themes.¹⁶

Hofinger comments in a similar vein.

There is no question, therefore, either of minimizing the rational aspect of the Christian message or of replacing this aspect by more effective elements. The question is simply one of eventually complementing this rational aspect by also bringing out the equally important and essential dynamic aspect of the Christian message.¹⁷

Bound up inextricably with the Bible is the liturgy. This latter can hardly be separated from the Bible. "To accomplish so great a work", says Vatican II in its

¹⁶ John Muller, "An Outdated Epitaph", in Our Sunday Visitor, March 28, 1965, p. 8.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 235.

Constitution on the Church, "Christ is always present in His Church, especially in the liturgical celebrations."¹⁸ The liturgy is the life of the Christian. Unless the student has a proper appreciation and love of the Life of the Church, how can one expect him to live the dynamic life of Christ?

Christ, Our Lord, present in His Church, thus makes Himself the Master-Teacher of all Christians in the most direct and personal way. And he does so above all in the celebration of the liturgy. Here He is with us. Here He speaks to us through the inspired word of Scripture, and through all the persons, words and actions of the rites...Here He draws us into His own response of love to the Father, into His own prayer and sacrifice. Here He involves us in His own work of redeeming mankind.¹⁹

The liturgy brings to life the very words of Scripture. How can one possibly separate the very life of Christ from the student? The Mass, the sacraments, the prayers of the Church, the liturgical year, both the temporal and sanctoral cycles . . . these make up the liturgy of the Church. Now these very elements must become part of the daily life of the student. The real power of the Liturgy is pointed out by Gabriel Moran:

¹⁸ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, (N.C.W.C. translation), Washington, 1964, p. 31.

¹⁹ Mary Perkins Ryan, "Knowing God Through the Liturgy", in Our Sunday Visitor, Sept. 20, 1964, p. 8.

The liturgy is a great teacher because it does not concentrate grimly on saying all the right things that supposedly should be said. It lets the truth emerge out of reverence, artistry, dialogue, play and silence. Anyone who would successfully teach the Christian faith must be filled with the spirit of the liturgy. He must understand that all his teachings are fragile human experiences that have their culmination in the liturgical meeting with God.²⁰

The religion course offers a most excellent means, a most conspicuous opportunity for instilling the living liturgy. In the past the liturgy has often been neglected. It was at times treated but always as a separate division of the program. Once developed, it was promptly dropped. It is no small wonder, then, that our students have in the past chosen the last bench in Church and will continue to do so (even after the old-fashioned type of course) unless they are truly "struck" with the liturgy. Does not the liturgy give something? It teaches Christ, it gives Christ. Fr. Hofinger puts it well: "Long after the religious instruction is completed the liturgy will remain the master teacher."²¹ Yet in spite of the great teacher the liturgy is for certain, there will be no attempt to brag the liturgy into every lesson. The author will not attempt to force the presence of the liturgy where it does not naturally fit. Like the use

20 Moran, "Catechetics for the Real World," p. 59.

21 Hofinger, Pastoral Catechetics, p. 48.

of Scripture as mentioned above, we will often find no place in the area of the theology of secularity.

Unless a more relaxed, organic and unself-conscious use is made of Scripture with young people in America today, we will fail to communicate that reality which Scripture so beautifully embodies. . . . Most current attempts to drag the liturgy into all religious teaching are even more artificial than the uses of Scripture.²²

Blended with the Good News of Salvation and the liturgy of the Church there is the doctrine presented in a logical fashion. Both moral and dogmatic theology are developed in form of true biblical theology. To accomplish all this in one form is no small task. Yet this is the goal of the present proposal. The student must be presented the doctrine in a way that the accent is on Christ and the manner in which He presented His doctrine. The hallmark of His message was love. In the past, with the great dominance of the legalistic approach to the message of Christ, all the life-blood of love was drained from His Word and nothing was left of His teaching but a long list of "do's" and "don'ts." Religion for the student was dead because the message was dead. To sit in on certain religion teachers the stage was set: their message was dead. Rigor mortis had set in. Fr. Collins summarizes well the entire picture of kerygmatic theology:

22 Loc. cit.

The modern catechism (and the catechist who uses a catechism text today) will avoid the defects of present day texts: (1) too many divisions and formulas not correlated with or motivated by the themes of salvation history; (2) overly abstract in the sense of not being rounded and animated by biblical theology; (3) severely polemic and apologetic in content, as were the theology manuals which were the font of the catechism; (4) too many positive obligations which, although essential for Christian living, are not presented in the context of the joyful response of God's loving children to His merciful call for a knowing and loving service.²³

There remains one last element in teaching a dynamic Religion course. Hofinger terms it "Christian Living". The Adaptive Way terms the same idea as "Response". Although the wording is different, the idea is basically the same. That which must stand the acid test of all the wonderful words, the involved methods and the personal message conveyed by the teacher are the results. Is there a true carry-over from knowledge to true Christian living? There is much jargon used in the field of education. But no matter how one words it, the basic question is: Is the teacher doing a good job? And by this we mean all of the above. The religion teacher who is performing well will inspire his students to true Christianity. The greatest objective factor in achieving the desired results is the action of the Holy Spirit. The greatest subjecting factor in teaching is the

²³ Joseph Collins, "Knowing God Through Catechism," in Our Sunday Visitor, March 28, 1965, p. 15.

personality of the teacher. The most attractive way of presenting the message of Christ should be used. The kerygma, the good news of salvation, might well be this most attractive way.

It can hardly be overstressed at this point the importance of the content. For many years the Catholic schools have had excellent teachers but the content was poor, dull, unattractive, truly not the message of Christ. The kerygma is the good news of salvation given to man at Pentecost and in this dissertation we wish to follow in the spirit of Pentecost, the kerygma. As the Holy Spirit spoke through the Church at the first Pentecost, so at the second Pentecost, Vatican II, again the Holy Spirit is speaking very directly to man and a great part of his message here concerns the laity, his membership in the community of the Church and the World.

THE DAILY LESSON

The Adaptive Way employs a method which is most effective for unfolding the kerygmatic spirit. The daily lesson of the above mentioned Adaptive Way is as follows:

- 1--Prayer (liturgical, Scriptural, personal, "home-made" prayers.).
- 2--Orientation (It consists of introducing the lesson by means of Holy Scripture and a related story or an incident).
- 3--Presentation (Beyond a doubt, this is the meat of the daily lesson).

4--Assimilation (It consists of questions on the matter treated).

5--Christian Living: Response (This is concrete Christian Action).

This is the framework for each of the twenty lessons which, as explained above (page xiii), are offered as a practical application of the theoretical principles laid down in the present "Introduction".

Referring to the kerygmatic presentation of religion, Fr. Hofinger was quoted above (page xvi) as saying that this presentation in no way wishes to minimize or replace the rational aspects of the Christian message. Rather, it seems to the present writer, that theological precision and clarity are particularly required in the mind of the kerygmatic teacher as a constant point of reference. The teacher may not care to use formal definitions and distinctions but they must underline his explanations of doctrine. This is true also of the theology of secularity. Perhaps because of the relative newness of this field, the teacher must especially have clear in his mind all the basic elements which he will be treating. For example, it would be disastrous if he were to confuse, either in his teaching or his thinking the "world" that must be loved, and the "world" that must be shunned, or ideas of secularism and secularity. In the matter of Christian secularity, which is capital in the present dissertation, a contribution towards clarity and theological precision has been made recently by Charles Davis in his book,

God's Grace in History (London, Collins, 1966). A number of definitions and propositions used by Davis are added here with vague references as presuppositions and points of reference. Not all of these will apply explicitly in the lessons that follow, but all seem to be required as a background against which the teacher in the classroom can move with confidence--and with theological precision-- in this new field of Christian secularity. (Some of these definitions will again be presented to the students in the development of material at hand. They will not be as complex as here presented because of the persons involved.)

DEFINITIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

Secularization is the ascertainment of the place and value of the secular.

Secularisms is the exclusion of the sacred or transcendent. It is irreconcilable with Christian faith. Christians in general believe in God as transcendent to the world and man, and grace as transcendent over nature and reason.

Dechristianization, in the strong sense, is the general loss of Christian Faith. Secularization and dechristianization are considered by some (but not by the writer of this dissertation) as identical. Secularization as developed in this thesis is considered as a positive development and the mature fruit of Christianity.

Some writers are mistaken in their attempt to reconcile Christianity with secularism. The author here makes no such attempt. The secular or profane is the sphere of immediate reality; man can master it intelligently; it comes totally within his human grasp. The sacred is the unknown beyond, higher and deeper than the immediate reality; man cannot master it; it is usually grasped obscurely and symbolically.

Secularization widens the area of the secular, bringing more of it within the grasp of man's understanding. The secularists on the other hand conclude that the sacred will eventually be eliminated. Still others see secularization as a process of differentiation, overcoming all confusion of sacred and secular and enhancing both. Modern secularization may be considered as a purification of our concepts of the profane and the sacred. Christianity doctrinally required a radical distinction between the secular and the sacred. It unites the secular and the sacred in a unity of order but refuses to identify them.

There are areas where secularization have taken place: 1-- nature or the material world, the political order or the state, and the social order or society. The transcendence of God leaves nature as a secular reality which can be studied for its own sake without reference to His presence and action. The Church has given a new awareness of

the essential distinction between secular and sacred authority and has ceased to expect the State to promote the mission of the Church by political means. This development culminated in the "Declaration on Religious Liberty" in the Second Vatican Council. The acceptability for the Christian of the secular society is connected with the whole matter of integrating the sacred and secular as God's plan unfolds in history.

The mysterious sacred, the mystery of God, has been announced to men in history. The presence of this mystery brings a new force into men's lives, to transform their existence individually and socially. Man is now destined to live not just "as a man" from his own natural resources but as a child of God, in personal communion with Him, sharing His life, and called to know and love God as God knows and loves himself. Christianity comes as a new and higher integration of the life of men. The order of grace integrates and subordinates all the lower systems in man, without destroying them.

"The consecration of the world" (consecratio mundi) is a term not ordinarily accepted by the writer. It would be only acceptable as a phrase if it is understood as the Christianization of the world (making it more Christic) while at the same time, and at all times respecting the true identity of the world, its secularity. The phrase is unacceptable if it means a sacralization of the world, the attempt to

give the world a different identity, a false identity from the one given it by Christ at his Incarnation. The secular world of its very nature is open to the higher integration that the Church seeks to promote. But when the Church makes the world more Christic it attempts to bring it under the influence of grace. This does not sacralize it. The secular is not brought under Church authority which has the sacred as its sphere.

CHAPTER I

(UNIT 1)

GOD CALLS MAN --- MAN'S RESPONSE

LESSON I: GOD CALLS US TO HOLINESS. . .TO GODLINESS

PRAYER

"Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before Him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

"Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for He is our God and we
the people who belong to His pasture,
the flock that is led by His hand."¹
(Psalm 94, Verses 1,2,6,7)¹

or "O God, who did grant unto the blessed Martyr Thomas,
to embrace the cross with a cheerful and resolute
spirit amid the allurements of the world and the
pains of prison and death: grant we beseech You, by
his intercession and example that, quick to strive
for faith and justice, we may deserve to come
happily to the joys of eternal life. Through Our
Lord. (Collect from Mass on Feast of St. Thomas
More)²

ORIENTATION:

It is a known fact that most teen-agers give a cool
reception to the idea of the word "holiness". A better term,
"Godliness," does not disturb as much the mind of the

¹ Powis, Smith, Edgar Goodspeed, The Complete Bible,
Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1964. (For all
scriptural quotations this version: The Complete Bible will
be used.)

² J. Canon Rea, St-John's Missal, Michigan, Mosack
& Sons, 1961, p. 501.

upperclassman. Only the mature person has the courage to accept the idea of holiness. Do you feel that most students are afraid of the idea more out of ignorance than any other factor? Are students afraid of the term "Godliness"?, "Christ-likeness"?, Are all the above the same? Why is it in our day the style and "in" idea to appear non-Christlike?

Frank, a senior, says that holiness applies only to priests and nuns. Nancy, who is "pinned", makes no bones about it and comes out bluntly against holiness because it is opposed to fun and happiness and our way of living as teen-agers? Comments.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

Thus shall you say to the House of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: 'You have seen for yourselves what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now then, if you will but heed my injunctions, and keep my covenant, you shall be my very own out of all the peoples (For all the earth is mine), and you shall be a kingdom of priests to me, and a holy nation.' (Exod. 19:6)

But immorality or any form of vice or greed must not be so much as mentioned among you; that would not be becoming in God's people. There must be no indecency or foolish or scurrilous talk--all that is unbecoming. There should be thanksgiving instead. For you may be sure that no one who is immoral, or impure, or greedy for gain (for that is idolatry) can have any share in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph. 5:3-5) Other References: Deut. 7:6; 14:2, 21; Isa. 30:19, Mt. 5:48.

You who are husbands must love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her, to consecrate her, after cleansing her with the bath of water through her confessing him, in order to bring the Church to himself in all her beauty, without a flaw or a wrinkle or anything of the kind, but to be consecrated and faultless. (Eph. 5:25-27)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--Let's dispel the darkness
- 2--Christ preached holiness
- 3--Holiness consists in. . .
- 4--St. Paul called the Early Christians "saints".
- 5--There are many such saints around today, some among teen-agers, some among married people.

LET'S DISPEL THE DARKNESS

Most teen-agers want no part of this holiness bit but they are not radically opposed to Godliness. . .this does seem more manly. As soon as holiness is mentioned, a strong mental block is immediately set up. God made me to be happy. True. But happiness is something immediate. Now for the high school senior happiness might be in having a girl who cares for him. It's having security. Happiness is being well-liked at school. Happiness means having a car and his own freedom. He is convinced that the happiness as understood by the religion teacher is quite different from his concept of happiness. The teen-ager wants to live. He wants to live life to the hilt. Dullness, going to Church, "always praying", going to Mass, priests, nuns, sadness, no fun--these are associations students make with holiness.

CHRIST PREACHED HOLINESS

God, as his words above indicated, many centuries ago already called his chosen people to holiness. Christ, by the way he lived preached holiness. To the Pharisees He

said: "Who shall convict me of sin?" (Mt. 13:4). Yet these very men accused Him of many sorts of sins. They had both a false idea of holiness and also a very warped idea of the Law of God. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath by working miracles, of having a devil. Christ denied all these accusations. He proved rather conclusively that his enemies were wrong. Christ preached holiness of life to us. "So you are to be perfect, as Your Heavenly Father is" (Mt. 5:48). He taught His Apostles how to pray. He even counseled us in the words of St. Paul to pray always: "Always be joyful. Never give up praying. Thank God, whatever happens. For this is what God, through Jesus Christ, wants you to do" (1 Thess. 5:16-19). Do you think it is rather strange that the Apostle Paul tells to pray always? You know it is rather easy to find numerous passages where Christ preached holiness of life. In fact, it is belaboring the obvious. But then again, anyone can preach holiness. Often we don't practice what we preach. This goes for students, for parents, and may even apply to priests and Religious. Priests and Religious would be the first ones to set you straight. . .they are not automatically holy. They can say one thing in class. They can give the correct slant on Christ in class, and then go out of the classroom and do quite differently. Some students might be expert at the above type of hypocrisy.

GODLINESS CONSISTS IN. . .

Often people think that youth, because of their false ideas of what true Godliness is, are afraid of it, that they dislike it with a "passion". Because of some muddled thinking, and perhaps because of the tough struggle many youths have today with the really tough commandment, To love our neighbor as ourself. . .they say that Godliness and holiness is not for them. It is impossible. Too many teen-agers come to Confession having examined themselves not on the above commandment but only on the 6th and 9th commandment. If they have not failed in these areas then they have no sins. There needs to be some straight thinking on the matter of Godliness. Closeness to God is not a negative idea. In The Gospel According to Peanuts, (Peanuts is a popular comic strip, well known to most teen-agers and often carries theological overtones in its message.)

Lucy sums up this 'whole trouble' this way:

You know what the whole trouble with you is, Charlie Brown?

'No, and I don't want to know! Leave me alone.

The whole trouble with you is you won't listen to what the whole trouble with you is!'

But Lucy is not such a good listener either. In another cartoon she tells Charlie Brown,

The whole trouble with you is you don't understand the meaning of life!

'Do you understand the meaning of life?' he asks her.

Her reply: We're not talking about me, we're talking about you!

(The doctrine of Original Sin is a theme constantly being dramatized in Peanuts. And as Lucy asks Charlie Brown, after demonstrating to him how his pebble-like virtues are no match for the boulder-like defects) --- 'Don't you think you're lucky to have me around to point up these things in such a graphic manner?'³

The contrary is true. Christ told the man of the Gospel, when he asked Him what he must do to be saved, to love God with his whole heart, with his whole mind and with his whole soul, and to love his neighbor as himself. Godliness consists in loving our neighbor and God in our neighbor. This is doing the Will of God. This is to identify a Christian. How does a student know the Will of God? At times this can be rather involved and obscure. But then again, it can be quite simple and obvious. If I am truly loving my neighbor - he is my parents, my brothers and sisters at home, my fellow students, those in my parish, those in my community, regardless of their race or color or creed - then this love will be demonstrated in the above persons. Is it rather clear now why this is the difficult commandment? Can it be said that the student who has true love for his neighbor will love himself correctly? What does it mean to love oneself correctly? Many people do not love themselves correctly---and this is why they find it almost impossible to love their neighbor. True?

³ Robert Short, The Gospel According to Peanuts, Philadelphia, John Know Press, 1965, p. 34.

ST. PAUL REFERS TO THE SAINTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The Apostle, Paul, uses the term "saint" in a somewhat different manner from that in which we are accustomed to seeing the word. Our common interpretation of a saint is one who is canonized and who has a special feast day and a special Mass in the Liturgy of the Church. Paul refers to the Christians at Jerusalem as the saints: "About the collection for God's people (saints), I want you to do as I told the churches of Galatia to do." (1 Cor. 16:1). If Paul, the Apostle, uses the term "saints" for the Christians at Jerusalem, for the whole community, and especially for the apostles, it would seem that most of us sitting here are saints of God, God's people. To be able to receive the Sacrament of Love, the Holy Eucharist, we must be saints. To partake of the body and blood of the Lord, we have to be God's people, saints.

Does not the consecrated Cup which we bless mean that in drinking it we share in the blood of Christ? Does not the bread that we break mean that in eating we share in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body, for we all share the one loaf (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

To be a saint can well mean to live daily the Divine Life of God, sanctifying grace in our soul. As Christians we are all called to Godliness of life. As Christians we are members of the Church. Christ sanctified the Church; He delivered Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her.

By sending the Holy Spirit on the Church at Pentecost He further brought the Church to perfection. Whether we are the laity or members of the hierarchy, we are all the Church and are called to Godlike living.⁴ "This is the will of God, your sanctification." (1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 1:4). It is then as Christians and because we are Christians that we are called to holiness. Priests, nuns, Brothers are called to sanctity of life. The laity are also called to the same Christlike living.

It would seem that our young friends at the beginning of this lesson should be questioned further on their attitudes. We are called to holiness because we are Christians, because we are members of the Church, the bride of Christ.

Thus it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. By this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society.⁵

At this point one may be a bit confused because he never heard this teaching of Christ applied to the laity. It is true that up to the present Vatican Council the challenge to holiness of lay life was surely not stressed, indeed hardly mentioned, surely not emphasized in the words we have in

⁴ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 43.

⁵ Ibid., p. 44.

our Vatican II. Holiness had in the past been associated with others, indeed not the laity. The Religious was the one to strive for sanctity. (They, of course, still must do this. Nothing has been changed in Vatican II with reference to the Religious.) Theirs is a special grace to follow Christ in a distinct manner. You might wish to accept this distinctive way of life. "Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity."⁶ The laity have a most noble vocation. He has a great dignity, the dignity of a Christian. A Christian has many privileges and obligations in the Church. One such privilege is to be able to accept the call made first to the Chosen People.

Is my happiness destroyed by living as a true Christian should live? Pleasure may be found outside the framework of the love of God, outside of His Commandments. True, lasting joy and happiness are never found where love is absent. Do you wish to challenge this statement? Intellectually, one might accept the statement; emotionally, one might well rebel. How does one handle such a problem? One speaks about emotional involvement. One may be emotionally

6 Loc. cit.

involved in a boy-girl relationship. All of us have emotional involvements in our lives. Intellectually, we see the answer very clearly. We see what we ought to do. But we cannot bring ourselves to make the change. It will take many years for the laity to accept the call to holiness in the Church, but it will come gradually. It is being accepted by some of the laity already. There are lay saints in the Church.

ST. THOMAS MORE WAS SUCH

Thomas More was a married man. In fact, he was married twice, his first wife having died. Yet today Thomas is in the Liturgy of the Church. He was truly a man for all seasons. He is a saint; he lived in a Godlike manner during life. He is a Saint in the Church. This is why the collect was chosen from the Mass of Thomas More.

ASSIMILATION

- 1--Could you list some incorrect notions about Godliness, holiness and happiness?
- 2--Which is easier, to preach holiness, or to live holiness? Why?
- 3--What do you think has brought on this so-to-speak "sudden" emphasis of holiness for the laity?
- 4--Could you explain the idea of Christ-likeness to a high school friend in a way that it would not be embarrassing to you and in a manner that he might just "buy" the idea?
- 5--What is happiness? What is holiness? What is your idea of God?

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Could we discuss the complicated process of gaining convictions, of becoming emotionally involved? Discuss also how one might change a conviction, and get out of the emotional involvement?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

You know a student who is emotionally involved in some problem, serious or otherwise. Sit down, analyze his problem, and work out a solution step by step. Put this plan on paper and put it into effect.

How could this class start taking seriously the universal call to Godliness?

Is there a closed retreat program for underclassmen?

LOOKING AHEAD

- 1--Ask for one student who will compose a prayer fitting into the theme of Lesson.
- 2--Pick out several large pictures from a magazine---find a Scripture text from the Gospels which might well apply to the picture, e.g., a picture of Appalachia (Appalachia, that area of Eastern United States, which derives its name from the surrounding mountains, and which in general has been one of the depressed areas of this Country). . . "When I was naked you clothed me. . ."

LESSON II: MAN, GODLIKE IN NATUREPRAYER:

It is fitting indeed and just, right and helpful to salvation, for us always and everywhere to give thanks to You, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God; for when Your Only-begotten Son showed Himself in the substance of our mortal nature, He restored us by the new light of His own immortality. And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominations, and with the whole host of the heavenly army we sing a hymn to Your glory, saying again and again: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Preface of Epiphany)¹

ORIENTATION: Today we smile politely at people before us who believed in miracles and visions. Our generation is the knowing generation. Science has advanced us beyond the unenlightened age of our parents. Periodically in the past stories seem to have cropped up of visions of the Virgin Mary. Around the time of the Second World War there were stories about Our Lady's appearance in the Bronx in New York. Then there were the rumors of visions of Our Blessed Mother in Fairmont Park in Philadelphia. More recently there were reports of Mary's appearance in Necedah, Wisconsin. The leading magazines covered the story in true American fashion.

¹ J. Canon Rea, St. John's Missal, p. 778.

Many people were led to believe the visions as authentic. Even some members of the Catholic clergy vouched for the authenticity of the visions. Amid all the stories and rumors of the messages of Our Lady in her visions was one to the effect that in this one small town only a few people were living in the state of grace: some old people in the Old Folks Homes, of the city, and the priests and nuns. What would be your comment on such a report from a visionary?

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Then God said, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, the wild beasts, and all the land reptiles!" So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; he created both male and female. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it: the birds of the air, the domestic animals, and all the divine things that crawl on the earth!" (Gen. 1:26-28)

Jesus answered, "Anyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but anyone who drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty, but the water that I will give him will become a spring of water within him, bubbling up for eternal life." (John 3:13-14)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE

- 1--The natural dignity of Man: foundation of all his greatness
- 2--Man can love. He is human, he is a person, he can think and will,
- 3--Grace builds on our wonderful human nature.
- 4--The Life of God within man
- 5--That which augments the Life of God within man

ALARMED OVER INCREASE IN TEEN-AGE SUICIDES

This is a fact. The statistician tells us that the percentage of suicides among the young people is on a sharp rise. This seems odd. Young people of high school and college age are constantly told that their most carefree years are those years right now of which they are a direct part. Perhaps even college life, which has the image of a life lived to the fullest, cannot compare to high school life, which has less pressures and demands. One often has to succeed in college. The constant prospect of war and the draft adds to the pressures. Marriage, security, social position, an important job--these are often directly dependent on success in the four years of college. Not in such an immediate and direct way is high school life. There are many factors involved in the sharp rise of suicides. The type of life that the teen-ager lives seems to be a prime factor. Yet what is behind this type of life, this highly complex mode of living of modern youth? Young people with a purpose and a true sense of belonging do not suffer the suicide frustrations of the shiftless and purposeless. People who have purpose in living have achieved a sense of importance in their own person.

Every person, no matter what his age, must establish in his own mind his sense of true importance. He must recognize his own worth if he is to have a healthy mental outlook on the world and his fellow man. Many people there are today

who do not recognize and realize their own intrinsic worth as a person. Within man's very being, excluding all his exterior possessions, there is a dignity which the Scriptures tell us reflects the very image of God. Man as man, not just by his intellect and will, but in his very being there is the image of God.

Spirit and dust compounded to form an image of the Infinite; living in time and space, yet headed towards a goal that lies beyond both; part of the created universe yet destined to share the glory and joy of the Creator, that man who places himself in the care of a doctor is something more than nerves and tissue, blood and organs. And though the doctor is called in directly to heal the body, he must often give advice, make decisions, formulate principles that affect the spirit of man and his eternal destiny. It is, after all, the man who is to be treated: a man made up of soul and body, who has not only temporal interests but also eternal; and as his temporal interests and responsibility to family and society may not be sacrificed to fitful fancies or desperate desires of passion, so his eternal interests and responsibility to God may never be subordinated to any temporal advantage.²

We see people with little or no self-respect. We say that these people, be they teenagers or adults, have not discovered their true selves. They have not grasped the words of Scripture: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness." There is little sense in speaking of love and the grace of God unless one can first, in a true and correct manner, recognize his natural dignity. The accusation has

² Monks of Solesmes, The Human Body, Boston, St. Paul Editions, p. 221.

been thrown at Catholics that often they are so intent on acquiring supernatural virtues they forget quite completely about many of the natural virtues so important for daily living. What natural virtues are involved in recognizing the above dignity? The foundation of the supernatural rests firmly on the natural. People who do not develop and construct their supernatural life on the natural either end up with no supernatural life or at the most with a very atrophied Godlike life or they are somewhat neurotic and unbalanced.

Another obvious condition of man's person: he is not self-sufficient. God is self-contained. He needs no other person outside the Trinity of Divine Persons to "recognize" His greatness or the fact that He is God. Man, on the contrary, is not self-contained. That he recognizes his own dependence is just a start. But it is indeed a very good start and an all important one. Man is a social being and as social being he must have the recognition of other men to give him an added sense of worth. Perhaps a hermit (if such exists today) or a monk living in total seclusion might not need the recognition of other men. Most of us are not built like the hermit or the monk. Yet this recognition of our fellowmen of our worth cannot be bought directly. Have you ever seen a student seek directly the praise of his fellow students? What is your impression of a student who seeks

popularity directly? Your reaction is probably quite normal. Such a person repels you and he ends up completely lacking that which he has sought. Man must never seek his own glory directly. The high school athlete who forgets his own interests, who serves his fellow students, who forgets the cheers and glory from the fans. . .this student generally ends up rather close to the top in popularity and esteem of his fellow students.

THE VENEER, THE FALSE, THE SHAM-CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE

Few persons are fooled by the veneer, the counterfeit he offers in place of his real self. We dislike the snow job people pull on us. So many students try to put on the act, as we say. They try to be someone else. They are "big deals"! They are "one of the boys". And they try to prove to all comers that they can hold their beer and have their women. Young girls have other ways of presenting a phony personality. Most normal students are balanced enough to present themselves as they are. Or you have girls who walk around with that fake cool look of "nothing-in-the-world-can-touch-me-baby." Do you know such girls? Do they attract you? Everybody knows that if their steady told them: "It's all off," they just might shatter into a "thousand pieces" on the spot! We should never search for excuses to hide our defects! People who are straightforward and accept the blame for defects and shortcomings--these

people are mature; we admire them. There are young people who will defend every action of their lives to their last letter. Such people we classify as insecure. They are always on the defensive.

St. Francis once prayed:

Lord make me an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.³

HUMANITY IS THE TRUTH

The statement that truth is often more strange than fiction might well apply to all of us. To recognize the truth about our humanity is indeed no small matter. When the inspired author put down in Genesis: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'" (Gen. 1:26) . . . if these were not the words of God we might well tend to challenge man's true intrinsic value. In looking about and observing humanity in general, the temptation might be to truly doubt the dignity accorded to man by God. A friend of mine relates this story:

³ Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun," in The Little Flowers of St. Francis, New York, Image Books, p. 19.

He was traveling with another friend of his in New York. They entered a hotel and this friend was mistaken for the owner of the hotel and an entire chain of hotels. He was immediately told that the best room in the house would be at his disposal. It took this friend of mine quite a few hours to get over the shock. What is such in comparison to having someone tell us that we are the image of God? We resemble God Himself. To truly accept this statement, to understand the profound meaning behind the sacred words of Scripture, can change one's entire life. The Word of God is trying to explain to us that we resemble God so much that we are the very image of God.

Revelation thus teaches us those lofty truths concerning the human body, which natural sciences and art, of themselves, are incapable of discovering; truths which endow the body with a new value and a higher dignity, and so provide more pressing motives for us to give it the respect which it deserves.⁴

Our very person reflects God. This resemblance we bear to God is so great, this likeness is so profound, that there is an image. Not every likeness produces an image. Some persons have such faint likeness of others that we cannot say they are the image of the other. But, on the other hand, likeness can be so striking that it can be said there is a true image. I suppose when Christ asked the Pharisees for a

⁴ Pontifical Documents, edited by Monks of Solesmes, The Human Body, p. 217.

coin and He told them to examine it, after He asked them whose image and inscription was thereon the Jewish leaders were forced to say: "Caesar's!" The figure of a man resembling Caesar was so striking that Christ could use the word "image". Now God's image is stamped on man! His very likeness is imprinted on our person. This image, of course, is not perfect. The stamp of Godliness includes our entire being.

The King of the universe in one way or another, formed from the slime of the earth the marvelous work which is the human body. It was to be a worthy crown of creation. He breathed in its face a breath of life and so the body became the dwelling place and instrument of the soul. Thus, matter was placed at the prompt service of spirit, and the spiritual and material world were thereby brought together and united in a synthesis which is difficult for our minds fully to understand--united not only by a bond that is merely external, but in the unity of human nature. Thus raised to the honor of being the dwelling place of the spirit, the human body was ready for its dignity of being the very temple of God, with even higher prerogatives than those which are due to a building consecrated to Him.⁵

God has no matter within His person. He has no body. Some say our soul is more essential in resembling this likeness of God. Others would say our whole person is the image of God and truly so because man is only complete and truly himself in both his body and soul. Christ, who truly was man, who had a perfect body like our own (we say each day in the

⁵ Ibid., p. 217.

Angelus: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.") and gives supreme dignity to our body.

MAN CAN THINK, AND REASON: MAN CAN WILL, AND LOVE

There are many things young people can do. They seem at times super-versatile. There are many kinds of sports. Some sports probably have a thousand different motions. It takes a long time, constant practice and perseverance to achieve proficiency in any given sport. Modern dancing, which is more visceral than anything else, surely has a thousand and one different wiggles to master. All people admire great skill in a sport or the physical grace of dancing. These natural acts of sports and dances can be good and wholesome or they can detract from man's dignity.

In the intensive use and exercise of the body, this fact must be taken into account. Just as there are gymnastics and sport which, by their austerity, help to keep the instincts in check, so, too, there are other forms of sport which reawaken them, either by violent pressure or by sensual allurements. Even from the aesthetic standpoint, in the pleasure derived from beauty and the admiration of rhythm in dance and gymnastics, instinct can subtly put its poison into the mind.⁶

Yet these actions, wonderful as they are, are not the highest and most perfect actions attributed to man. Animals have in common with us many motor skills; animals can even play some

⁶ Ibid., p. 219.

sports, at least after a fashion (though it might be challenging an animal too much to try to teach him our modern dances); nevertheless, there are two actions which only man can perform. These two actions distinguish man, they set man off from all lower creatures. Man, like God, can think! Man, like God, can will and love!

There are two perfect actions in God. God thinks. This thought of God the Father generates the Son. We read in St. John's Prologue:

In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God and the Word was Divine. It is He that was with God in the beginning. Everything came into existence through him, and apart from him nothing came to be.
(Jn. 1:1-3)

The Word, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity, is the infinite expression in thought of the Father. This thought is infinitely perfect; it is the Son of God. Man's faculty to think is not infinite, but it is so great that it makes us the image of God. Our thoughts do not generate a person but our thoughts reveal the deepest secrets within our person. Our thoughts are universal. Man's capacity for a variety of thoughts and ideas, although not infinite, has no definite limits. Only because man can think can he alone of all the creation know God. He can know and acknowledge the existence of God. Man's mind has been fashioned in a way that it must always seek the truth. Even with the effects of original sin, the common heritage of man, his mind, although "darkened"

or confused, nevertheless still seeks the truth. Young people have almost a "passion" for seeking the truth. Their desire for the truth is outstanding. This quality Christians believe is implanted in our faculty by God. Pilate asked Christ: "What is truth?" Christ gave no answer here but He did say: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He also said: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Our Faith lays great stress on the truth. There are students today who say they buy the expression of Augustine, love and then do as you like . They apply this statement---they love a girl, they can express their love as they see fit and not according to the Rules of God and the Church. What is love? St. Paul gives us a good idea of love:

Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth; bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Cor., 13-4-7)

Truth today is on the lips of the World. Who possesses the truth? What religion? With deep respect to our separated brethren, we believe that we possess the whole and complete truth. They indeed have the truth but it is not perfect.

The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter.⁷

MATTER AND SPIRIT

At this point we must not make the error of forgetting that all of us are citizens of this world. We have taught for too long a time that man may be in the world but is he really of it. He is an exiled citizen passing through this world. Quite incorrect! Christians have ignored the world and the great influence the World has on man's salvation. Because Catholics especially have ignored the world, we have lost the world to Christ. Vatican II is now saying, to paraphrase a very popular song, "Stop the world, I want to get on." The salvation of souls today is so bound with matter and the world that we can hardly afford to ignore it. The same is the case with our spirituality. Our spirituality must be a human spirituality, one based on the dignity of the intellect and will, to be sure, but let's not forget the body. Our bodily life is not some sort of springboard for our spirit, and once we are aloft we forget the body. We need the body to be complete, and our greatness in creation is because we are body and spirit.

⁷ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 17.

Man then "has not two lives, but one. Neither a part-time body nor a spirit on the side, man is called to wholly and integrally human. For in this human worldly life, everything is involved, including God. Only in the measure we enter into it can we know fulfillment."⁸ Chardin has written some beautiful lines on the sacredness of matter and the world---

Blessed be you, universal matter, immeasurable time, boundless ether, triple abyss of stars and atoms and generations: you who by overflowing and dissolving our narrow standards or measurement reveal to us the dimensions of God.⁹

No upperclassman would deny that love is wonderful, that love is a many-splendor thing. Some of us are probably right now in love. It can be wonderful, it is wonderful. All of us have experienced love. We love people; we love our good parents; we love our friends; we love God. And God loves us beyond a doubt. Actually, God first loved us... our love is now a response to His love. A person of the other sex may also love us right now. No one in his right mind would deny that love exists. And being loved and being able to love is indeed wonderful. Love we have in common

⁸ Robert Johann, "Matter and Spirit", in America, July 10, 1965, p. 52.

⁹ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Hymn of the Universe, New York, Harper & Row, p. 68.

with God. "God is love," St. John tells us. God is infinite love. The Apostle John also tells us about God's love for us: "For God loved the world so much that He gave His Only Son, so that no one who believes in Him should be lost." (Jn. 3:16; 14:20-21).

The perfect love of the Father for the Son, and the Son's love of the Father is the inspiration of love which results in the 3rd person, the Holy Spirit. It can be said then that the Holy Spirit is pure love. Human beings are the image of God because they can love. And people who are in love so much that they get married. . .their love reflects the fruitfulness of God's love and brings into existence a person. Every action of man, no matter how much it is bound up with matter, e.g., eating, drinking, the marriage act, has a great perfection and beauty if intelligence and love are present.

All natural and supernatural perfection of man rests on the statement of the Word of God in Genesis: "Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness." (Gen. 1:26)

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--What is meant by a sense of importance?
- 2--What is meant by loving oneself correctly?
How does a person gain the respect of others?
- 3--Explain the seeming contradiction, to develop one's personality one must forget self and give oneself to others. What causes a person

- 3--(continued)
to twist and distort his personality by working directly at his own importance?
- 4--How is it that often the only person who is fooled by the veneer of his personality is the very person himself?
- 5--What is the difference between image and likeness? Discuss the two elements in man's person which make him the image of God.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--High School life should be for the most part free of major worries. . . do you agree or disagree? What are some of the more serious problems that a high school student faces?
- 2--Young men and women who have a sort of counterfeit personality, do they want to remain this way? What would be your advice to them?
- 3--If we have such a great natural dignity because of our body and our ability to think and to will and love. . . then how do you explain the fact that often man acts lower than animals? Could you give some explanation and example? Is the word "lower" used correctly?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

From the Liturgy, from the great men of our country pick out saints of our day whom you think used their great intellectual gifts to become truly Godlike.

Or a humanitarian who, in your own opinion, was outstanding for his love of his fellow men and used this faculty to become a great person.

Go through the Scriptures and pick out passages where Christ used things of nature, material things, in his work of teaching and instructing.

What is meant by personality development? Explain in a short treatise the elements that go into completing full personality.

Examine the words in the "Sound of Music" and analyze the tremendous sentiments of love in the young lady and Mr. Von Trapp.

LESSON III: THE LAITY AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

PRAYER: (Of Mary, the model of all the laity)

My heart extols the Lord, my spirit exults in
God, my Savior. For He has noticed His slave in
her humble station, for from this time all the ages
will think me favored! For the Almighty has done
wonders for me. How Holy His name is.
(Luke 1:46-49)

ORIENTATION

Mark, a senior, who has all but lost his Faith,
made a comment on the Sunday sermon in which the priest ex-
plained the changes in the Mass and why the laity should
take a more active part in the Sacred mysteries. His com-
ment: "The priests and nuns are getting tired of doing all
the work in the Church and so they are trying to build us
up and make us feel we have a responsibility to the Church."
Any comments?

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

For you are a people consecrated to the Lord,
your God, the Lord, your God having chosen you out of
all the peoples that are on the face of the earth to
be a people of his very own. It was not because you
were the greatest of all peoples that the Lord set
His heart on you and chose you (for you were the
smallest of all peoples), but it was because the
Lord loved you, and would keep the oath that He swore
to your fathers, that the Lord brought you out by a
strong hand, and rescued you from a state of slavery,
from the power of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Be assured,
then, that the Lord your God is God, a trustworthy
God, who to a thousand generations keeps loving
faith with those that love Him and keep His commands,

but one who immediately requites anyone who hates him, by destroying him, never delaying with anyone who hates him, but requiting him immediately (Deut. 7:6-8).

You shall be a people holy to Yahweh your God. Yahweh will set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and you shall be a people holy to Yahweh your God, as he has spoken. (Deut. 26: 18-19). (This is not a translation from the Goodspeed Edition)

PRESENTATION

Outline:

- 1--Some confused ideas about the laity
- 2--Origin of the word "laity" and the true meaning
- 3--Vocation of the laity: to offer a true Sacrifice
- 4--Position of the laity in the Church

SOME CONFUSED IDEAS ABOUT THE LAITY

It would only take a few questions on the part of the teacher asking your opinion on the meaning of the term "laity". . .and shortly there would be a great variety of different ideas of just what the term "laity" means. Such confusion would be "par for the course" as the expression goes. There have been many people in the past who have done a good deal of muddled thinking about the true origin and meaning of the term in question. Sitting here right now you may think that "laity" applies to those persons who are not priests and bishops. The laity are those persons who are not religious, priests, Brothers or Sisters. A student who has done some reading on the matter might say that you have priests and the laity. The priests are active in the Church, the laity are passive.

Somebody once said that the laity are in the body of the Church and they have three things to do during Mass: they are to pray, to obey and pay. How do you feel about this? Many people have thought for centuries that the laity belonged to the Church in some way, in some sort of inferior way. They were sort of second-rate citizens in the Church. They surely had no voice in the Church, (they were to be like children in that they should be seen and not heard) and they had no definite role or responsibility in the Church.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD "LAITY" AND TRUE MEANING.

All of the above has been quite sharply reversed in recent years and especially since the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. There has been a lot of re-thinking and returning to the times of the Early Church where we see, no doubt, the true meaning of laity and their true role in the Church. It seems that the word laity goes back many centuries to the Jewish people. The word then meant "People of God". Quite a switch of meaning from some of the ideas put forward above. The meaning is a most beautiful one; one that is very rich in meaning. "People of God," "People Consecrated to the Lord," these are the meanings or translations of the Greek word "laos" or "laity". "For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God, the Lord your God having chosen you out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth to be a people of his very own. (Deut.7:6)

St. James refers to the laos when he says, "On arriving at Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the presbyters, and they proclaimed all that God had done with them" (Acts 15:4). And again we have a similar idea from Peter:

You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may proclaim the perfections of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. You who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (Peter, 2:9-10).

The expression "People of God" was first applied then to God's chosen people. Why did God choose this race, the Jewish people, to be a holy people? God tells the Israelites why He has chosen them, not because they were a powerful and influential people, not because they "were the greatest of all peoples that the Lord set His Heart on you" (Deut. 7:6), but because they were in reality the smallest and most insignificant of all people. It could well be that God wanted to show the other nations his power and might. God often chooses the low, insignificant and foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

For consider your own call, brethren; that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the 'wise', and the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong (1 Cor. 26,27).

Why God would want to save us is itself a mystery. It is clear that God wants us to share in His glory. Each one of us, every student, is destined for glory and for complete and full happiness for all eternity. This was God's message to His people. This is the message to all mankind. "Now I really understand that God shows no partiality, but welcomes the man of any nation who reveres Him and does what is right." (Acts, 10:35) St. Peter spoke these words to the people after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever wondered about the salvation of all nations? Who are saved? What is meant by the statement: outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation?

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.¹

¹ Vatican Council II, Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, in Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Ind. Our Sunday Visitor Press, p. 4.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harrassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to 'maintain good fellowship among the nations' (1 Peter 2:12), and if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.²

St. Peter tells us that the requisite for salvation is to know God, revere Him and do what is right. How many millions of people do not know of God? How are they saved? What is meant by doing what is right? Can a person do what is right even if he has never been taught the Ten Commandments? Have you ever thought of the fact that. . .

1--We were born into a highly complicated civilization yet we know about God.

2--We could have been born in some mission land and never heard of God.

3--We could have been born into our own secular city and still never have heard of God.

St. Augustine once said that God created us without our consent but He will not redeem us without our consent.

Why should God choose a race, a people, to save?

² Ibid., p. 6.

God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness. He, therefore, chose the race of Israel as a people unto Himself.³

God made a covenant with His people. He would protect them from their enemies if they would keep His Commandments. The Jewish people were to be a witness at all times to all other nations of this covenant.

TEEN-AGERS AND THE CRISIS OF THE MASS

Most adolescents find Christ boring. They are not much interested in Christ. They find Mass boring. . . they find Religion boring. The Mass is without meaning to him. He sees no need for the Mass. He does not understand how it relates to himself. Are these the reasons why so many high school students miss Mass on Sunday? What is your opinion? Is there a factor of students losing the sense of sin involved here also? What is meant by the sense of sin? Because parents feel it their strong obligation to force their children to assist at Mass. . . and because perhaps your parents have done this to you, is this the reason you miss Mass now? Should parents force their children to assist at Mass? What are you going to do as a parent in a

³ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 10.

few years from now? Will you feel free of any obligation if you do not insist that your children attend Mass? Have we found the answer yet to good teaching and training?

Have the memorized answers of the Confirmation class given you, the student, a clear understanding of the sacrament and your commitment to Christ? Has a forced attendance at daily Mass during grade school given you a personal love for worship? Do busy, cold, tyrannical parents prepare you psychologically to accept the personal warmth and love of God? Do priests, Sisters and Brothers, who often seem to be lacking in a personal commitment to Christ by the way they go about teaching Religion, impart a commitment to Christ in you? Do religion classes which are merely extended sermons on morality, usually in matters of sex but, in any case, couched in terms of "keeping the law", help you to better understand the Christian life?⁴

BEFORE THE MASS---VOCATION OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE:
TO OFFER A TRUE SACRIFICE

Long before the Sacrifice of Calvary and the Mass the Jews had a calling. This was the true vocation of the Jewish people. They, as a nation, were to offer a true sacrifice to their God. This was the unconditional demand of the Lord.

If you truly hear my word and keep my alliance, you will be my special people among all the nations: for all the earth is mine. And you shall be a kingdom of priests and a nation of saints (Exodus 19:5-6).

⁴ Kevin Coughlin, "Do We Know How to Teach Religion?" in Ave Maria, Nov. 6, 1965, p. 14.

It is quite striking that, although the People of God had an hereditary priesthood in the tribe of Levi, nevertheless as a people the entire nation was to bear witness to the true God. This is why the Lord calls them a kingdom of priests. It is the priest's function to offer sacrifice. This, then, is the function of all the people, the laity, the people of God. Quite a noble and lofty calling. Might we say that the original notion of laity, or people of God, differs sharply from many of the ideas the laity have today of their own calling. Now all that happened in the Old Testament was a preparation and a prefiguring of the new covenant which was to be established by Christ.

All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ, and of that fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God Himself made flesh.⁵

Christ was to bring to perfection the Old Law and lay new stress on the Law of Love in place of the Law of Fear. The Jewish people were to be the foundation of the more perfect covenant given to us by Christ. God spoke of this new covenant to his people: "Behold, days are coming", is the oracle of the Lord,

⁵ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 10.

when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt -- that covenant of mine which they broke, so that I had to reject them -- but this is the covenant which I will make with the House of Israel after those days,

is the oracle of the Lord:

I will put my law within them, and will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:31-33).

ISRAEL: CHURCH OF GOD -- OUR CHURCH:
CHURCH OF CHRIST

There is the temptation to say that all the above material applied to the Jewish people but does not apply to me many centuries later. On the contrary, the people of Israel were already called the Church of God. The new Israel, the one true Church, the Catholic Church, is called the Church of Christ.

All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ, and of that fuller relevant which was to be given through the Word of God Himself made flesh.⁶

Every student here is a member of the Church of Christ. What was the vocation of the laity, or the people of God in the Old Testament is now my vocation in an even more perfect manner. They were a chosen people; I am a member of the

⁶ Loc. cit.

chosen of Christ. They were to be a holy people; I am called to holiness of life. The Jewish people were to be a nation of priests offering a true sacrifice; I have the great privilege of being a member of the priesthood of the Faithful by Baptism and Confirmation and to offer a true sacrifice, to co-offer the Mass together with the ordained priest. In place of the Chosen People of the Old Testament are we of the Church of Christ.

POSITION OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH

The layman's position in the Church is crystal clear. His role is indeed not a passive one. It is true, and one has a point, that only very recently have the Council, the Bishops and the Church in general stressed the great social act which the Mass is. The Mass is not a prayer of private devotion. It is dynamically social in its very essence. The Mass is a renewal of Calvary, the witnessing of the Resurrection, the renewal of the love act of Christ in his Church. It is to demonstrate visibly and externally that love which should unite all in Christ. Passive participation at Mass is definitely a thing of the past.

Full participation in the Mass and the sacraments must be experienced, both by congregations and by their members as individuals. Neither talking nor reading about the laity's part in Catholic worship is enough. The best theoretical preparation or the soundest instruction will not take the place of actual celebration.⁷

No longer should one ever be permitted to sit passively in Church. A few years ago the last word in active participation in the Mass was following the Mass in the missal. This took years to accomplish. The generation before the "missal-carriers" were the "rosary-rattlers and novena-leaflet-dispensers". People had thought that if every person was taught to use his missal properly then we would have truly "arrived". Today even more is expected of the laity, and rightly so. Not only are they to follow the Mass with the Missal, not only is each of the laity to have a conscious awareness of the visible bond of love and charity among those offering the Mass, but they are to express this unity by actively singing with the entire congregation and answering the prayers and giving the proper responses. Teen-agers are notorious for their lack of singing in Church. . . though they can blast out cheers and belt out school songs at sporting events--odd, isn't it?

⁷ Frederick McManus, The Council and the Liturgy, Washington, D.C., N.C.W.C. Press, p. 5.

Responses. These acclamations or responses are mentioned first by the Council as the way in which the people express publicly their part in the Church's life of worship and prayer. At Mass there are only six or eight different phrases of this kind, all simple, all coming at key moments.

The important thing about 'Et cum spiritu tuo,' [and with your Spirit] 'Amen,' etc., is this: Unless the people say or sing them at every Mass, low Mass and high Mass, Sunday Mass and weekday Mass, it will never be truly evident that 'liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church. . . manifest it and have effects upon it. . . concern the individual members of the Church, in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and participation.'⁸

Now about our friend, Mark, could you answer his objections? If we, the laity, are the Church, and we are! and if the laity in the Old Testament were to offer as an entire nation a true sacrifice and now we have taken their place in actively offering the Mass. . . the welfare of the Church is just as much my business and concern as any priest or nun. I am as much a member of the Church as the clergy. In fact, I have an equality in membership in the Church as any cardinal, any bishop, any priest. . . even the Holy Father himself.

Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism', sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ; having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity. There is, therefore, in Christ and in the Church no inequality

⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex, because 'there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.⁹

We all make up the Church, and it is now my privilege to have the concern of the parish at heart just as any priest.

If, therefore, in the Church everyone does not proceed by the same path, nevertheless, all are called to sanctity and have received an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God. And if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ.¹⁰

ASSIMILATION

- 1--What is the origin of the word "laity" and what is the true historic meaning applied to the term?
- 2--What was the covenant between God and the Chosen Race? Explain.
- 3--Explain religious liberty as quoted in the Constitution.
- 4--What is the difference between the sacrifice that the laity in the Old Testament were to offer and the sacrifice I am to offer?
- 5--Why could the Jewish people be called a nation of priests? Why can the priesthood of the faithful be applied to me?

⁹ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

6--Why am I as much responsible for the welfare of the Church as my pastor? What do you say or do if your pastor does not accept this?

7--The Mass is a prayer of praise. . .how much should I get out of it personally?

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1--Are there some priests, some pastors, who do want the faithful to be active and responsible members of his parish, yet act contrary to this in other areas concerning the running of the parish?

2--There are shortcomings on both sides of the fence. (Evidently you listed some of these for the above question). Now could you list and discuss some of the shortcomings of the parishioners which disrupt the good running of the parish and "tie the hands" of the parish priests?

3--If I am the Church. . .if I am as much a member of the Church as any member of the clergy. . . then what elements in the life of the teen-ager must be changed?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

1--What could you do to organize the underclassmen to sing with you in Church?

2--Organize the upperclassmen of the school here, and those who are not attending Catholic schools, and get them to actively participate in the Sunday Mass. Is this possible? Must students of necessity sit in the last benches, or stand and lean against the wall of the Church?

3--Run a car service on Sunday for the old people of the parish who cannot get to Mass. . .unless someone brings them. This can be organized quite easily. Names can be obtained from the pastor.

4--Put the effects of the Constitution on Religious Liberty into action.

CHAPTER II

(UNIT 2)

THE LAYMAN'S APPROACH TO GOD -- THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

LESSON I: THE GREAT MEANS TO GODLIKENESS ARE THE SAME FOR ALL

PRAYER:

O God, you are the unfailing support of those who call upon you, the liberator of those who pray to you, the peace of those who appeal to you, the life of those who believe in you, the resurrection of those who die in you. I call upon you in behalf of your servants, who ask for the gift of baptism, and who hope to obtain, through this spiritual rebirth, everlasting grace. Accept them, Lord. You have graciously said: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Then grant your favor to these who knock, so that, having received an everlasting blessing in their baptism, they may possess the kingdom of grace that you have promised. Who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, live and reign God, forever and ever.¹

Mercifully fill him with the Spirit of your fear, and seal him with the sign of the cross of Christ, that he may obtain everlasting life.²

¹ Collectio Rituum, New York, Benzinger Brothers, 1964, p. 118.

² Ibid., p. 140.

O God, you gave the Holy Spirit to your apostles, and willed that through them and their successors he be given to the rest of the faithful. Look with favor upon our humble service, and grant that the Holy Spirit, descending into the heart of this man (woman) whose forehead we have anointed with holy Chrism and signed with the sign of the holy cross, may, by dwelling there, make it a temple of his glory. You who with the Father and the same Holy Spirit live and reign forever and ever.³

Fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect.⁴

ORIENTATION

I was told by a friend of mine this story of a family in Canada. As a family, they had moved from South Africa to Canada because they did not want their children growing up in the atmosphere of prejudice that existed in their country. It might be added that the father had an excellent position in the Government. But this is not the main story. One day after school one of the girls brought home a Novena leaflet prayer to St. Jude. The Novena was a one-day affair. The prayers. . . there were nine of them, had to be said at exactly the same time of the hour during the day if one hoped to obtain the spiritual favor. The prayer had to be passed on to three other persons. I can still see the Mother in her true British accent, after having the affair explained to her by her daughter: "Darling, into the garbage can".

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)

So I also have sent them into the world. And for them I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (Jn. 17:19)

³ Ibid., p. 142.

⁴ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 13.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from immorality (1 Thess. 4:3).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing on high in Christ. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish in his sight in love (Eph. 1:4).

- 1--I absolve you from all your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, by the Passion of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the same whatever good you do or evil endured be unto you for the remission of sin, the increase in grace, and life everlasting.
- 2--Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you (Jn. 18:2).
- 3--I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must love one another. By this they will all know that you are my disciples--by your love for one another (Jn. 13:34-35).
- 4--Listen, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone, so you must love the Lord your God with all your mind and all your heart and all your strength. These instructions that I am giving you today are to be fixed in your mind: You must impress them on your children, and talk about them when you are sitting at home, and when you go off on a journey, when you lie down and when you get up; you must bind them on your hands as a sign, and they must be worn on your forehead as a mark; you must inscribe them on the door-post of your house and your gates (Deut. 6:4-9).

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--Age of layman
- 2--Nobody can replace the laity
- 3--Great means of holiness offered to both religious and laity
- 4--The rich, liturgical life now offered to the laity
- 5--Basic elements of both vocations are the same, but there are differences.

BEYOND THE LEAFLET STAGE

Of recent years there has been much written about the layman's role in the Church and the World. As we shall shortly see, there is a very definite and special role for the laity both in the Church and in the World. Some people say that there is no such thing as lay theology or, more correctly termed, spirituality of the laity. It is only a question of semantics. If this is so, then a tremendous amount of ink and paper and thought has been wasted on the theology of the laity.

We agree with those who, giving the word its full theological exactness and implications, reject the idea of a 'spirituality' of the diocesan clergy, a 'lay spirituality', and so on. At the same time we have every sympathy for those who, taking the word in a concrete descriptive sense, seek to identify the elements of 'spirituality' among parish-priests, in the apostolate, among the laity. For ourselves, we use the word or refrain from using it almost indifferently. We have used it, not without inverted commas, in the first line above principally so that those to whom the word is familiar and clear may know that our purpose is to talk about the things they understand by that word: in what particular conditions do lay people have to sanctify themselves?⁵

A primary truth governs the whole question, and it is this: there is only one Christianity, one obligation, to seek union with God in Christ, and so to tend to holiness: It is not the onerous privilege of priests and religious alone, it is the obligation of all Christians whatever in virtue of the one Christianity that is common to them all. But their vocations are diverse, their states and conditions of life are diverse, their actual duties are diverse: and accordingly, while it is true that there is no spirituality proper to the laity because theirs is the common Christian spirituality, it is also true that there is a spirituality of lay life, as there is of priestly life or of monastic life. Each form of life has its own conditions, duties and resources, and the vita in Christo is influenced accordingly.⁶

Already there is a listing of over two thousand books in all languages on the approach to God in the lay state. We call this lay theology. There would seem to be much more

⁵ Collectio Rituum, p. 78.

⁶ Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 379.

at stake in developing the spirituality of the layman than a mere question of meaning of words. Happily, both for the Church and for the laity, we have advanced far beyond the novena-leaflet stage.

These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.⁷

For those Catholics who are still at the above stage of spirituality, or who are totally ignorant of their call to Godliness,, it would almost seem that they were left at the post when Pope John began the race for bringing the Church up to date with Vatican II. Novena pamphlets may be good as far as they go, but how far do they go in giving the modern Catholic a dynamic spiritual life? Ignorance today of the layman's call is inexcusable. It would be safe to say that any time the Church gives or entrusts a special mission to the laity (and the Church has done this) then she must offer the laity the means to effect the accomplishment of the goal.

⁷ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 34.

What is the task entrusted to the laity?

They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.⁸

The laity have a twofold mission: one in the Church, to participate in the triple mission of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King, the other the temporal: to make the World more Christic.

United on behalf of heavenly values and enriched by them, this family has been 'constituted and structured as a society in this world' by Christ, and is equipped 'by appropriate means for visible and social union.' Thus the Church, at once 'a visible association and a spiritual community,' goes forward together with humanity and experiences the same earthly lot which the world does. She serves as a leaven and as a kind of soul for human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family.⁹

The World is not so much to be consecrated as it is to be recognized, endorsed and brought to fulfillment in Christ. To bring the World to fulfillment in Christ is an enormous task involving all the elements that go to make up

⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

our modern society, our modern world. Many have attempted to define the layman's role. D. Thorman, in his article "Lay Life with God", defines the spirituality concerned as "living a life of union with Christ according to our circumstances."¹⁰

Fr. McNamara's definition is perhaps more precise:

One who seeks to work out his salvation, not merely in secular society but through it, by fulfilling those duties which his position in Society imposes on him.¹¹

Leclercq on the same idea says:

The real solution must be based on the realization that the spiritual character of the kingdom will be achieved in the perspective of the Incarnation. It will not be achieved by abstracting from the human body and the conditions that surround it. The spiritual kingdom is addressed to men who remain men, who live a physical, intellectual, social life according to their condition as men. This necessarily involves material elements. We must determine which of these material elements are necessary for the spiritual life and compatible with it, and which are opposed to it.¹²

When the religious character of the layman's secular activities has been determined--we have lay spirituality.

¹⁰ Donald Thorman, "Lay Life with God," in Ave Maria, Dec. 10, 1964, p. 22.

¹¹ Kevin McNamara, "Is there a Lay Theology?" in The Irish Theological Quarterly, Spring, 1954, p. 245.

¹² Jacques Leclercq, Can a Layman be a Saint, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1959, p. 20.

THE AGE OF THE LAYMAN

Perhaps never before has the layman enjoyed such special interest of the Church as today. Surely we have to go back many a century before we can match an era where the laity were in such prominence in the life of the Church. This has been called the Age of the Laity.

But there are certain things which pertain in a special way to the laity, both men and women, by reason of their condition and mission. Due to the special circumstances of our time the foundations of this doctrine must be thoroughly examined. For their pastors know how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire Church.¹³

There are several important reasons why the Church has made this the age of the laity. The state of the Church is such today that the laity are indispensable. The ranks of the clergy, the religious Brothers and Sisters, are no longer sufficiently numerous to take care of the spiritual needs of the Church. The Church recognizes that today we are dealing with a new kind of layman. The age of the educated laity is here. In the past, beyond a doubt, the most educated person in the parish was the pastor. This can no longer be said. The modern suburban parish surely has many

¹³ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 34.

parishioners, perhaps even half of them, who are college graduates. And of these are professional men who are well read and better informed in their own field than any priest in the parish, who in the past was supposed to be some sort of universal authority. Often in areas other than theology the parish priest should get advice from his parishioners, who are truly well-informed in their fields. In the areas such as finances, politics, social problems and culture. . . these are only a few of the areas where the pastor should recruit the help and services of the laity. Today the Church is dealing with an informed and educated laity, and we should make use of their talents. Even in the area of theology, in the special area of Catechetics, we must solicit the help of the laity in teaching the Word of God to the very young. Surely any Catholic college graduate who has followed a regular program of theological studies through the four years, and with some proper additional preparation in the special area of methods and techniques, should be able to do a satisfactory job in the area of Catechetics.

There is a focusing of interest on the laity that has never been so keen as in our own present day. Suddenly the layman finds a role, an active role, for himself in the Church and in the world which he must fulfill or run the risk of missing his whole and true vocation as a member of the People of God. His role in the Church is not the same

as that of the clergy. He shares in the Church's role which only he, the layman can actively fulfill.

For the distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God bears within it a certain union, since pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual need. Pastors of the Church, following the example of the Lord, should minister to one another and to the other faithful. These in their turn should enthusiastically lend their joint assistance to their pastors and teachers.¹⁴

The laity are not to be the servants of the clergy. The clergy do hold however a prominent place in the servant church. The laity should consult the clergy for advice and guidance; the clergy should consult the laity in their parishes for advice, for cooperation, for direction in areas which are somewhat strange to the clergy. There may be occasions where, for the good of the parish, the laity must sacrifice their own interests and serve the needs of the priest and the parish.

NOBODY CAN REPLACE THE LAITY IN THE WORLD

In the area of the temporal order, in the area of the World in general, there is a task reserved all but exclusively to the faithful. Unless the laity fulfill and complete the role of Christ in the World, this mission will remain incomplete.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world. For even if some of them have to fulfill their religious duties on their own, when there are no sacred ministers or in times of persecution; and even if many of them devote all their energies to apostolic work; still it remains for each one of them to cooperate in the external spread and the dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devoutly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom.¹⁵

It is not the vocation of the clergy and religious to "interfere" in temporal matters. The World is the bailiwick of the laity. It is the vocation of the layman to bring Christ to the business world, the political world, the world of entertainment, to the suburb, the family, and all the professions that exist in any large city.

They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.¹⁶

Unless the spirit of Christ does see fulfillment in the business world, in industry and politics, where His principles should reign, in spite of the fact that the present World is often most calloused to honesty, justice and fairness. . . then there is little hope that the spirit

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

of Christ will ever be developed and brought to fulfillment. It seems that the laity have waited for centuries to have the priest and the nun give him the nod to enter the secular World and introduce that forgotten person, Christ. On the other hand, the Church's laity is not without fault. There have been numerous members of the faithful who constantly ask the clergy and religious to train them, to outline a job that must be done and direct them in their introduction of Christ into the professions. Often in the past the Church did not only not see the problem clearly but it did not even recognize the problem. Frequently the Church lagged in taking the initiative. The Church has not trained the laity to meet the crisis of our times. Neither the Church nor the laity was completely at fault. The situation where the secular World is all but organized without Christ. . .this sad situation and the responsibility for it must be shared by the Church's clergy and faithful. A theology of the World must be developed:

A Christian synthesis of the modern world is needed to give the laity a spirituality proper to them. A truly living theology that stands abreast of a swiftly moving and evolving world is a vital necessity for the layman. The layman's apostolate is then worldwide, like the Church.¹⁷

¹⁷ Leo Putz, An Emerging Theology, Chicago, Fides Press, 1959, p. 81.

To prepare the layman for his immediate role, a theology of the layman is needed. Karl Rahner in his work on The Sacraments, The Layman and the World asks the question: 'What is this mission of the Church? It is the manifestation of the grace of God as a tangible presence in the world of men. For even as God willed to communicate Himself to the world in the Incarnation of the Logos, so also the grace, that He communicates must be incarnated in space and time here and now. Every dimension of human activity must feel its impact -- history, social activity, practical accomplishments, scholarship, and the arts. Every baptized person is commissioned to work for this manifestation.¹⁸

THE CALL OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD
AND THE LITURGY

It is significant, and yet most logical and necessary, that along with the development of the true calling of the people of God in the world, there be also a very close and most intense active involvement of the laos in the very life of the Church, her liturgy. The vocation of the faithful in the Liturgy must advance side by side with his role in the Christic World. To stress the one without the other is not to develop the whole Christian man. Yet this situation is so common in our day as to be almost frightening.

¹⁸ Karl Rahner, The Sacraments, (The Layman and the World), Baltimore, Helicon Press, p. 72.

It is no accident that the growth of the liturgical movement and the lay apostolate have taken place at the same time in modern American history. It is, I believe, strictly providential. . . "The true significance of the liturgical movement, therefore, lies just in this: that it tries to lead men back to the 'primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit'; it tries to restore that of which Catholic Action is the further flowering and fruitage. . . It is all very neat and short and simple: The liturgy and the lay apostolate are as inseparable as man and wife. They depend on each other; they complement one another."¹⁹

To teach the apostolic role of our young adults, without insisting on his absolute need of the Liturgy of the Church. . . one runs the danger the apostle Paul spoke of: that of becoming sounding brass or a tinkling symbol. It is any wonder that the apostolate hardly ever gets off the ground for many students of high school age. There are precious few upperclassmen who are willing to take seriously their vocation as a member of the laity. Those, though, who are involved sincerely in the organized apostolate, whether it be the sodality, the Y.C.S., or any other form of Catholic Action, are persons who have also taken seriously the Liturgy of the Church. The life of grace, the Sacraments, the Mass, are absolute must for perseverance and drive in the vocation of the people of God. Pius XII had a comment on this:

¹⁹ Donald Thorman, The Emerging Layman, Chicago, Fides Press, 1964, p. 75.

For the love of God, if you speak to the Sodalists of the World, tell them that Christianity does not propagate itself with the kind of propaganda one uses to sell shoes or toothpaste. To propagate the grace of God is something profoundly supernatural and is not done by human means alone, but above all by interior grace.²⁰

The power of pastoral-liturgical activity rests in this, that the Christian life may express the paschal mystery in which the Son of God, incarnate and made obedient even to the death of the cross, is so exalted in His resurrection and ascension that He may share His divine life with the world. By this life men, dead to sin and conformed to Christ, 'may live no longer for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again.' (2 Cor.5:15)²¹

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN

It was ^{not} too long ago that the great means to holiness and Godliness were set apart almost exclusively for the clergy and the religious, and rarely, if ever, did the laity dare to avail themselves of the great elements of the Liturgical life. Celebrating the sacred mysteries with the priest: the daily sacrifice of the Mass and reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord -- this was not only daring but it almost classified the layman as some sort of frustrated religious.

²⁰ Pius XII, encl. Bis Seculari, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1946, p. 7.

²¹ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Washington, N.C.W.C. Press, p. 4.

Just as the Pope has without ceasing helped the bishops to fulfill their corporate function, so have religious contributed significantly to the end that the vocation of the people to holiness should not go by default. Still it happened (and not seldomly) that not to become a monk or nun has been taken as a saying of 'good-bye' to a life of holiness.²²

It is not at all uncommon today to find many of the laity daily participating in the great social act of the Liturgy, the Mass, and availing themselves of the Lord under the sacramental species.

They should be especially concerned about the liturgical formation and the active participation of those who are engaged in religious associations of the laity, since it is the latter's duty to share more intimately in the life of the Church and also to assist the pastors of souls in properly promoting the liturgical life of the parish.²³

It is almost commonplace to see men and women who have made the Cursillo (Crusade) make the Liturgy an integral part of their daily living. It is not an uncommon practice in many high schools for the priests to want daily communion available for the students. Yet could it be said that most of the students avail themselves of this wonderful opportunity? The teens talk so much about love, they ought to think what St. John said about God and love.

²² Bernard Haring, "The Universal Call to Holiness," in Homiletic & Pastoral Review, Nov. 1965, p. 28.

²³ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 42.

"God is love, and whoever continues to love keeps in union with God, and God with him." (1 Jn. 4:16). The Sacrament of Love is the Holy Eucharist. But God pours out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Who has been given to us. "For through the Holy Spirit that has been given us, God's love has flooded our hearts." (Rom. 5:5) Indeed, in order that love, as good seed may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept His Will, and must complete what God has begun through their own actions with the help of God's grace. These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and, in a special way, the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively, fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues.

The sanctifying effects of charity are available to all.

Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; (4) by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor.

In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.²⁴

Other elements in the spiritual life which have in the past been associated with religious and their spirituality are spiritual reading and mental prayer. Today there are numerous excellent books of the spiritual life especially written for the laity. Before the World War II it was indeed the rare book written specifically for the laity. For over a hundred years the only book written for the laity was The Devout Life, by St. Francis de Sales. Today some of our young adults find Christ and a meaningful approach to Christian living on the pages of excellent books. Mental Prayer is something almost every high school student has been taught in the course of his high school education. Yet how many seniors put themselves directly in contact with God by meditation? Is it any wonder that our seniors often tell us that God is dead for them. Voluntary annual retreats, this is the mood today. Have retreats outlived their usefulness? Few students would deny the value of such. Retreats can be a powerful means to realizing one's lay calling. Religious have always made annual retreats.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

Only of recent years have many parents made closed annual retreats. This practice is accorded to the laity, the future of the Church. How do we evaluate a retreat?

These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues.²⁵

LAY AND RELIGIOUS VOCATION: MANY SIMILARITIES
THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY ARE THE SAME

- 1--There is the same Christ who is our Mediator with Our Father in Heaven.
- 2--There is the same Church -- both laity and clergy and Religious make up the Church.
- 3--There is the same revealed Word of God: Holy Scripture.
- 4--There are the same Sacraments, the same Sacrifice.
- 5--There is still one Faith and the means for guarding the Faith and putting us in contact with God are most similar:
 - A--The same prayers
 - B--The same elements of the spiritual life: charity and apostolate, prayer, and retreats.

BUT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES

In spite of the many similarities, in spite of the great elements of our Faith which are the same, there are

²⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

differences, different elements which are stressed, different virtues, different divisions of theologies which apply more directly to the laity or the religious. These elements we might call secondary elements as the coach of a football team refers to primary defense and secondary defense.

SECONDARY ELEMENTS DISTINGUISH
THE LAITY AND RELIGIOUS

- 1--Religious life stresses a life of detachment from persons, things and one's own will.
- 1--Lay life stresses a life of attachment to persons, to things and to one's own Will.
- 2--The Religious "flees" the world and remains at all times not a direct part of the secular world. He lives a Community Life with his fellow religious.
- 2--The laity, on the contrary, do not flee the world--they must be a direct part of the world in order to work in it and change it. The world is his bailiwick.
- 3--The Religious have the great spiritual helps of the three vows: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. "By his profession of the evangelical counsels, then, he is more intimately consecrated to divine service.²⁶
- 3--The laity have the great help of their married partner and their children, material thing and the use of their own will not directed by the authority of a superior. The layman must decide his job, his place of residence and plan his own entire life in the sight of God.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

4--For the Religious there is a more prominent place given to prayer, to certain virtues and religious practices as fasting, penance, silence, solitude and recollection. (These above elements with the vows make up, to a great extent, a spirituality referred to as Eschatological spirituality.)

4--The laity in his vocation will stress more those elements of Creation, using and working through all of Creation in order to bring matter to God. This spirituality is termed: Incarnationalism. One notices the word "incarnation" in the above. God the Son became incarnate in order to redeem us. The laity, must incarnate God in matter in order to sanctify it. "All material creation is absorbed into our very person: material food, the elements from the ground, also higher elements as music, ideas, words, love appreciation. Is the only value in our daily actions the purity of intention? Or do they become a part of our person?27

Such virtues as liberality and magnanimity would specify the proper use of matter and would be a way of sanctifying material creation. Such a virtue as Social Justice might be more evident in the daily life of the laity than in the religious. In general, all of the temporal order must be fulfilled and brought to completion in Christ.

ASSIMILATION

1--What chief factors have given us the age of the laity?

2--Why is the laity irreplaceable? It would seem if there were more priests and religious we would not need the help of the laity. Any comments?

27 G.A. Bauman, "Is there a Lay Spirituality," in Ave Maria, March 6, 1960.

- 3--The vocation of the laity and the liturgical life of the Church go hand in hand. Explain.
- 4--There was a time when many of the rich elements of the liturgy of the Church were not made use of by the laity. Why? List those vital elements of the liturgy now afforded by the laity.
- 5--Discuss the basic elements of religious spirituality and lay spirituality, where there is common ground for agreement, and those areas where there are differences.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Discuss reasons why the liturgical life of the Church is so lackluster for many of our youths. What suggestions would you offer for improving some of the elements of the Church's Liturgy?
- 2--Why do you think that large school retreats have outlived their usefulness? Do you see any special advantages to closed retreats? Voluntary retreats? The question might be asked: what are the advantages of voluntary retreats and the disadvantages?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES (CHRISTIAN LIVING)

- 1--If the laity are the Church, and they are. . . then list five aspects of parish life in which the laity could help out the pastor and take over the basic work. List these five with plans of action.
- 2--Go to the library and read one article on the role of the laity in the Church. (There is an abundance of such material found in almost every Catholic magazine, especially America, Ave Maria, Ligourian, Commonweal, the Sign.) Make a summary of the article and report to the class.
- 3--Do the seniors have closed voluntary retreats? If not, could you as a group do something positive to bring about such?
- 4--Read an article on Incarnational spirituality or Eschatological spirituality and report on it to the class.

THE LAYMAN'S APPROACH TO GOD --
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

67

- 5--Set up a "dry run" Mass explaining the meaning of the Mass to the students.

LOOKING AHEAD

- 1--Prepare a prayer fitting the theme of the next lesson.

LESSON II: DISCUSSING THE DIFFERENCES
IN SPIRITUALITIES

PRAYER:

Be praised, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
By whom You give us the light of day!
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor.
Of You, Most High, he is a symbol!

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon and the Stars!
In the sky You formed them bright and lovely and fair.

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind
And for Air and cloudy and clear and all Weather,
By which You give sustenance to Your creatures!¹

"One of the jailers asked Felicitas in the midst of labor pains how she would fare in the amphitheater. She answered, "Now it is I who suffer, but there is another who will be in me who will suffer for me because it is for him that I am to suffer."

ORIENTATION: (Story of nun and her children, and a mother at home and her children.)

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

For the glory of the most holy trinity, the honor of Mary and the salvation of my soul and all souls, I promise to God and vow to observe during my entire life poverty, chastity and obedience according and conformable to my sacred rule.

This union, then, is most serious, because it binds you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate, that it profoundly influences your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, is hidden from your eyes...sacrifice is usually

¹ Cf. Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun", in The Little Flowers of St. Francis, p. 19.

difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy: and perfect love can make it a joy....By the sacramental grace of matrimony which is in me, I _____ take thee, my wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.' The priest is the minister of Christ, an instrument, that is to say, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer. He continues the work of the redemption in all its world-embracing universality and divine efficacy, that work that wrought so marvellous a transformation in the world. Thus the priest, as is said with good reason, is indeed 'another Christ': for, in some way, he is himself a continuation of Christ. 'As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you,' is spoken to the priest, and hence the priest, like Christ, continues to give 'Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.'²

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE

- 1--Religious or monastic spirituality: eschatological spirituality. Secular Institutes and similarities to religious life.
- 2--The vocation to the diocesan priest.
- 3--Marriage vocation: total commitment to the temporal. Incarnational spirituality. Single life a modification of marriage spirituality.

ORIENTATION

A part of the basic difference between the spirituality of the religious and that of the laity is exemplified in the following story: A nun in an orphanage has a number of children to take care of during the year. A mother has a number of children to care for also. They both do basically the same work of rearing children: getting them up, making

² Pius XI, end., The Catholic Priesthood, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1934, p. 8.

sure they get proper food, proper clothes, and proper amount of rest. They both send them to school each day. The similarity of the nun and the mother is striking. But here is where the similarity ends. At the end of the year the Mother Superior takes the children from the nun and they move up to the higher division. The Superior gives the Sister a different group of children, reassuring her that this new crew is just as good as the group she dearly loved last year. The nun must accept this passing on of the children. On the other hand, the mother at the end of the year cannot say that she is going to pass on her children to some other family. . . after all, she cannot get another group just as good as the ones she now has. No! The children are hers because of her marriage vocation. The life of marriage is one of attachment. The life of a religious is one of direct detachment from persons, things, and one's own will.

PRESENTATION

FIVE VOCATIONS IN THE CHURCH, TWO STATES IN LIFE

Ordinarily there is a listing of five vocations in the Church:

- A--Married Life
- B--Priesthood
- C--Religious Life
- D--Secular Institutes
- E--Single Life

For the Priesthood:

All priests, both diocesan and religious, by reason of Orders and ministry, fit into this body of bishops and priests, and serve the good of the whole Church according to their vocation and the grace given to them.³

³ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 32.

For Religious Life:

The sacred synod has already shown in the Constitution on the Church that the pursuit of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels draws its origin from the doctrine and example of the Divine Master and reveals itself as a splendid sign of the heavenly kingdom.⁴

Despite such a great variety of gifts, all those called by God to the practice of the evangelical counsels and who, faithfully responding to the call, undertake to observe the same, bind themselves to the Lord in a special way, following Christ, who chaste and poor (cf. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58) redeemed and sanctified men through obedience even to the death of the Cross (cf. Phil. 2:8). Driven by love with which the Holy Spirit floods their hearts (cf. Rom. 5:5), they live more and more for Christ and for His body which is the Church (cf. Col. 1:24).⁵

Secular Institutes:

What then are Secular Institutes as such? The Pope picks out for recognition, as has been said, only those 'which have as their genuine and avowed aim the life of perfection in all its fullness', 'not every Association which in all sincerity pursues perfection in the world', but those which 'more nearly approach the canonical state of perfection, i.e. as far as its substance is concerned', (a) by their internal constitution and hierarchial form of government, (b) by their complete self-dedication (their only bond) which they require of their members properly so called, by their profession of the evangelical counsels and (c) by being 'employed in the apostolate and Christian ministry'. Also they do not take public vows (i.e. of religion) nor follow the religious life in common.⁶

⁴ Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, Huntington, Ind., Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1965, p. 3.

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Secular Institutes, London, Black Friars Publication, 1956, p. 41.

Secular Institutes, although not Religious institutes, involve a true and full profession of the evangelical counsels in the world. This profession is recognized by the Church and consecrates to God men and women, lay and clerical, who live in the world. Hence they should make a total dedication of themselves to God in perfect charity their chief aim, and the institutes themselves should preserve their own proper, i.e., secular character, so that they may be able to carry out effectively everywhere in and, as it were, from the world the apostolate for which they were founded.⁷

(Provida Mater Ecclesia)

Single Life:

Likewise, the holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of the counsels proposed in the Gospel by Our Lord to His disciples. An eminent position among these is held by virginity or the celibate state. This is a precious gift of divine grace given by the Father to certain souls, whereby they may devote themselves to God alone the more easily, due to an undivided heart. This perfect continency, out of desire for the kingdom of heaven, has always been held in particular honor in the Church. The reason for this was and is that perfect continency for the love of God is an incentive to charity, and is certainly a particular source of spiritual fecundity in the world.⁸

In our day the single life does not appear as one of the basic vocations where one leads a full Christian life. We often associate with the single life persons who are selfish, men who drive a sports car, the playboy type of person,

⁷ Pius XII, encl., Provida Mater Ecclesia, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1956, p. 14.

⁸ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 48.

women who are highly independent in their own life and financially secure. Nevertheless, a great number of very dedicated persons can be found in this form of vocation. St. Paul speaks in a most praiseworthy manner of this vocation:

About unmarried women I have no command of the Lord to give you, but I will give you my opinion as that of one on whom through the Lord's mercy you can depend. (1Cor. 7,25-26).

I would have you free from care. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please God. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided. And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. Whereas she who is married thinks about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. (1 Cor. 7,32-34).

Married Life:

Married life has always been the vocation to which most people are called. And no doubt it will remain so. There is no definite place in the Gospels where Christ established marriage as a Sacrament. (That marriage is a sacrament and that Christ raised this natural institution to this state cannot be denied.) This has been for a long time the teaching of the Church, since medieval times. Many hold that it was at the Marriage Feast of Cana that marriage was raised to a sacrament. St. Paul speaks in very lofty terms about the sacredness of marriage:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water by means of the word; in order that he might present to himself the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27).

Furthermore, married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path (to holiness) by faithful love. They should sustain one another in grace throughout the entire length of their lives. They should embue their offspring, lovingly welcomed as God's gift, with Christian doctrine and the evangelical virtues. In this manner, they offer all men the example of unwearying and generous love; in this way they build up the brotherhood of charity; in so doing, they stand as the witnesses and cooperators in the fruitfulness of Holy Mother Church; by such lives, they are a sign and a participation in that very love, with which Christ loved His Bride and for which He delivered Himself up for her.⁹

ONLY TWO STATES IN LIFE

The five distinct vocations that are recognized in the Church have just been touched on. It is not our purpose here to develop any particular vocation. The point in question is that, although there are five vocations, there are only two distinct states in life. They are: religious life and married life. All the other vocations are modifications of these two. If we drew a line with degrees of involvement in the world and degrees of separation from the World -- on

⁹ Ibid., p. 46.

the far end we would have marriage as the vocation which most directly and completely involves the layman in the temporal order; and at the other end of the line representing the greatest degree of detachment from the world we would have Religious Life. This past comparison is most important in understanding the two distinct states in life.

TOTAL SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

(called Eschatological Spirituality)

1--Religious Life

A--Three vows of Religion

B--Live a community life

C--Although in the world they are not of the World. . . a life of total detachment. They are to bear witness to Christ and His Church as only they can.

This is done by their vows and community life.

The faithful of Christ bind themselves to the three aforesaid counsels either by vows, or by other sacred bonds, which are like vows in their purpose. By such a bond, a person is totally dedicated to God, loved beyond all things. In this way, that person is ordained to the honor and service of God under a new and special title. Indeed through Baptism a person dies to sin and is consecrated to God. However, in order that he may be capable of deriving more abundant fruit from this baptismal grace, he intends, by the profession of the evangelical counsels in the Church, to free himself from those obstacles, which might draw him away from the fervor of charity and the perfection of divine worship. By his profession of the evangelical counsels, then, he is more intimately consecrated to

divine service. This consecration will be the more perfect, inasmuch as the indissoluble bond of the union of Christ and His bride, the Church, is represented by firm and more stable bonds.¹⁰

2--Secular Institutes

A--Three vows of Religion: they, who embrace a particular institute, e.g. Opus Dei, are not religious. Their vows are social vows. They do not live a community life. Some diocesan priests are members of Secular Institutes. Les Oblats are such a group--

B--Work in the various professions in the secular World. Opus Dei perhaps most world renowned!

3--Diocesan Priesthood (Their normal charism is to serve the sacramental needs of the people.)

A--The obligation of celibacy and a solemn promise of Obedience.

AA--Some priests of various rites are permitted to marry. (This problem has been indirectly discussed at Vatican II, directly discussed by the Bishops. What would be your opinion on this? Would there be more vocations from our youth if the diocesan clergy were permitted to marry?

B--Do not live a community life, but recommended.

C--Because they have no vow of poverty they are and can be more involved in business and commerce, in the ownership of personal property. They can in general be more involved in the temporal order than Religious.

4--Single Life

A--No vows except the commandment of continency imposed by Christ on all the non-married.

B--No community life.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 51

C--The same involvement in the world as married people except that they are not given in marriage and therefore do not have total, direct and complete attachment to a married partner and children.

Married Life

This vocation is given to total involvement in the world. There are no vows similar to those of Religious which would separate them from the contact of the World.

They do have marriage vows, and in their commitment to the temporal order there is always a danger of the wrong sort of total commitment. The laity must always have a certain prudent caution, a certain spirit of the vows, because of the fact that all of us remain affected by concupiscence. Explain. It might be said here that the married person living his Incarnational spirituality must maintain a certain element of the eschatological spirituality of the religious.

Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive. Let all then have care that they guide aright their own deepest sentiments of soul. Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder them in their quest for perfect love. Let them heed the admonition of the Apostle to those who use this world; let them not come to terms with this world; for this world, as we see it, is passing away.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid., p. 49.

Now concerning the things whereof you wrote to me: It is good for man not to touch woman. Yet, for fear of fornication, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise the wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer; and return together again lest Satan tempt you because you lack self-control. But this I say by way of concession, not by way of commandment (1 Cor. 7:1-6).

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR NOW

The above explanation might have cleared up a few points for all concerned. It can be seen more clearly now that basically there are two states in life and all the various vocations are modifications of either total commitment to the secular world or "total" separation from the world. (One must be careful of the word "total".) Today, if our religious Brothers and Sisters are going to do an outstanding task of teaching in our high schools they will have to have a workable acquaintance with the world and know what is meant by commitment to the temporal. If the Religious does not have this insight into the layman's life, then he can hardly prepare the student for his secular mission. It might be added here that much just criticism of nuns and Brothers has been leveled concerning their preparation of the student for the temporal order.

St. Paul might have expressed the two basic states in life in a clear manner when he said: "All things are

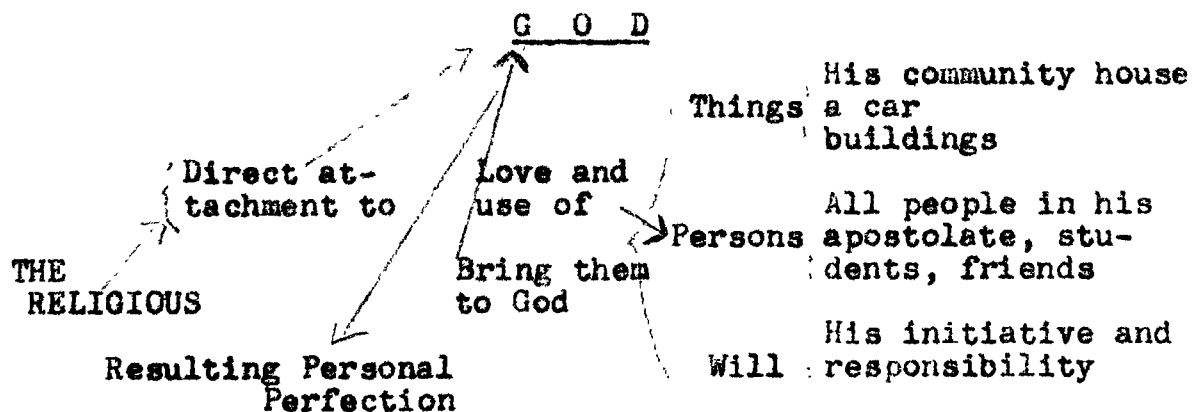
yours, you are Christ and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:23)
It is up to the laity to have all things. He is pontiff of creation. To the religious the words "You are Christ" might well apply in a very direct sense! All of us are in Christ and Christ is God.

LOVE OF GOD DIRECTLY THROUGH DETACHMENT

The Religious

DIAGRAM OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

"He who says that he loves God and hates his brother is a liar." (1 Jn. 19,20)



Today there are authors who no longer hold to the above way of thinking of Religious and laity from or going to God through detachment or attachment to persons and the elements of this World. This topic is thoroughly discussed in John Gerken's book: Toward a Theology of the Layman (This book explains the thought of Karl Rahner.) Also of a recent

publication, Theology Digest for Summer, 1967, Rahner again identifies love of God with Love of Neighbor.

The priest and religious are pontiffs of the spiritual - they bring man to God.

1--The Religious by his vows is attached to God in a special manner.

2--Up until our present time the Church has always held that love of God through detachment is a more perfect way of loving God. Not so, say some modern theologians. The Constitution on the Church says it this way: "Every person must walk unhesitatingly according to his personal gifts and duties in the path of living faith, which arouses hope and works through charity."¹² Actually each person must walk in his vocation as given to him by the Holy Spirit and the special charism appointed to him.

3--Religious then have received a special grace or charism to follow Christ in a distinct manner.

In this sense it is legitimate to speak of religious life as a "higher" vocation. It is not higher in the sense that it destines to a greater holiness. It is higher only in the sense that it performs a role and function in the Church which a Christian in the world, even when totally surrendered to God in Christ, could not exercise. In

¹² Ibid., p. 44.

technical terms, the call to religious life is a charism, a gratia gratis data, a gift of God granted primarily for the sake of the Christian community.¹³

- 4--The great natural means for development of one's personality: things, persons and one's own will for self-determination are replaced by a different structure. All these foundation stones are used in a different manner. There is not an absence of things, there is not an absence of love, there is not an absence of initiative and responsibility. There is, though, no direct attachment.
- 5--This form of life should not detract from normal personality development.

All men should take note that the profession of the evangelical counsels, though entailing the renunciation of certain values which are to be undoubtedly esteemed does not detract from a genuine development of the human persons, but rather, by its very nature, is most beneficial to that development.¹⁴

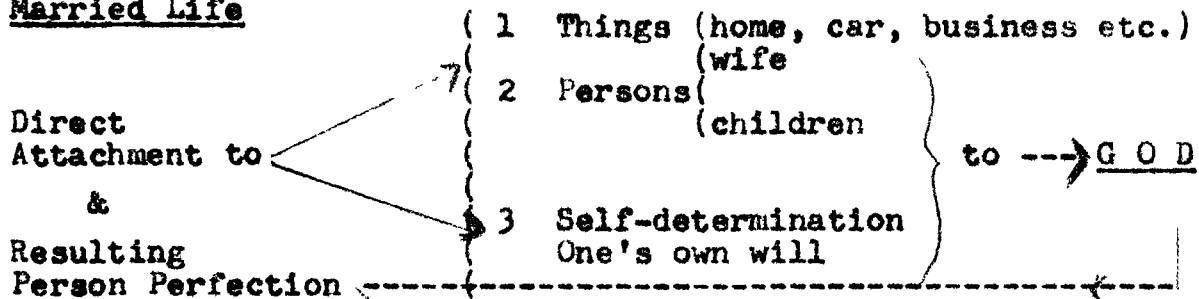
¹³ Gregory Baum, The Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life of Vatican II, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1966, p. 18.

¹⁴ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 53.

LOVE OF GOD THROUGH ATTACHMENT

Married Life might be expressed in the diagram below.
In the vocation of marriage one goes to God through his creatures. Love of God through attachment might be expressed in the words of St. John: "As long as you did it to the least of my brothers you did it to me." (Jn. 21,23)

Married Life



The layman is pontiff of creation. He sanctifies all of Creation by its proper use in attaining God.

- 1--Those in marriage go to God by means of attachment to creatures and creation. Which is the more perfect: to love God through detachment of all things or through attachment of creation?
- 2--Some theologians hold: "To love God with your whole heart, your whole mind and your whole soul" is the essence of the Christian life. Christ made no distinction, in to love God directly (by detachment) or to love God in and by means of his creatures. The present Constitution avoids the wording which might create some confusion of

one vocation being higher than the other. We are all equal in dignity as Christians. In functions in the Church there is subordination and hierarchy.

RESULTING PERSONAL PERFECTION

We had occasion in a previous lesson to point out the importance of a normal, healthy and balanced personality. Since man cannot and does not have within his own person the infinite, self-sufficiency of God, he must develop a sense of worth in and through persons and the possession of created objects. That man must love others is a proof of his own insufficiency.

Both the married person and the religious must have this sense of personal worth to have a balanced personality. This is what is meant by the expression "developing one's personality." It would seem on the surface that one could develop his personality more easily in marriage than in religious life. This is true. It takes perhaps a stronger faith to live as a religious and to love all things in a detached manner. Yet there are problems in all vocations. No vocation is free from all worries. "But each one has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another." (1 Cor. 7:7) And St. Paul speaks of the problems of married people: "But those who marry will have worldly trouble, which I would like to spare you." (1 Cor. 7:28)

And the warning in the Constitution on the Church:

Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder them in their quest for perfect love. Let them heed the admonition of the Apostle to those who use this world; let them not come to terms with this world; for this world, as we see it, is passing away.¹⁵

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--List the five vocations in the Church and explain each.
- 2--What are the two basic states in life? What makes them so different?
- 3--What is meant by the expression "total detachment" in serving God in religious life? Explain the diagram.
- 4--What is meant by the expression "Love of God through creatures and creation"? pontiff of creation? Explain the diagram. Must the layman practice the evangelical virtues in spirit?
- 5--Explain the phrase, "a sense of self-importance". Explain how every student must have a sense of importance. Explain how a balanced personality is achieved through development of one's personality.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 49.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--Discuss several problems which you think priests and religious might encounter in achieving a balanced personality.
- 2--Discuss some problems similar to the above but in the vocation of marriage.
- 3--Point out the advantages of the vocation to the priesthood or religious life; point out the advantages that marriage offers.
- 4--Tim, a Senior, does not understand that a vocation is a way of going to God. He says that in marriage one has an easier life and none of the "hard things" of the priest or religious to reach God. He has sex and that is everything. Comment on Tim's ideas.

CHRISTIAN LIVING:

- 1--Give an outline of how a married person uses a home, a car or a boat -- material things -- how he can use these to get him to God. . .or use them so that they take him away from God. Give examples of students who use created things in the wrong way.

- 2--A rather famous professor on a famous Eastern university campus took a poll among some 5000 married couples. He found out among other things that only 25% could truly say they were happy. Do you think this poll might not be true? Write an exposé on those elements of married life which you feel are enemies of happiness.
- 3--Choose an institution here at school which you feel is not serving the good of the school or the good of the students. Outline the steps which must be taken to effect this change.
- 4--Look up in the library material on C.F.M. and the Serra Club. Report to the class on your findings.
- 5--Discuss the life of an outstanding layman in your city. Examine his use of all of creation. Is he fulfilling his lay calling?

LESSON III: THE LAITY: PONTIFF OF CREATION

PRAYER:

Praised be Thee, my Lord, for all Thy creatures; especially for Brother Sun, who lightens up the day, and through him Thou enlightens us. Beautiful is he, and radiant with great splendor of Thee Most High he a token gives. (Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi)¹

Lord Jesus Christ, you truly contain within your gentleness, within your humanity, all the unyielding immensity and grandeur of the world. And it is because there exists in you this ineffable synthesis of what our human thought and experience would never have dared join together in order to adore them--element and totality, the one and the many, mind and matter, the infinite and the personal; it is because of the indefinable contours which this complexity gives to your appearance and to your activity, that my heart, enamoured of cosmic reality, gives itself passionately to you.²

ORIENTATION:

There is a city in France called Dijon. It is famous for its mustard. But perhaps even more famous is the city for its mayor. The mayor is a priest. He has been mayor ever since the beginning of World War II. The priest was so successful in handling the Germans during the War

¹ Cf. Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun", in The Little Flowers of St. Francis, p. 19.

² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Hymn of the Universe, p. 75.

that the people kept him on as mayor for these many years. I don't get it! I thought the temporal, such things as politics and industry, are exclusively the area of the laity. How do you explain the situation of this priest?

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

From this time on those who have wives should live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they did not mourn, and those who are glad as though they were not glad, and those who buy anything as though they did not own it, and those who mix in the world, as though they were not absorbed in it. For the present shape of the world is passing away. I want you to be free from all anxiety. . . A married man is concerned about worldly affairs, and how he can please his wife, and so his interests are divided (1 Cor. 7:29-33).

I have a request to make for them. I make no request for the world, but only for those whom you have given me, for they are yours--all that is mine is yours and what is yours is mine--and they have done me honor, but they are to remain in the world, while I return to you. . . I have given them your message, and the world has come to hate them, for they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them away from the world, but to keep them from the evil one (Jn. 17:9-11:14-15).

PRESENTATION

Outline:

- 1--The priest is pontiff of the spiritual.
- 2--The laity are directly involved in the temporal.
- 3--The layman is pontiff of Creation.

THE PRIEST IS PONTIFF OF THE SPIRITUAL

The example given above might have confused a few people. This is very understandable because the above situation is quite unique, not to mention confusing. The priest must not meddle in secular affairs in any direct fashion.

Cardinal Suhard, an outstanding priest who worked in his Paris diocese at the time of the second World War, wrote in his great pastoral letters:

It is not fitting for priests to run secular affairs. That is the duty of the laity. This is not a gratuitous statement; it is a necessity under the present circumstances, and it is also their right.³

In ordinary circumstances the priest mayor of Dijon has no place in politics. But the situation is not ordinary. It is a rare exception. Cardinal Suhard's words still stand. Vatican II has the comment to make:

It is true that those in Holy Orders can at times be engaged in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But they are by reason of their particular vocation especially and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry.⁴

When we say that the priest is pontiff of the spiritual, what do we mean? You are familiar with the word pontiff in a different context. The word pontiff means bridge-builder, and that is the true role of the Holy Father and every priest who shares in his responsibility of bringing

³ Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Priests Among Men, New York, Integrity Publication, p. 55.

⁴ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

the laity, the faithful, into contact with God.

But each time, on the other hand, that a service of the Church is to be filled, priests rush to it. There is a sort of feverish haste in their response, as if they were convinced that they were the only ones that could do the work.⁵

Priests give justification for their work in the secular world. . .press, cinema, writing, radio. . .fascinated by immediate results and impatient delay required to form the laity, they long to see the fruits of their labors. . .this is wrong. The priests must form the layman and the layman must transform the world. The Church must go to the World and this she does through her laity who engage in the temporal order in itself and for itself, but in the light of a Christian vision of life.⁶

Thousands of priests are involved in non-ecclesiastical occupations while tens of thousands of our people look for a shepherd. Never has St. Augustine's idea been more relevant: we are ordained for the benefit of the Christian people. . .for the benefit of those to whom we administer the Word and the sacrament of the Lord.

How many sectors of this country are a literal 'no-priest-land'? How many parishes understaffed; how many souls without counselors or directors? In his address to the Lenten Preachers in 1954, Pope Pius XII outlined a threefold task for priests: discovering lay collaborators, training them, making

5 Jacques Leclercq, Holiness and Temporal, p. 21.

6 Loc. cit.

use of them to increase the apostolic yield. How little we have done in 10 years to fulfill this need. Just the other day it was announced that 200 military chaplains are desperately needed immediately to minister to thousands of our service personnel virtually unattended. Finally, there is the ever-growing problem of meeting the spiritual needs of over 550,000 Catholics on secular campuses. At the University of Maryland, for instance, there are some 4,000 Catholics and two full-time Newman chaplains; the situation is even more appalling, I know, at other universities and colleges.⁷

The priest, then, must serve his role in a true fashion. He has no business in secular affairs. He has enough, actually more than enough, work in his office of bringing all men to God. This is a gigantic task which the Church has been most conscious of for many centuries. It might almost be said that for centuries this was the only "bridge" that concerned the Church. The priest's work is sanctification of the faithful. It is the true task of every priest to take care of the spiritual needs of the laity and bring him to God. Most of the laity admire a priest for this today. Most high school students admire a priest for being a man of God. That he is a good basketball coach, that he shoots in the high '70's in golf, such skills are convenient to have. They might help him bring

⁷ William Toohey, "The Hyphen Priest," in Ave Maria, July 17, 1965, p. 7.

the Word of God to the laity but, do you agree, they are not required for the priesthood? If a priest can put you in contact with God, can put your conscience at rest, can show you that the World and life do make sense, in spite of the confused clowns at our every side. . .the priest who can do this is, without talking down to the layman, fulfilling to a great extent his vocation.

It is no secret today that even among the hierarchy there is a sharp disagreement concerning the amount of involvement priests and nuns should have in race demonstrations and other forms of public participation. Some bishops and archbishops have forbidden their priests and nuns to take an active part. Other members of the hierarchy have taken quite the opposite course of action, encouraging clergy and religious to demonstrate their beliefs openly where such Christian principles are at stake as the race question and fair housing. What stand would you take?

Not only in these areas but there are other areas where the role of the clergy is being challenged. Cardinal Cushing has called on all members of the hierarchy to release the thousands of priests "tied" behind desks, doing clerical work that could be just as expertly, and perhaps even more expertly, handled by the laity who have been directly trained in such work. These thousands of priests should be released for more direct priestly work in our own

country, South America and Africa, where teaching, offering the Mass and dispensing the sacraments are things that are truly priestly. What are your comments of the statement of Cardinal Cushing?

ORIGINS OF LAY THEOLOGY

One might be tempted to ask when did a "special theology" for the laity come to be developed? Did not St. Paul tell us that we are all one in Christ:

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through your faith. For all of you who have been baptized into union with Christ. . .there is no room for "Jew" and "Greek"; there is no room for "male", "slave" and "free man"; there is no room for "male" or "female", for in union with Christ Jesus you are all one (Gal. 3:26-8).

There has been a development of this theology over the past twenty years. We had occasion above to introduce to you Cardinal Suhard, who wrote such eloquent letters to the clergy of Paris. Already in his pastoral letter back in 1948 he makes mention of the fact that a theology of temporal order is now being developed, and he watches its development with great interest.⁸

The great philosopher, Jacques Maritain, in his book on Christian Humanism brings up the question of a special spirituality or theology of the laity. It should be no

⁸ Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Priests Among Men, p. 48

surprise to us to see new developments in theology especially since Vatican II. The Holy Spirit is always at work in the Church. The revealed Word of God is taking place today.

The modern understanding of the Gospels confirms this. As a recent instruction from the biblical Commission makes clear, the Gospels are not simply records of Jesus' words and deeds; they are interpretation and application of those words and deeds to the young Christian Church. This interpretation and application in the Gospels is, of course, constitutive in the sense that it constitutes Christian truth and Christian morality in a way that the later, post-biblical interpretation of the Church cannot. The later Church will only explicitate, make clear and adapt this constitutive truth to the succeeding ages. The point is, however, that in both cases there is an evolution, a progress in understanding.⁹

The world today judges the Church as one who has fallen behind in giving answers where answers must be given. The Church in her moral and theological development has truly lagged behind in many areas of sex and technology, in the fields of psychology and psychiatry. Moral problems are raised in diverse sections of science which still remain unanswered. Theology should be out in front directing and guiding and leading, instead of always trying to catch up.

⁹ Eugene Maley, "Council Observer", in Catholic Telegraph Register, Oct. 15, 1965, p. 8a.

A Christian synthesis of the modern world is needed to give the laity a spirituality proper to them. A truly living theology that stands abreast of a swiftly moving and evolving world is a vital necessity for the layman. The layman's apostolate is then world-wide, like the Church.¹⁰

In developing a theology for the layman, must we not take into account 'man's newly found liberty from economic slavery?

A theology of work, a theology of leisure time, a theology of education and of marriage, a special aspect to the theology of redemption taking into account the new sociological, medical and pluralistic society--these developments must take place in the sacred science of theology before a complete synthesis of a spirituality involved here can be presented.¹¹

It should come, then, as no surprise to study an area concerning the laity, which perhaps is rather new to you. Fr. Kevin McNamara brings out the above thought well on lay theology:

Catholic theology in recent years has dedicated itself in a special way to a sympathetic understanding of modern life and thought, in the hope of winning a contemporary world for Christ. . . The efforts of theologians to find a place in the Christian scheme of things for the ideas that have become in a special way identified with the modern mind have focused attention on new objects of study and have been responsible for certain theological developments. The frontiers of theology have been extended

¹⁰ L. Putz, An Emerging Theology, p. 83.

¹¹ Kevin McNamara, "Catholic Theology Today", in the Irish Theological Quarterly, Spring, 1954, p. 245.

in three directions particularly, so that today we have three almost completely new departments in theology: a theology of the laity, a theology of history, and a theology of terrestrial realities.¹²

The area of lay theology is rather recent and as yet we do not have developed a complete lay theology.

We are dealing with a new area in theology, with all that it implies of uncertainty, groping, controversy, and some ultimate dissatisfaction. But it is an important area, and if theology is to fulfill its glorious task of discovering, ordering and illuminating divine truth, it cannot neglect this portion in its total enterprise.¹³

A lot of the trouble with modern high school courses in the past was the fact that much of the matter was not pertinent, was not applicable to the modern teenager in his everyday living and problems. Often Religion was the dullest and most uninteresting course in the curriculum. This may have been due to the textbook or to the teacher--probably both! Religion can easily be the most vital course of the curriculum because it deals with living and one's eternal destiny--and what high school student is not interested in living his personal contact with Christ? Each vocation has its proper gift from God.

¹² Loc. cit.

¹³ J. Keating, "Theology of the Laity", National Proceedings of American Theological Association, New York, 1962, p. 45.

For just as there are many parts united in our human bodies, and the parts do not all have the same function, so, many as we are, we form one body through union with Christ, and we are individually parts of one another. (Rom. 12:4-5)

If lay spirituality or sanctity is the normal calling for the laity, we must approach it from their lives in the World, rather than from a strictly spiritual level. . .generally speaking, the main areas of lay life are occupational life, family life, and civic life. Man belongs in his place of work, his home, his civic community, like a fish belongs in water. The world is his bailiwick.¹⁴

Today a lot of lay people who do want to be holy are behaving like religious out of the cloister. They try to keep up religious practices in the lay state (we do not wish to depreciate the piety of lay people who take on modified religious practices, as Third Order members, for instance, but we do not believe they represent today's main way of lay sanctification), sometimes saying the Divine Office, or forming into semi-religious communities under a modified rule.

This negative image is further projected when our moralisms touch on matters of purity and aesthetics. Although our anti-smut and Marylike dress campaigns may be directed against a false view of sex, our lack of attention to other areas and our failure to emphasize positive aesthetic values give us the dour faces of Puritans. The total image we project is not that of a people who have given flesh to the authoritative papal documents on social questions, but that of defenders of the narrow concerns

¹⁴ Dennis Geaney, You Shall be Witnesses, Chicago, Fides Publishers, p. 45.

of a parochial, provincial, and puritanical Church. This is the type of parochialism which seems to have little concern for the masses of people whom Christ came to redeem, unless they prove themselves to be white, Anglo-Saxon, respectable, church-going, conforming Catholics. This is an attitude more Calvinistic than Catholic.¹⁵

Lay theology is a theology in which the laity take seriously their role in the Church and in the temporal order. "What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature."¹⁶ If Christ cannot be found in the daily life of the student, in his school life, in his recreational life, in his social life, and in his civic life, and does not prepare him for discovering Christ shortly in his permanent vocation of marriage and the family and his profession, then there is little hope of proving to the student that Religion is lived every moment of the day and not just something one puts on like a coat or hat for a short period of time--Sunday at Mass. This is living our religion, "living a life of union with Christ according to our circumstances."¹⁷ They live in the word, that is, in each and all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life,

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁶ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

¹⁷ Donald Thorman, Lay Life with God, p. 79.

from which the very web of their existence is woven.¹⁸ When St. Paul speaks about being divided: "I want you to be free from all anxiety. . . A married man is concerned about worldly affairs, and how he can please his wife, and so his interests are divided." (1 Cor. 7:33), how must this be interpreted? Can these words of Paul be harmonized with the counsel of Christ when he told us to pray always? There are perhaps two ways at least of interpreting the words of the Apostle. Can you give at least two different interpretations? Is it possible for man to please God in pleasing his wife? It would seem that many high school students have the two faces of Eve. They think they have two lives, two personalities, so to speak: the one spiritual (Religion is for this) and the other material, which is some sort of springboard which serves only the spiritual. Each one of us is an integral person. Everything of our person must be involved in God. It was Chardin who said that to live as a man was already to live as a Christian. This is spirituality incarnate, human spirituality, not angelic spirituality. We will some day be in heaven body and soul -- not just soul. Did Christ have these thoughts many centuries ago: "I do not ask you to

¹⁸ Op cit., p. 35.

take them away from the World, but to keep them from the evil one." (Jn. 17:15).

And this is the point. Human spirituality does not mean access to another world, but a new intimacy with this one. It releases a whole new range of possible relationships that are completely beyond the capacities of the merely material.¹⁹

There have been two theories of lay spirituality: the first one of withdrawal from the World; the other an attempt to infiltrate material life with the Christian spirit. Historically, neither has been successful. The first failed because it really did not answer the question; the second, because the infiltration became lost in the mass of material efforts which ultimately dominated it. The spiritual became subordinated to the material.²⁰ This situation existed centuries ago. We run the same risk today, but perhaps not with the same odds against us. The Liturgical life of the Church is being lived so intensely today by millions of Catholics that the above danger, although always present, is somewhat diminished. On the other hand, there are still millions of Catholics, no doubt many of our youths, who do not see the vital necessity of living this very Liturgical

¹⁹ Robert Johann, "Matter and Spirit," (Philosopher's Notebook), in America, July 10, 1965, p. 40.

²⁰ Jacques Leclercq, Can a Layman be a Saint, p. 25.

life, especially the Mass and sacraments. It doesn't turn them on. One can have the most meaningful Liturgy, folks songs, guitars and full participation. . .if one's Faith is not exercised it remains quite meaningless.

We live in the Church; we are the Church; we are not isolated persons in the great social body of the Church. We are the People of God who, as a people, must offer a true sacrifice to God. The chosen People of God is one: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism", (Eph. 4:5) sharing a common dignity as members form their regeneration in Christ; having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection: "possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity."²¹ We so often consider ourselves as isolated individuals who have no responsibility to the Church, no responsibility to the Mystical Body. It is only as a people, the people of God, that we can offer a true sacrifice.

At all times and in every race God has given welcome to whosoever fears Him and does what is right. God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.²²

²¹ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

²² Ibid., p. 10.

The sacraments are not isolated practices of our Faith. The Holy Eucharist not only increases our life, but it bears witness to the life already within us which we live constantly throughout the entire day. If this is our approach to the Liturgy, then we will not fail in the same attempt of those gone before us. Isn't it because of the permanent sacramental life of matrimony within us (when that day comes) that my marriage must endure, "By the sacramental grace of matrimony which is in me, ' ----- take you until death do us part." (Liturgical Ceremony of Marriage)

For centuries the Church has been telling its people, religious as well as the laity, to flee the world. Have no contact with the World, avoid the dangerous contagion of the World, avoid meeting rooms where the halls are filled with clouds of smoke and nothing of import is accomplished; avoid the newspapers, the TV, the places of entertainment; do not get involved in politics. It is dirty and dishonest; avoid contact with non-Catholics, do not associate with the atheist or the Communist, and we can go on and on. Now of a sudden we hear Vatican II:

Catholics, in their ecumenical work, must assuredly be concerned for their separated brethren, praying for them, keeping them informed about the Church, making the first approaches toward them. But their primary duty is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done or renewed in the Catholic household itself, in order that its life may bear witness more clearly and faithfully to the teachings and institutions which have come to it from Christ through the Apostles.²³

We are urged to get into the mainstream of world influence and change those areas which are wrong. We are urged to enter politics where the common good, where the great areas of social justice can be carried out. We are almost pushed into the world, which is Christic, yet often great segments of it are hostile to Christ and His message in the Gospel. Today the apostolate is not one of choice. It is ours the moment the waters of baptism are poured on our heads. It is no longer a question of having a delightful decision to make. The Church tells us today that as laymen we have no decision of choice to make with reference to the temporal order. It is our vocation! The laymen must work where his true role lies. The laity do not flee the world, but rather enter the world change it and do not let it change us. It must be made Christic. So often in the past there might have been careful steps taken to protect

²³ The Documents of Vatican II, (General editor: Walter Abbott, New York, Guild Press, 1966, p. 348.)

us from all sorts of people who do not think, believe and act as we are supposed to. There is a period in our lives where protection and formation is needed. There is a time when we must start to influence the secular World about us. As upperclassmen, now is the time! "They are to remain in the World while I return to you." (Jn. 17:9) "Now I do not pray that you take them out of the World. . .but that you preserve them from it." (Jn. 17:19)

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--What is the meaning of the statement: The priest is pontiff of the spiritual?
- 2--What is the difference in the role of the Holy Father as Pontiff, as bridge-builder, and the priest who is also a "pontiff"?
- 3--Why should there be a theology of the laity?
- 4--Theology has lagged behind the secular World in giving answers to man's modern problems. Can you give some concrete examples in the life of the student where the moral implications of your actions are not clear?
- 5--What is meant by the temporal order? What elements of the temporal order are open to teenagers to change and influence?
- 6--The layman is pontiff of creation. This means...

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--It is rather easy to see that the Mass is a social act. Also the Holy Eucharist. The Sacrament of Penance, although most personal, has still powerful social implications. Mention some.

- 2--Discuss the areas where you feel that high school students still flee the world and their responsibility to the World.
- 3--Do you feel that more students will lose their Faith if they take up the challenge of this chapter? There are great dangers in starting a dialogue with non-Catholics or atheist. Agreed? How is this danger to be counteracted?
- 4--Should mixed marriages be encouraged to enter more directly into a dialogue with non-Catholics? Do you think mixed marriages will be on the increase because of this dialogue? should they?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Contact a fellow teen-ager, one who has no Faith. Work up a series of questions, asking him his goals, his "beliefs", his morality. Write up the interview.
- 2--Read the Constitution on the Church, Chapter VI on the Laity.
- 3--Read the Ceremony of Act of Faith in Baptism.
- 4--Examine a problem outside the school. . .a problem on the level of the teen-ager. . .what can we do to organize to solve it?

LESSON IV: TO GOD THROUGH CREATION or
THE LAYMAN IN THE WORLD

PRAYER:

Almighty and everlasting God, You have willed to restore all things in Your beloved Son, the King of the whole creation; mercifully grant that all the families of nations that have been disunited by the wound of sin may become subject to His most sweet dominion. (Prayer from Mass on the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King)

He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. All kings shall pay Him homage, all nations shall serve Him.
(Ps. 71, 8.11)

By virtue of the Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see. On the contrary, everything is sacred to those capable of distinguishing that portion of chosen being which is subject to the attraction of Christ in the process of consummation.¹

ORIENTATION:

Susan has a problem. Her religion teacher advised her that going to the "Y" for swimming and recreation is something that would surely be permitted today, also an excellent occasion for meeting non-Catholics and trying to understand each other better, a good occasion for dialogue!

¹ Pierre Teilhère de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, New York, Harper & Bros., 1960, p. 35.

On the other hand, Susan's Mother is shocked at such advice. She asked her Pastor, and the Pastor told Mother not to permit Susan to go to the "Y" for swimming. Reason given: they make you read the Protestant Bible there and one should not mix with non-Catholics until one is an adult and sure of her faith. Also, the Pastor said that in the past Catholics were not permitted to go to the YWCA.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

Pilate said to Him, 'Then You are a King?'
Jesus answered, 'Yes, I am a King. It was for this that I was born and for this that I came into the world, to give testimony of the truth.' (Jn. 18:37)

Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not a kingdom of this world. If My kingdom were a kingdom of this world, My men would have fought to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom has no such origin. (Jn. 18:36)

The last enemy to be overthrown will be death, for everything is to be reduced to subjection and put under Christ's feet. But when it says that everything is subject to Him, He is evidently excepted who reduced it all to Him. (1 Cor. 15:27-28)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--"My Kingdom is not of this World."
- 2--The salvation of souls bound up with the temporal.
- 3--Determining the religious character of layman's secular Act.

"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD"

Many "devout" persons in the past have used this statement of Christ to Pilate to excuse themselves from any involvement in the world. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. We are not to establish the kingdom of Christ in the world. The World is the domain of Satan. "I will no longer speak much with you, for the prince of this world is coming, and in me he has nothing." (Jn. 14:30) "Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn.2:15) It is not difficult to find many similar statements in St. John's Gospel which deal with Satan and the world of which "Christ has no part".

On the other hand, we know that Christ is King of the entire World. "All power is given to me in Heaven and on Earth." (Mt. 28,18-20) These words in the Gospel of the Feast of the Kingship of Christ bring this out. We find a similar statement in the Psalms:

"He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

"Before him his enemies shall fall,
his foes lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.

"The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

(Psalm 71, 8-11)

How, then, are we to reconcile the words of Christ to Pilate and other passages of the Gospels where evidently Christ is King, not only of the spiritual World, Heaven, but He is just as much King of the secular World in which we live? When Christ spoke to Pilate he was emphasizing his primary role the spiritual, yet Christ did not deny the fact that He was also King of the temporal. Christ came to establish the Church. Christ was not some sort of revolutionist. He advocated no revolt of the civil authorities. He did not even advocate directly the overthrow of such things as slavery, which was completely opposed to his Gospel message. Christ came to change the hearts of men. He gave us principles and Commandments, such as love of God and our neighbor. . .and if these are carried out they would work a revolution in man's heart first, and man in turn would change the social structure. It is also evident that Christ was on trial for his life. The accusation was that He had refused to pay tribute to Caesar. All this was most confusing to Pilate. Christ's words were as true as ever. Christ wanted to make it clear that He was not seeking earthly power. He came to establish His Kingship in the hearts of men. They, in turn with His Spirit, would establish His reign in the secular World.

These words of Christ, on the contrary, are no excuse for the laity to let the world, so to speak, "go to the dogs." The world must be the Kingdom of Christ.

We realize, too, that the world, as set over against the Church is not necessarily to be conceived as a hostile or merely neutral force. By the Incarnation, by the cross and resurrection, the world is already Christic and ecclesial in its dynamic orientation. Its Christianity is, in Rahner's now famous term, anonymous, but it is real. To quote Fr. Schillebeeckx: 'In the plan of salvation, the concrete world, by definition, is an implicit Christianity; it is an objective, non-sacral but saintly and sanctified expression of mankind's communion with the living God; whereas the Church, qua institution of salvation, with her explicit creed, her worship and sacraments, is the direct and sacral expression of that identical communion.'²

Christ must be refracted in the world which is His. It is admitted by many important laymen in the Church, and by important theologians, that the Church has ignored the world for too many centuries. It is a dictum that for centuries only the spiritual was stressed. This is no longer sufficient in our modern age. In past centuries, no doubt, concern for the spiritual was sufficient for solving man's problems and caring for his soul. The Religion course which stresses only the spiritual will never be a complete course.

² Thomas Clarke, S.J., "The World is Already Christic", in America, May 29, 1965, p. 81.

It is not by setting up a negative or merely defensive attitude to oppose erroneous theories of atheistic materialism and bad leaders that we may hope to solve the agonizing problems of the working world. It is by the active presence, in factories and stockyards, of pioneers fully conscious of their double vocation, as Christians and workers, who are resolved to assume fully their responsibilities and know neither respite nor rest until they have transformed their environments to conformity with the teachings of the Gospel. It is by such positive and collective work that the Church will be able to extend her life-giving action to millions of souls.³

Man is both body and soul. Unless all matter is brought to God by the laity; unless his theology includes the redemption of matter; unless his spirituality consists of more than an hour on Sunday and a few prayers during the week, he will never live the rich calling of the layman's vocation and will never have that full encounter with God. This might well be what is wrong with the spiritual life of so many high school students. Their biggest problem is living the life of God, of preserving the life of Christ in their own soul. Students who have the problem of masturbation -- often stressing only the spiritual, the sacraments and prayer are not sufficient.

³ Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Priests Among Men, p. 55.

Let's pursue this line of thought further. A group of priests in a Midwestern archdiocese has been exploring for some time the relation between social action and purity. It is their tentative conclusion that high school students who become involved in social movements, such as the Young Christian Students, are less likely to fall prey to impurity.

There is more involved here than merely keeping young people busy so that they don't have time for sin. The principle is that the entire emphasis and orientation of the Catholic social movements is directed outside the individual. Impurity is often found in persons who are inner-directed, who are selfish and concerned primarily with themselves. But the orientation of persons in the social movements is to be concerned for others and for the social and spiritual environment in which others live and work. By becoming involved in social action they forget self--with its connotation of impurity--and become concerned with others. For them, social action has spiritual values over and above the value of the action itself.⁴

They have tried the old solutions for years and without success. The student must be made aware of his obligations to the Church, as a member of the People of God and also aware of his obligations to Society. Once he becomes involved in Society, in the problems of others, once he is aware of the apostolate entrusted to the laity. . .all this, along with a deep appreciation of the Liturgical life of the Church -- the student may be able to take a fresh stand on his spiritual problems and, for the first time in his high

⁴ Donald Thorman, The Emerging Layman, p. 71.

school career, truly feel that he is making the progress necessary to live constantly and totally the life of God.

THE SALVATION OF SOULS BOUND UP WITH THE TEMPORAL

All too often we have both the laity and the clergy still living in a past age in which they think there exists a kind of sacred society. The world is secular and man's spiritual as well as his earthly destiny is bound up with the industrial city of which he is a part. Genesis tells man to "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." All creation, all created things of man must serve to bring him to his eternal destiny. Often they do not. St. Paul, when writing to Timothy, reminds him that all things are good:

. . .men with seared consciences who forbid people to marry and insist on abstinence from certain kinds of food that God created for men who believe and understand the truth to enjoy and give thanks for. For everything God has created is good, and nothing need be refused, provided it is accepted with thanksgiving, for then it is consecrated by prayer and the Scripture used in it. (1 Tim. 4:3-5).

Although the priest must be concerned with the spiritual, this is his task, yet he must realize that students do not live in isolation from the world and all the elements of the world. He must be well aware of the elements that go to make up the daily life of the student. Cardinal Suhard

brought out this idea many years ago when he saw his own priests publish such books as France Pagan, France a Mission Country. In his own words:

Although he is an apostle and fosters the apostolate, the priest's responsibility is not confined to the salvation of souls.

In the first place, this is so because souls do not exist in isolation but rather in concrete human beings. Those whom he invites to the eternal kingdom live on earth for the time being, they are transients in a transitory world. Even if he did not wish to do so, the priest would have to reckon with the City of Man because he meets it everywhere, in his own self, since he is not an angelic emigrant; in others, who are reached by his message only through sense symbols. More important still, the City of God and the City of Man, although they are distinct and today all too frequently sorely at odds with each other, do not exist side by side but are all mixed up together.⁵

The religion teacher, then, who is ignorant of the secularity of the students' life is hardly fit to teach religion. On the other hand, the students who totally ignores his vocation in the World and refuses to do anything to Christianize his environment, runs the risk of being more influenced by the World than his influencing the World. Often the very social structure of our society is so set up and arranged that those who practice true virtue, honesty, justice, charity, are considered out-of-step, while those who go along in the main stream are considered normal. Can

⁵ Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, Priests Among Men, p. 72.

you give any such examples? Are there such problems in the Catholic high school?

The salvation of persons cannot be accomplished without a certain 'salvation' of the social order. While it is true that the social order exists for the persons, and not conversely, one may, nevertheless, say that it is civilization itself which requires spiritualization in all its problems and movements, each of which constitutes, as it were, a collective reality.⁶

Young people today, and rightly so, lay great stress on the natural goodness of all things. "For everything God has created is good, and nothing need be refused. . . ." (1 Tim. 4:4) Youth today is not interested in hearing various warnings of the Church about the fallen nature of man and all the evils about him. That goodness is everywhere is true, and this is a most positive approach to all of Creation. Genesis tells us this: "And so it was. God saw that all that he had made was very good." (Gen. 1:31) Yet man can, and often does, take the goodness of God, the handiwork of God and turn it away from him. All must serve God, "for everything is to be reduced to subjection and put under Christ's feet." (1 Cor. 15:28) This stress on the natural goodness of all things in relation to God may be called Christian humanism. It is true that this new approach to living is very refreshing and wholesome and something

⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

which appeals to the young set especially. It is also true that what the Church has said no, no, to in the past. . . warning man of its dangers, is now not only permitted but encouraged. These changes are seen not only in lay life but also in religious life. The Church can never dispense man from mortification and penance, but such formal laws regarding Lent, fasting and abstinence are now dispensed with. Can you give other examples in this area? The Church, although she has always stressed the goodness of sex, of all legitimate forms of recreation and leisure, even on Sunday, of drink and alcoholic beverages, as long as they are not abused - as opposed to other religions which have condemned many of the above as intrinsically evil - still she is cautious in the practical application of this goodness which she sees in all of creation.

In the above area of setting values on all of creation, man today in showing the great dignity of marriage is setting additional values on the people who make up their lives. Today we no longer hear one referring to his wife, or her husband and children as means to Heaven and God. People who are an essential part of our daily living are not means. They are ends, not final ends surely but truly intermediary ends in our journey to God. Don Thorman in his book on The Emerging Layman brings this out:

For, unless people are ends in themselves, it is all too easy to lose respect for human dignity, the eternal value of all the individual human being. To tell a man involved in a Christian marriage that a woman and children he deeply loves, that his wife and offspring are merely the means through which he is to work out his salvation, may contain a textbook truth, but it goes contrary to human intuition of all generations.⁷

DETERMINING THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE
LAYMAN'S SECULAR ACTIVITIES

This is the goal of the theology of the layman. Unless this can be achieved, we have at best only a half-developed theology. There must be a unity in the lives of the laity, "that everything in heaven and on earth should be unified in Christ--the Christ through whom it is our lot to have been predestined" (Eph. 1:10-11). If this cannot be lived in the lives of the laity, then we do not have a theology which is living and which stands abreast of a swiftly moving society and an evolving world. It is not a theology that is functional to the laity who are a most integral part of the fast changing social order. Is there not a religious character to sports, to recreation, to leisure time, to work, to sex, to marriage, to studies, to scholarship and the arts? God must be found in all these elements

7 Cf. Donald Thorman, The Emerging Layman, p. 66.

which make up the life of the student, more especially the laity who have determined their vocation. All these elements must be canonized in the lives of the laity,

For it all belongs to you--Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present, the future--all of it belongs to you. But you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God (1 Cor. 3:22-23).

This is the mission of the Catholic Church. She must show us how the grace of God is manifested and its tangible presence felt in every aspect of our lives.

Every dimension of human activity must feel its impact--history, social activity, practical accomplishments, scholarship and the arts. Every baptized person is commissioned to work for this manifestation.⁸

And there is much more to all the great building stones of our lives than the mere good intention.

I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that nine out of ten practicing Christians feel that man's work is always at the level of a spiritual encumbrance. In spite of the practice of right intentions, and the day offered every morning to God, the general run of the Faithful dimly feel that time spent at the office or the studio, in the fields or in the factory, is time diverted from prayer and adoration. It is impossible not to work--that is taken for granted. But is impossible, too, to aim

⁸ Karl Rahner, The Sacraments, The Layman & the World, p. 104.

at the deep religious life reserved for those who have the leisure to pray or preach all day long. A few moments of the day can be salvaged for God, yes, but the best hours are absorbed, or at any rate cheapened, by material cares. Under the sway of this feeling, large number of Catholics lead a double or crippled life in practice: they have to step out of their human dress so as to have faith in themselves as Christians--and inferior Christians at that.⁹

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--Why is Christ's kingdom not only of the spiritual world but also of all creation?
- 2--People who interpret Christ's kingship as applying only to the life hereafter. . .how will they act in the secular world? What is meant by letting the world "go to the dogs"?
- 3--We are not divided. We are, each one of us, a person. Yet how will the student act who divides his life between religious practices on Sunday and his secular actions during the remainder of the week?
- 4--What is meant by the statement of Suhard that the salvation of souls is bound up with the salvation of the social order?
- 5--Explain the meaning of the statement that the layman must have determined the religious character of his secular activities?

9 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, p. 34.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Discuss how the student's realization of his social vocation as the People of God, his involvement in the apostolate, in changing the social order on his level might well be a solution to such personal problems as masturbation?
- 2--In what areas does the teen-ager feel his pastor, perhaps his religion teacher, is quite ignorant concerning his problems of daily temptations and living? How could this be corrected?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--The Church has always insisted on family participation at Sunday Mass. Yet, most young students do not want to go to Mass with their parents. Some priests have tried for a student Mass on Sunday. If you could organize the singing, and the type of participation in the Mass... how would you set up the Mass where you feel the student would get more out of his participation in the Mass? (This might be done in the school at regular school Masses.) Could you organize a special student folk-singing Mass?
- 2--List various aspects of our social structure which are organized against Christian living. Read one article on any such aspect, steady dating, drinking, social standing, and give a report on it.

LESSON V: HOW THE LAITY CAME TO IGNORE
THE SECULAR WORLD

PRAYER:

Be praised My Lord for Brother Fire, by which
Thou illuminated the night; fair and merry is he,
robust and strong. Praised be Thee, My Lord, for
our Mother Earth, who doth sustain and nurture us,
and bringest forth divers fruits with colored
flowers and plants. ("Canticle of the Sun" of
St. Francis)¹

ORIENTATION:

Some time ago three priests were literally picked
from the ocean and saved. They were trying to make the off-
shore islands across from Los Angeles. Their boat sprang a
leak, a bad one. . .and when the helicopter picked them up
the police saw the priests bailing out water for dear life.
When the priests were safely aboard the chopper they were
asked if during their perilous moments they thought of pray-
ing. "Hell no, we were too busy bailing out water to stop
to pray" was the answer.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his
Mother named Mary, and or not his brothers named
James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? (Mt. 13,54-56)

¹ Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun",
The Little Flowers of St. Francis, p. 19.

Master, if you had been here my brother would not have died! When Jesus saw her weep and the Jews who had come with her weeping too, repressing a groan, and yet showing great agitation, he said, 'Where have you laid him?'...Jesus shed tears. So the Jews said, 'see how much he loved him!' (Jn. 11:32-36)

Thy Mother and Thy Brethren are waiting to see you. . . .(Mt. 12-47)

You must not adopt the customs of this world but, by your new attitude of mind, be transformed so that you can find out what God's will is, what is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

Special ministries have been assigned to the high priest: a special place has been allotted to the priests, and the levites have their own duties. Lay people are bound by rules laid down for the laity. (Early Letter of Clement of Rome, 95 A.D.)²

SOME CONFLICTING IDEAS ABOUT THE LAITY

It was pointed out above that the origin of the laity (laos) was the People of God, in counter distinction to their pagan neighbors. They were, as a nation, to offer a true sacrifice to God. St. James says this much in the Acts of the Apostles: "Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has told how God first showed an interest in taking from among the heathens a people [laos] to bear his name." (Acts 15:14) Over the course of the centuries the lofty meaning attached to our laity was lost sight of. What once meant people of God was reduced to simply lay folk. Have we come a long way

2 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 139.

to the point today where the laity described themselves as "not the clergy".

The term "laity" is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. These faithful are by Baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God...³

The Head of the Church reminds his hearers of the great dignity of the laity: "You who were once 'no people' but are now 'God's people'; once 'unpitied' but now 'pitied indeed'. (1 Peter 2:10)

It was not long ago, in fact just in the past century, the laity were described as those fit for only hunting and fishing. Magr. Talbot writing to Cardinal Manning once said:

What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all.⁴

As late as 1849 Bismarck remarked that the Church consisted of the hierarchy and the clerics. The community of the faithful was not a necessary part of the Church. The Church in his viewpoint consisted of the hierarchy and the clerics. Many centuries ago even a Pope Boniface VIII, in

³ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 34.

⁴ Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 231.

his turmoil with the laity, stated that "the laity are our enemies!" It is difficult to imagine how we arrived at our present state.

CHRIST AND HIS MOTHER ARE MEMBERS OF THE LAITY

It is not a common thought to consider one's pastor as a member of the laity. Nevertheless he is. It is even a less rare thought to consider Christ as the laos of God. Yet, Christ preempted all people. He is the first-born of the People of God. His Mother, Mary, was truly of the laity and remained so throughout her entire life. That Christ is truly the first of the laity, of the People of God. . . this lends infinite dignity to our lay vocation.

Christ for the first almost thirty years of his life was identified as an ordinary son of humble parents. "Is He not the son of Joseph the carpenter" (Mt. 13:54-). The fact that Christ was by nature a Priest did not take away from his title as a member of the People of God. Christ, above all, came to offer a true sacrifice, which was first entrusted to the Israelites, the Chosen People. He was the true Messiah. Yet because the Jews knew his origin they refused to accept him as the Messiah. The Messiah -- no one would know his origin the Jews thought. Christ spent most of his life on the Earth as a layman practicing the humble trade of his foster-father, Joseph. Christ was involved

with the laity all of his life. Many of the laity supported him in his apostolic journeys. Some of his closest friends, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, were of the laity. Yet the laity, in spite of the example of Christ are not convinced of the great dignity of the lay vocation nor have they endorsed the world to influence it.

Yet Vatican II is most explicit in the job of laity.

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.⁵

IN EARLY CHURCH A FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF CLERGY AND LAITY

You have heard the expression: it wasn't always this way. Well, it might be said in a very similar manner for the relations between the clergy and laity. Christ gave us the hierarchy in the Apostles, who were all bishops. St. Peter was the head of the Church, the first pontiff. Priests appeared on the scene to help out the bishops in their work. You will not find the word "priest", as

⁵ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

identified by Catholics today, used in the New Testament. There is a sharp division of thought between the Catholic and our separated brethren over the origin of the calling of the priests. Martin Luther rejected the status of priesthood. He said that all Christians are priests, and all priests are Christians. The first written record of the word "priest" used as such is in the year, circa 95 AD by Clement of Rome:

Special ministries have been assigned to the high priest: a special place has been allotted to the priests, and the levites have their own duties. Lay people are bound by rules laid down for the laity.⁶

This statement may not seem important to us but to the Church, who has always held that the tradition of the priestly vocation in the Church goes back for many centuries, this is most important.

Christ, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, has through His apostles, made their successors, the bishops, partakers of His consecration and His mission. They have legitimately handed on to different individuals in the Church various degrees of participation in this ministry. Thus the divinely established ecclesiastical ministry is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests and deacons.⁷

⁶ Jeremiah Newman, The Christian in Society, 1962, Helicon Press, Baltimore, p. 21.

⁷ Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 30.

In the early Church there was little thought of our term 'vocations', separate vocations as we stress today. The clergy and the laity were both united as members as the People of God . The clergy had no distinctive garb. The clergy married, and they continued this practice in the West for many centuries even up to the eleventh century, as Newman tells us,

Nor were these by any means isolated instances, as is evidenced by the many pastoral letters of the eleventh century which tried to impress on the clergy the principle of celibacy. Indeed an eleventh century law for the priests of the diocese of York definitely assumed that the majority were likely to be married.⁸

The clergy and the laity were like two different roles in society. The clergy was a sort of office. It was not for many centuries considered as a way of life, a distinct vocation as it is considered today. Today it is rather easy to distinguish the cleric from the religious. Clericature itself is an office, a function. It is not a state of life. Religious life is a state or way of life. "In principle, then, clerics and monks were sharply differentiated: 'cleric' indicates a function, 'monk' a state or way of life. A man is a cleric by ordination to the sacred ministry, a monk by personal renouncement of the world. The two things are not

⁸ Cf. Newman, p. 21.

unrelated, however, and in the West the relationships have been understood in such a way that the two conditions reinforce one another." Religious life, on the other hand, has always been considered as a distinct way of life. The function of the clergy, of the priests, was distinct from that of the laity, but there was no idea of developing the great cleavage we have today. Today we say that the clergy and religious are especially concerned with religious matters, liturgical matters, the laity are primarily concerned with the temporal.

The role of the laity, now a very passive one at least up to most recently, would have seemed quite strange and foreign to the laity in the early Church. To have encouraged the laity to be apostolic and to take an active part in the parish. . .well, there was little need of this.

During the first centuries, the priest limited himself sharply to the functions that we just mentioned. The apostolate is not peculiarly his task, any more than bearing witness to charity. The works of mercy, visiting the poor, caring for the sick, were entrusted to laymen. Later on, priests occupied more and more numerous functions, including many that belonged to the laity; but the care of the sick was never a priestly function, and the visiting of the poor was so only occasionally. All this has always remained in the domain of the laity. Much later, when the Church canonically ordained the religious life as a state distinct from both clergy and laity, this work of temporal charity in great measure came

to be taken over by communities or religious, men and women, but it was a question of religious who were not priests.⁹

What apostolic group today is set up especially for visiting the sick and the other corporal works of mercy? Recently, and this after a great push to educate the laity to their vocation as members of the laity, we see a much more vigorous participation of the laity in parish life. In spite of new signs of vitality among the laity, there remains, unfortunately, a great block of the laity who have not responded to the call of the past pontiffs and the present message of Vatican II. It remains the task of the parish priests and the religion teachers to stimulate the adults and the youths in their role in the Church as lay apostles. The apostolate is no longer one of choice!

THE LAITY, ACTIVE IN THE COUNCIL

It was quite the bit of news at the Second Vatican Council when the laity were officially invited. It was even more "shocking" news to hear Pope Paul invite for the first time women to the Council. The first woman to be present at the Council was Marie Louise Monnet. Although they, the laity, had no voice in the Council, no official voice and vote, they did have a quasi-active role to play. And it was

⁹ Fr. Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 190.

the privilege of many of the clergy to hear the comments of the laity on their return after the various sessions. To say this is "old hat" might sound like sour grapes. The early Christians were present at the first Council at Jerusalem. The laity did take some sort of part at this Council. What role they actually played is not clear. It is not given to us in any detail in the Acts of the Apostles. We do know that the apostles and the elders met together 'to consider' and also the laity, to insure their support so that the Council had the support of 'all the multitude'.

So the apostles and the presbyters had a meeting to look into this matter. And after a long debate, Peter got up and said to them, 'Brethren, you know that in early days God made a choice among us, that through my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith. Why then do you now try to test God by putting on the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are' (Acts: 15, 6-12).

Then the apostles and the presbyters with the whole church decided to select representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts: 15, 22).

Beyond a doubt, there will be subsequent Councils in the Church. As the layman takes more of his rightful place in the Church for certain he will have a greater and more

active voice in the important decisions and workings of the Church.

THE MIND OF THE APOSTLE, PAUL

It would seem that the theology of the great Apostle Paul had a profound influence on the Christians he came into contact with, on the people he converted. Paul gives us his own relationship with the world:

But I never want to boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which the world has been crucified to me and I have been to the world (Gal. 6:13).

This is Paul's personal position with reference to the world. He had a very positive idea about the future of the world when he said, "All things are yours, you are Christ's and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3-23). Paul does not tell the people to flee the world:

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people--not that you are to have nothing whatever to do with the immoral people of the world, any more than with its greedy and grasping people or idolaters, for then you would have to leave the world altogether (1 Cor. 5:9-10).

And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).

And more advice from Paul:

. . .that you are not to associate with anyone who is supposed to be a Christian brother, and yet is immoral or greedy or idolatrous or abusive or drunken or grasping--for with such a person you must not even eat. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? (1 Cor. 5:11-12).

So what I mean and insist upon in the Lord's name is this: You must no longer live like the heathens, with their frivolity of mind and darkened understanding. They are estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance that exists among them and their obstinacy of heart. . .(Eph. 4:17-19).

Paul was much influenced by the thought of a quick return of Christ called the Parousia. Because of this dominant idea he writes in a certain vein about husbands, "In view of the present distresses--that it is a good thing for a man to remain just as he is" (1 Cor. 7:26). "I want you to be free from all anxiety" (1 Cor. v. 32). "But the woman who marries is concerned with worldly affairs" (v. 34), "so the man who marries her does what is right, and the man who refrains from doing so does even better" (v. 38). "But she will be happier, in my judgment, if she remains as she is, and I think I have God's spirit as well as other people" (v. 40). Paul speaks of this quick return of Christ: "The appointed time has grown very short. From this time on those who have wives should live as though they had none. . ."
(v. 29-30). St. Paul does not tell the Christians that it is

their duty to bring and restore the temporal order to Christ . . . a duty especially of the laity. He seems to assign this restoration to Christ his power exercised in the World at the end of history. The Apostle warns the Christians about the spirit of the World, but he does not tell them directly to flee the World. It would seem that the Christians adopted the spirit of Paul concerning the quick return of Christ. They respected the authority in civil society, but they did not directly concern themselves with progress of the world and effecting changes. In fact, the Christians became rather well known for their indifference to the temporal order. This is quite a contrast to the words of Pius XII: "The consecratio mundi is, essentially, the work of the layman, people who are intimately involved in economic and social life and participate in the government and legislatures."¹⁰ We will not debate here with those who object to Pius XII's wording. They insist that the world is already Christic. It is true that Christians will always be dominated by the idea of their Faith: Heaven is their final Home. It does make a difference! Christians for so many centuries have remained aloof from much that pertains to the social order. The result is: often today one finds the

10 Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 1957, #49.

social structure of society organized against Christian living. Perhaps in the first century, or even up until the breakup of the sacred society, one could ignore the temporal without dire consequences. Today: No! As Suhard stated above, today the salvation of souls is bound up with a certain salvation of the social order. Tertullian reflected the spirit of detachment from the World of the early Christians in his question, may a Christian engage in the affairs of the World? Celsus reproached the early Christians for their attitude of not being interested in the World.

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--List and discuss some conflicting ideas about the meaning of the laity.
- 2--Why are the laity an integral part of the Church?
- 3--Name some of the outstanding figures in the New Testament who were members of the laity.
- 4--What elements in the early Church helped to unify the spirit of the clergy and laity?
- 5--Discuss Paul's approach to the World, the laity's involvement in the World, the coming of the Parousia and how this, no doubt, affected Paul's outlook on involvement in the World.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--What is the Legion of Mary? Who founded it? What is its spirit? What are its chief works?
- 2--How could a Pope like Boniface VIII make the statement he did? What brings on such attitudes? Do you think there are some priests who feel that the laity are interfering in their work? What could be done to change this situation?

- 3--What areas ought the laity be consulted with to bring about a better running diocese or parish?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Organize the students into a group for visiting the sick. Set up a group for work in the hospitals and old Folks homes.
- 2--Give a report on the laymen who were involved in the Second Vatican Council. Report on who spoke and concerning what topics.
- 3--Project yourself 10 years from now. Set up a parish in which the laymen have their true and proper role.

LESSON VI: THE EARLY CHURCH --
THE CATHOLIC GHETTO TODAY?

PRAYER:

O God, You gave Blessed John to your people as a minister of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech You, that we, who have had him as a teacher of life on earth may deserve to have him as our advocate in heaven. (Collect of St. John Chrysostom)

or

O God, You transferred Blessed Louis, Your Confessor, from an earthly throne to the glory of Your heavenly kingdom; grant, we beseech You, through his merits and intercession that we may have companionship with the King of kings, Jesus Christ, Your Son. (Collect of St. Louis, King)

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
A voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people and his friends
and those who turn to him in their hearts.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. (Psalm 84, 9-14)

ORIENTATION:

Frank is a senior. He has been studying some history of late. He has learned to his surprise that in centuries past the Popes and Bishops were often very powerful rulers, of countries and large cities. He is surprised at all the world-wide influence the Pope had in those days. Today the Pope seems to have much less influence in society. It would seem to Frank that the Catholic Church has been stressing other areas of influence. Frank would like to know if it were not better to return to the past ages, where the hierarchy had a more direct influence in the temporal order. He would like to see more planned appearances of Pope Paul as the one that took place at the UN in New York in 1965.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

If anyone says, 'I love God' and yet hates his brother, he is a liar, for whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. That is the command that we get from him, that whoever loves God must love his brother also.
(1 Jn. 4:20-21)

Dear friends, if God has loved us so, we ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, yet if we love one another God keeps in union with us and love for Him attains perfection in our hearts.
(1 Jn. 4:11-12)

Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the just will answer him, saying 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee; or thirsty, and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and take thee in; or naked, and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee sick, or in prison, and come to thee?' And answering the King will say to them, 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for Me' (Mt. 25: 34-40)

PRESENTATION

Outline:

- 1--Importance of going back to the Fathers (Early Councils)
- 2--Today: Church of the Dispersion
- 3--Time of Constantine: Church had little influence
- 4--Middle Ages
- 5--Pius IX; Ghetto Catholic

OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

A very popular book of recent years has been President Kennedy's book entitled: Profiles in Courage. The TV Program by the same title, and based in part on the President's book, has also proven its popularity among the American People. One wonders at times why there is this constant and persistent referring to the early history of our

country, to our early Founding Fathers. This answer is quite evident. JFK wrote his book because he admired men in our early history. He, no doubt, had the intention of recapturing the courage of the past. The late President wrote:

This is a book about that most admirable of human virtues -- courage. 'Grace under pressure,' Ernest Hemingway defined it. And these are the stories of the pressures experienced by eight United States Senators and the grace with which they endured them--the risks to their careers, the unpopularity of their courses, the defamation of their characters, and sometimes, but sadly only sometimes, the vindication of their reputations and their principles.

A nation which has forgotten the quality of courage which in the past has been brought to public life is not as likely to insist upon or reward that quality in its chosen leaders today--and in fact we have forgotten.¹

It is important to know and understand the minds of the Fathers of our Country, men who signed their names to the Declaration of Independence. We who live almost two hundred years later, in a country that has grown by millions of people, in times and circumstances that are most different from those of our national founders are in constant danger of losing and departing from the glorious tradition that is ours as understood by men who lived and died for freedom.

¹ John F. Kennedy, Profiles in Courage, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 1.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

It is no secret that the Catholic Church has often returned to the Fathers of the Church for guidance and inspiration. These men like Justin, Irenaeus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose and Augustine -- these are some of the great Fathers of the Church. The writings of these men have always been an inspiration to our age, even though we live many centuries later. These men whom we give the title of "Fathers of the Church" lived in the years and centuries immediately after Christ. Some were disciples of the twelve Apostles, some lived one or two hundred years after the time of Christ. . . yet many of these men were close to the spirit in the Church left us by Christ. It seems from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council that we have in the past departed from the true spirit of the early Church. The point of charity is one point that was truly the hallmark of the Church. "By this will all men know you are my disciples if you have love for one another."

(Jn. 13:34-35) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things I command you." (Jn. 15:12-15)

There were various marks in the past for which Catholics were known -- observance of Friday, Mass on Sunday, large families, its stand on birth control, etc. Whether these traits were essential marks of the Church, it would seem not. If we have been living as true Christians, would not our hallmark be charity? It is a point in question today whether Catholics are truly known for their genuine love of neighbor. Our record is not too clean or clear. We have often in the past refused to live the doctrine of love of our Negro neighbor. Many would today deny that we are known by the greatest of all virtues, charity. Vatican II has stressed once again this most important characteristic that Christ gave us. "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. But he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (Jn. 14:21) "As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (Jn. 15:9-10)

THE LAITY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The laity were active in the early Church. They were present at the Council of Jerusalem, as we have seen, and the decisions of the Council had the support of all the

multitude. At the Council of Nicea, Athanasius, a deacon, took a part. Laymen were also present, along with the Emperor at this Council.

It is likely that their chief concern was to maintain order and to facilitate the discussions rather than to play a deliberative or even consultative role in spiritual matters.²

Cyprian speaks his mind on the role of the laity in the Council: "Nothing without the advice of the presbyters and the consent of the laity."³ It is not at all times clear what was in the mind of Cyprian, but it does seem that the laity were asked to corroborate in the decisions of the clergy. Even in the appointment of Bishops as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Augustine, the laity were asked to give their approval.

THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE THE CHRISTIANS
HAD IN THEIR SOCIETY

It is no secret that, because of the very close ties between the clergy and laity, the latter had been involved in the internal operations of the Church. It might be expected that the Christians had little influence on society in the early centuries of the Church. Not only was there a

2 Jeremiah Newman, The Christian in Society, p. 10.

3 Loc. cit.

question of numbers, but there was the constant persecution of the Christians in Rome, along with the fact that they did not enjoy the social standing we Catholics have today. One has to be accepted into society and be in truth a dynamic part of it to have a real influence on the people who go to make up the social order. Not only was there the social structure to contend with, but the very religion of the Christians and the slant that St. Paul gave to the World profoundly influenced the followers of Christ. This, no doubt, as we saw above was why Tertullian and Celsus spoke as they did. At the time of Constantine's conversion in 312 there was one society which might be called a sort of sacred society.

This great historic event -- yes, for the first time the Christians enjoyed a type of social standing. They were now able to take an active part in law making, in the professions, in social work, and perhaps the most important of all, military expeditions, to defend Christianity. Having but one Christian society, or sacred society, the Emperor had profound influence in those areas pertaining to the Church, the manner of offering Mass, the type of vestments, candles, altars and, in general, the morals of the country. It might even be said that Constantine gave a kind of false reserve and reverence for the Mass and Eucharist. The Emperor had a powerful voice in the appointment of Bishops.

The office of priesthood and bishopric was considered just that, an office, and not a vocation, and it was very common for the laity to be appointed directly to these offices. One could hardly say that there was confusion of temporal and spiritual powers.

There was no confusion of powers: there was always an emperor and princes on one side; a Pope and bishops on the other; but they were two sides of one body, the Body Christian.⁴

There was not then this dichotomy, this partitioning of the spiritual and the temporal, the spiritual for the clergy and the temporal for the laity.

CONTRASTED TO OUR SOCIETY TODAY

One could hardly call our society today a sacred society; at the most a Christian society. Today we have a situation which some term a pluralistic society, others call it diaspora. Many ethnic groups make up our country. Many different religions and philosophies form our civilization. Actually, the Catholic population of our country is a minority. We are not a majority with some 45,000,000 Catholics out of a population in excess of 200,000,000 people. This situation has also been termed a diaspora. We are scattered throughout the population of our country. We might live next

⁴ Fr. Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 383.

door to another Catholic as well as an atheist, an agnostic, a secular humanist, or to a family of any of the many Protestant religions. This term, diaspora, was first applied to the Jewish people who were captured by the Babylonians and were taken from their own country and scattered among the Gentiles. The Jews no longer enjoyed the moral protection and helps that would naturally come with living with people who thought and believed and lived as they did. Today we no longer have the helps that might come from living in a totally Christian society or Catholic society. Certain sections of Ireland and Spain would be the only countries remaining that could be said as possessing a truly Christian culture. People often point a finger at the Catholics as having such little influence in their own society. With almost a fourth of the population being Catholic might the accusation be a valid one? Are we as teen-agers more influenced by the society and the people around us, their ideals, goals and philosophy of life, or do we influence our society in which we live? How about morals, manners, dress, type of dances, songs, social customs, dating habits, etc. . .do we as Catholics set the pace for such or do we go along with the main stream of action and are swept along by whatever might be popular or in style?

Is our high school a kind of ivory tower? Are we living in an intellectual, cultural and spiritual ghetto? It has been the criticism of Catholic schools that we have trained people to be active in their parishes, but they have not been trained to be leaders in their community. If we as seniors have never worked side by side with people and students of other ethnic groups. . .and we are fearful of doing so, then we have a high school and students who are in a kind of ghetto. If we have limited our reading, our social life and cultural life to Catholic influences only then we are living a starvation diet! If our feeble and meager apostolic efforts as high school students have been directed only to the people within the walls of our school, then we cannot be sure we have not the ghetto mentality. Such type of malformation is one of the main reasons people today are concerned about the inferior formation given in Catholic schools. What can we do to overcome this ghetto mentality in our school?

THE WRONG SORT OF "LAY THEOLOGY"

Up to very recently it might be said that most high school religion textbooks taught a sort of monastic spirituality. What might this mean? It means very simply that the spirituality as practiced by the monks and religious has been applied in a very direct manner to the laity. The approach to God through silence, the spirit of the vows, penance and

mortification and, in general, the whole spirit of detachment from the things of the world and total disengagement from the world. . .this spirituality of the monks and religious has been applied to the laity. This is not the true theology of the laity. Although there is a place for some of the above elements, nevertheless, a true stress and dominance for the laity must be on attachment to and engagement directly in the World and involvement in it so that the temporal order might become truly Christic.

What truly characterizes, the laity is their secular nature. . . . But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.⁵

Monasticism came into being with such great founders as Pachomius and Benedict. The monks were at the start not priests and had no intention of becoming priests. (Only later on with a dirth of vocations and the Bishops of various dioceses being hard pressed for vocations, were monks ordained priests. This practice once started continued through

⁵ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 35.

many centuries.) The monks did not marry, which became a striking difference between them and the secular clergy. They lived in monasteries, and had a community life. This last was not peculiar to the monks. At times, even the secular clergy or diocesan clergy also lived together in communities. In any case, the spirit of the monks had a profound influence on all of society. Even the idea of personal confession, which was not practiced for the first several centuries after the apostles, might have come about to a great extent because of the influence of the monasteries. Some of the great theologians in the Church hold that monasticism and the mode of life that was lived by the monks brought about a sharp distinction between the clergy and the laity. This eventually caused the separation and division of the two great vocations which for centuries were so closely allied. Others hold that, because of the great involvement of the laity in the inner activities of the Church, bordering on direct interference, brought about a sharper line of demarcation between the lay life and his sphere of activity and the spiritual sphere of the clergy and monks.

It is misleading to describe the period from the fourth to the twelfth centuries as one in which the laity was progressively excluded from having an active part in the affairs of the Church. On the contrary, this excursion, when it did come about, seems

to have been a reaction to excessive lay activity in ecclesiastical matters from the era of Constantine to the eleventh century.⁶

It seems that there might be attributed a great influence to the imperial system on the Church Government and the great influx of pagans into the Church and matters of religion.

During this period the intervention of 'heads of state' came to replace the co-operation of the laity that was such a marked characteristic of the early Church. What might, broadly speaking, be called the powers of the laity, came to be absorbed by rulers who, in addition, tended to assume even some of the powers of the clergy.⁷

In the Middle Ages we no longer had what could be called a sacred society. Nor did we have the present form of two perfect societies: the Church and state. One finds few distinct lines at this time separating the two societies. There was by this time only a separation in part of the clergy and the laity. The laity were still often in the realm of the Church. We had lay investiture with all its evils. By the way, what is lay investiture? And we had the interference of the Church in temporal matters. What do you understand by this phrase? This was often the bad situation of Popes and Bishops, and in general the clergy running the functions of what the Government might be called on today to

⁶ Jeremiah Newman, The Christian in Society, p. 20.

⁷ Loc. cit., p. 20.

run. The society in the Middle Ages was then a mixed society. But the whole spirit was dominated by monasticism. Often secular rulers, the emperors, led more of a monastic type of life than the true lay life which would have been his normal manner of acting. Carolman, the successor of Charles Martel, was such. Could you imagine in our day a man like President Kennedy living that type of life and still carrying out successfully the great demands of his office? It should be made clear that there is no attempt to play down the importance of prayer or of great men like Adenauer who was a man of prayer and deep spirituality at the same time he was a great statesman. Popes at times left the throne to live in retirement as monks. Marriage, even by the great saints, was not given the lofty dignity and elevation that is accorded it today by the Church. Sanctity was judged always in the matter of monastic holiness, of the vows and detachment from the world. Perhaps this might well account for the few lay saints there are today in the calendar of the Church. Even those lay saints who, so to speak, made the grade, were judged not on their vocation of marriage, or on their lay vocation, as perhaps ruling with wisdom and justice, but on those points where they practiced monastic spirituality. Such was the case with St. Louis, King of France; Jane de Chantal, Nicholas de Flue, Joan of Arc. The Breviary lesson of St. Louis has this to say:

In the East, he ransomed many Christians who were slaves of the barbarians and also converted many of the infidels to the faith of Christ. After returning to France, he built many monasteries, and hospitals for the poor. He relieved the needy by his beneficence and frequently visited the sick, and even waiting on them. He wore plain garb and constantly afflicted his body with a hairshirt and must fasting.⁸

One person's examination of all those raised to sanctity over a six year period: between 1950-55 inclusive -- there were 30 canonized, 14 beatified. There were 17 men and 13 women. There were 16 Italians, 10 from France and 3 Spaniards. Of the women: 12 were religious and out of these 9 were religious foundresses. There were no laymen canonized!

THERE WERE NONE OF THE LAITY

By the fifteenth Century there was a great reaction in the Church at the interference of the secular rulers and the laity in the matters that pertained to the Church. A great wave of "spirituality" then came over the Catholics. All sorts of pious unions sprang up, (e.g., the sodality), which were to bring the laity closer to the life of the Church. With the end of the Middle Ages came the concept of the two perfect societies. There was the temporal society, the State; and the Ecclesiastical society, the Church, and the two were completely separated and at odds. The Church turned

⁸ The Roman Breviary, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1964, p. 1010.

its back on the regular world and did not even attempt to influence it to any great extent. (One pope advised the people not even to vote--as a way of showing a protest--imagine this solution today!) Catholics for years have turned their backs on the World. What has been the effect of this mode of action?

It was only with Leo XIII, Pius X and Pius XI that the Church became extremely conscious once again of her role in the secular World. Pius XI launched the great movement of Catholic Action, the participation of the laity in the activity of the hierarchy. And with Pius XII and Pope John XXIII the great movement has continued of "reactivating" the laity and bringing them closer to the Church, and giving them a complete ecclesiology, a complete role in the Church itself. This is where we stand today after so many centuries of having the laity integrally an active part of the Church, then losing the laity to the Church by almost total inactivity. Now once again we are struggling to re-establish the laity and the true laos, the People of God.

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--Does the Church attach too much importance to the early Fathers of the Church? Why or why not?
- 2--What was the status and condition of the laity in the early Church?
- 3--Explain the sacred society.

- 4--We live today in a diaspora or a pluralistic society. Explain.
- 5--Explain the role of the laity in the Church in the Middle Ages.
- 6--What is meant by monastic spirituality? How did it perhaps influence the canonization of lay saints?
- 7--What were the effects of the Church ignoring the temporal and remaining isolated and aloof from the temporal?
- 8--Discuss the ghetto Catholic.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--Why do Catholics seem to have such little influence in the World today? Discuss. What or who is at fault--the education, the Church, the laity?
- 2--From the very brief history of the laity in the Church, what comments can be made on the present condition and role of the laity in the Church?
- 3--Could you discuss some practical areas where the Catholic youth could do more at influencing than being influenced by the currents in our social life?
- 4--How does one cope with apathy on the part of so many students?
- 5--Would JFK have become President of our country if he had attended the Catholic parochial school?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Compile a list of lay saints in the Church. Compile a list of saintly men who were not Catholics.
- 2--Give a report on the great movement of Catholic Action.

- 3--List some areas where Catholics seem to ignore the secular world and where we attempt not to have any sort of influence.
- 4--Why should Catholics be in the area of politics?
In the area of science and research?
- 5--Why is our school an ivory tower? or isn't it?
What movement could we initiate right now to change this situation?
- 6--Start a dialogue with other non-Catholic schools on a code of morality.

CHAPTER III

(UNIT 3)

MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

LESSON I: THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH: A COMPLETE ECCLESIOLOGY

PRAYER:

I pray for them; not for the world do I pray, but for those whom thou has given me, because they are thine; and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to thee, Holy Father, keep in my name those whom thou has given me, that they may be one even as we are (John 17:9-11).

Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me, that all may be one, 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 has sent me (John 17:20-21).

Let us pray:

Almighty and eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look with favor upon these your servants, N_____ and N_____, whom you have called to take their first steps in the faith. Take from them all blindness of heart. Free them from the snares of Satan which until now have held them. Open to them, Lord, the gate of your mercy. Then, seasoned by the salt which is symbolic of your wisdom, may they be relieved of the corruption of evil desires; and, finding pleasure in the keeping of your commandments, may they serve you in your Church and make progress from day to day in the way of perfection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

ORIENTATION

Judy is a high school senior. She is a sincere Catholic and an active member of her parish, something rather rare for teen-agers. Judy has been studying about the new role of the laity in the Church. She has been most affected by the phrase: "The Laity are the Church." Her pastor keeps telling the parishioners that this is not his parish but theirs. They must give in their collection; they must support their parish. On the other hand, when there is a decision to be made in the parish, when there is a question of how the money is to be spent that has been received from the Sunday collection or made at the festival, then the pastor says that this is his decision for his parish. Judy would like a few things cleared up. She thinks there is some basic confusion in Father's mind.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God, the Lord your God having chosen you out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth to be a people of his very own. (Deut. 7:6)

. . .and the Lord has today avowed concerning you that you are a people of His very own, as He promised you, and so you are to keep all His commands, and then He will place you high above all nations whom He has made, in praise, renown, and honor, that you may be a people consecrated to the Lord your God, as He promised. (Deut. 26:18-19)

He planned to assemble in the Holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. Already from the beginning of the World the foreshadowing of the Church took place. It was prepared in a remarkable way throughout the history of the people of Israel and by means of the old covenant. In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the spirit, was made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and 'from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,' will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.¹

The Son, therefore, came, sent by the Father. 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. To carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and revealed to us the mystery of that Kingdom. By His obedience He brought about redemption. The Church or, in other words, the Kingdom of Christ, now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the World.²

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--The Church is compared to . . .
- 2--The Church through the centuries compared to....
- 3--The Church is a hierarchy, a communion of the faithful.
- 4--The triple role of Christ in His Church.
- 5--The role of the laity in the Church.

1 Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 2.

2 Loc. cit.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Qahal Yahve was the first title God gave to a people He chose to be His very own. God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people. Here we have for the first time God choosing a nation, a People. He would make an alliance with them, a Covenant with them. He would make them a great people if they were true to the Covenant, to His Commands, if they would offer a true sacrifice to Him. Formerly God made a personal alliance, which was actually an individual one, with Abraham, and renewed in the Patriarchs.

I am the Lord. . .I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. . . .I will bring you to the land which I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I will give it to you as your very own, I, the Lord.³

This People of God prefigured the Church of Christ and the new Covenant He would make. "All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ."⁴

3 Ibid., p. 1.

4 Loc. cit.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD COMPARED TO THE SPOUSE OF GOD

This is without doubt a most beautiful theme, a most profound theme, expressing the closeness and love of God for His People. Both the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah use this theme to express and describe the love of God for the Chosen People.

The Lord said to me again, 'Go, love a woman that is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods. . .' (Hosea 3:1).

Therefore, I am going to persuade her, and lead her to the wilderness, and speak to her heart. Then I will give back her vineyards there, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she shall respond there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. On that day it shall come to pass, the oracle of the Lord, 'That you will call me, My husband' (Hosea 2:14-16).

The prophet Jeremiah has the same theme of God and His spouse, the People of Israel. Hosea came about one hundred years before Jeremiah. Hosea had influence in the north of Israel; Jeremiah had great influence in the south of Israel, in Jerusalem. This was around the year 628.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem.' Thus says the Lord: 'I recall your youthful devotion, your bridal love, how you followed through the desert, through a land unsown' (Jeremiah 2:1-2).

And again: "Can a girl forget her ornaments, a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number."
 "How finely you trim your way to seek after love...."

(Jer.: 2:32-33). The prophet Isaiah speaks of the Lord and His spouse: The Lord has made an alliance with His spouse. It is always the love of God that makes Him pardon His spouse. Throughout the Old Testament there are still other comparisons for the People of God. But perhaps the most striking image used by the Prophets is that of spouse.

Another theme used for the People of God is the Temple comparison. God's presence among His People was manifested in the luminous cloud, which was the glory of Yahweh, the Hebrew word "Kabod". This cloud rested over the tent designated as such by Moses. ". . .and as soon as Moses entered the tent, the column of cloud would descend, and stand at the doorway of the tent while he conversed with Moses." (Ex. 33:9) Later the presence of God rested in the Temple constructed just for this purpose.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his own mouth spoke to David, my father, and with his own hand has fulfilled it, saying, 'Since the day that I brought forth my people, Israel, out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house that my name might be there, but I have chosen David to be over my people, Israel.' . . .Now the Lord has made good His word which He spoke; for I have risen up in the place of David, my father, and first on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have provided a place for the ark in which is the covenant of the Lord. . .
 (1 Kings, 8:15-20)

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

We are accustomed to the term, "the Mystical Body of Christ", in referring to all the people who make up the Church. St. Paul did not use this term. This term "mystical" came into use in the Church much later on, in the Middle Ages. St. Paul refers to the Church, to us who make up the Church, as the Body of Christ. We are the Body of Christ. "Do you not know that your bodies are part of Christ's body? . . . Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is within you, which you received from God?" (1 Cor. 6:15,19) And again from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "He has put everything under his feet and made him the indisputable head of the Church, which is His body. . . ." (Eph. 1:23)⁵

There are numerous passages in the writings of St. Paul to bring out the closeness of us to Christ. It does seem to many that the term: The "Church", "the Body of Christ", carries a fuller, more direct and clearer meaning than the common term, "Mystical Body of Christ". What do you think? One last quotation of Paul: "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. And God has placed

⁵ Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 10.

people in the Church, first as apostles, second as inspired preachers, third as teachers, then wonder-workers; then comes ability to cure the sick, helpfulness, administration, ecstatic speaking" (1 Cor. 12:27-28). Why this term was not kept to express the deep meaning of our union to Christ is something we do not wish to go into at the moment. Later on, even before the term "Mystical Body" came into use, the Church was designated as the Eucharistic body of Christ. Perhaps the shortest explanation for adopting this term was that by the Holy Eucharist the Church was constructed, and by the Eucharist each individual member of the Church moved and lived.

WHY ALL THIS HISTORY? WHY ALL THIS INSISTENCE
ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

The Church is still called the Mystical Body of Christ. But we refer to the Church today also as the People of God. We have returned to the original meaning of those people who prefigured the Church. For the Jews, they as a community were the People of God. These people were in the plan of God to be the new Israel, the people of the New Alliance established by Christ. They were to be the present Church. Once the Jews forfeited their privilege, not as the People of God, for they still are this, but to form the Church then all baptized Gentiles and those Jewish converts, became the new Israel, the Church of Christ, the Body of

Christ. In the years and even centuries preceding Vatican II the Church was not looked on so much as a community. The idea of Church as hierarchy was dominant. The juridical structure of the Church was stressed. There was, so to speak, the pyramid picture. The pyramid of power consisted of the Holy Father on top; the bishops were second in the line of power, having authority to rule the Church. The clergy followed, having the power to sanctify the members of Christ's body. Where were the laity fitted into the picture? This was not too much the concern of those who understood the Church in the past centuries. At the Second Vatican Council some had requested to call the Church the "Family of God." This expresses in a very beautiful fashion the equality of members in the Body of Christ. Yes, equal! It sounds strange, but it is true. Each baptized person in the Church is as much a member of the Church as any priest or bishop. There is a difference only in functions in the Church, a hierarchy of functions. We shall see this shortly. Eventually, the Council Fathers chose the term, "People of God", to express the true meaning of life and fellowship of grace among all the members of the Body of Christ.

CHRIST, IN HIS CHURCH:
HIS TRIPLE ROLE AND THE LAITY

The fact that the Church is a community of the faithful does profoundly affect each member of the Church, every teen-ager. If the Church is a community, and it is, then we as members of the Community, must have a very vital and direct role or function to play in the Church. Only a complete ecclesiology of the laity will satisfy his total calling in the Church of God. What was Christ's role in his Church? The Church has always assigned the triple role of Priest, Prophet and King to Christ.

It was for this purpose that God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, that He might be teacher, king and priest of all, the head of the new and universal people of the sons of God.⁶

Christ was indeed the eternal High Priest. Christ was truly a prophet sent by His Father, He the Teacher, the Divine Teacher and Christ is King, both of Heaven and Earth. Now if we, the laity, are the body of Christ, if the Church is a community and we are this Community, then we must have the same place in the Church, in the order of the laity, as Christ did in his Church, His Bride, in a most preeminent manner.

⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

The Catholic now realizes that Christ's work and mission are his; Christ's power to do works are even greater than he did; Christ's knowledge-shared through faith; Christ's apostolate in the communication of the glad tidings; Christ's suffering by making up what is wanting in the passion of Christ, the Redeemer; Christ's social action, by imitating Him who went about doing good to all men and in every order or significance. All these things are clearly taught by the doctrine of the Mystical Body.⁷

This community idea of the Body of Christ, can hardly be overemphasized. Thanks to the special grace of Vatican Council II, the Fathers saw so clearly that the Church is not a pyramid of power, but rather a true family and community in Christ.

Why is this community aspect so essential in human life? Our mind falls short of all explanation; nature simply notes the fact that it is required. But why does this requirement exist? Here revelation enlightens us. Man was created in the image and likeness of God; and the mystery of the Trinity characterizes the very being of God. In one divine nature there is a community of Persons. Men are, therefore, a community because God is a community. The Creator wished the human community to be a replica of the divine community.⁸

Each of the laity brings something special to the Church, to make up the Body of Christ, which no one else can bring. Each one here, each high school student, is a person the likes of whom is not to be found or duplicated in the

7 T. Claot, "The Sense of the Community," in Theological Studies, Spring, 1961, p. 23.

8 Ibid., p. 26.

Church (the true Church of Christ). If we do not bring the fruits of all our talents and gifts to the Church then they are truly wasted. Pius XII said it more profoundly:

It must not be supposed that this coordinated or organic structure of the body of the Church is confined exclusively to the grades of the hierarchy. . . . When the Fathers of the Church mentioned the ministries of this body, its grades, professions, states, orders and offices, they rightly have in mind not only persons in sacred orders but also. . . etc.⁹

Each one of us must say with the Apostle Paul, I make up in my own person the sufferings that are lacking in the Body of Christ.

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--What are some of the names by which the "Church of God" in the Old Testament are identified?
- 2--What is the origin of the term: "Body of Christ?"
The origin of Eucharistic Body? Mystical Body?
Which do you prefer? Why?
- 3--Why all this "bit" about insisting on returning to the Jewish people?
- 4--Explain the triple role of Christ. Why must I share in this threefold mission of Christ?
- 5--What is the difference in the concepts: The Church is a pyramid of power and the Church is a community of the faithful?

⁹ Fr. Congar, (Mystici Corporis Christi of Pius XII), Towards a Theology of the Laity, p. 26.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--Can you now answer in part the problem that Judy has mentioned above?
- 2--As a high school student, what can I bring of my person and talents to complete the Church, to complete Christ? What have I to offer the Church that might be unique to high school students?
- 3--Is my parish a pyramid of power or is it a community of the faithful? What can I do to help the pastor make it a real community on the level of the teen-ager?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - CHRISTIAN LIVING:

- 1--It seems that often pastors are somewhat "down" on the teen-agers because whenever they come to him they want something. They never come to offer their services. True?
- 2--List some services that we as teen-agers could perform for the parish. Do we ever show up for parish functions? (Of course, we have homework to do!) How can I relate to the Holy Name Society? Is it a dead issue? To the St. Vincent de Paul Society? To Teen Clubs? What can we do to foster First Friday Mass and Communion among the young set? Could something be done to have all the students go to First Friday Mass and Communion in their own parish and then come to school? Would it be possible to push all classes back by one course to foster parish participation?
- 3--What concrete action could be taken here at school to bring about more of a community or family spirit rather than the traditional atmosphere of teacher-student relationship?
- 4--What plan of action could we and must we carry out for the students of our age who do not attend a Catholic high school?

LESSON II: CHRIST, A PRIEST BY HIS VERY NATURE --
LAITY BY GRACE

PRAYER:

To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of each family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers; to return from God to men to bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; to teach and to pardon, console and bless always--what a glorious life! And it is yours, O Priest of Jesus Christ!!

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

For every High Priest who is chosen from among men is appointed to represent his fellow men in their relations with God, and to offer gifts and sin offerings. He can sympathize with the ignorant and misguided because he is himself subject to weakness, and on this account he is obliged to offer sacrifices for sin, not only for the people but for himself as well. And no one takes the office upon himself, but men assume it only when called to it by God, as Aaron was. So even Christ did not claim for Himself the dignity of the High Priesthood, but he was appointed to it by him who said to him. . .
(Hebrews, 5:1-5)

Come to him, as to a living stone rejected by men, but chosen and prized in the sight of God, and build yourselves up as living stones into a spiritual house for a consecrated priesthood, so as to offer spiritual sacrifices that through Jesus Christ will be acceptable to God. (1 Peter, 2:4-5)

1 Benziger Bros., (Published Selections of Noted Preachers, Lacordaire) New York, Benziger Bros., 1940, p. 81.

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--Priesthood of Aaron
- 2--Christ a priest by His very nature
- 3--Various Names for the priesthood of the faithful
- 4--The laity, their role: to offer a spiritual sacrifice

WHOSE BRIGHT IDEA OF SUNDAY MASS

It is no secret that a goodly number of our high school youth miss Sunday Mass. It is also no secret that a certain number of high school students go to Mass because they are forced to do so by their parents. Proof of this is that once they graduate from high school and go away to college they begin to miss Mass rather regularly. Why Mass? So many young people apparently get so very little out of Mass. Students who miss Mass on Sunday do not deny God. It is true that there may be a certain weakness in their Faith, but basically they feel no need to go to Mass, nor do they feel any accomplishment for having gone to Mass.

To show a person the need for the sacrifice of the Mass can be a rather involved sort of job. Often ignorance is as much the culprit as a certain weakness of faith. It is not uncommon that students are almost as ignorant of the real meaning of the Mass, even though it has been frequently explained to them, as an incoming convert. And yet these same

young people in other areas are as close to the idea of homage and respect and the need for this as any person who believes most solidly in the value of the Mass. People have always felt the need of offering sacrifice. People of almost all nations have always felt a need to render homage to a Supreme Being. God, or Yahweh, is the name we have given to our Supreme Being. Because people have always felt the need to render homage to a god, to offer a sacrifice to a god there is a long history of sacrifice and of people who offered sacrifice.

In the patriarchal period, before Israel was a People, there was no such thing as an official priesthood. The head of a clan or tribe was the priest by the very fact that he gave the blessing or made the sacrifice in the name of all his people. The simple exercise of priesthood constituted their "ordination", so to speak. In order that this priesthood might not be haphazard, and in order that stability and continuity of office be assured, a certain tribe was assigned the duties and privileges of priesthood. The tribe of Levi was so designated. "So the Lord said to Aaron, 'You and your sons along with your clan shall answer for any guilt in connection with your priesthood. Have your fellows too, the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, present themselves with you. . .'" (Nm. 18:1-2)

There is a glorious history of priesthood and sacrifice among the Jews. There was the common priesthood of the faithful where the entire nation as a people were to offer a true sacrifice, and there was also, alongside this common priesthood, the hierarchical priesthood of Aaron and the sons of Levi who were to aid Aaron in the sacrifice. Some of our separated brethren do not accept the notion of a hierarchical priesthood, although they are very strong on the priesthood of the laity. Nothing speaks as eloquently of the hierarchical priesthood in the Bible as the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram against the constituted priesthood in the name of the general priesthood. The Book of Numbers tells of their destruction by the Lord because of their rebellion.

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, along with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, the son of Reuben, became arrogant and took their stand before Moses, along with two hundred and fifty of the Israelites, leaders of the community, picked men of the assembly, men of note. They gathered in a body against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'Enough of you; for all the community are holy, every one of them, since the LORD is in their midst; why then do you exalt yourselves above the LORD'S assembly?'
(Numbers 16;1-3)

And then, just as he finished saying these words, the ground under them split open; the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with all their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah and all their goods. So they and all that belonged to them descended into Sheol alive; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the community.
(Numbers 16:31-34)

CATHOLICS HAVE ALWAYS HAD THE GREATEST
RESPECT FOR THEIR PRIESTS

It is difficult to duplicate the centuries of deepest respect the laity have had for the sacred priesthood. Priests are so very human. They have many faults and shortcomings, and yet that for which the priesthood stands, the respect that it has always been given, not the man as such but to the person, Christ, whom the priest represents and often poorly, has been constant throughout the many centuries of the Church. What is a priest? Paul, the Apostle, tells us:

"For every high priest:

1--is chosen from among men. . .

2--is appointed to represent his fellow men in relations with God

3--and to offer gifts and sin-offering. . .to offer sacrifices for sin" (Hebrews, 5:1-3).

This magnificent statement of Paul shows the humanness of a priest: "Every high priest is chosen from among men," and it also tells us quite frankly the chief role of the priest:

to offer sacrifices for sin, not only for the people but for himself as well. There is no one among us who is without sin. If we say, 'We are without any sin,' we are deceiving ourselves, and there is no truth in our hearts (1 Jn. 1-8).

Because we have all sinned we have need of sacrifice, and the Sacrifice of the Mass is the perfect way of expressing and offering expiation to God.

By the power of the sacrament of Orders, in the image of Christ the eternal high Priest, they are consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful and to celebrate divine worship, so that they are true priests of the New Testament. Partakers of the function of Christ the sole Mediator, on their level of ministry, they announce the divine word to all. They exercise their sacred function especially in the eucharistic worship or the celebration of the Mass by which acting in the person of Christ, and proclaiming His Mystery, they unite the prayers of the faithful with the sacrifice of their Head and renew and apply in the sacrifice of the Mass until the coming of the Lord the only sacrifice of the New Testament, namely that of Christ offering Himself once for all a spotless Victim to the Father. For the sick and the sinners among the faithful, they exercise the ministry of alleviation and reconciliation and they present the needs and the 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. In the midst of the flock they adore Him in spirit and in truth. Finally, they labor in word and doctrine, believing what they have read and meditated upon in the law of God, teaching what they have believed, and putting in practice in their own lives what they have taught.²

There can be no priesthood of the Church without having first the priesthood of Christ. Christ did not merely fulfill the functions of the priesthood -- He is the Eternal Priest, the perfection and fullness and completion of all the priesthood. All the priests of the Church share in this universal priesthood of Christ. Christ fulfilled the requirements of St. Paul. Christ was taken from among men. . .

² Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 31.

He represented all mankind on the Cross. . .He offered a sacrifice, Himself, for all the sins of the world. We wonder at times how and when Christ was ordained a priest. Christ was "ordained" a priest in the womb of Mary by the very fact that He became man. This constituted Christ, the Eternal Priest. The moment He became Incarnate He became the perfect priest. The very moment God the Son became man, took flesh. . .this constituted and ordained Him a priest. It was by His human nature that He could have a body and hang on the Cross and offer himself the perfect sacrifice. It can be said then that truly Christ is a priest in His very human nature. Every person today who shares in Christ's priesthood is ordained and consecrated. He is set aside for offering sacrifice. Christ was truly ordained in Mary's womb. Mary was the first Mother in all the world who had a Son who was a priest.

CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL PRIEST -- WE, THE LAITY,
ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST, ALSO PRIESTS

Many names have been given to describe the sharing of the laity in the priesthood of Christ. Whether one calls this participation in the priesthood of Christ the lay priesthood, the royal priesthood, the common priesthood of the faithful, the priesthood of the spiritual life, the universal priesthood, the mystical priesthood. . .all of these basically aim at explaining the amazing fact that the laity

also share in the priesthood of Christ. St. Peter writes: "You are the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the consecrated nation, his own people, so that you may declare the virtues of him who has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter, 2:9-10) And St. John writes in the Apocalypse: "And from Jesus Christ, the trustworthy witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the sovereign of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood -- He has made us a kingdom of priests for His God and Father. . ." (Apoc. 1:5-6)

There are many ways in which we have the dignity and can claim the title of common priesthood of the faithful. As a community, as the community of God, just as the Jews were the People of God who offered a true sacrifice, so we the Church, the continuation of the People of God who are Christ's Body can offer a true sacrifice. Out of the almost 3-1/2 billion people who make up our population only a minority are Christian or Catholic. As the chosen People of God in the Old Testament were but one small nation among many, and it was their duty to offer a true sacrifice to God, so we as Christians are called to offer a true and lasting sacrifice to the one God, because we have the capacity as Christians of offering an authentic sacrifice.

Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism', sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ; having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one home and one undivided charity.³

The common priesthood of the faithful can be applied, in addition to the priesthood of the People of God, to each member of Christ's Body. Each member of the faithful as a member of the Body of Christ shares in the priesthood of Christ. If I am part of Christ's Body, and if Christ is the Eternal Priest, then I, as part of Christ share in His priesthood. It is like being a member of a team. If my team wins the city title. . . I, as a member of this championship team share very directly in the glory of the team. So it is with Christ and myself in a much more perfect and profound manner. Since Christ is the universal priest. . . I am a part of Christ's Body, I, therefore, am a priest. And the more I possess the life of Christ within me, the more I share in the priesthood of Christ by grace. This would be the priesthood of Christ in the ascetical or supernatural life.

Sacrifice as defined by St. Thomas and which so many others have adopted:

³ Ibid., p. 35.

True sacrifice is every work done with the aim of uniting us with God in a holy fellowship. That is to say, every work that is referred as its end to the good which can make us truly blessed.⁴

All can make a priestly sacrifice of their entire lives. Most of us will be called on by our life in marriage to face many crosses and trials and disappointments. We will offer our life of marriage in Christ. . . a true sacrifice to God. Some of us might be most unhappy in our marriage vocation and God may demand heroic sacrifice of us. Explain how this might be possible. All our daily acts of virtue are acts as a member of the Body of Christ; they are acts of the priesthood of the laity. "I appeal to you, therefore, Brothers, by this mercy of God, to offer your bodies in a living sacrifice that will be holy and acceptable to God." (Romans 12:1) And in the same theme of a spiritual sacrifice:

So sin must not reign over your mortal bodies, and make you obey their cravings, and you must not offer the parts of your bodies to sin as the instruments of wrong, but offer yourselves to God, as men brought back from death to life, and offer the parts of your bodies to him as instruments of uprightness.
(Romans, 6:12-13)

The immolation is not restricted to the Liturgical sacrifice. The Prince of the Apostles would have us, precisely because we are built upon Christlike living stones, be a holy priesthood and offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, II-II, q. 85, a. 2, a. 3, Al 1.

Christ.⁵ The Council Fathers speak of this spiritual sacrifice when they state in the Constitution on the Church:

The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that through all those works which are those of the Christian man they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:4-10)

Therefore, all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God, should present themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--Does man have an obligation to offer sacrifice to God? Why?
- 2--Discuss the definition of priesthood by St. Paul.
- 3--Discuss the various names given to the priesthood of the laity. Which one is the most meaningful to you?
- 4--Explain to a non-believer the meaning of the priesthood of the faithful in the community sense.
- 5--What is the difference between the priesthood in the community sense and as individual members of Christ's body?

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--How would you approach a fellow senior who misses Mass regularly?
- 2--The upperclassman who says that he gets nothing out of the Mass. . .could you help him?

5 Pius XII, encl., Mediator Dei, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1948, p. #90.

- 3--Should parents insist that their sons and daughters who are in the last year of high school go to Sunday Mass? Some day you will be married and have a family. What will you do in a similar situation?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Get the names and addresses of ten non-Catholic teen-agers in your parish area (boys or girls). Get their reaction to their Sunday service. If they miss Mass. . . what can you do to solve the problem?
- 2--Describe in detail the Sunday service of some non-Catholic friend. Give your reaction to his service.
- 3--Have the class visit a synagogue or protestant church to assist at their services.

LESSON III: HIGHEST ACT OF THE LAY PRIESTHOOD --
THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

PRAYER:

Lord, we Your servants and Your entire family offer this sacrifice to You. Graciously accept it; give us peace each day in our life; draw us away from eternal damnation so that we may one day be received into Heaven among Your saints. We beseech this of You through Christ Our Lord, Amen. (Canon of the Mass)

ORIENTATION:

Many things upset Janice at Sunday Mass. She cannot follow the Mass with her missal as formerly; she finds singing very distracting; she loves the Mass prayers but dislikes very much comments made on the various prayers (the priest must think we are all of a grade-school mentality); and she doesn't get this bit about having a layman in the sanctuary leading the prayers. She also said that if she were ever in a mission church where a lay deacon gave out Communion she would refuse to go to Communion.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

Now the faithful participate in the oblation understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in the twofold manner, namely, because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also to a certain extent in union with him.¹

¹ Ibid., #93.

But the faithful in virtue of their royal priesthood join in the offering of the Eucharist.²

Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God, they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the holy spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ. Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God, and offer themselves along with it. Thus both by reason of the offering and through holy communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself.³

This character directly and immediately disposes the soul to execute whatever pertains to divine worship. And because this is not carried out in a fitting manner without the aid of grace. . . consequently the divine largess distributes grace to those who receive the character, in order that thus they may worthily fulfill the office to which they are deputed.⁴

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE

- 1--Tertullian, the "great champion" of the lay priesthood.
- 2--Ordained priesthood and priesthood of laity, a difference.

2 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 12.

3 Loc. cit.

4 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, III, q. 63, a. 2-6.

- 3--The laity offer the Mass through the priest.
- 4--The laity offer the Mass together with the Priest.
- 5--The character of Baptism and Confirmation deputizes one to worship.

TERTULLIAN, THE "GREAT CHAMPION"
OF THE LAY PRIESTHOOD

Tertullian, a man of great stature in the early Church, might well have become a saint if it had not been for his mistaken teachings. This man was the founder of theology in the West. He became the first of the Western Fathers to speak of the lay priesthood. He championed the idea of the lay priesthood. But he soon overstepped the true nature of the priesthood of the faithful. He raised all of the laity to the level of the ordained priesthood. Tertullian said just the opposite of what Martin Luther taught. Luther, a very sincere man, said: "all Christians are priests and all priests are Christians." He reduced the ordained priesthood to the level of the laity. He discarded the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Mass, when he denied the priesthood of orders. Tertullian, on the other hand, had the laity offer the Mass.

We will be vain if we think that what is licit for the priests is not licit for the laity. . . The authority of the Church constitutes the difference between the clergy and the people. . . So where there is no assembly of the clergy, you offer, you baptize, and you alone are priests for yourselves.⁵

⁵ J.E. Rea, The Common Priesthood, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1939, p. 186.

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

In trying to develop for the faithful their dignity of priesthood there may be some danger of overstressing the idea. . . of confusing the priesthood of orders and the lay priesthood. We are reminded of this danger by the Council Fathers:

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are, nonetheless, interrelated; each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ.⁶

There we have it, and it is quite clear. There is not only a question of difference in the degree of priesthood in question but in essence there is also a difference. Once young people study the dignity of the lay priesthood and know how this dignity is acquired through baptism, and increased by the sacrament of Confirmation, there should be little confusion in their minds that the two priesthoods do differ. Yet, there is a very close connection between the two. It is simply not a question of pious words. Both priesthoods are interrelated, both rest on the priesthood of

⁶ Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 12.

Christ, both are a participation in Christ's priesthood. This statement does not lessen one bit the true and great meaning involved in the doctrine of the priesthood of the faithful.

THE LAY PRIESTHOOD OF THE MASS

The collective or community priesthood that we enjoy in being a member of the Church has been outlined. The priesthood of the ascetic or supernatural life has also been seen at a glance. But there remains an even higher and deeper meaning of the priesthood. We speak now of the highest act of the lay priesthood: the liturgical act of sacrifice, the Mass. There will be few quotations from Scripture bringing out this rich meaning of the common priesthood. Why? There is such a thing called the development of theology. We have outstanding examples of the development of theology in Vatican II. In fact throughout the entire history of the Church there has been many areas where theology has developed. The full doctrine of the lay priesthood remained and waited for development, not in Tertullian but in St. Augustine, in Thomas Aquinas and in Pius XII. There is a good foundation for this doctrine in St. Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and the Corinthians, but Paul and the other inspired writers, for reasons that are rather involved, were rather reluctant to speak or apply the profound idea of priesthood to anyone else except Christ.

THOSE FELLOWS, THE DONATISTS

Often it takes some "muddled" thinking first to make people think clearly and explain just what they mean. There was a group of fellows--they were called the Donatists--who denied the validity of sacraments conferred by unworthy ministers. Imagine this! Suppose this were true? Consequences? That's right. You would never be sure that you received true absolution for your sins, and you would not be sure you received the Body and Blood of Christ. . . why you would not even be sure you were baptized (a most important Sacrament) if a true sacrament depended on supernatural condition of the soul of the priest. This would truly confuse everything. Well, happily these Donatists were not taken seriously. The argument used against them was something like this: the Church has never repeated the sacraments of Baptism and Orders once they had been rightfully conferred by proper ministers, no matter how unworthy they might have been in their own personal lives. The tradition of the Church stood as a powerful argument in this situation.

ST. AUGUSTINE MAKES A BREAK-THROUGH!

Way back when. . . we studied that some of the Sacraments were rather special. They had a double effect: besides giving grace, they also imprinted a mark. Well, this term "mark" was rather obscure and perhaps we never got things

explained about just what this "mark" involved. Paul speaks of it in this way:

You also have heard the message of the truth, the good news of your salvation, and believed in him, and through union with him you have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit that was promised, which is the guarantee of our inheritance, so that we may get full possession of it, and praise his glory for it (Eph. 1:13-14).

The Apostle has a similar passage in his Epistle to the Corinthians speaking of the seal by which all Christians are sealed unto the day of redemption. This idea of Paul was little developed until the time of Augustine. He was the first to clearly separate the two effects of those sacraments which produced grace and at the same time marked the Christian with a certain seal. He was not the only Father who spoke of this double effect of the special sacraments. But he was the first who, in a most clear fashion, developed this idea of the seal or mark which the Holy Spirit imprints on the soul for life.

WHERE AUGUSTINE STOPS,
AQUINAS BOLDLY FOLLOWS THROUGH

Although Augustine was the first to clearly explain the sacramental character of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, he did not take the next logical step. He states that by Baptism we are made members of Christ the Priest. He does not go on to link or identify this character or mark with the priesthood. In other words, he "isolates" the

character of the sacrament but he does not, so to speak, "make use of his findings." He does not tell us what the character of the priesthood is. He even tells us that all Christians are consecrated to the service of God by this seal of the sacrament of Baptism. That is correct. This mark, this sign which we studied about years ago. . . this seal or character deputizes us for the worship of God. The word "deputize" is familiar to most of us who watch Westerns on TV. To deputize one means to empower one to act in a certain way, e.g., make arrest, etc. The seal special to Baptism and Confirmation does this for each member of the laity. It empowers us to offer sacrifice, and to have the power to offer sacrifice is the power of the priesthood. St. Thomas says it rather clearly: "This character directly and immediately disposes the soul to execute whatever pertains to divine worship."⁷

ALMOST EVERYBODY PRIZES EXTRA POWER
OR AUTHORITY

This special power of Baptism is not to be confused with the first effects of the sacrament: sanctifying grace. This grace, we say, empowers or makes us sons of God and joint heirs with Christ for Heaven. The Ritual of Baptism

7 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, III, q. 8, a. 3.

says: "John, enter the temple of God, so that you may have part with Christ in everlasting life." "May almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you a new birth by means of water and the Holy Spirit and forgiven all your sins, (here he anoints) anoint you with the Chrism⁸ of salvation in the same Christ Jesus our Lord, so that you may have everlasting life."⁸ Grace destines us for the beatific vision. In addition to the grace of this sacrament the character or seal of Baptism empowers us to take part in divine worship. We say it marks us for the cult of God. What is the cult of God? Sacrifice. This power or quality of our soul from Baptism is so real, so permanent, that it will last forever. . . whether we go to Heaven or Hell. The hypostatic union of Christ's human and divine nature deputized Him for His role as Eternal High Priest. The primary effect of Baptism is that we are made sons of God and have a share in His eternal glory. But still a most important effect of Baptism is that we are consecrated and deputized for the worship of God.

CONFIRMATION: AN ADDITIONAL PERFECTION

This sacrament, like the first, has a primary effect in the area of grace. Baptism makes us sons of God. The

⁸ Collectio Rituum, New York, Benziger Brothers, 1963, p. 8.

sacrament of Confirmation gives us additional grace to strengthen and profess our Faith. Like Baptism, there are two principal effects involved in the sacrament: sanctifying grace and the character of the sacrament, which is an additional consecration and added deputizing of the Christian for the office of priest, which perfects the baptismal character and makes one an adult in his Faith. "He who is confirmed received the power of publicly confessing his faith by words and, as it were, ex officio."⁹ Confirmation might well be called the Sacrament of Christian maturity. "The most fundamental meaning is found in the expression "confer-ring of the Spirit," which refers to the dedication, sanctification and strengthening of the new Christian." Confirmation is the strengthening and intensification of the baptismal character. It is the sacrament of mission and witness, for the Christian who is sent and to bear witness to Christ as a mature adult Christian.¹⁰ The character places the confirmed "adult" in a new relationship with Christ as a priest. There are wide differences of opinion today as to the appropriate and fitting time for the reception of the sacrament. Some of the hierarchy, like Bishop Sheen have departed from

9 J. Rea, The Common Priesthood, p. 210.

10 Bernard Cooke, Christian Sacraments and Christian Personality, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1965, p. 91.

the traditional time of grade school and confirms a person when he or she is approaching adulthood, at the end of high school. Now the public profession of faith is incorporated into the priestly activity of Christ and thus forms part of the Christian cult.

THE KEY ISSUE: REALIZING AND LIVING,
THIS CONSECRATION, THIS DEPUTIZATION

Understanding for the first time, perhaps, the true meaning of the indelible mark or character of Baptism and Confirmation is significant. But it is of little consequence with our Faith to have knowledge and no commitment. The student who understands how he shares in the priesthood of Christ and does nothing about it on Sunday. . .he may as well with the same practical profit study a few definitions, a few useless definitions, look at these definitions in the mirror of his soul and then promptly go away and forget what manner of man he is. To miss Mass on Sunday, to be sitting in the back of the Church and going through a meaningless Mass, to come late regularly for Mass, not to take an active part in the singing and prayers of the Liturgy. . .this is quite conclusive proof that neither Baptism, nor the fact that I am a child of God a brother in Christ and destined for eternal glory, nor the realization that God loves me. . .nor the fact that I have the power to share in the cult and worship of God. . .yes, conclusive proof that my Religion is all in

theory, small in involvement and encounter with God. Religion must be an encounter with Christ. The Mass is the highest Christian social role I can play in the Church, the Body of Christ.

THE RELUCTANT SHERIFF

At times one comes across a student who is highly gifted, has a "barrel" of talents, intellectual, athletic or otherwise, but is so indifferent that he hardly ever uses these gifts. One does meet occasionally such a student. It is rather common-place on the high school level to meet talented students who are no students at all. Or in the professional fields can you imagine a man with position and authority, yet never bothers to use such for the good of his fellow men. Such a person is truly the "reluctant sheriff" who does not make use of his deputization to keep law and order. What a pity.

EXERCISING ONE OF OUR GREATEST PRIVILEGES

The laity may offer the Mass, according to Pius XII, in different ways. One manner in which the laity may offer the Mass is mediately through the priest. The priest offers the Mass in the name of the congregation present for the sacrifice. The laity take part by intention, by assisting at Mass, by faith, prayers and aspirations. This is offering

the Mass mediately through the priest, integrally and ascetically. And it might be added this is the normal manner of worshiping of most people. They are content with this.

A more perfect way of considering the laity's active participation in the Mass is by offering immediately the Mass together with the priest, and in union with the priest. The Mass is surely not the priest's Mass; it is Christ's sacrifice but it is also the Church's offering. The laity are the Church. The Mass is the sacrifice of the faithful.

Now the faithful participate in the oblation understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in the twofold manner, namely because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also, to a certain extent, in union with him.¹¹

ASSIMILATION

- 1--Who was Tertullian and what doctrine did he teach?
- 2--Can you distinguish between the priesthood of the laity and the priesthood of orders?
- 3--What is the fulfillment of the priesthood of the laity?
- 4--Identify the Donatists. Give the contribution of Augustine on the matter at hand.
- 5--Explain the two consequences of Baptism and Confirmation.

¹¹ Pius XII, Encyclical: Mediator Dei, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1950, p. 18.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1--How does one live the lay priesthood? Can you answer the questions of Janice? The Mass is a social act. So how must I act?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN LIVING

Go through the Ordinary of the Mass. Pick out every phrase that brings out the social character of the Mass.

Janice has a good friend who is a Protestant. At her Church there is no idea about a Mass or sacrifice. Why? Prepare a ten-minute explanation of the Mass on the level of a non-Catholic.

Prepare a Mass at school in such a way that it would suit the taste of the modern student. Set up the Mass with the greatest participation of the students.

LESSON IV: A PROPHET IS A WITNESS TO CHRIST --
THE LAITY AS WITNESS

PRAYER: Prayer of Christ, the Divine Teacher -

O God, who did teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by the light of Thy Holy Spirit; grant that by the same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through our Lord. . . in the unity of the same.¹ (Collect of the Holy Spirit)

ORIENTATION:

A priest-friend of mine was traveling to Peru for his mission assignment. Seated next to him was a young man of about twenty-two. The two struck up a conversation. It came out in the ensuing conversation that the young man expressed his great desire to spend two years in the missions of South America. He was paying his own way to Peru; he said this should be ordinary for every young man. As he put it, "If every young man can give two years of his life to his Government in the Armed Service, every man can surely give to God two years in the service of His missions. He said this manner of thinking was quite common among the youth of his Church. He was a Jehovah's Witness!

1 J. Canon Rea, St. John's Missal, p. 771.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

He admitted--he made no attempt to deny it--He admitted that he was not the Christ. Then they asked him. . .Are you the Prophet? He answered, 'No' (Jn. 1:20-21).

The crowd answered, "It is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee!" And Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all who were buying or selling things in it. . . (Mt. 21:11).

And they took offense at Him, but Jesus said to them, 'A Prophet is not refused honor anywhere except in his native place and at his home (Mt. 13:57).

But I must go on today and tomorrow and the next day, for it is not right for a Prophet to die outside Jerusalem (Lu 13:33).

So repent and turn to God, to have your sins wiped out, that happier times may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, your destined Christ. Yet he must remain in heaven till the time for the universal reformation of which God told in ancient times by the lips of his holy prophets, Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, as he raised me up. You must listen to everything that he tells you. Anyone that will not listen to that prophet will be annihilated from among the people.' (Acts 3:19-23)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--Some false and real ideas about Prophets.
- 2--Christ, greatest of all Prophets.
- 3--What makes the laity prophets, teachers or a witness?
- 4--The laity share in the Prophetic Role of Christ.
- 5--There is subordination in functions in the Church.

SOME FALSE AND REAL IDEAS ABOUT PROPHETS

When we speak of Christ, the Prophet, we immediately (and correctly so) try to conjure up all the predictions that Christ made about future events. Christ did make public many things of the future and the prophets in the Old Testament foretold some of the particulars of his birth and death. That the Messiah would be born of a virgin is quite an outstanding prophecy, having been made over 500 years before His birth. Christ foretold his own passion and death; He foretold his own great Resurrection. He foretold the lasting memory of Mary Magdalen, one who washed His feet with her tears. He foretold Peter's weakness and the type of death he would suffer. The incidents of the end of the World, and signs of the end of the World are also given to us by Christ. There is not an infinite number of prophecies that Christ uttered but they are plentiful in the Scriptures.

This interpretation of a prophet is true and valid, but it is rather limited interpretation of the term in question. In broader terms we might say that a prophet is one who speaks in the name of God. The prophets of the Old Testament spoke in the name of Yahweh. "All your sons shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the prosperity of your children." (Is. 54:13). Naturally, the prophet who speaks in the name of God will speak the truth. He is

actually a teacher of the Lord who is to instruct His People. This is an additional idea to our notion of prophesy, but it is a very valid one. A prophet always teaches the mind of God to His People. At times these teachings may be a kind of revelation to the people; at other times the Prophet teaches no new doctrine but simply reminds the people of the existing teachings and how they have wandered off and away from the truth. We say that a prophet can be a witness to the truth. This manner of witness can be by his teachings and by his own actions and personal living. This much we can truly say concerning the prophet: "A man whom the Holy Spirit introduces into the hidden designs of God so that he can be their witness till death."²

This idea of witness is an integral part of the picture of a prophet. Today we often speak of bearing witness to Christ. The prophet was always inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is a function attributed constantly to the Third Person of the Trinity. The prophet is an agent, so to speak, of the Holy Spirit. He speaks not his own mind but the mind of the Spirit, those truths that the Spirit wants revealed. This Spirit is a witness to the plans of God, to the truths of God. It would not be too much of a task just

² Jean Daneilou, The Advent of Salvation, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1960, p. 168.

to reveal the truths of God. But the prophet is called upon to be a witness of the plans of God for the World and for man in this World. This can be a most difficult task. Often man's plans go contrary to the plans of God. Man proposes and God disposes. Often man's plans are not in accord with the plans of God. God's plans for each one of us often cut across and go counter to our plans. When the prophet reveals this, when the prophet reminds man that his plans are not God's plans there is stiff opposition, and the prophets, especially Jeremiah, can bear witness to this fact. Man tries to reshuffle history to suit himself. This is bound to be, with his limited vision. Although it is easy to admit in theory -- just sitting here and accepting things as they are in truth -- yet in practice it is not easy to admit that God is like the bus driver who sits up high and sees over the traffic pattern far ahead. We, so to speak, in just a car, sitting in our low-slung sports, can hardly see further than the car immediately ahead of us. So it is. The prophets in the Old Testament had a hard lot because of this. They were often linked with suffering because the people rebelled against them in their job of being a witness. The people would often rebel. "The prophet, therefore, who represents God's outlook, cuts across the plans men are making; and that is why they reject him."³

³ Ibid., p. 183.

CHRIST, THE GREATEST OF ALL PROPHETS

Christ spoke of John the Baptist: "What did you go out into the desert to see? . . . Yes, I tell you, a prophet, and more than a prophet. . . ." If Christ could say this of John, who was His precursor, then the title of prophet can be applied to Christ in a preeminent degree. Christ fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Himself. He not only fulfilled all the prophecies, He prophesied and taught, "as no man has ever taught". The prophets in the Old Testament, the greatest, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel -- these men were but types and figures of the One who was to come. All the prophets in the Old Law pointed to the greatest of all prophets, Christ. We see when the Jews came to John they asked him several questions -- if he was the Christ, if he was the Prophet. The people referred to Christ as the Prophet: "The crowd answered, "It is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, in Galilee." (Mt. 21:11) Jesus accepted the title of prophet and referred to Himself as a prophet: "But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not refused honor anywhere except in his native place and at his home.'" (Mt. 13:57) "And it is not right for a prophet to die outside Jerusalem." (Lu. 13:33)

For three years Christ taught the ways of God. For the duration of his public life, Christ spent His time

teaching the people. The Gospels are the books containing the teachings of Christ. Christ founded His Church on Peter: "But I tell you, your name is Peter, a rock, and on this rock I will build my Church." (Mt. 16:17) "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me." (Jn. 14:6) Christ, then, is the Prophet sent by the Father; Christ is the Divine Teacher, the Witness to His Heavenly Father. From His role in His Church, we the laity receive a share. We, too, must be prophets, teachers and witnesses to the Truth.

WHAT MAKES THE LAITY PROPHETS

The Prophets in the Old Testament received the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. The same anointing of the Spirit that makes the laity Christians makes them prophets. This anointing is received in Baptism and strengthened in the sacrament of Confirmation. Each Christian is united to through His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Each one is given his spiritual illumination for the common good. One man receives through the Spirit the power to speak wisely; another by the same Spirit receives the power to express knowledge; another, from his union with the same Spirit, receives Faith; another, by the one and same Spirit, the ability to cure the sick; another, the working of wonders; another, inspiration in preaching; another, the power of distinguishing the true Spirit from the false one; another, various ecstatic utterances, and another the ability to explain them.
(1 Cor. 12:7----10)

These special manifestations of the Holy Spirit in us are called charisms. They are special graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit. The charisms are varied; the charism of preaching or teaching is among these. These special gifts are not for ourselves, but for the common good, the Church the Body of Christ. This is why the Council Fathers state:

The holy people of God share also in Christ's prophetic office; it spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give praise to His Name. The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief.⁴

In the past, the Church has little insisted on the anointing of each one of us by the Holy Spirit. Today, more than ever, the Church is conscious of the special manifestations of the Holy Spirit in each one of us by the sacraments. It might well be said that in the past the Church hardly, or rarely, capitalized on and made practical use of the laity in Christ's role of teacher. "These are all products of one and the same spirit, and apportioned to each of us just as the Spirit chooses." (1 Cor. 12:11) These charisms that the faithful receive are not to be confused with the infallible gift bestowed on the Holy Father and all the Bishops throughout the World as a body.

⁴ Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 14.

That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of Truth. It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience with which the people of God accept that which is not just the word of men, but truly the word of God.⁵

The laity must always exercise their special gifts of the Holy Spirit in union with and under the infallible direction of the Church.

IN DIGNITY: EQUALITY --
IN FUNCTION: SUBORDINATION

Once before this issue was touched on but, because no effort was made to develop this key concept, it might be well to explain more fully what is meant by the quality of members in the Church. Most students will always say that regarding the laity and his vocation, there is not the same dignity connected with it as with the priesthood. We know what they are trying to say but they are not saying it well. They have badly explained their own vocation. The Church is the Body of Christ. All the vocations in the Church are equal in dignity. We are all the Body of Christ. That which makes a priest a member of Christ's body, Baptism, is the same sacrament which makes one of the laity a member of Christ's body. As regards our own body, all of its members are equal in dignity as members of the body. Each is a part

⁵ Loc. cit.

of the body and as such enjoys the dignity of our body, enjoys the distinction of being a member. Applying this comparison to the Body of Christ, Paul said:

For the body does not consist of one part, but of many. If the foot says, "As I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And, if the ear says, "As I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," that does not make it any less a part of the body. If all the body were eye, how would we hear? If it were all ear, how could we have a sense of smell? As it is, God has arranged the parts, every one of them in the Body, as He wished them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? And it is, although there are many parts, but one body (1 Cor. 12:15-21).

From this comparison of Paul, it is clear that all, laity and clergy, are equal members of the Body of Christ.

There is a distinction in the Church in functions. Paul above speaks about various functions of the Body of Christ. In the Body of Christ there are various functions. Some of these may be more noble, there may be more glory attached to them.

On the contrary, the parts of the body that are considered most delicate are indispensable, and the parts of it that we think common we dress with special care, and our unpresentable parts receive especial attention which our presentable parts do not need (1 Cor. 12:22-24).

And again in Paul:

For just as there are many parts united in our human bodies, and the parts do not have the same function, so many as we are, we form one body through union with Christ, and we are individually parts of one another. (Romans 12:4-5)

Wherever there is a diversity of functions there is need for coordination. We have diversity of functions in the Church. We have various vocations in the Church. In order to achieve coordination among all the members, there must be subordination by authority and obedience. In your own family at home, all of you are equal in dignity as members in that family. Dad has his function, Mother has her function in the family. So do you have a special function and role in the family. But to achieve harmony in that family there must be authority and subordination to that unity. So in the Church, there is the hierarchy and the laity, a subordination of one to the other to achieve unity to the Body of Christ.

Applying what has just been studied to the laity, it can be said that each one of us has received special gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The charism of preaching and teaching is something not to be denied, yet the laity must realize that these special gifts of the Holy Spirit must be used in harmony at all times, and in coordination by subordination to the teaching authority of the Church. The charisms of the Holy Spirit do not make us infallible. There is only one Infallible teaching in the Church -- the

Pope and Bishops. We the laity must exercise our role of teacher in the Church and share in the teaching and prophetic role of Christ.

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--Explain the various meanings attached to the word "prophet".
- 2--Prove that Christ was truly a prophet and state some of His prophecies.
- 3--What makes the laity share in the teaching role of Christ?
- 4--Explain the various charisms or manifestations of the Holy Spirit to each of the laity.
- 5--Explain: "Equal in dignity. . .subordination in function."

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Why do you think the laity have in the past taken such a minor role in the teaching role of the Church?
- 2--How can I, an upperclassman, right now fulfill my role of teaching in the Church. Am I too young? Suppose I fall into 'heresy' . . .discuss these problems.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Inquire into the program of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in your diocese. Join the program to prepare yourself for teaching C.C.D. courses to the small children.
- 2--Set up a training center in the high school -- organize those willing students -- work in Appalachia with the priests and nuns teaching the Bible.

LESSON V: A WITNESS TO CHRIST IN THE
SECULAR WORLD

PRAYER:

Show all Your faithful, Lord, in what a full and true sense 'their work follows them' into Your Kingdom--opera sequuntur illos. Otherwise they will become like those idle labourers who are not spurred by their task. Or, if human instinct triumphs over their hesitations or the sophisms of a religion upon which not sufficient light has been thrown, they will remain fundamentally divided and frustrated; and it will be said that the sons of heaven cannot compete on the human level, in conviction and hence on equal terms, with the children of the world.¹

Christ of glory, hidden power stirring in the heart of matter, glowing center in which the unnumbered strands of the manifold are knit together; strength inexorable as the world and warm as life; you whose brow is of snow, whose eyes are of fire, whose feet are more dazzling than gold poured from the furnace; you whose hands hold captive the stars; you, the first and the last, the living, the dead, the re-born; you, who gather up in your superabundant oneness every delight, every taste, every energy, every phase of existence, to you my being cries out with a longing as vast as the universe: for you indeed are my Lord and my God.²

1 Pierre de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, New York, Harper & Bros., 1960, p. 38.

2 Pierre de Chardin, Letters from a Traveler, New York, Harper & Bros., 1964, p. 97.

ORIENTATION:

The story is told of a small city in Switzerland, Fribourg. It seems that during the first months of the Protestant Revolt a rather famous follower of Martin Luther came to this city to preach a series of sermons on the 'Reformation of the Church' according to Martin Luther. The city was rather heavily Catholic and the people were willing to listen to the new doctrines, but they demanded the right from the hierarchy in the city to pass judgment themselves on the preacher before they accepted his new teaching. After several Sunday sermons in the Cathedral Church, the people decided against the new teaching and forced the priest, who had been a follower of Luther, to leave town.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

In connection with the prophetic function, that state of life which is sanctified by a special sacrament is obviously of great importance, namely, married and family life. For where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, and gradually transforms it, one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the Faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children.³

³ Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 36.

A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. . . He spoke very confidently in the Synagogue at first, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the way of God to him more correctly (Acts XVIII: 24,26).

Jesus answered, 'Take care that no one misleads you about this, for many will come under My name and say, "I am the Christ", and many will be misled by them' (Matt. 24:6).

PRESENTATION

Outline:

- 1--Witness to Christ in the Secular World
- 2--Lex orandi--lex credendi (The law of praying becomes the law of believing).
- 3--Private Revelations
- 4--Laity; Dogmatic teaching -- scientific teaching

WITNESS TO CHRIST IN THE SECULAR WORLD

If the student has understood the material that has gone before, then he will well understand the present lesson. Along with the old idea that the laity were some sort of second rate citizens in the Church came the idea that the laity had no responsibility to the Body of Christ, and must not take an active part within the Church itself. From the foregoing lesson it is easy to understand the special charisms that have been accorded to each individual member of the laity. The Holy Spirit works in a special way. He is manifested in a peculiar way in each Christian. The Body of

Christ has various functions. There is equality in dignity of members; there is a variety of functions, as Paul reminds us: "For just as there are many parts united in our human bodies, and the parts do not have the same functions. . ." (Romans 12:4) And unless these various functions are completed in each member, the Body of Christ is not complete.

It is easy to see that the prophetic role of the laity is different from the same role as played by the hierarchy or the priests. It is not the laity's role normally to stand in the pulpit in Church and preach the Sunday sermon, although this is being done from time to time on special occasions. This is more proper to the hierarchy and the parish priests, but Christ must be witnessed to by the laity in the area where they alone are competent, and in the order which is more proper to them. We speak here of the secular world! It is most important that the laity, that the high school student understand what is expected of a witness. A true witness is one who speaks the truth about a given subject. If the witness does not speak the truth, then he is branded as false. The faithful in the Church are called upon to witness Christ and what He stands for. Someone once said that a Christian is one who acts in a way that if Christ did not exist his actions would not make sense. Do the high school students in this school act in this way? No one is perfect, they tell us. True there are bound to be failings and short-

comings, but is the pattern of your life consistent with the life of Christ? Do you bear witness by your daily living, by your love, by your faith, by your morals to a certain code which we call Christian? If the high school senior does not bear witness to Christ in the scholastic functions at school, in athletic events, in the social activities of the school, and in the life of the parish, the Mass and the Sacraments, then one can hardly say that he is a witness to Christ. It is a difficult idea to get across to students that, unless they are witnesses to Christ in these areas, Christ will never be proclaimed here. It is not the area of the religious Brothers, Sisters and priests, to bear testimony to Christ. This area is peculiar, is special to the laity. By accident, you might see a priest or Brother save a most embarrassing situation on the football field or in the gym. But this is not the ordinary situation. Unless the laity bear witness to Christ in society and industry, in all the professions of the World, in business, in economics, in medicine, in politics and even in the education field, then people will not be reminded of Christ's presence in the World. These areas are proper to the laity and only he can witness Christ here. This whole area of the temporal and of bringing matter to God is called Incarnational spirituality.

Religious, Sisters and Brothers, are witnesses to Christ in a special manner and in different areas. Religious

and priests by the way they dress, by their manner of life, by their insistence on prayer and penance, by their three vows which cut them off from the world. . . their whole manner and mode of life is geared to witness Christ to you in these areas. Unless the religious keeps you in contact with Christ --he is supposed to remind you of the primacy of the spiritual, that Heaven is your final goal, that you are created for God. He is supposed to keep uppermost before you Christ's final coming and the four last things of man: death, judgment, Heaven and Hell. This type of supernatural living is called Eschatological spirituality.

LEX ORANDI - LEX CREDENDI

That the law of praying becomes the law of believing might be a workable translation for this once-famous phrase. What does it mean? It means that as the Church prays so it believes. In general it might be safely said that, by and large, and rightly so, the greatest developments in the teachings of the Church have come from the teaching authority of the Church, the Pontiffs and the Bishops who compose the hierarchy. It is the specific role of the hierarchy to sanctify, but especially to rule and teach the Church. The official teaching of the Church through the Holy Spirit is referred to as the public charisms of the Church. This is the aspect of the Church considered as the means of

salvation. This pertains to the externals of the Church. The Church, as the community of the faithful, as the Body of Christ, as members who have fellowship in grace and the life of Christ. . .this is the interior Church, the Church where there is equality in dignity of membership. In the past, people of other faiths have confused these two ideas and have ascribed equal authority to both hierarchy and faithful in the field of teaching. Not so! The teaching charisms given to the laity must always rest in harmony with and under the authority of the public teaching charism accorded to the hierarchy by Christ and the Holy Spirit. The above confusion led the great Church reformers to use such quotations of Scripture: "Take care that no one mislead you about this. For many will come under my name and say, "I am the Christ," and many will be misled by them," (Mt. 24:6), and apply this with equal validity to the hierarchy and laity. Also: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you disguised as sheep but are ravenous wolves underneath. You can tell them by their fruit." (Mt. 7:15) These quotations Luther understood in such a way that he remarked: "Every Christian is anointed, and can interpret the word of God, judging any doctor, Bishop or Pope, in the act of teaching."⁴

4 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 285.

Luther confused here the inward charisms of the Holy Spirit accorded to all Christians with the public external charisms accorded only to the hierarchy.

Now the law of praying, which eventually becomes the law of believing, does concern the faithful in a precise manner. There are dogmas in the Church which seem to have been developed almost as much by the laity as by the clergy or hierarchy. In the early Church, at the Council of Ephesus in the year 431, a great majority of the Bishops fell into the heresy of Arianism. It was St. Cyril of Alexandria who, along with a few other Bishops and always with the constant prayers and strong moral support of the faithful championed the cause of Mary under the title of "Mother of God." Again, with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception -- a doctrine that the laity never seemed to have questioned or doubted, and yet was highly contested by many of the hierarchy and the great theologians of the Church -- the laity held steadfast and unwavering to this privilege of Mary. It was in conjunction with the confirmation of the many prayers and strong belief of the faithful that the Holy Father in 1854 proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The doctrine of the Assumption of Mary was a belief held by all the faithful for centuries. For centuries the laity and clergy prayed and believed in Mary's Assumption. Only of recent years has this doctrine been proclaimed a

dogma of the Church.⁵

It is a rather disheartening situation to see the laity of the Catholic Church often surpassed by people of other faiths in living the prophetic role of Christ in their lives. This sad situation, to a great extent, can be laid at the feet of the hierarchy. Only in the area of Mariology have the laity been active and progressive in fulfilling their prophetic role.

It is a curious thing, but here Protestants show themselves more conservative--I was going to say more clerical--than Catholics, for in the eyes of the Reformers, Marian piety is only superstition and pagan syncretism.⁶

In the past, then, the piety of the laity has led the hierarchy in proclaiming new dogmas. Whether this is still possible one may doubt. But it has been seen recently, and it will be seen as a common occurrence, that the laity will be consulted on all matters of Faith and morals where it can be said that they are as well-informed as the clergy. The case of the "pill" is an example where Pope Paul VI sought the advice of the laity. More and more wise Bishops will consult the laity on matters of the diocese

⁵ Today a certain number of well-known theologians, among them the German-Swiss, Hans Kuhn feel strongly that the doctrine of the Assumption should never have been proclaimed a dogma of the faith.

⁶ Gerard Philips, The Role of the Laity in the Church, Notre Dame, (Indiana), Fides Publishers, 1955, p. 75.

and parishes where a decision taking into account the sociological and economical, as well as the religious aspects must be made. Already we have the existence of diocesan and parish councils to advise pastors and the Bishop. Often they are only a "front" and empty of a decision-making voice . . .but we do have a beginning. The Church can now expect leadership from the laity in the area of teaching, now that the layman has come of age where his intellectual formation has often equalled, and if not surpassed, the intellectual formation of the clergy. We have the laity teaching in the early Church where Apollos' instruction was completed by Aquila and Priscilla: "A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. . .he spoke very confidently in the synagogue at first, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him home and explained the way of God to him more correctly" (Acts XVIII: 24-26) The laity are called upon today to teach their own children the first years of catechism and prepare their own children for First Communion. There are dioceses where a most vital CCD program is in effect to care for the large percentage of Catholic students in our public schools. The laity here participate in the teaching authority of the Bishop. Their participation is similar or analogous to the priests' participation in the teaching authority of the Bishop. But this privilege must be exercised with the Bishop's approval: "If anyone be a

prophet, let him prophesy, but according to the proportion of our Faith" (Romans 12:6).

PRIVATE REVELATIONS ACCORDED TO THE LAITY

One does not have to go through any mental gymnastics to immediately produce examples of private devotions now practiced almost totally held by all the faithful, which were imparted to the Church by means of the laity. These private revelations or teachings now often challenged by certain theologians and at the moment seemingly on the wane are to be distinguished from the public revelation as found in the Scriptures, and which ceased with the death of the last Apostle, John. Private revelations, as accorded to St. Margaret Mary in the form of devotion to the Sacred Heart, the First Friday devotions, the messages of Lourdes and Fatima, once again accorded to children, the Miraculous Medal devotion imparted to St. Catherine Laboure. . . these are all examples of the laity exercising their prophetic role and teaching and influencing the entire Church. Many other examples similar to the above can be pointed to where the personal message of God to the laity was later imparted to the entire Church. Today we might look down with a certain air of disdain on all devotions. This is not the spirit accorded us in Vatican II. The Constitution on the Church has stressed most strongly devotion to Mary. Devotions in the past which served to enkindle the Faith of the faithful. . .

one should not be too ready to discard unless there is something better to bring about the same results. Today we have an identity crisis in the Church. We have discarded so many of our Catholic traditions that we are free --floating. We have lost our identity good or bad as the case might have been.

DOGMATIC TEACHING, SCIENTIFIC TEACHING

The example given in the other lesson of the young man of Jehovah's Witnesses going to South America. . . thanks to the renewal in the Church and the Second Vatican Council, we hear of many of our laity, young men and women, giving several years of their life to teaching catechism in the South, in Mexico, Central and South America. The Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA) and other such organizations, are known through the World for their intense lay teaching activity. Such lay activity is not beyond any person reading this lesson. Consulting persons who are directing these activities, and talking to young people, often of college age, might be the first steps toward your direct involvement in Christ's prophetic mission in the Church and World. The Peace Corps and VISTA are two national organizations where the Catholic young adults are taking an increased interest.

All areas of teaching are now open to the laity. It is no longer a rarity to have laymen on the faculties of

Catholic universities teaching theology to the students. For a long time now the laity have been involved on the primary level and secondary level in teaching religion. To share in the role of the Divine Teacher, one does not have to limit himself to Religion or Catholic schools. In all areas of the arts and sciences, in all types of schools, public or private, the Catholic layman can have a most fruitful apostolate, and can truly live his prophetic role. Salaries today have been increased in the Catholic high schools where they now stand on a par with the salaries of the public schools. Money is an enormous factor to consider in the choice of any profession. One should choose where he realizes accomplishment and achievement. Often happiness is more directly involved with this sense of accomplishment and achievement than with money values. The field of the sciences is a vast area where Christ is often absent.

Now the man whom the Holy Spirit takes hold of to be his instrument in carrying out the works that will divinize the world is the prophet in the Old Testament, the Apostle in the New. We get back here to the great truth underlying all our thought: there is always a sacred history going on, accomplished by the Holy Spirit, whereby all spiritual creation is divinized.⁷

⁷ Jean Danielou, Advent of Salvation, p. 187.

ASSIMILATION

- 1--How can only the laity be a witness to Christ in the secular world? Discuss the idea of being a witness by one's life, by teaching.
- 2--Explain examples of the law of praying becoming the law of believing.
- 3--Explain the difference between the public charisms accorded to the hierarchy and the private charisms of the Holy Spirit accorded to the laity.
- 4--Explain the connection of private revelations to public revelations. Give examples of private revelation and others not mentioned in this lesson.
- 5--What areas in general are now open to the laity to carry out their role of Christ the Divine Teacher?
- 6--Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the Peace Corps and VISTA.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Discuss advantages and disadvantages to teaching in the public school and Catholic schools. Where could the Catholic layman have the most influence?
- 2--Discuss problems of morals in the Church, in your own diocese where the laity might be well able to throw a special light on a given subject to help the Bishop make a decision. Are there any such moral problems at school where the students might be consulted before a decision is made? morality of types of dancing, etc.?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN LIVING

- 1--Contact a Papal Volunteer a Peace Corps man who has spent some time in the Missions and write up a report on his or her experience.

- 2--Organize a local Peace Corps, a VISTA program in your own high school to serve your community.

LESSON VI: THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH
AND WORLD - THE LAITY'S ROLE

PRAYER:

Almighty and everlasting God, You have willed to restore all things in Your Beloved Son, the King of the whole creation; mercifully grant that all the families of nations that have been disunited by the wound of sin may become subject to His most sweet dominion. (Prayer from the Mass on the Feast of Christ the King)¹

ORIENTATION:

So they have something new now. Today a person in most big cities can buy a "grave" twenty stories high. Today you can go to a large building, a skyscraper in some cities, and buy a slot on the fifth or tenth story for your departed. New? Hardly. A few years ago a friend was visiting Spain. He visited the City of Kings, Escorial. At Escorial is an enormous castle built in the form of a grid-iron. There is a gigantic room, round in shape. It has a number of levels. In one magnificent marbled room are buried scores of kings with their families. Royalty is in abundance in this room. Yet they can hardly be said to be kings today. They are only dust. . .and rule no man's life.

¹ J. Canon Rea, St. John's Missal, p. 1174.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

Pilate said to Him, 'then you are a King?'. Jesus answered, 'Yes, I am a King. It was for this that I was born and for this that I came to the world, to give testimony for truth.' (Jn. 18:37)

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, the wild beasts, and all the land reptiles! . . . Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it: have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, and all the living things that crawl on the earth. (Gen. I: 16,19)

Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though He possessed the nature of God, He did not grasp at equality with God, but laid it aside to take on the nature of a slave and become like other men. When He had assumed human form, He still further humbled Himself and carried His obedience so far as to die, and to die upon the Cross. (Phil. 2:5-8)

When He had washed their feet and put on his clothes and taken His place, He said to them again, 'Do you understand what I have been doing to you? You call me Teacher and Master, and you are right, for that is what I am. If I, then, your Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet too. For I have set you an example, in order that you may do what I have done to you. I tell you, no slave is superior to his master, and no messenger is greater than the man who sends him.' (Jn. 13:12-16)

PRESENTATIONOUTLINE

- 1--Kingship and authority go together.
- 2--"Fill the earth and subdue it."
- 3--Christ's kingship while on this earth: Service!

4--Laity's kingly role in the Church: a spiritual kingship.

5--Authority? Responsibility? Service and Spiritual Kingship!

KINGSHIP AND AUTHORITY

We read every day of deposed kings, kings who have been expelled from their country and now ruled by a revolutionary force. Without a Country a king is hardly a king. He is king only in name. In reality he rules no one. When one discusses the concept of king, it is most naturally associated then with ruling, with the temporal, with society, with people. All of these ideas can truly be applied to Christ. We have seen in a previous lesson that Christ is truly king, not only of the world to come, but also he is truly king of this earth and of all men in the world. Christ is king, not only in the realm of the spiritual, but also of the world in which we live. Christ has absolute power in both the spiritual and temporal. Not so for the Church. There are two perfect societies: the Church and the State. The State is supreme in its realm of the temporal. The Church is supreme in the spiritual. So we see that the power of the Church is limited to the one area of the spiritual.

We are concerned with the role of the laity and his kingly mission in the Church. Does he truly have one? Of the triple role of Christ in the Church, and the laity's

sharing in these roles, the kingly role is the weakest. The place of the laity in Christ's priestly and prophetic roles is rich, not only in theory but also in practice. But how can the laity share in Christ's kingly role in the Church if they have no authority in the Church? This is the problem. By divine revelation, the direct authority of the Church has been given to Peter and the Apostles. This in our time is the Holy Father and the Bishops of the world. The hierarchy rule in the Church, not the laity. Is there, then, a true kingly role for the laity in the Church?

"FILL THE EARTH AND SUBDUE IT!"

This was the first command of the Lord to Adam concerning a certain ruling of the Earth. Adam here was given a certain type of kingly function in the Garden: "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it". . . "have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the domestic animals, and all the living things that crawl on the Earth." (Gen. 1:16,19) If things had remained as God originally planned them for Adam, then all of creation would have been subject to Adam and he would truly have exercised his dominion over matter. But, as Adam fell he no longer was master of the situation. The world became hostile to him and to all his plans on this earth. The earth was no longer his Mother. Adam had to fight to subdue it, and the fact

that after these thousands of years, men, in great numbers, are still starving and need shelter. Might this not well be proof that we humans have not gained complete mastery over the world? We shall see shortly where the world took on a double aspect. The world is good as created by God, yet the world can corrupt man because man is now fallen and partially wounded in his nature. The laity have a direct task to become involved in the world and bring all of creation to God. Yet man often, in the process of using matter, in the process of bringing all of creation to God, gets so involved with matter that he is no longer master of matter. Matter, or the World, masters him and man becomes a slave to the beautiful things of creation. Can you give any examples where high school students, instead of using all the wonderful things of creation to get to God, are themselves conquered by matter and the elements of the earth? Each one here is a citizen of the world, and as Christians we are citizens of the supernatural kingdom, the Church, and destined to be perfect and complete citizens of the spiritual kingdom to come, Heaven. To maintain this balance is no easy task. It probably is the most difficult task in the life of the laity. The world is good. It must be so because it came from the hand of God; man is also good. He first came from the handiwork of God. But man sinned and fell and is now wounded in his nature and does many evil things. Because man fell, and since man is

so much a part of nature and matter, many theologians hold that even the earth in a certain sense also fell, and now is often hostile to man. Because of our partial unbalanced nature, we do not maintain the proper balance in approaching the world in order to bring it to God.

CHRIST'S KINGSHIP ON THIS EARTH

It is true that Christ is king of our Earth, of our world, but when we look at Christ coming into our world, how did He come? Did He come in power and splendor. . .the manner that is proper to kings? Hardly. He came in poverty and lived a life of a servant. He was the servant of all. "Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though He possessed the nature of God, He did not grasp at equality with God, but laid it aside to take on the nature of a slave and become like other men " (Phil. 2:5-6). And when Christ spoke about rulers:

You know that the rulers of the heathen lord it over them. It is not to be so among you, but whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to hold the first place among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man has come, not to be waited on, but to wait on other people, and to give his life to ransom many others (Mt. 20:26-28).

Christ while on this earth did not exercise his kingly power. This power will be exercised at the second coming of Christ when He will judge the living and the dead. While Christ was on this earth He was a humble servant of all. He went so

far as to wash the feet of His Apostles to impress this idea on them: "If I, then, your Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." (Jn. 13,15)

Authority is ordinarily interpreted in the juridical sense of power to command, of authority over others. This aspect of authority--it is only one aspect of authority--will remain with the Church. The Church in the past was judged more in the manner of the hierarchy and as the means to salvation. Only recently, as we have seen, has the Church been considered as the People of God, as a community, as a fellowship of grace. This special emphasis on the Church has given us a rather new and refreshing approach to authority and power and kingship. If Christ assumed the role of a humble servant on Earth, and yet was King, how should we as Christians act? "He called a little child to Him and had him stand among them, and He said, 'I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven at all!'" (Mt. 18:1) Christ shows the apostles here that they will be great in Heaven, not because of any power linked with their apostleship, but because they have the spirit of a child, the simplicity of a child. It is easy to find references to the spirit of humility and service that Christ assumed on this earth. The idea of authority is mentioned over ninety different times in the Gospels. Most of them are with reference to God or Christ. Only seven of the

above mentioned ninety references are referred by Christ to His Apostles. Some of these refer to the apostles as having power over evil spirits. Of all the ninety-three times the idea of authority is mentioned, only two times does it apply to the apostles as having received power from Christ to continue His work. The Church must have authority and power to command, to direct the members of the Church. But today we see the Church less anxious to appear in this role of commanding, of using her power of excommunication and interdict. Rather, the Catholic Church today plays more the role of a Mother who, at all cost, wants to save her children and bring them to Heaven. The Church today is more anxious to resemble Christ in His role as servant than in the spirit with which He will come at the end of the World. How about the laity? Can they take on the role of Christ the servant, although He was King?

THE LAITY'S KINGLY ROLE IN THE CHURCH

"What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all."² As late as 1906, we hear St. Pius X counsel the faithful to the effect that the one duty of the laity is to

2 Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church, p. 261.

allow themselves to be led, and like a docile flock to follow the shepherd. It would seem that the above statements express the spirit of a certain age that is definitely gone. No longer are the laity content to be "pushed around" in the parish like a herd of sheep. No longer are the laity content to appear as a type of playboy who hunts, shoots and entertains. The laity today want an active role and voice in the Church. The faithful are no longer satisfied with the triple function in the parish church that one old pastor described: to sit, to listen and to dig in their pocket and give in the collection. Today we have an articulate laity who want to be heard. If they have a share in Christ's kingly mission. . . then they want to exercise this privilege. Because the laity today are well-trained intellectually, they have definite ideas as to how the parish can be improved and more efficiently operated. Yet how can the laity fulfill this kingly function if, by divine revelation, the direct authority and power in running the Church has been assigned to the hierarchy? In the past it might well have been true that the laity were incapable of exercising any function of authority in the Church. Not so today. Today the Church is not content to let the laity sit idly by. The Church must return to her primitive spirit and role where the laity had a voice. If the laity were active in the early Church, in the selection of Bishops in the Councils then she ought to

return to this true spirit. Vatican II is an example of such beginnings. Much more can be done to give the laity a voice in the running of the Church, both on the scope of the World and on the local level. We must wait and see how effective our parish and diocesan councils can be. It is too early to judge this new manifestation of a voice of the laity.

Does the laity truly want authority in running the Church? Some deny the interest of the laity in directly seeking authority in the Church. Some of the laity hold that their authority is primarily expressed in the sphere of the World and here it truly is. Since the World must be brought to Christ, the chief role of authority for the laity will be in the area of the temporal. Whether in the area of politics, in business, in directing institutions of law, in running universities, in running social service organizations . . . in all these areas the Catholic laity must be found, and it is here that the proper exercise of authority can be used to direct such operations to good and the service of humanity. But this does not answer our first question. Some hold that the laity are more concerned not with responsibility and authority in the Church, but with a consultative voice in these areas. A gigantic step is to be made when the laity's role of authority in the Church is realized. They are the Church. There are pastors today who see the need for giving the laity a voice in the running of the parish. There are pastors who

have greatly capitalized on the intellectual skills of the laity, and they have done an outstanding job in the lightening of the heavy task of the pastor today who runs a modern complex parish. By giving the layman responsibility in the parish, by giving the faithful a true voice, one achieves the goal of having an interested, involved, active and responsible laity in the parish. An enviable achievement. The assistant priests of the parish, have little or no authority in the running of the parish. Yet this should not although it often does deter the parish from doing outstanding work in the service of the Lord. The same might well be said of the laity.

AUTHORITY AND SERVICE

One question remains unanswered: how does one interpret the laity's role of authority under the aspect of service? The faithful can truly render their kingly role under the aspect of service by being of service, to Christ, to His Church, to his pastor and to his parish. How entrenched still is the idea that the parish is the pastor's? His problems are not their problems. They remain inactive and indifferent in giving their service to the parish. There is still a way of being intelligent, responsible, a man of initiative, a man of the parish, with all these qualities put into use and still exercising service to the Body of Christ.

A SPIRITUAL KINGSHIP, A KINGSHIP OF SERVICE

The Constitution on the Church stresses above all the role of a spiritual kingship for the laity in the Church:

Now Christ has communicated this royal power to His disciples that they might be constituted in royal freedom, and that by true penance and a holy life they might conquer the reign of sin themselves.³

Although the laity have the principal task of establishing Christ as King in the temporal order, there still remains the establishing of a spiritual kingship:

It follows that though there are many nations there is but one people of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly rather than of an earthly nature.⁴

The conquest of sin and the reign of Christ as King of our heart is a direct part of establishing Christ as King. If Christ is not king of my own heart there is little sense in trying to go out and convince others of the Kingship of Christ in their hearts. The two work together. The Kingship of Christ is strengthened in our own soul when we engage in the apostolate of Christ the King in the hearts of others.

³ Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 39.

⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

For the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom also by means of the laity, namely, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. In this kingdom creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.⁵

ASSIMILATION:

- 1--What are some ideas associated directly with kingship? What is the problem here for the laity?
- 2--Discuss how man can subdue the World. How does the World often subdue man?
- 3--Christ's kingship on this earth took on more the aspect of a servant. Discuss.
- 4--What is the difference between authority and responsibility of the laity in the parish?
- 5--Discuss the spiritual aspect of kingship for the laity.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1--Discuss some areas where the laity would like to have something to say about the good running of the parish.
- 2--In what areas would the high school students like to have responsibility given them in the running of the parish?
- 3--Discuss some particular areas where we, as high school students feel Christ is not truly King of our lives in a spiritual sense.

5 Loc. cit.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - CHRISTIAN LIVING:

- 1--If the seniors were put in charge of the spiritual activities here at school, what program would you launch? Give us your plan and your fresh approach to Mass, Communion, Confessions, Retreats, etc.
- 2--Organize a school council to run together with the Chaplain and all his functions.
- 3--Report on your parish council. . .is it a front for the pastor. . .or is it a truly effective instrument of the parish?
- 4--Set up a teen-club parish council with the pastor's consent.

CHAPTER IV

(UNIT 4)

MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE WORLD

LESSON I: THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AND SPIRITUAL YOGA

PRAYER:

The "great" commitment all too easily obscures the "little" one. But without the humility and warmth which you have to develop in your relations to the few with whom you are personally involved, you will never be able to do anything for the many. Without them, you will live in a world of abstractions, where your solipsism, your greed for power, and your death-wish lack the one opponent which is stronger than they--love, Love, which is without an object, the outflowing of a power released by self-surrender, but which would remain a sublime sort of superhuman self-assertion, powerless against the negative forces within you, if it were not tamed by the yoke of human intimacy and warmed by its tenderness. It is better for the health of the soul to make one man good than "to sacrifice oneself for mankind." For a mature man, [O Lord], these are not alternatives, but two aspects of self-realization, which mutually support each other, both being the outcome of one and the same choice.¹

ORIENTATION

A group of students were discussing the future of their belief in the Church. About 20% of those present said they no longer considered themselves "total" Catholics. They

¹ Dag Hammarshold, Markings, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1963, p. 34.

accepted some of the teachings of the Church. . .they were a type of pick and choose Catholic; they selected only those beliefs they thought were reasonable and logical. Over 50 per cent of those present no longer believed in the organized Church. They were a type of secular humanist. They felt the only important element of religion was to love one's neighbor. Mass, the Sacraments, the affluent Church, the Vatican possessing billions of dollars. . .these had to go. Love was the only relevant thing. The Church was corrupt from the top down. It could not be reformed. The simplest solution for everybody concerned would be the day when there would no longer be an organized Church. Christian humanism? This is even not the answer. Secular humanism is the total answer.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE:

God is Love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 Jn. 4:16)

Suppose a brother or a sister, is in rags with not enough food for the day, and one of you says, 'Good luck to you, keep yourselves warm, and have plenty to eat,' but does nothing to supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?
(James II:15-16)

In order that love, as good seed, may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept His Will, and must complete what God has begun by their own with the help of God's grace. These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation,

lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues.²

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--What is spiritual yoga?
- 2--Encountering Christ on the road of Life
- 3--A new spirituality and secular humanism
- 4--Creating or escaping the ghetto spirituality

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL YOGA?

There is a certain commonness, an almost universalism in the spiritual yoga which is frightening. Spiritual or sacramental yoga is an approach to God which is characterized in a certain segment of high school students. He gets up in the morning, makes a short morning prayer, goes to school and makes a visit in the school chapel before going to class. He might even avail himself of the sacraments, confession and Communion during the lunch period. He goes to Mass, perhaps more often out of a sense of duty than inner conviction and joy. He says his night prayers, even some extra prayers at times, gives something in the collection, joins a spiritual organization in school and . . . he knows if he sticks to

² Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church, De Ecclesia, p. 41.

his routine he will pile up credits in a spiritual treasury that he can draw from when the going gets rough. This can become a pseudo form of spirituality, Catholic yoga; one must build up the spiritual muscles and keep them in peak of condition for the day when he will encounter the world in all its evil and temptation. He belongs to a type of Soul Assurance Prayer Plan. The idea sounds like: save now, spend later. (Surely the prayers as prayers are not pseudo but his manner of approach to God might well be.)

The first reaction to the above might be "What's wrong with this?" In fact, the student might think if he did this well each day in his spiritual life, he would be truly holy. The religion teacher has been telling him for years to prepare for the temptations of life. One should not launch out into the deep until he is solidly grounded in grace which is built on fidelity to one's religious duties and a daily religious time schedule. This is a rather neurotic approach to God's life within us. Sacramental yoga we call it. One cannot approach Christ in the ordinary way of standing on his feet -- this is too normal. One must stand on his head to relate to his God. He thinks he must do this to see Christ. Actually, the normal elements of every-day life ought to be time of meaningful contacts with Christ: how one gets up in the morning (does he aggravate his parents in the process?) how the student drives his car, what is his manner

of speech in his daily conversation? how does he study? what is his charity to his neighbor encountered on the road of life? how does he fulfill the duties of state proper to his calling? . . .these are the building stones to God. Yet, for many a student, his social life, his dating code of morality, his contacts with his fellow students, his parents, his neighbor. . .these are so many trivialities which are all but meaningless in approaching God. You may say the above is a caricature of the normal student. Perhaps. Yet there might be many adults, both lay and religious, whose spiritual life is a form of spiritual yoga. Many students seem to stand on their head in their attempt to reach God. In reality, approaching God should be done in a standing position, that is in the very normal and common things of life. That one should "tank" up on grace to meet the "beast", as did the early Christians in the arena, that one should consider the world this arena of evils and wild beasts. . .such a spirituality never has appealed to the discerning Christian students, and rightly so. Christ never insisted on the pre-occupation of spiritual exercises, on rules and formulas, on all the practices of the spiritual life. These might have been insisted upon with religious nuns, and priests in their spiritual formation but should never have been stressed for the laity. A lot of trouble with unreal Christianity and the student not "buying" this line of yoga has been the

source of many religious problems, and the eventual throwing of Christ overboard because he sounds so fake and unreal. And one's manner of approaching the world, it has been really and truly ghettoish.

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

Christ was quite strong in his condemnation of the Pharisees, with all their veneer of spiritual practices. Christ did speak often about love of neighbor, and He spelled out quite bluntly just who our neighbor is. The parable of the Good Samaritan was just about as shocking in its own setting for the Jew of his day as the poor White and Negro is to affluent white in our own society. We were always taught in the past to love our neighbor. But was it made very explicit just exactly who our neighbor was? Would we care to apply the parable of the Good Samaritan to the hard, concrete reality of today? The Constitution on the Church speaks of this charity:

Universal holiness of the Church goes to the heart of the matter in stating that charity, as the bond of perfection and the fullness of the law, rules over all the means of attaining holiness and gives life to these same means. It is charity which guides us to our final end. It is the love of God and the love of one's neighbor which points to the true disciple of Christ.³

3 Ibid., p. 35.

Any discussion on holiness must begin with love and not with rules. Laws are only a means to love. If they fail to help us love, we should re-examine our understanding of them. Have you any practical suggestions on what laws in our lives have prevented us from loving our neighbor, rather than loving him? Would the Good Samaritan "Law" be an example in reverse of what we are speaking of? This is often why students find the Church a hinderance to finding God. Because they are members of the Catholic Church they may think they have lost God. Is this possible? Many of our rules and regulations have, in their eyes, so totally obscured the reality that God is lost to them. God is dead! (The spirit of God is dead in our hearts.) This could be why so many students can find no place for formal religion, for the Church in their future lives. Closeness to God, for them, is so often bound up with brick and mortar, asphalt and alleys, flesh and sex, poverty and dirt, black and white, fair housing and equal rights, the world and suffering, my job and my neighbor, . . . yes, all these given the correct value and fitted into the mosaic of life spell Christ to them. The good world, love it; my neighbor, black or white, rich or poor, love him; all these in Christ make up holiness. The Christian should talk more about loving the world, talk about making society and the social order more Christic. . . this might be a more realistic approach to Godliness.

Cardinal Suhard had this idea years ago when, as Archbishop of Paris, he said: (we quote again for emphasis)

Take note of this. The salvation of persons cannot be accomplished without a certain 'salvation' of the social order. While it is true that the social order exists for the persons, and not conversely, one may, nevertheless, say that it is civilization itself which requires spiritualization, in all its problems and its movements, each of which constitutes, as it were, a collective reality.⁴

Christianity must mean encountering Christ on the road of life. Do you think this has often been gravely violated and misunderstood in the past? are many students today spiritually bankrupt? Because we do not know who our neighbor is, because we have gotten lost in the forest of rules and laws, the letter of the law, because we have no theology of secularity, of the world of matter. . .we are paupers in Godliness. All human growth is in meeting or encounter. This is the language of the humanist or existentialist, but it is also what a deeper understanding of the Gospel reveals.

The encountering of the two disciples with the risen Christ on the Emmaus road points up our thesis that holiness is achieved in the meeting. Christ, traveling incognito, entered into the conversation about the happenings of the past few days. At Emmaus they pressed Him to stay with them overnight and have dinner with them. . .they found Christ in the breaking of the bread, but the condition to finding Him in the bread was to find him on the way.

⁴ Cardinal Suhard, Priest Among Men, New York, Integrity Publication, p. 35.

Were not our hearts burning within us as He talked to us on the road?⁵

The student has seldom been taught that it is impossible to love God unless he first loves his neighbor. St. John tells us this: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and yet hates his brother, he is a liar." (1 Jn. 4:20) Christian love is a fellowship in the Lord and with the brethren. Christian holiness is the perfection of this love, this fellowship. Love is a relationship between persons. It is a giving and receiving. It is accepting and being accepted. Many Christians often find their faith empty and meaningless because they have forgotten how to love the world and their fellowman. If grace builds on nature, then one can never hope to have the grace of God fruitful in his own person unless there is a loving and encountering of his neighbor on the natural plane of everyday living. The young have seemingly examined the Church and they have found it wanting. The present great humanitarian movements have often not been sponsored by Christians but by secular humanists. (A secular humanist neither believes in an organized church nor Christ or God but professes strongly he loves his fellowmen.) The young have often not seen the visible effects of the grace of God, from the "Sunday Faith" of their milieu. There is that

⁵ Dennis Geaney, "Holiness in the Home and Factory", in Ave Maria, Oct. 23, 1965, p. 14.

same hatred and prejudice and lack of love in spite of all those Sunday attendances at Mass. Religion is a crutch for many people. It fits too neatly into their daily lives without changing anything, without showing any love of neighbor. People feel good if they have gone to Church. People feel they need religion to give them a certain sense of doing their duty. They might even think they love God until they are put to the test as the white Catholics were in a Chicago suburb some time ago. When one's religion is not an occasion for encountering Christ in a visible demonstration of love, then religion is empty, the people are pharisaical and the outward customs and rites are a crutch for security and self-identification.

Each student must look into the ground of his being and begin to discover the wealth of Godliness in each daily action, in the most common and ordinary of all actions. The rich ore of the actions of one's state in life must be mined.. Whether it be driving that car, the manner of taking the test with honesty and integrity, the encountering of God in the neighbor of our parents, or the Negro or the poor white, the manner and morals of our dating, the job after school hours. . .these acts have a richness which cannot be ignored if one is to recognize the image of Christ in his life. And those acts which formerly were meaningful are no longer too meaningful and able to do the job in our modern

era. Novenas, the rosary, first Fridays, Forty Hours, devotions to the saints. . .these have been somewhat ignored and given place to a more meaningful liturgy of the Word and Mass, and to a richer contact with each other.

These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and, in a special way, the Eucharist, the frequent participation in the sacred action of the Liturgy, application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service and the constant exercise of all the virtues. For charity, as the body of perfection and the fullness of the law, rules over all the means of attaining holiness and gives life to these same means. It is charity which guides us to our final end. It is the love of God and the love of one's neighbor which points out the true disciple of Christ.⁶

Married people especially are seeing now and will see even more in the years to come a whole change of emphasis in their lives. One writer puts it this way.

No longer do we see the ideal Christian marriage put in terms of the large family, no contraceptive practices, Catholic schools from kindergarten to graduate school, and the family rosary. Our view of Christianity as a meeting, an encounter, or a finding Christ 'on the way' puts emphasis on the relationship or the quality of the meeting, rather than a particular practice, the avoidance of a well-defined evil, or submitting to some programmed spirituality.⁷

Is the above quotation a form of over-simplification?

It would seem to be from the experiences of some as an

6 Documents of Vatican II, Constitution on the Church De Ecclesia, p. 47.

7 Dennis Geaney, "Holiness in the Home and Factory", in Ave Maria, p. 20.

exaggeration. Whatever the answer, the fact remains that many young people today, and many Catholic authors that they are reading do stress encounter.

A NEW SPIRITUALITY VS. SECULAR HUMANISM

The average student is aware of a change of emphasis, is aware of a whole fresh approach to the world, a new humanism in his everyday life. Is this possible with God being eternal and unchanging, and all holiness a reflection of this constant and eternal love? How can this be possible when the Council reaffirmed the need of prayer, of the sacraments, of Mass, of such old ideas as penance and self-abnegation? We find today that the alert Christian will begin with action rather than prayer. Many Christians have for so many centuries reversed the process, have insisted on prayer and yet have not been truly outstanding in recognizing and loving their neighbor. We have come to mistrust the Christian of the past who seems to have prayed yet had not made his world a better one to live in.

Anthony Padovano puts it this way.

It seems to me that a modern spirituality begins with activity. The most decisive of all our decisions in life is the vocational decision--so decisive, in fact, that it radically affects one's spirituality. A spiritual program requires an understanding of the personality of the individual and of the apostolic work about to be done. One must know how he intends to dispose of himself before God and how he is to make himself available to his neighbor before he can determine a suitable spirituality.⁸

⁸ Anthony Padovano, "Today's Spirituality for Today's Apostle," in Ave Maria, March 11, 1967, p. 15.

It should surprise no one to see a vigorous and strong development of man's relation with the world and his fellow man. Vatican II has established that the Church is not the triumphant Church which has already arrived at its final goal. The Church is a pilgrim Church, moving towards its goal, often groping and hesitating for the right road, a road with new and often strange land marks. No longer are many of the past so called "land marks" of Catholicity valid for the present. What was "sufficient" for the past, whether it was in meatless Fridays, in devotions of piety in the external observance of Lent, in a passive laity, or in Latin in the Mass. . . today these do not suffice. A new identity is given to the Christian. His position in the world is no longer that of the sacred or mixed society. The Christian now finds himself living in a pluralistic society, the beginnings perhaps of a diaspora relationship with the world. The world has progressed with monumental developments. The United Nations is but one. In years past there might not have been a need for such an organization. Today there is no such thing as an isolated nation. What one nation does affects not only its own people but in some way affects people far beyond its border.

So too with Christianity. In the past Christianity has produced some marvelous apostles of the poor, the sick and colored in giants like Vincent de Paul, Camillus de Lellis

and Peter Claver. The Church needs to raise up more today of such great men of Faith. Up until recently perhaps some Christians never thought about race relations, about the poor of Appalachia or the poor of the world mentioned by Pope Paul in Populorum Progressio as a dimension of living Christianity. Deny any human being his civil or human rights and you have denied Christ. We repeat the question of St. John: "He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn. 4:21) The student must achieve Christian love and fellowship within the framework of his daily life. "We are coming to a maturity in our century where we see that our prayer life and our day-to-day routine are all of a piece."⁹ Christianity has always taught this but the modern Christian has lost this message. We have found out the hard way that one cannot ignore his fellow man and still call himself a Christian. Science and technology and the conquering of space and planets have propelled us into an almost instant awareness of the brotherhood in Christ. The Mystical Body must be thought of with the mind of the secular humanist and the love of Christ. Science has forced the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of all mankind on the Christian with a

⁹ Dennis Geaney, "Holiness in the Home and Factory," in Ave Maria, Oct. 23, 1965, p. 21.

force and confrontation that he can no longer ignore or side-step.

The secular humanist has thought he had the answer. The Catholic student who no longer sees the need of an organized Church, who no longer acknowledges the need of the grace of God in the Mass and sacraments has come up with a partial answer. Freedom, dignity, equality, personality, justice, love of neighbor. . .these make up the platform of the secular humanist. This platform is a most dangerous one because Christianity first launched these great humanitarian principles. They are the very roots of Christianity. If the secular humanist can love his neighbor, then the Christian must have an even more outstanding love. The secular humanist bears a love of mankind which he thinks has no participation in the Love of Christ. He is wrong. His true love of humanity has its origin in Christ, although he may never have heard of Christ, much less acknowledged Christ. Man in the past did not prevent the massacre of six million Jews, the displacement of thousands of Arabs, the horrors of two world wars or the atomic bomb. And the secular humanist has not given us peace in the past ten years. Nor has the hatred of the races ceased with the advent of the humanist who says he can solve the world's ills without Christ. Christianity has desacralized the world in order to make it truly Christic. The gods have been taken out of the world,

and nature. With the advent of Christ the world took on its own autonomy unmixed with the gods. Perhaps man has gotten more than we bargained for. Mankind is listening for God, for His Spirit and we find God strangely silent. Modern man is looking for answers but the oracles are silent. No divine words have fallen from the sky. God is dead! In the midst of our teachings, our doctrines, often involved in much confused thinking, man stands hesitating and confused. There is an unaccustomed silence, and it seems as if we are no match for this voiceless God. The world is in no position to bargain with God. If man believes he can solve all the misery of hunger and hatred without God, without Christ -- God may let man to his own devices to bring him to his conscious need for God. No longer then will man say: God is dead!

It is an experience in the lives of some young people to merely "use" God. As in the past, today one often attempts to construct his world, his civilization, his own life on a level which uses God to fill in the crevices. The great secular structure is fitted together into a mosaic-of-life pattern, and to cement these crevices and to fill in the gaps we used God. Man must be opened beyond himself. He must be lifted to a plane above himself if he is to truly love his neighbor. God is the ground of his being and unless the Christian realizes this he will continue creating other

world wars, and other ghettos. God is the totality of his being. He is not the only the cohesive force which cements the road blocks of our road in life. God is the whole road and man is the whole road in a different sense. The two together make the world Christic; the two together make man Christic. A Christic world is what must be endorsed, fulfilled and brought to completion, not purely and simply a secular world.

Our involvement with the world is another source of ascetical endeavor today. Living in the world as much as possible and yet refraining from those things which can undo our witness is more agonizing than running from the world. If one withdraws from the world, his life becomes easier. The most difficult undertaking of all is facing the world with a stubborn insistence that Christian values will not be compromised.¹⁰

In order to give the student a clearer idea of the term "Christic" and what is meant by making the world more Christic, the well-known German theologian, Fr. Johannes Metz may be quoted.

To Christianize the world [to make it more Christic] means to secularize it, to guarantee it is own scarcely sketched, scarcely imagined heights and depths which have previously lain bound in sin.¹¹

There is not to be a struggle against secularizing the world.

¹⁰ Anthony Padovano, "Today's Spirituality for Today's Apostle", Ave Maria, p. 26.

¹¹ J. Metz, "The Christian and the World", Theology Digest, Summer, 1965, p. 97.

There have been several attempts within recent years to give a Christian explanation of the increasing worldliness and offer remedies for it. One approach seeks to push back the worldliness of today's world towards an immediacy to God through a 'theology of terrestrial realities'.¹²

(A theology of terrestrial realities assumes the fact that although the world, good in itself, shared in the fall of man, was affected by original sin like man was and must be sanctified in some way similar to man. Here all matter is sacralized, given a new identity as man is given new identity in baptism.) God has assumed the world in Eschatological definitiveness when he sent his only incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. The world is always becoming and changing, becoming more Christic through what has happened to it in History. In Christ, man and his world (matter) have been irrevocably assumed into the hypostatic union. "We must see matter and spirit as essentially related to one another. . . that matter of itself essentially develops toward spirit".^{12a} What holds for Christ holds then for man and his world. If God has assumed matter into the Trinity by his incarnation then He has enhanced the world, He is not competing with the world. Now if God assumed the world, He must stand above it, He is

¹² Ibid., p. 99.

^{12a} Karl Rahner, "Christology and Evolutionary World Vision", Theology Digest, Summer, 1965, p. 11.

separate from it. God is divine and the world appears as entirely worldly.

Today one may, indeed must, admit that the secularization of the world, a radical Christian event, often had to assert itself against an historical Christian misconception of the world. For this reason, though not solely for this reason, this secularization has taken on really anti-Christian and secularistic features.¹³

The Christian now knows the truth of the world. It is not divine, it is not hostile to him. Only man's abuse and false recognition of the world makes it hostile to God, and to man own's well-being. The world can now be more worldly, more secular because man recognizes the world for its true identity. It is secular, and to guard its secularity is to guarantee its true identity and this recognition is part of making the world more Christic.

For Christ to assume the world must not be thought of as one biological event in his life, but rather as a whole of his historical life, his Incarnation, his living, his working and teaching, his suffering, his passion and death and his glorious Resurrection and ascension. It was in creation and revelation God became true God and man true man. The hypostitic union of man as God gave man his peak of cosmic reality. There was a human sharing of the divine.

¹³ J. Metz, "The Christian and the World", Theology Digest, Summer, 1965, p. 100.

Matter sharing in the divine is not possible without the Incarnation. When the Christian then is encouraged to make the world more Christic man here is encouraged to recognize the secular nature of it and guarantee its true identity. Man must recognize the world for its true identity, love the world, endorse the world, and use matter to share in the Christ event of history, of making the world come to its ultimate fulfillment for which it was destined. To 'flee' the world, to reject the world, to treat the world as the enemy of Christ and his Father, to refuse to get into the mainstream of the life of the world, to refuse to get involved in the world is to not accept the secularity of the world, its goodness, its true identity.

In all this discussion about Christian secularity and its extreme attractiveness to the student he might be tempted to ask the question, what is all the difficult about accepting the fact that the world is Christic? Just to give the student a glimpse of the difficulties involved we might treat for several pages St. John's approach to the world. One can hardly sweep under the rug all that the evangelist, John, has to say about the world as opposed to Christ.

Perhaps no inspired writer speaks more often of the world and in more direct terms than the Evangelist, John. In almost every chapter, up to and including Chapter 18, of his Gospel there is some direct reference to the world.

The Fourth Evangelist is most often quoted to portray the ambiguity of the world. The world is not only ambiguous for John, there is a profound ambivalence found in it. When John employs the term "world" in what sense is he interpreting the word "world"? In examining various authorities on St. John we come up with a variety of meanings.

Bouyer in his Christian Humanism has this to say:

Just as, with St. Paul, the word 'flesh' is not just a synonym for 'body', the 'world', in St. John's language, does not mean the physical universe as such but in its condition as resulting from sin and from the rebellion of creatures against their Creator, which has brought them into captivity to Satan, the enemy of God. The world in itself, so far from falling under the condemnation of St. John, is the object of that wonderful sentence of Christ preserved for us by the Evangelist, who enshrines it at the heart of his narrative: 'God so loved the world that he gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. (John III, 16).¹⁴

In reading the Evangelist and all that he has to say concerning the world, one might easily forget the special meaning that is in his mind as he speaks of the world. Often the special meaning implied is obvious; at other times the meaning is not evident at first sight. To cite a few of John's passages:

¹⁴ Bouyer, Christian Humanism, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1959, p. 24.

"Now is the judgment of the world; now will the prince of this world be cast out." (Jn. 13:31)

"And you will see me no more; and of judgment, because the prince of this world has already been judged." (Jn. 16:11)

"Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my followers would have fought that I might not be delivered to the Jews." (Jn. 18:36)

The above are only a few of John's passages which contrast the world of Satan with the kingdom of God. Here it is not difficult to see that John has a special meaning for the world. The last quote from St. John has often led Christians into a certain spirit of apathy when there was a question of establishing the reign of Christ in the temporal order. There will be occasion in the following pages to comment in more detail on this passage.

We find the first reference of John to the world in his prologue: "It was the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not." (Jn. 1:9-10) Once again it is evident that John identifies the world with men in the world.

Boismard, a known authority on the Prologue of St. John, makes a similar comment on the world of St. John:

In what sense does John speak of 'the world' here? With him, it normally implies the sum of created beings with special reference to men, or rather it stands for men regarded as part of the whole creation.¹⁵

This remark of Father Boismard is brought out very clearly in John III, 19, where the reference to man is very obvious: "The light is come into the world but men loved the darkness rather than the light." Because the world so often refuses to receive and accept the Messiah it takes on the pejorative sense found in John. . .the world has refused to receive the Word's message and that is why the term so often has a pejorative sense in St. John. The world becomes the sum of the powers opposed to Christ and His Faithful, (Cf. especially Chapt. XVII) and John goes so far as to write 'the whole world is seated in wickedness' (1 John V. 19). In actual fact, 'Satan rules the world. . .',¹⁶

In trying to get a better understanding of the mind of St. John on the world one must not forget that he was undoubtedly influenced by the Jewish idea of two separate worlds. The people of Israel came to the conclusion that there were two separate worlds. They were forced to admit that the evil abounded more and more in the world. From all

¹⁵ E. Boismard, St. John's Prologue, New York, Herder & Herder, 1959, p. 33.

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

the failings of their own people and departure from His Commandments; from the persecution of their own people, where even in the Promised Land, during certain periods of their history, the religion of Jahweh was outlawed. In place of the promise of a Messianic Kingdom where justice, and fidelity to God should have reigned, and there should have been perfect freedom to worship the one true God, there was constant harassment by their enemies. Good did not seem to become more dominant but evil did seem to be ever on the increase.

The people of God were forced to look at the facts more soberly and the conclusion that they drew was that the Messiah could not reign over such an evil world. He would reign over a new world, a world to come. Boismard remarks on this mentality:

At the beginning this opposition between the present world subject to evil and the future world subject to God through the mediation of the Messias was perhaps to be understood in a sense that was much more moral than physical, but in the measure in which the situation of the Holy People got worse the Jews had grown to accentuate the realism of these two worlds and even to conceive of the future world as being entirely a new creation, the old world disappearing forever. Had not the author of Isaias already spoke of new heavens and a new earth?¹⁷

Leonard Johnson in his article on "The World and the Flesh" writes in a similar vein:

17 Loc. cit.

The term 'world' as it should be used, as the Bible normally uses it, has always a tacit addition: creation dependent on its creator; when St. John uses it in a pejorative sense he is tacitly underlining the omission of that implication. The world is just the world. But in reality, you cannot simply have creation. The world cannot be neutral. If it does not imply, as it should, the recognition of its dependence, then it implies not merely separation from God but aversion from God. The term 'world' will therefore come to mean not merely the world without God, but the world turned away from God. Necessarily, therefore, John will say that 'the world hates Christ' simply because this is what the term 'world' means. This is 'the sin of the world': not any particular act of disobedience or any specific vice; but simply the state of rejection of God and aversion from Him.¹⁸

CREATING OR ESCAPING THE GHETTO SPIRITUALITY

It was mentioned in a previous chapter that the spirit of Vatican II might be a paraphrase of a rather famous song and play: Stop the World, I Want to Get On. Often the Catholic finds his spirituality irrelevant and somewhat meaningless because he has been taught to be aware of the dangers of the world, to remain aloof from the world, not to get involved in the world. The confusing thing about it all is that in a certain sense this is true if understood properly. Today the Christian might reject this approach to the world. The goodness and sacredness of the world and matter is now recognized in a most refreshing and positive approach

¹⁸ L. Johnston, "The World and the Flesh", Life of the Spirit, Dec. 1961, p. 41.

to daily living. We have too long taught a ghetto spirituality which young people refuse to buy. Our approach, as seen above, must be tied in very closely with our fellow man and all that the world has to offer. Today we are saying with Teilhard de Chardin that the world is already Christic. Matter is sacred, nothing is profane or low or evil. The great French philosopher, Jacques Maritain, already long before de Chardin, had this vision of the world.

He held up for the coming age the ideal of a Christendom (a term that today is expendable) that would not represent, as did the Middle Ages, a consecration of the temporal order and its instrumentalization for spiritual goals, but would rather aim at a refraction of the Gospel in the world that would be secular in character, i.e., that would leave to the created and the temporal a certain status of autonomy that they lacked in the Middle Ages.¹⁹

Man understands today that the world and his daily actions in the world are to a great measure his spiritual life. Even the prayer life of the student will take on a whole new approach if he understands prayer in relation to his neighbor. Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher, wrote beautifully about prayer:

¹⁹ Thomas Clarke, "The World is Already Christic", America, May 29, 1965, p. 802.

What does it help my soul that it can be withdrawn and from this world here into unity, when this world itself has of necessity no part in the unity--what does all 'enjoyment of God' profit a life that is rent in two? If that abundantly rich heavenly moment has nothing to do with my poor earthly moment--what has it to do with me, who have still to live, in all seriousness still to live on earth?²⁰

Buber reminds us that often in our daily contact with our fellow man these meetings are cold, impersonal, formal, truly not what they are supposed to be if our holiness is to be judged on our relationship to our fellow man. In order to renew and make more meaningful our contacts with our neighbor there is need of prayer.

Prayer is an engagement of the whole man, who is all there with heart and tongue, intellect and will--with one's whole being acting in unison. Prayer is saying 'Thou' with the whole of one's being acting in unison. Prayer is saying 'Thou' with the whole of one's being to one's neighbor, to the world, and therefore to one's God. Prayer is encountering God in the common things of life, in the things that one does, in the persons one meets. Prayer, then, is encountering the Eternal Thou in the finite 'Thous' of my ordinary life, in the nearest 'Thou'.²¹

ASSIMILATION

1--Comment on the Prayer of Martin Buber.

2--What is the relation of the Scripture sources to the lesson?

²⁰ Grace Marie Schutte, "Reflections on Prayer and Worldly Holiness", in Worship, Winter 1966, p. 107.

²¹ Ibid., p. 108.

- 3--What is spiritual yoga? Discuss.
- 4--What is meant by encountering Christ on the road of life?
- 5--Discuss those elements in the life of the student which ought to be most meaningful in his contact with God, yet often remain forgotten.
- 6--Why is there a need for a change in our approach to God?
- 7--Who is a secular humanist?
- 8--Explain the ghetto spirituality so common among Catholics today. Was it good and meaningful in its day? and today?

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--The incident of Martin Luther King in Cicero (suburb of Chicago) to prove to the Christians that they had race hatred. . .the stoning of a nun, the near killing of a negro priest by the Catholics. . . Please comment.
- 2--Does race hatred exist today in the Catholics, but the only difference from yesterday is that yesterday he was bold enough to come out and admit the fact. Today it is still there. . .but hidden.
- 3--Why is love of neighbor today identified with our seeking God?
- 4--Do we have the goods of this World and do we close our heart to our Appalachia neighbor who is poor and destitute?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- 1--Prove to the student body that he has love of neighbor. Could the opposite be demonstrated?

LESSON II: THE WORLD LOOKS TO MAN, NOT TO GOD,
FOR DIRECT FULFILLMENT

PRAYER:

Tractors

I don't like tractors, Lord.
I saw one in a field a while ago,
And I loathed it.

Tractors are conceited.
They crush man with all their strength.
They never look at him, they just move forward.
But when they move forward, they crawl, and that pleases
me.

A tractor is ugly, yet it is strong and I need it.
But it needs me, it needs man.
It needs man to exist; it is man who made it.
It needs man to move; it is man who starts it going.
It needs man to go forward; it is man who steers it.
It needs man, especially, that it may be offered up,
For a tractor has no soul, Lord, and it is man who must
lend it his own.

I offer you tonight, Lord, the work of all the tractors
in the country, of all the tractors in the world.
I offer you the efforts of all the machines that have no
soul with which to offer themselves.
I pray that they may not crush man with their haughty
power, but rather that they shall serve him;
I pray that man, in the freedom of his soul, shall
dominate them.¹

ORIENTATION

Some months ago a group of parents in a largely
Catholic populated city objected to the introduction of a new
religion series into the parochial grade schools. Their

¹ Mike Quoist, Prayers, New York, Sheed & Ward,
1963, p. 38.

objections: the textbooks taught more sociology than religion. There was too much stress put on the elements which go to make up our city. The Catholic religion, they said, has been watered down with too much of the secular or profane. Religion they thought must not be diluted with matter and flesh. Harvey Cox says on this area:

But one consensus has clearly emerged from modern anthropological studies. It is that the religion and the culture of a society cannot be studied apart from its economic and social context. Religion is embedded in behavior and institutions before it is consciously codified.²

SCRIPTURE SOURCE: (DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH)

We should not foolishly dream up an artificial opposition--where none really exists--between one's own spiritual perfection and one's active contact with the everyday world, as if a man could not perfect himself as a Christian except by putting aside all temporal activity.³

Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. . . .they can thereby gather their human, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.⁴

² Harvey Cox, The Secular City, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, p. 21.

³ Pope John XXIII, Mater Et Magistra (Paulist Press) 1962, #14.

⁴ Documents of Vatican II, The Church Today, New York, Angelus Book Guild, Walter M. Abbott, (General Editor) 1966, p. 243.

Now is the judgment of the world, now will the prince of the world be cast out. (Jn. 12:31) I will no longer speak much with you, for the prince of the world is coming, and in me he has nothing. (Jn. 14:30) And when He has come He will convict the world of sin. . .and of judgment, because the prince of this world has already been judged. (Jn. 16:8-11)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--We have not loved the world enough
- 2--The theology of secularity
- 3--World in need of reconciliation
- 4--World in need of redemption

Presenting definitions here might be in order.

The World

Ordinarily the term world means more than the material elements which make up the universe, the stars, the planets and our own Earth. The term "world" corresponds closely to what we might term the temporal order.

(The term "world" for St. John often takes on the pejorative sense, the world that is opposed to Christ, that world which becomes the sum of the powers opposed to Christ and His Faithful.)

Christic

The term Christic is used with the expression, "to make the world more Christic". That the world is Christic means that the world is orientated to Christ in his very being or essence. To recognize the true identity of the world as given it by Christ is to recognize its Christic elements and to make it more Christic. The historical event of the Incarnation (of matter being assumed into the Trinity) is still going on. This historical event was not one biological event but an event which is continuous, a process which is continuous. To make the world more Christic is to endorse the world, to use all the element of the world in man's pilgrimage to God.

Consecration
of the
World

The expression, consecratio mundi, is often used with the connotation of setting the world apart for Christ, the world has become profane and secular, opposed to Christ. The Christian must so to speak 're-baptize' the world, give the world an identity different from what it is now, a world opposed to Christ. The world must become the world of Christ, not the world of Satan. To conquer the world is to subdue a world hostile to Christ and make it obedient to the Will of God.

This form of approach to the world is different from the theology of secularity which takes the world as it is, the world is good, the world is Christic and must be endorsed, completed, fulfilled, brought to perfection and completion in Christ. The only way the Christian can make the world more Christic is to recognize its identity to endorse the world and accept the world as not the enemy of Christ, but as a world moving ahead in the historical event of the Incarnation.

Sacred

The sacred confronts the profane. Sacred means consecrated to God. The world is holy, but it is not sacred. It keeps its own identity. Both the sacred and the profane can be holy, but sacred is opposed to profane.

Sacral

This is an object which was profane or secular and given a new identity by attempting to make it sacred. e.g. making a bank, which is secular in nature, sacred by giving it a name, e.g. Bank of the Holy Spirit.

Secularity

That which is secular is profane, is of this world. The theology of secularity is the theology of matter and the world.

Secularism

is a closed world view. It functions very much like a new religion. Secularism as commonly understood is agnostic humanism. An example: The Christian speaks of the dangers of secularism. Here secularism means limiting God and his influence to the Church alone. Here God must have no influence in the world, God has no relation to humanism. Secularism is pagan humanism.

Secularization Secularization is the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and toward this one.

WE HAVE NOT LOVED THE WORLD ENOUGH

In the preceding chapter the student had a glimpse of the approach to the world as evil and as Christic. For centuries man's struggle toward God has faced this dilemma. There was God on one side and there was the world on the other. These two forces, one supernatural, eternal and infinite; the other secular, profane, matter-bound opposed to God. The world stood for all that was opposed to God and His Kingdom. The world was hostile to God. The Christian was taught to suspect the world, to approach it cautiously, to flee the world, to remain aloof from it, to treat the world as the Kingdom of Satan. There were good reasons behind such an approach. . .the words of Scripture afforded ample proof of the Christian's position. Yet the Church insisted on the goodness of all matter, of all of Creation. Had not the inspired author said: "And God saw that it was good." (Gen. 2:7) And does not St. Paul say of the World: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, but rather received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." (Cor. 3:12) And does not John in all his association of the world with Satan say (repeating a most significant passage): "God so loved the world that He gave

His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life." (Jn. III:16)

These phrases have sounded good to the ears of the Christian but he never truly accepted them. And the student was constantly warned of the world and the spirit of the world. To be a man of the world, this is just what he is, was a man of Satan opposed to God. Yet young people today want to be a direct part of the world. . . want to live and be where the action is. This is often seen in the student who comes from the quiet country or rural area and gets a taste of the big industrial city. He often finds it impossible to go back to the quiet, slower pace of the small town. No doubt when one grows old, and has lived to the fullest, he may want to retire to the quiet of the rural. But for heaven's sake - not now! For young people, the big city means life and excitement, and what young person in his right mind wants to turn aside from all that spells fun and pleasure? So, in plain language the Church has not convinced the young people on the spirituality of "flight from the world."

The Christian from the earliest times has been noted for his uninvolvedness in the world. Perhaps much of this tradition originated from the teachings of the Apostle, Paul, concerning the quick coming of the Parousia, (the second coming of Christ). Paul extolled the glories of virginity, at the expense of marriage or warning married people to act

as if they were not married, and he summed up his entire approach to the world in, "I am crucified to the world and the world to me." (Gal. 6:14) And there are the words of Christ which for centuries seemingly stood for Christians as a warning about involvement in the world, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this World, my followers would have fought that I might not be delivered to the Jews." (Jn. 18:36) And John, from the very beginning of his prologue speaks of the World as opposed to Christ, "It was the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not." (Jn. 1:9-10) And again John puts these words on the lips of Christ: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. . .but because you are not of the world I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." (Jn. 15:18-20) And, developing the same theme: "Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. . .the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I bear witness concerning it, that its works are evil. (Jn. 1:3-13) And, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him." (Jn. 14:17)

There is an abundance of passages of John referring to the hostility between Christ and the world. The Christian

must face this same enemy, the world, in his daily personal life. Must he? This is the question. It is no secret that the Christian has always been dominated by the idea of eschatology, the final coming of Christ, preparing himself for his final home, heaven. The Catholics of our country, considering their large numbers, it would seem, should have more figures of national import, and the impact on our society surely could have been greater. It is admitted that in the past the student has at times been taught to keep aloof of the world, to flee its evil influence, and then, all of a sudden to see Vatican II throw itself into the life-stream of the world--what a change. This about-face may be the most astonishing change of the Council, the spirit of endorsing the world, of loving the world for its own worth and value. The world must not be conquered but served. The world must not be consecrated but rather recognized for its holiness in its profanity. The world must not be considered as the seat of Satan, but as the home of the Incarnate Christ. Pope Paul at the opening of the 2nd year of Vatican II commented:

Let the world know this: The Church looks at the world with profound understanding, with sincere admiration, and with the honest intention not of conquering it but of serving it, not of despising it but of appreciating it, not of condemning it but of strengthening it.⁵

⁵ Pope Paul, Opening Address at Session of Vatican II, Sept. 29, 1963. (Quoted in "Christian Secularity", by Anthony Padovano, Ave Maria, Feb. 25, 1967, p. 19.)

To love the world more because of its true worth, its own inherent value, not just as a means to something else, but for itself, to respect it and serve it. . . Michael Novak says this much:

For the key word for describing the relation of the Church to the world is no longer power, triumph or isolation. The key word is service, and the key test from Scripture is the one which tells us that Christ emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant.⁶

This is why the Christian, both young or old, are not to flee the world, are not to approach the world as evil and as the kingdom of Satan, but they are to love the world because the world is already impregnated with Christ. The world is Christic because it was assumed into the Trinity at the moment of the Incarnation. All of the world is orientated to its final end by Christ. Recognizing the true identity of the world is making it Christic.

Today, while we still realize that there is no salvation apart from Christ and the Church in the full scope of their presence and activity, we are aware that there is salvation for men and institutions outside the institutional, sacramental Church. We realize, too, that the world as set over against the Church, is not necessarily to be conceived as a hostile or merely neutral force. By the Incarnation, by the cross and resurrection, the world is already Christic and ecclesiastical in its dynamic orientation.⁷

⁶ Michael Novak, The Break with Platonic Religion... Eyes of the Modern World, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1965, p. 43.

⁷ Thomas Clarke, "The World is Already Christic", in America, p. 803.

Quite a change? Indeed. It will be seen shortly how this approach affects the immediate life of young people especially. Each and every Christian is to love the world. And the more fully one loves the world the more truly one will know the world and will recognize what is truly the world and what is merely a phenomena of the world. This is Christian secularity.

Secularity is sensitive to the joy and the sorrow of the present but also to the everlasting possibilities of a future life. Secularity's view of history is so open-ended that it is able to accept an Incarnation and a Resurrection. It calls us not to less love for the world but to more love. For we love something in a durable manner and we love it unto its own salvation.⁸

Salvation is final and complete reconciliation to Christ and his Father. Although the world is Christic in essence, in its proper identity it constantly needs the grace of Christ to keep and guard this true identity. There are so many people who militate against the true nature of the world, who use all means in their power to turn the world from Christ. For this reason the Christian must endeavor to bring out the Christic nature of the world and to orientate it still more to Christ its final end.

The old adage that love follows on knowledge. . . that one cannot truly love someone unless he first knows

⁸ Anthony Padovano, p. 19.

that person. . .the converse might be even more true today: unless one loves a person he cannot truly know that individual. Often one hears somebody say in his prejudice: this person is impossible, he is most difficult to understand and figure out. Perhaps if one started loving that person, for the first time he would truly understand and know that person. Since man must now love the world his approach to matter and the elements of the world will be different. Once man loves the world enough he will know and recognize its true worth.

The world is not so much to be consecrated, captured, given meaning and salvific relevance. Rather, it is to be recognized, endorsed, brought to fulfillment. Also, if the world is in a true sense, the undisclosed Church, the Church in her turn is the world fulfilled and manifested. In St. Augustine's beautiful phrase: 'The Church is the world reconciled. She is not only the sign of Christ but the sign of the world.'⁹

THE THEOLOGY OF SECULARITY

The theology of secularity depends on the doctrine of the Incarnation. True Christian secularity depends on the phrase: The world is already Christic, i.e., it is oriental to Christ by the very fact of the Incarnation. It is not Christ but it has the "spirit of Christ" in its goals and purposes.

⁹ Thomas Clarke, "The World is Already Christic", p. 803.

"Secularity depends upon the nature of the Incarnation and manner of its historical contingency."¹⁰ Secularity demands that we recognize the world as it truly is. "Secularity issues from the nature of creation which God makes partly responsible for our origin and destiny."¹¹ If we ignore secularity, we become the ghetto Catholic. . .the Catholic who remains within his own protected circle of Catholic friends, his own Catholic world and does not open his heart and soul, his entire being to the secular world and the people who make up this world. Secularity must not be exaggerated. . .for if it is, one degenerates into secularism, which is also a kind of ghetto, a kind of closed world view excluding Christ. True secularity must include Christ or else there can be no theology of secularity. And if we ignore secularity we become "progressively less Catholic or universal." We enter into the ghetto. . .onto a closed world view of all creation. And then we are right back where we were before Vatican II. We have then an approach to God and the world which is not realistic. . .we have something artificial and protective, too protective for its own worth. . .truly anti-apostolic. The Christian must be taught

¹⁰ Padovano, *Today's Spirituality for Today's Apostle*, Ave Maria, p. 18.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

to enter into the main stream of the life of the secular city. It is only in this manner that one can bring out the real nature of the world in its inherent orientation to Christ. Paul VI writes in this vein in one of his latest encyclicals:

The world cannot be saved from the outside. . . All things human are our concern. [And in his speech in New York before the United Nations:] We here celebrate the epilogue of a wearying pilgrimage in search of a conversation with the entire world.¹²

The theology of secularity is quite unique in its approach to the world. Perhaps never before has Christianity so openly endorsed the world and encouraged its members to get in the main-stream of its activities as in our day. This new approach to theology does not deny that there are problems, grave problems of sin and injustice in the world. But Christianity sees more clearly that the world was given to him by God to make it a suitable place for all to live in. To ignore the world, to flee the world, to condemn the world. . . these have not been sound, realistic answers for making the world into the image of Christ.

¹² Ibid., p. 19.

We know that the world is in a mess, but somehow we feel that it deserves something better than relegation to the trash heap; and we all know that God is our hope and strength, but we seem to find the spiritualities of the recent past (God help us) a little too godly for our tastes.¹³

That there are dangers in approaching the world with this openness and positivism cannot be denied. But we are living in an age where maturity according to one's age is demanded of all. Young people want to be treated as adults and what they resent most is the paternalism and overprotectivism both on the part of their parents and the Church. By the time a senior in high school has reached the end of twelve years of Catholic training. . . either he should have the maturity of living by his faith and intensifying the Christic elements of the world, or we have done a mediocre task of Catholic education and this student has never reached the maturity of faith which his age demands. "What is worldly in the world can be integrated in a genuine Christian way; and the believer has no immediate reason to have a bad conscience in entering into it."¹⁴ A number of students may lose their faith by this direct confrontation with the world. Those who condemn this openness onto the world and

¹³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴ Robert Capon, "The Secular and the Sacred", in America, March 4, 1967, p. 307.

would have us retreat to a safer position, one might be a position of the ghetto Catholic, will be quick to condemn secularity and label it un-Christian or Godless. But it is highly questionable if the sheltered student would have held on to his faith by the more sheltered approach to daily living. In the age of adult Christianity, the calculated risk must be taken. It might be necessary for our teachers of Religion to change their method of faith-indoctrination in view of the theology of secularity.¹⁵ Like all elements of our lives, there must be a balance. It is the truly great man who can and does maintain a balance in all the elements which make up his daily life, whether they be of a secular, profane nature, or of a more direct religious nature. But there must be no hesitating in seeking the balance.

¹⁵ A full treatment of such an involved problem is not attempted here. It might be well to voice the opinion of Fr. John McKenzie in an article in the summer issue, 1964, of *Living Flame* entitled "Imparting the Faith to Infants" where he says that in the past, religious have often been guilty of a kind of brain washing with reference to imparting the Faith. One should be led up gradually to a mature decision of accepting the Faith. We have much to answer for and which is now catching up with us.

The tragedy of the Christian Faith is not the secularization of the world, but rather--or so it seems to us--the way in which we Christians in fact reacted to it, and for the most part still do. Have we not here failed to recognize, or have we even rejected, our own child, so that it ran away in youth and now, totally estranged from us, regards us with a gaze distorted by a vicious secularism? Did not Christianity, at the dawn of modern times, enter too hesitatingly into this new world-perspective?¹⁶

Secularity without Christ degenerates into secularism. It is a current thought that man has need only of reconciliation with his neighbor, he has no need of redemption. If this is achieved, they say, then all the ills of the world will be solved and we will have peace and harmony. Modern man then has need of loving and living in harmony with his neighbor. The younger generation made the world aware in a new and refreshing way for the need of love in man's life. And the young, with their goals supremely high, have set out to accomplish what past ages have attempted and failed at: the universal love of one's neighbor. Has not the greatest scandal of man been man's inhumanity to man? There is a certain segment of Christians, the new breed, if they can be styled thus, who see in the immediate future the disappearance of all organized religion. They find it difficult to find a place for religion which seems at times to have

¹⁶ Johannes Metz, The Christian and the World, New York, P. L. Kenedy & Sons, 1965, p. 89.

been more involved in politics than political world and has not in its message and mission. Has the Church at times prostituted itself with compromise and expediency in the past? Because the Church has at times taken such a position, she has not always been true to Christ's mission. Religion has often fit too conveniently into the lives of many Christians. The so-called "religious faith" has changed little in their lives. Because of lack of true witnessing of Christ, some young adults of the world have particularly turned to a type of secularity which does not admit a role for Christ. But secularity without Christ is not secularity but secularism. Man not only has need of a human reconciliation with his neighbor, he has need of the redemptive grace of Christ, which heals man in his fallen nature. That man has lacked a certain harmony in his person, that man is fallen in some way, although not universally accepted, is held by millions of believers in Christ. We have only to look at our past history, of wars, of hatred and violence to force us to pose the question: what has happened to man? why has he acted this way? and will he continue to act thus? Yet there are those who say that secular idealism has achieved striking results over its brief, short history.

They note that it was, as a matter of fact, secular idealism that fired the civil rights movement; that it is secular morality, that more and more governs our attitude toward marriage and divorce, abortion and euthanasia; and that is the secular cleavage of conservative-liberal that is the over-riding intellectual force of the day. The Roman Catholic Birchite feels himself far safer with a good Mississippi sheriff than with some of his own co-religionist--freedom marching nuns for example. [Obviously the last three lines are an overstatement but perhaps the author uses the example to bring out his point.]¹⁷

But to pick up oneself by one's own bootstraps is a neat trick. To generate true and lasting love of neighbor without the grace of Christ is impossible for the committed Christian. One has to love his neighbor -- the Christian has at times given us a poor example of this -- and truly to persevere on this course of history takes more than what the ordinary secular humanist has to offer. (The great Ghandi of India was truly no ordinary man.) True secularity must include Christ and His love, which is needed to bring about a universal love of all men: black, white, yellow. . .or whatever the color of his skin or the code of his beliefs.

For too long a time Christianity has been identified only with the Cross of Christ. Christianity is the cross of Christ and more. Christianity is the glorious, resurrected Christ. Christianity is the incarnation of Christ into our world and His renewal of this world. Man should always find

¹⁷ Robert Capon, "The Secular and the Sacred," p. 307.

enough suffering in this life to remind him of the Cross. There will always be (due to the fallen nature of man) the presence of false secularity, i.e. secularism in the world. The world on the move without a rudder is a world without Christ. Secularism is man who has arrived already at his goal; he needs no redemption. But has he truly arrived? "Secularisms always appear as something beyond our control, not penetrated by faith itself and, in this sense, really pagan and profane."¹⁸ Will the Godless secularist learn the hard way, the way of experience, that his philosophy is not a complete and whole one? Will man have to travel through an age where Christ and the Church are all but totally rejected? Signs at times seem to indicate this. And the secular humanist will say that Christianity has been tried and has been found wanting; Christian humanism has not been the answer but secular humanism has and will continue to be the pragmatic answer. A partial answer to this difficult question posed by the secular humanist can be found in the response, Christianity has not failed, the doctrine of Christ has not truly been lived in all its fervor. In addition to this the Christian comes face to face with the mystery of the Cross and Christ's

¹⁸ Johannes Metz, The Christian and the World, p. 90.

words that the world will always hate you as it has hated me.

Fr. Metz tries to bring out this mystery.

The re-enactment in faith of the liberating acceptance of the world remains for us painfully hidden in an almost impenetrable and obscure secularism. We shall always have to suffer from this secularism and bear it as the cross of our faith, appearing as it does extremely pagan and profane. We shall always have to confess with Paul: 'I am crucified to the world and the world to me'. (Gal. 6:14) This is so, not in spite of our acceptance of its secularism, but precisely because we accept it in faith, and because it is for us painfully strange and ever estranging in this incomprehensible state, gloomy and as though sightless, in the very center of the realization of our faith.¹⁹

ASSIMILATION

- 1--It seems that in the past we have loved the world too much. Any comments?
- 2--How have we not loved the world enough?
- 3--How does one go about loving the world more, or more correctly?
- 4--Comment on the statement that one must love a person before he truly knows that person.
- 5--Too much secularity and you have secularism. . . discuss.
- 6--Too little secularity and you have not true Catholicity and universalism. True or False --- Explain.
- 7--Discuss the Scripture sources.

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Discuss some examples of ghetto Catholicity in the students' lives.
- 2--If the world is already Christic and must be endorsed. . .why Catholic schools?
- 3--Discuss examples where you feel the Church has truly protected your Faith.
- 4--Do you feel your Faith needs protection, the protection of a Catholic high school? of a Catholic College or university? Some say the primary purpose of a Catholic education is not the protection of one's Faith. Explain.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- 1--Invite to your school two college men, one attending a secular university; the other attending a Catholic university. . . evaluate their comments on the advantages and disadvantages of a state and Catholic university.
- 2--Write a paper on the good elements in a Catholic high school. Make it a mature paper in the light of this past lesson.
- 3--Can you offer any constructive criticism for bettering your school?

LESSON III: CHRISTIANITY BROUGHT ABOUT THE
SECULARITY OF THE WORLD

PRAYER:

God, who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, who 'from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth.' (Acts 17:26) All men are called to one and the same goal, namely, God Himself. . . If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law, (Rom.13-9-10) To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.¹

ORIENTATION

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a man who is now rather famous for his approach to the theology of secularity. Bonhoeffer lived during the time of Hitler's regime. He was a Lutheran minister and was jailed after an attempt on the life of the dictator. Bonhoeffer wrote many interesting and exciting treatises on our topic at hand. One of his thoughts: "We are proceeding toward a time of no religion at all. . .how do we speak of God without religion. . .how do we speak in a secular fashion of God?"² "If theology is to survive and to

¹ Documents of Vatican II, The Church in the Modern World, p. 223.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, New York, McMillan Co., 1959, p. 123.

make any sense to the contemporary world, it must neither cling to a metaphysical world-view nor collapse into a mythical mode. It must push on into a living lexicon of the urban-secular man."³

SCRIPTURE (AND OTHER SOURCES)

He has given us perfect insight into his secret purpose and understanding of it, in following out the design he planned to carry out in Christ, and in arranging, when the time should have fully come, that everything in heaven and on earth should be unified in Christ--the Christ through whom it is our lot to have been predestined by the design of him who in everything carries out the purpose of his Will, to win praise for his glory, by having been the first to believe in Christ. (Eph. 1:9-13)

But the end of all things is near. Be serious and collected, therefore, and pray. Above all, keep your love for one another strong, because love covers up a host of sins. (1 Pet. 4:7)

For the world's future remains wholly an inheritance from the hour of Christ. (Eph. 1:10)

Today one may, indeed must, hazard the assertion that the secularization of the world, in origin, a Christian event, was compelled to force itself through in opposition to the concrete historical world-view of Christendom, and that this is the reason why, in fact, it took on an anti-Christian, viciously secular character.⁴

³ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 251.

⁴ Johannes Metz, The Christian and the World, p. 85.

We should have it responsive to all truth and virtue and to all the realities of our doctrinal and spiritual inheritance. Sincere and ready in genuine spirituality, ever ready to give ear to the manifold voice of the contemporary world, ever more capable of making Catholics truly good men, men wise, free, serene and strong. That is what we earnestly desire our family conversation to be.⁵

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--Origins of secularity. . .the Christians effected it.
- 2--Approaches to the world: the sacred, the sacral, consecration of world.
- 3--Secularism & secularization.

ORIGINS OF SECULARITY: THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGION EFFECTED IT

It is difficult to believe, even more difficult to accept the apparent fact that the Judaeo-Christian Religion was the cause of secularization. To say this with all the knowledge of what the Church has done over the centuries to protect man from the world, to protect and preserve him from the baneful contagion of the world. . .definitely we have here a reversal of the Christian position. Secularization or secularity to a great measure was heralded into existence with the advent of biblical faith. It was basically a

⁵ Pope Paul VI, Ecclesiam Suam, (as quoted by Abbott, in Documents of Vatican II, p. 306).

liberating process as God spoke to man, when God began to dialogue with man. Before God spoke to the Jewish people, matter and spirit, the gods and the supernatural were intertwined into all of the Greek and Roman mythology well known to the Greek nation, tribes and peoples of the world had their religious cult mixed with all sorts of superstitions, and the daily movements of the spirits and gods with man and nature.

Pre-secular man lives in an enchanted forest. Its glens and groves swarm with spirits. Its rocks and streams are alive with friendly or fiendish demons. Reality is charged with a magical power that erupts here and there to threaten or benefit man. Properly managed and utilized, this invisible energy can be supplicated, warded off, or channeled. If real skill and esoteric knowledge are called into play, the energies of the unseen world can be used against a family foe or an enemy of the tribe.⁶

It was the biblical faith of the Jewish nation which, for the first time, professed belief in one God rather than in many gods so commonly known and accepted by the neighboring nations. Throughout the entire history of the Israelites there is one thing uncontested: their tenacious hold on monotheism. Not only did the Jewish people profess belief in one God but their God was distinct and separate from the world and matter. For the first time there is a religion which makes God truly God, man truly man and the world truly the world. The world

⁶ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 21.

has been demythologized of all the spirits and demons. For the first time man begins to know the truth about the world and himself. The biblical beliefs of the Jews demythologized the world and set it free to be accepted on its own worth and with its own values. This great event turned man's attention away from false worlds and towards this world. Whether we regard this turning with dismay or anxiety depends in part upon understanding its sources. Knowing from where something comes aids in seeing where it may be going. With the Book of Genesis man is told that God created the world, created nature and set man to have dominion over it. "The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden to till it and to keep it. . ." (Gen. 2:15) "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." (Gen. 1:28) Never before had man dared to place himself above nature. Now nature was to serve him. He was the highest of all creation. But primitive man found the gods and the demons in all of creation and dared not tamper with the situation which was the religion of the people. Harvey Cox sums up briefly the idea of secularization: "We have defined secularization as the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and toward this one."⁷

7 Ibid., p. 17.

Secularization is good. It is a reality started by God in his revelation, in his speaking to his chosen race, the Hebrews. The Christian should no longer struggle against the secularization of the world. No longer does the Christian accept a closed world view of the events of history. The Greek concept of the world as a fixed framework of uniform recurrence has been displaced and rejected for a secular world of becoming and change. The world is now one of happenings, a world evolving not in a circular fashion of repetition, but a history that is spiral, which sees the growing perfection of man and nature. This latter interpretation of history was accepted and adopted by Vatican II. The Greeks and their idea of accepting existence and history spatially was discarded for the Hebrew idea of history as a series of events. The classical interpretation of history, over the event-type of history was one of the main reasons why the Catholic Church inclined to a static interpretation to theology. Change was inferior to that which was constant, fixed, a type of the eternal religious world. It implied that the true religious world was timeless and changeless, and thus superior to the secular world which was passing and transient. The above approach to the world and present day theology has had such profound impact on the Catholic Vatican II world that today there is the very sharp cleavage between the liberal elements of the Church and the conservatives.

Although all Catholic theologians admit of the development and evolution of doctrine in the Church there seems to be two schools of thought concerning just what teachings of the Church can be changed and what moral truths given us by God never admit of any exceptions. This issue will not be treated here because of its vastness, only this quotation from a recent talk of John Courtney Murray. . .

Truth is an affair of history and is affected by all the relatives of history. Truth is an affair of the human subject. Truth, therefore, is an affair of experience. And in the perception of truth the human intelligence has a function that must be conceived as being creative. This is the truth in the philosophical error of idealism. Somehow the mind creates truth in a sense. There is a truth here as there is in all errors. [The Council Fathers, he said, rejected classicism and embraced historical consciousness.] The transition from 'classicism' to 'historical consciousness' is one aspect of the general cultural crisis in which the Church is caught. To the classicist the truth is so objective that it can exist apart from anyone's possession of it with 'ideas always up there in heaven. In this view, there is no such thing as an historical dimension to truth, no development or growth.'⁸

HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO THE WORLD

Throughout history there have been various and sundry approaches to the world. We have seen a kind of sacred approach to the world from the above in developing the origins of secularity and secularization. In the past, Christianity

⁸ John Courtney Murray, "The Historical and the Classical", as quoted in the National Catholic Reporter, May 17, 1967, p. 3.

had done an excellent job of baptizing the ancient pagan customs and symbols and giving them new values and meanings. (Today many of these sacred customs and symbols have lost their meanings for modern man.) By the time of Constantine there was for Christianity the existence of a sacred society. There was no such thing as a strictly secular order. The spiritual and the secular were one. Society was Christian. This society, like a coin, had two sides, so to speak, with the Emperor and princes making up the one side, with the Pope and Bishops on the other side. This form of society began to die out at the end of the Middle Ages and with the advent of the Protestant Revolt. Today there are vestiges of the sacred society in the sacral society. These vestiges can be found in thoroughly Catholic nations, at least in name, countries like Italy, Spain, and sections of Ireland and Canada. God is found in all things. Streets are named after the saints, the figure of the crucified Christ is along many of the roads, and way-side shrines are common. Not only are schools and buildings named after the saints, but even the finances of the country are baptized with the God-in-all-things. The Bank of the Holy Spirit is as common to Romans as the Chase Manhattan is to New Yorkers. And so, from the sacredness found in all things in the early history of the Church, we have vestiges of the sacral. In the sacral there is an attempt to push back the world to an immediacy in God

through a theology of terrestrial realities. It is evident that the above characterization of the theology of terrestrial realities is not complete. (We will not develop here the above theology which gives a certain sacredness to all of matter.) It seems that this approach does violence to the value of the world as it truly is. "Man knows from history, and perhaps from his own life, that a too facile or imperialistic baptizing of human values ultimately serves neither these values nor Christianity."⁹ There must be some way the world can be Christ's without doing violence to its very identity. Theology of terrestrial realities might well be guilty of the above.

It was with the French Revolution and the beginnings of the 19th Century that we have the advent of our current form of secularism and its approach to the world. Secularism is an approach to the world which is not the same as secularization. Secularization degenerated into a positive rejection of God is secularism. Secularization, open to the Incarnation and Resurrection is true Christian secularity. Secularism was epitomized in the Russian Revolution, which was not open to God but was violently opposed to the influence of God.

⁹ Thomas Clarke, The World is Already Christic, p. 800.

Secularism, on the other hand, is the name for an ideology, a new closed world-view which functions very much like a new religion. While secularization finds its roots in the biblical faith itself and is to some extent an authentic outcome of the impact of biblical faith on Western history, this is not the case with secularism. Like any other ism, it menaces the openness and freedom secularization produces; it must, therefore, be watched carefully to prevent its becoming the ideology of a new establishment. It must be especially checked where it pretends not to be a world-view, but none the less, seeks to impose its ideology through the organs of the state.¹⁰

Secularism was the answer of the God-hater and the atheist. Might we say that the death-of-God men are quite naive. . . because they do not realize that all religious convictions and affirmations are symbolic. . . they seem to have no interest in the structure of meaning. They do not define a system of coherence. We can only guess at their premises. What becomes of the mystery of creativity which is reflected in the Church's belief in God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth. The philosopher, Niebuhr, makes this comment:

We must revere the mystery and the majesty of the human story which transcends all human knowledge. These men have not sufficiently digested all the problems of the Christological controversies of the early Christian ages, nor have they understood the existentialism of the Nineteenth Century.¹¹

¹⁰ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 21.

¹¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, as quoted in U.S.Catholic, May 1967, p. 32.

Secularism is the degeneration of secularization. To those who positively exclude God from the secular city they have a closed world view - true secularization is not hostile or closed to the influence of God in the world.

Nor is secularization the same as the consecration of the world to Christ, a doctrine so commonly taught to Catholics over the past twenty-five years and as late as 1962. In the words of Cardinal Montini, (now Pope Paul VI)...

. . . This is why she (the Church) will call upon the laity, her good and faithful lay Catholics, to form a link between her supernatural domain, wholly devoted to religion, and the temporal domain of society in which they live. By a sort of delegation, she will confide to their docile and skilled collaboration the difficult and very beautiful task of the consecratio mundi, that is [note carefully the words used] to permeate the vast realm of the profane world with Christian principles and powerful natural and supernatural virtues.¹²

(The brackets here are those of Father Chenu.)

To approach the world with the ideas cited above. . . this is a form of consecration. Consecration is a process by which something is set aside for sacred usage. It sets apart something from common usage and availability in order to give it a new identity, an identity from secular to sacred. Persons can be consecrated, priests and religious are consecrated, by their ordination and vows. Things can be consecrated, as a cemetery, a Church, or a chalice. These

¹² M.D. Chenu, The Christian and the World, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1965, p. 162.

things are set aside for exclusive use as the case may be: Christian burial, for the service of God or for the sacrifice of the Mass and the Blood of Christ. Now secularization is not the withdrawal of the world for special use. Holiness is different from sacredness. An object can be sacred without being holy, a person can be consecrated without being holy. The world is profane, yet it is holy. By being consecrated it would lose its identity and be something else. "In becoming sacred, the profane ceases to be profane: in becoming holy, it remains profane."¹³ And again:

The profane confronts the sacred. A profane reality--object, act, person, group--is that which preserves in its existence, within its workings and its ends, the basic stability of its nature.... Grace does not 'sacrilize' nature in making it partake of divine life, it restores it to itself, so to speak.¹⁴

This is why we say, then, that the world is not to be approached by the laity in the manner of consecrating it. The world must keep its own identity, the world must be accepted as it is, it must remain as it is, profane, to serve man on this earth. This is why we say that the world is already Christic, it must be kept in its own identity, it must be endorsed and brought to fulfillment.

¹³ Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 170.

To consecrate the world is to give the world a new identity, it is to make something else out of the world than what it truly is. It is the task of the young people of our country to work in the profane. Religious are consecrated to God in a special manner and deal primarily in the area of the sacred. It is the role of the laity to remain in the area of the profane. So let the world be profane. The world must become more Christic exactly at the same time it is being built. The Church must continue to be missionary, to go out of herself and not construct something, a Christian world at her own expense.

The Church of the twentieth century no longer has to take upon herself the ordering of civilization or the building of nations; rather, she must spread evangelical leaven among these civilizations, within the structures of mankind. It is not the business of the Church to nourish mankind, to oversee economic projects, to provide measures of security, to undertake agrarian reforms. . . . But she must collectively pledge her faith, her hope and her charity, her 'political charity' (Pius XI) to serve the upbuilding of a fraternal humanity.¹⁵

ASSIMILATION

- 1--What is the origin of secularity?
- 2--What is meant by demythologizing the world?
- 3--What is the difference between the classical approach to the world and the historical approach?

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 167.

- 4--What is the sacred approach to society? the sacral? Give examples.
- 5--Why is secularism opposed to secularization?
- 6--Explain the statement: The world must be endorsed, fulfilled and brought to completion.
- 7--Comment on St. Paul's approach to the world in the Scripture Orientation.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--If we are to accept the approach of secularization . . . which is an open world view. . . then how are we as Catholics to keep our beliefs which differ from Protestants?
- 2--Can you list some state or federal laws which seem to benefit one religion over another?
- 3--Every person is free to follow his own conscience in the secular world. . . do we have a right or duty to impose the Catholic beliefs of abortion and birth control on the rest of the world?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- 1--Suggest customs or practices for your school that would be an application of Christian secularity.

LESSON IV: SECULAR CITY ASCETICISMPRAYER:

Mindful of your saying, O Lord: "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn. 13:35) We Christians cannot yearn for anything more ardently than to serve the men of the modern world ever more generously and effectively. Therefore, holding faithfully to the gospel and benefiting from its resources, and united with every man who loves and practices justice, all Christians must shoulder the gigantic task demanding fulfillment in this world. Concerning this task, O Lord, every man must give a reckoning to Him who will judge every man on the last day.¹

ORIENTATION

Bob, a senior about to graduate, complains that he has been trained in his Catholic education to feel at home in his parish and to work in his parish, but he feels very insecure in his role in the community and with his non-Catholic neighbor. If the theology of secularity demands the openness of a Catholic to the whole world. . .and he has not received this training in high school, he wonders who is at fault. Ought he to have taken the lead while in school and become involved in the community and with the various sectarian groups about him, or is the school at fault in not

¹ Documents of Vatican II, The Church in the Modern World, p. 307.

"forcing" him and training him, not only to be a leader in his parish but also in his community?

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Now to him who is able to accomplish all things in a measure far beyond what we ask or conceive, in keeping with the power that is at work in us--to him be glory in Church and in Christ Jesus down through all the ages of time without end. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21).

You must not adopt the customs of this world, but, by your new attitude of mind, be transformed so that you can find out what God's will is -- what is good and pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2).

So what I mean and insist upon in the Lord's name is this: You must no longer live like the heathen, with their frivolity of mind and darkened understanding. They are estranged from the life of God. . . (Eph. 4:17).

CHRISTIANS ARE TO RESPECT SOCIETY, YET A CERTAIN
ALOOFNESS FROM IS ALSO IN ORDER

None of us lives only to himself, and none of us dies only to himself; if we live, we are responsible to the Lord, and if we die, we are responsible to him; so whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord, for Christ died and returned to life for the very purpose of being Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14:7-9).

No one is to look down on you. Remind men to accept and obey the constituted authorities, to be ready for any useful service, to abuse nobody, to be peaceable and reasonable, showing perfect gentleness to everyone. For we ourselves were once without understanding, disobedient, deluded, enslaved to all kinds of passions and pleasures (Titus 1:1-3).

Pray for me too, that God may give me an opening for the message, and let me tell the secret of Christ on account of which I am kept in prison until I can make clear to the authorities why I cannot keep telling it. Use wisdom in dealing with outsiders, making the most of your opportunities. Always put your message attractively, and yet pointedly, and be prepared to every inquirer a fitting answer. (Col. 17:36)

PRESENTATION

OUTLINE:

- 1--The world is profane yet holy
- 2--Protestant appraisal of secularity
- 3--Christian secularity tries to achieve:
 through the world man becomes all he must be;
 it is through man that the world finds its
 place before God.
- 4--Secular City asceticism

THE WORLD IS PROFANE YET HOLY

Several more descriptive definitions might be offered to prevent confusion in the mind of the student.

Gospel means good tidings, good news, particularly the good news of a victory - in the ordinary sense the four Gospels of the New Testament.²

Law has several meanings: it might refer to the Pentateuch, the Old Testament, the decalogue, or a particular law of the Pentateuch. When Christ spoke of the Law and that He never broke it He referred to the oral Law, or human tradition.³

2 J.L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1965, p. 301.

3 Ibid., p. 475.

- Grace is a principle of Christian life and action. Grace is the free gift of God given to man. It is the life of God given first to man at Baptism.⁴
- Natural and Supernatural is that which pertains to man's worldly existence. Natural is contrasted to man's supernatural gift of grace and God's life. That which pertains to man's nature ungraced by supernatural life of God is called natural. The supernatural life in man is God's life of grace in him.

It is a commonly formed concept that the profane carries with it, in addition to the idea of worldly, also that of opposition to the sacred. It was with Martin Luther that the word profane took on the pejorative sense, i.e., opposition to the sacred. We see the pejorative effects even to this very day in many of the common happenings of the day. A few years ago when Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was rather popular people were acquainted with the Divine Praises after Benediction. . .the acts of reparation for profane language. Profane here definitely meant opposed to the holy or sacred. Profane language is equivalent in many minds to profanity or cursing. We often see in the parish the very common idea of people opposing the profane or worldly. Parishioners are asked in the parish to donate toward the building of the new parish Church, the rectory or convent.

⁴ Ibid., p. 365.

Everybody wants to give money towards these objects which are sacred or consecrated: the chalices, the priestly vestments, the altar, the tabernacle. To donate an amount of money for the ordinary raw materials of the building, the cinder block, or the stones, bricks and lumber. . . people might donate towards these building materials but the donation is surely not as meritorious, sacred and holy as those donations made towards sacred objects. Why? The ordinary elements of a building: matter, stone, brick, wood, steel are profane things which do not touch on the holy.

The world is profane and must be accepted for what it truly is. We should not use the term, to make the world Christian. . . but rather the phrase is to make the world which is Christic already even more Christic by not "fleeing" the world, but by accepting it in the identity that Christ gave it, by getting actively involved in it. . . every Christian act in the world makes it more Christic. Every action of the secular humanist can make it less Christic. The world has a value all its own, the world has an identity all its own. Why change what God has ordained. Modern man has often destroyed the spirit of Christ in the world. "The modern view of the world no longer sees nature as the creation of God, but rather as an autonomous universe standing on its own two feet and needing no other basis or standard from

without."⁵ It would seem from the observation of history that once God has ordained something from the beginning and set the germ of development in the world, He does not interfere directly in the process He has set in motion.

God does not violate what he takes to himself. He does not suck it up into himself or divinize it in a bad sense of pantheism. . . .he can and wants to accept it precisely in the respect in which it differs from himself, in which it is not divine but rather human and worldly.⁶

It is difficult for us to change our thought process from the way we have been accustomed to think over a long period of time. That we accept the world for what it truly is, worldly, that it is distinct from God, that we do not want to change it over and make it Christian or sacred, (it must keep its own worldly identity), that Christianity is the primary cause of secularizing and recognizing the secularity of the world. . .these ideas are different.

The secularism of the world, as it has come about in the modern process of secularization, and as it confronts us today in a universally accentuated form, has come about in its broad lines, not in spite of but on account of Christianity. In origin it is a Christian event and thereby witnesses to the historically active power of the hour of Christ in our world situation.⁷

⁵ Alfons Auer, The Christian and the World, New York, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1965, p. 9.

⁶ J. Metz, The Christian and the World, p. 75.

⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

The world, then, is profane and the layman of today is also profane. They are not consecrated; they are not made into something other than what they always were or intended to be by their vocation. . . they are profane or worldly or non-sacred. The profane man should mean to us the unreligious man, not the non-religious or religious man. Cox brings this out:

By profanity we refer to secular man's wholly terrestrial horizon, the disappearance of any supermundane reality defining his life. Pro-fane means literally 'outside the temple' --thus 'having to do with this world.' By calling him profane we don't suggest that secular man is sacrilegious, but that he is unreligious. He views the world, not in terms of some other world but in terms of itself. He feels that any meaning to be found in this world originates in this world itself. Profane man is simply this-worldly.⁸

It would seem that this idea of profane must be basic for the understanding student. The student who understands profanity correctly will not make the absolute distinction and cleavage between his profane or worldly life and his religious life. All these things are holy to him, whether they be his social life, his business life, his scholastic life, or his supernatural life in God. If we only stop thinking of profane in negative terms, in terms which seem opposed to man's supernatural life, then there would be a whole new approach to the layman's profane or

⁸ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 60.

worldly existence. de Chardin states it so:

To repeat, by virtue of the Creation and, still more, of the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see. On the contrary, everything is sacred to those capable of distinguishing that portion of chosen-being which is subject to the attraction of Christ in the process of consummation.⁹

(We do not feel de Chardin's use of sacred destroys our thesis. . . his use of sacred is not used in an exact or precise sense.) The world is holy, then, because it has come from the hand of God. God has assumed the world in eschatological definitiveness with the sending of his Incarnate Son. If God assumed matter, flesh and blood into his very person when he became Incarnate, matter then was assumed into the Trinity, and matter from that very act of God takes on a dignity unique to itself. What holds for Christ holds for us. Matter has a profane holiness about it; matter has an identity all its own which man should not prostitute or try to change from its true identity. This assumption of the world in Christ ought not to be thought of as a mere biological event. It was an historical event covering his entire life on this earth: his birth, his preaching and healing, his suffering and death, his glorious resurrection. God, then, in the Incarnation gave an added dignity to creation. There is no attempt with the above statement to insert the

9 Pierre de Chardin, The Divine Milieu, p. 35.

secularity of our world into a theology of earthly or terrestrial realities, and give matter and the world an immediacy to God which was the approach of the Christian back in the medieval world. Nor do we attempt to reground the world in the mystery of Christ, give it new roots, give it a consecration which would give it a different identity. If the Christian could pattern his actions on the profane yet holiness of all elements of the World, then he would not be guilty of all elements of the world, then he would not be guilty of living secularism, or the closed world view of false secularity which excludes God from all profane actions and only relates God in his religious function.

A PROTESTANT THEOLOGY AND SECULARITY

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Lutheran minister, mentioned above who insisted that the world was coming of age. There would be a period where the world would be without religion.^{9a} He insisted that we find a non-religious interpretation of the Gospels for the secular man. What is

^{9a} A revealing article on Bonhoeffer and his writings appears in The Critic Magazine, June-July 1967. The article written by Michael Novak, entitled "Dietrich Bonhoeffer comments on many of the perhaps original insights of this man. The term 'religion' carries a special meaning. In Novak's article. . . "We are proceeding towards a time of no religion", Bonhoeffer observed. 'Men as they are now simply cannot be religious anymore.' Bonhoeffer meant by religion a human feeling, an inwardness, a special section of life and sentiment that men identify as godly." [He would also include here the idea of organized religion].

Bonhoeffer trying to say here? It would seem that his observation has a strong basis in reality. Modern man is a religious man, but he is a man without religion, without organized religion. How many millions of people in our own country, although they believe in Christ, and God yet are not affiliated with any Church group. There might be over fifty million persons in our own country who would fit well into Boeffer's category. They are neither Catholic nor Protestant, Orthodox or any of the Pentecostal groups. They belong to no church-affiliated group. Must man belong to a specified religious group, must he be a man of an organized religion before he can hear the message of the Gospel? Is there a message in the Gospel for such a person? Must a man be a formal Christian before he can hear Christ's message?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer firmly rejected this erroneous assumption and points out that it broke a striking parallel to the long-discarded idea that one has to be circumcized, a Jew before becoming a Christian.¹⁰

What message does the Gospel offer to the non-religious man? This concept might be difficult for us. An example of the above might be a movie put out a short time ago by a non-believer, a would-be atheist: The Gospel According to

¹⁰ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 62.

St. Matthew. This movie might give us some insight into Bonhoeffer's question. Presenting the message of Christ, letting the Gospel of Matthew stand on its own feet with no overtones of formal religion. . .neither of Catholicity nor Protestantism. . .just what is the message of this Gospel devoiced from all formal religion beliefs? Is the message one of love? one of serving one's neighbor? Is the message one of lowliness, suffering, of service and humility?

Take another film, The Parable, what is the basic message of this famous film? Is The Parable an attempt to answer Bonhoeffer's question? Must man belong to a formal religion to be saved? Must the message of the Gospel be fitted into various religious groups which immediately divide us? Modern man is both pragmatic and profane. Are these obstacles to hearing the voice of Christ in his Gospels? Are those young people correct when they say that the age is coming when there will be no organized religion? How much of our faith has been damaged by the divisions and wedges driven between us. . .belonging to one religion or the other? These are questions that various Protestant theologians put forth.

Along with Karl Barth, he [Bonhoeffer] supports the conviction that there should never even be an attempt to make room once again for religion in the secularized world. The coming generation will be one completely without religion. Yet here lies a new and great opportunity for the Christian message. For this message--in a world without religion--must also be without religion.¹¹

Yet is the fact that a world without religion is a testimony to God's powerlessness in the world? Not so! Then how would one interpret Paul's words: "For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The non-religious interpretation of the Gospel involves three elements: 1-the interpretation of Christ. Jesus Christ is at stake. Is Christ divine and human, or only human? 2-What does Christ really mean today for the secular man without religion? The intellectual sincerity of the person must be respected. 3-What does the secular man truly believe? Will there be as many different beliefs as there are believers? The theological thought must be adjusted to the message and must answer the question: how can Christ truly become the final salvation also of those people without religion?

We are confronted here with the non-religious interpretation of Gospel. The Gospel message involves the problem of Law. (The student must be reminded here that we are dealing with a Protestant interpretation of Gospel and Law. This interpretation would not be in accord with Catholic

¹¹ Alfons Auer, The Christian and the World, p. 17.

teaching. It is also realized that much of these few pages ^{be} will perhaps be beyond the comprehension of some high school students. But often the senior is familiar with such terms as "situation ethics" and an "existential philosophy". They want to know why the Catholic cannot act according to "situation ethics". The problem is most complex.) In any case this is but a very terse presentation of Gospel and Law, a topic far too complex to treat here in a thorough manner. Just to suggest the complications involved in the above topic, the great German theologian, Karl Rahner might be quoted:

Our intention here is not to settle this controversy on the meaning and function of specific moral precepts as between a Catholic universal ethics based on essential natures and a situation ethics given a Protestant interpretation. Too many questions would be involved. There would, of course, be preliminary questions, for example the ontological and epistemological question of the relation between universal and individual. There would be questions of biblical theology about the nature of Christian freedom, the relation between law and Gospel, the meaning of the law for those justified by faith. There would be questions of systematic theology, for example those concerning the nature of justification, the validity and knowledge of the natural law within Christian morality, the possibility and recognition of an individual call coming directly from God to the conscience in a concrete situation, and the question of the relation of such a call to universal moral principles, as well as many other questions with which the ecumenical dialogue will have to concern itself.¹²

Along with the non-religious interpretation of the Gospel, there is a question of the Gospel and the Law.

¹² Karl Rahner, The Future Christian, Montreal, Herder & Herder, 1966, p. 41.

A Protestant would say that only those who reject the Gospel fall under the Law. Through belief in the Gospel, man reaches majority and freedom; he is admitted to sonship. Through faith he becomes a "co-heir of Christ." Only those who do not love fall under the Law. Love gives total freedom. When Law rather than the Gospel becomes the basis of man's life, it militates against his choice and freedom. The Gospel is a summons to choice and answerability. Harvey Cox writes:

It designates not merely the verbal message of the Church, but also the call which comes to any man when he is confronted with the privilege and necessity of making a free and responsible decision, not determined by cultural background or social convention. . . . The Gospel is the activity of God creating new possibilities in history. Law signifies the fact that man does live in society.¹³

Because of the problem of the Gospel and freedom, Albert Camus (the Nobel Prize winner of literature in 1957) could be called a classical Christian atheist. Camus directed his writing to modern consciousness: how to live with direction and integrity in a world without God. Camus found the concept of human freedom and justice irreconcilable with the God of the orthodox Christian. Therefore he had to reject God. "Camus knew there was an essential contradiction between the traditional Christian doctrine of God and the full freedom and responsibility of man."¹⁴

13 Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 47.

14 Ibid., p. 71.

CHRISTIAN SECULARITY: ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

Christian secularity recognizes and gives value to the world that is all its own. Through man the world finds its proper place before God. Secularity does not try to cover the world and give it a false identity. To Christianize the world, to change it, to baptize it, is to misunderstand it, is to change it, is to give it a new identity, is to take away its worldliness and true identity as it came from the hand of God. The world is good, completely good, with its own personality. Only if man knows the truth of the secularity of the world can he recognize it for its true value. There are various closed world views, whether they be secularism or the other hosts of "isms" which have attempted to destroy the true identity of the world. This is the beauty of secularity, its trueness, its recognition of the world for its own worth, not as some sort of instrument or means of man to achieve his supernatural destiny. This is a much too Platonic approach.

It is through the world that man becomes all he must be; it is through man that the world is recognized for its true identity and takes its place before God. Man must always remain open for setting it in its proper perspective. To have true secularity the world must be open to Christ and his redemption; to close the world to God and the permeated

message of Christ is giving a closed world view. This is secularism. This is why the world must be more than a mere means or instrument of man. To give the world, to give one's children, one's husband or wife the value of only means. . . is to place these in a perspective that is too easy to lose the proper respect they deserve. To label all things as only instruments is to run the risk of making man a totally spiritual entity (which he is not), to form an approach which makes man's soul the prisoner of the body, and as such he longs for the escape of his spiritual being from this body. Christ loved the Apostles for what they truly were, He did not leave the fishermen but transformed them at Pentecost into Apostles. . . not as some sort of way to the love of the Father; He asks us to love our fellow men and His Father not to love them as a means to God. Only when man begins to love his fellow man in all truth and with all his qualities and values. . . perhaps then will man begin to give to his fellow man that respect and reverence he deserves as a brother in Christ. Since we have neither truly loved nor trusted our fellow man. . . how can we hope to love and put faith and trust in our God? To Christianize the world then means not to cover the world with unworldliness but to secularize it and have it face Godliness.

The world looks to man for its perfection and completion, not to God. For the world was given to man, not only as a gift but also as a responsibility.

The world was left unfinished so that man might share in creation, redeeming the world from chaos. As man assumes responsibility for the world, he humanizes it, for the world has no freedom or consciousness except in man.¹⁵

SECULAR CITY ASCETICISM

The big question for the high school student is: can he love the world enough? Is the student able to recognize the true identity of the world? Our age is not the first in the history of man that has attempted to approach the world directly and love it. Those of us who refuse to look at the record of history are doomed to repeat it. The world has been loved, and loved marvelously by Christians before us. It would be difficult to find a greater lover of the world for all times than Francis of Assisi. But there have been many other would-be Francis's who have thought they loved the world, but ended up having the world absorb, influence and overcome them. He has done nothing for the world, in fact, he gave the world a false identity. One whose love of Christ is shallow and whose sense of mission is selfish or non-existent will find the world too much for him. It is no secret that many a high school student has had the secularism

¹⁵ A. Mitterer, "Die Weltherrschaft des Menschen als Naturrecht," in: Naturordnung in Gesellschaft, Staat, Wirtschaft, Innsbruck, Vienna, 1961, p. 44.

of the world influence him instead of his life and actions influencing it, perfecting it and making the world more Christic.

The theology of Secularity is a bold, forthright approach to the world--only the courageous in Christ will be able to meet the challenge. "A Christian who goes forth to meet secular society on its own terms needs Christ desperately if he is going to be absorbed by the world."¹⁶ Not only is the theology of Secularity a whole new view of the world, but never before has the Church so boldly told its people to get involved in the main-stream of the life of the world. Never before has the Church been interested in accepting the world, in becoming a part of the world in order to bring it to fulfillment. Yet the world has had a grim record, for all its goodness, of persecuting the Church of Christ.

Its past performances take a lot of explaining. (Remember that no matter how we praise the secular city, it is, in fact, the secular city that killed the prophets, incinerated the Jews and is currently stumbling along into something less than the best of all possible worlds.) The utter secularists, of course, urge us to proclaim the death of God, with gladsome sound and get on with the business of committing our ship to the winds of the secular sea. I think, though, that we may all be excused if we choose to keep one hand on the rudder.¹⁷

¹⁶ Anthony Padovano, "Today's Spirituality for Today's Apostle", p. 20.

¹⁷ Robert Capon, "The Secular and Sacred", p. 308.

There will be many a student who will not be able to cope with a theology of secularity. His faith is already weak, his commitment to Christ. . .there is no commitment, his witnessing Christ. . . he hardly understands the word, his involvement in the apostolate. . .he has still, after twelve years of Catholic training a confused idea of just what the apostolate is and where one finds it, his involvement in and appreciation of the liturgy: the Mass and sacramental life of the Church, an absolute must for the life of the Christian soul, can be strongly questioned. A picture like this and one might have grounds to question the wisdom of the Church in her bold, new approach to the world and assuming that we are now adults in Christ. Christian secularity does not permit us to do anything at all for the world. There are enough brands of humanism existing today to convince us that every man must have a set of principles to guide himself in the secular sea of the world. What are these principles in a vast and swiftly changing society? The question is a difficult one. . .the answer promises to be even more difficult. We have seen in a previous section that the Church does not know all the answers nor has it attempted to give all the answers.

But if in such a situation where there are no directives issued by ecclesiastical authority, then the faithful must, nevertheless do something; let them be bold enough on their own responsibility to take matters into their own hands according to the dictates of their own conscience, guided always by that Christian prudence that is inherent in the truth of the Gospel and the Church's moral teaching, and which always takes note of the individual circumstances in which one must act, and let it be aided also by all the human sciences that have a bearing on the several problems.¹⁸

Although the principles are not clearly marked, it is agreed that the Christian must have a set of principles which point beyond humanism. To affirm the world without God, here one loses the world. To affirm God without the world one loses it just the same. Christianity symbolized only in the Cross has not done justice to the World. A heavenly Christianity has never done justice to the Incarnation.

A Christian feels that humanism never does enough and that it might just possibly close man in upon himself. Christianity brings humanism a salvation from its own failures.¹⁹

Humanism has aided man in many respects in his earthly existence, but it has not answered certain questions as, from where has man come? and what is man's destiny? Does Christ have any meaning to him outside of being a great humanitarian?

¹⁸ Documents of Vatican II, The Church in the Modern World, p. 246.

¹⁹ Anthony Padovano, "Today's Spirituality for Today's Apostle", p. 20.

We can talk all we want about modern man coming of age, and we can throw all the rocks we like at the gloom and negativism of orthodoxy, but we, for all the glories of our humanitarianism, are still building ghettos and still learning very effectively how to hate one another. It is true that the world needs love, but we have not answered a very basic question: why has man acted so in the past, and still does act this way? If we do not accept sin and need of redemption for fallen man then there is a mystery: the evil in man's heart.²⁰ Christianity still can tell humanism that, even if man is completely educated, nourished, housed, fed and respected, even if this is all achieved, man is still unhappy and his soul is restless. The answer goes beyond the elements of this world. Augustine made a comment on this: man's heart is restless for God and will not be satisfied until it rests in Him.

A WHOLE NEW ASCETICISM

A new asceticism is demanded of the laity. He must embrace the world, and renounce the world at the same time. What manner of talk is this, of renouncing the world after all has been said of secularity? We are sharers in the Incarnation, in the death and resurrection of Christ.

20 Robert Capon, "The Secular and Sacred," p. 308.

Christianity demands that we be witnesses to the Incarnation as well as the death of Christ and His glorious resurrection. We have not loved the world enough in the past to comprehend the far reaching effects of the Incarnation, nor has the mystery of Christ's suffering been related to the suffering of the world. The world suffers much today and this suffering is a sharing in the passion of Christ, who is a part of our cosmos.

The reason why we have had no viable asceticism to offer to a secular age is precisely that we have let slip the utter secularity of Christ's presence in the Church. We have turned the Church into a club of Jesus' admirers, into an association for the propagation of Jesus' teaching--into everything but what it really is: Jesus Himself in us. The Church is not about Jesus; it is Jesus. He is present to all earthen vessels, to be sure.²¹

The whole asceticism of the high school student might be summed up in encountering Christ on the road of life, in the world, in the city that is ever present. Christ lives in the midst of man's technological city. He lives in the midst of the action; he breathes its air, it is He who mouths its slogans, thinks its thoughts, moves about this city with our feet, smiles with our face, lifts up each person with our hands, heals with our words and thoughts and loves with the heart beat of every human. The student who is not convinced

²¹ Ibid., p. 311.

that his spirituality must commence with action, the teenager who does not understand that he cannot love God unless he recognizes his neighbor and loves that neighbor, the student who does not encounter Christ in every man on the daily road of life as the two disciples encountered Christ going to Emmaus, . . . he will never get the message of secular spirituality. The daily living of man in a Christic manner is the condition for recognizing in a greater immediacy Christ in the Bread of the Eucharist and living the drama of Calvary in the Mass. Every Christian in his many contacts with his fellow men, . . . if they are not the I-Thou contacts which Martin Buber speaks of, then he will see no need of prayer. Prayer will have no meaning for the student if he searches for a God which takes him to some unknown beyond. Once again Buber says it well--how foolish and hopeless would be man who turned aside from his course of life in order to seek God.²² The asceticism of the American student will be quite different from that in other countries. The student is one that is not primarily suffering from a lack of food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, proper recreation and relaxation and the other basic needs of life. Our asceticism can be grounded in the existential sufferings of our neighbor.

22 Grace Marie Schutte, "Reflections on Prayer and Worldly Holiness," p. 110.

There must be a shift of focus in our asceticism, not in its elimination. A high standard of living does not of necessity mean happiness. With all the abundant necessities of life Americans have, are they a happier people than those suffering from the basic needs of life?

The suffering characteristic of our country and in our day is not one of physical pain but, rather, sufferings which are more of a mental nature, of anguish and loneliness, of depression, anxiety, discouragements and general nervous pressures brought on us because of the tempo of our living.

The new asceticism must break down those protective walls that let us live alone and that make others die in loneliness. The old asceticism toughened us up to bear the burdens that come from outside. The new asceticism must make us willing to bear the guilt of the one another, to become one with our enemy, to forgive those who do not deserve it, and to lay down our life for sinners, for the new morality takes us into this circle of reality. . . As soon as man concerns himself with his own happiness, he condemns himself to isolation.²³

The above sums up rather well that a new asceticism is needed for the student but the emphasis might be quite different from the asceticism of the past.

ASSIMILATION

- 1--Discuss the Scriptural sources and Bob's problem.
- 2--How can the world be both profane and holy simultaneously?

23 Quentin Hackenworth, "New Morality Demands New Asceticism," in Review for Religious, May 1967, p. 501.

- 3--How has Christianity brought on secularization?
- 4--Explain the meaning of profanity. Discuss some of the bogus ideas offered in the past to the Christian on the profane.
- 5--Explain de Chardin's idea on the fact that matter is sacred.
- 6--Discuss Bonhoeffer's idea on the secular message of the Gospel.
- 7--The non-religious interpretation of the Gospel involves three elements. . .discuss.
- 8--What has Christian secularity achieved?
- 9--Explain the asceticism of secularity, the new form of asceticism for U.S.A.

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--If the Law is only for those who have not accepted the message of the Gospel. . .and if the Gospel is for those who have accepted the message of Christ and love. . .then we are to abandon the Law if we love enough. . .criticize this statement in the light of Christ's words: "It is not those who say 'Lord, Lord'. . .but those who do the will of my heavenly Father, who will enter the kingdom of heaven."
- 2--List a number of ideas which would be part of the secular message of the Gospel divorced from all religions.
- 3--Why do you think many students will be able to cope with a theology of secularity in relation to his influencing the world or the world influencing him?
- 4--Do you feel the Church is pushing the young Catholics out into the world too soon? Do you think the average student, after twelve years of Catholic school training, is ready to meet the world, to get involved in it as a Christian which by this very fact makes it more Christic?

- 5--In encountering Christ on the road of life. . .
do you feel this is a meaningful spirituality or
simply pie in the sky?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- 1--Sponsor the film: The Gospel According to
St. Matthew for the student body. The Parable.
- 2--Go through the Gospels and pick out a dozen messages of Christ that can stand alone, free from all organized religion. . .give the secular message of the Gospel.
- 3--Go through the Gospel and show that Christ laid the foundations for organized religion, i.e., a Church that is to teach, administer the sacraments and rule pastorally.

LESSON V: SECULARIZATION IN THE
DAILY LIFE OF THE STUDENT

PRAYER:

(Prayer before a Twenty Dollar Bill)

We can hardly respect money enough for the blood
and toil it represents. Money is frightening. It can
serve or destroy man.

Lord, see this bill! It frightens me.
You know its secrets, you know its history.
How heavy it is!
It scares me, for it cannot speak.
It will never tell all it hides in its creases.
It will never reveal all the struggles and efforts
it represents, all the disillusionment and
slighted dignity.
It is stained with sweat and blood,
It is laden with all the weight of the human toil
makes its worth.

Through how many hands has it passed, Lord?
And what has it done in the course of its long,
silent journeys?

It has offered white roses to the radiant fiancée.
It has paid for the baptismal party, and fed the
rosy-cheeked baby.
It has provided bread for the family table.
Because of it there was laughing among the young
and joy among the elders.

It has paid for the saving visit of the doctor,
It has bought the book that taught the youngster,
It has clothed the young girl.

But it has sent the letter breaking the engagement,
It has paid for the death of the baby in its mother's
womb,
It has bought the liquor that made the drunkard,
It has produced the movie unfit for children, and
has recorded the indecent song.
It has broken the morals of the adolescent and made
of the adult a thief.
It has bought for a few hours the body of a woman.
It has paid for the weapons of the crime and for the
wood of the coffin.

O Lord, I offer you this bill with its joyous mysteries, its sorrowful mysteries.
I thank you for all the life and joy it has given.
I ask your forgiveness for the harm it has done.
But, above all, Lord, I offer it to you as a symbol
of all the labors of men, indestructible money,
which tomorrow will be changed into your eternal
life.¹

ORIENTATION

A recent high school graduate in the service (perhaps not a typical high school student) wrote back home to a priest friend he knew well in school. "Things used to be so simple and uncomplicated, so black and white. Being a good Catholic meant Mass on Sunday, fish on Friday and no "pills" in married life. But the Council has changed all that and has opened up new horizons of Christianity which make all past definitions of Catholicity seem archaic and Victorian. The drama of an adult Christian is almost more than most of us can face up to. I don't know how many of us young high school grads are affected by the problem of unbelief, but most of us, no doubt, are suffering from an identity crisis. We ask ourselves the question: who am I? And what does it mean to be a Catholic Christian?

¹ Michael Quoist, Prayers, p. 31.

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

And they too will reply, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and did nothing for you'? And He will answer, 'I tell you this, anything you did not do for one of these, however humble, you did not do for me.' (Matthew XXV, 44-5)

Surely you know that you are God's temple, where the Spirit of God dwells. Anyone who destroys God's temple will himself be destroyed by God, because the temple of God is holy; and that temple you are. (1 Cor. III, 16-17)

Anyone who loves me will heed what I say; then my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. . . (Jn. XIV, 23)

No servant can be slave to two masters: for either he will hate the first and love the second, or he will be devoted to the first and think nothing of the second. (Mt. VI, 24)

Only the man who loves his brother dwell in light; there is nothing to make him stumble. But one who hates his brother is in darkness; he walks in the dark and has no idea where he is going, because the darkness has made him blind. (1 Jn. 11,10-11)

PRESENTATIONOUTLINE:

- 1--Some effects of secularization.....
- 2--Anonymity and Secularity
- 3--Social Life and Sex in secularization

SOME EFFECTS OF SECULARIZATION

Perhaps never before have young people spoken of love in a more serious vein than in our own generation. Love has been on the lips of every preceding generation but not with the style and seriousness as the present young generation. Love themes have always been at the top of the hit parade songs, of many best sellers; love themes have always had a lion's share of the best movies of the year. Yet today youth speaks of love in a far more serious manner in his own peer groups than the generation before him. Not only is the great theme of love on the screen, in the sound of records, and on the pages of books, but love today has become a word of discussion more common than any past age. Love as the meaning of religion, is a brand new current issue today. Religion makes the headlines almost every day. The most popular magazines of the country carry whole issues on religion and the crisis of Faith in the lives of the young and old alike. The topic of religion, along with love, has hit the top of the list as the most discussed topics. This was hardly imagined possible in past generations. Not only is love the theme of religion today, but the youth of the country reflect the popularity and deep interest of this theme in their religious functions, in their type of folk songs in Church. The common retreat themes today are that

of love. And discussions will go far into the night on the topic of Love.

In a related area, there are all sorts of young people struggling for identity. Young people refuse to be submerged into the masses. They insist on being different, they insist on an identity that is unique to themselves. Self expression is found in new and different hair cuts, in the manner of dressing, in the type of cars driven, the brand of liquor drunk, the styles of parties. . . the list is almost infinite. . . There are many areas where young people are seeking an identity which is both personal and unique.

Anonymity is the problem and choice that we are facing today. The giant industrial city has created anonymity. The exploding population has surely agitated the situation. Anonymity can be a terrible thing. Pius XII spoke of the faceless mass of people in the giant cities of the world.

The dehumanization effects of urbanization must be understood and offset by the teaching of the Church and the action of civil authorities. Life in the modern city has theological dimensions. The quality of that life must reflect the fact that man is created in God's image, redeemed in Christ's Blood and destined to live in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

[The papal message is marked with several strong and realistic passages.] The urban revolution, [Pope Pius XII says,] threatens man with anonymity: we elbow one another without knowing each other; relations are occasional and fleeting even on holidays; the masses have become agglomerations of solitude; and thought is made uniform through the monotonous blair of the mass media.²

2 Pope Pius XII, "Urbanization," in America, July 31, 1965, p.107.

Anonymity is a problem facing modern man in modern society. We are experiencing a situation unique in history. Man before us, who often lived in the small town or rural areas had not this experience and problem. The great trend of moving to the cities, of having all the advantages of the city, its activity, its cultural opportunities and its wide selection. . . all these have made the city more attractive than ever before. Cox brings this out when he comments:

A whole world of possibilities for communication lies within his reach. The contemporary urban region represents an ingenious device for vastly enlarging the range of human communication and widening the scope of individual choice. Urbanization thus contributes to the freedom of man. This is perfectly evident when we think, for example, of cinema theaters and restaurants. Residents of a city of 10,000 may be limited to one or two theaters, while people who live in a city of a million can choose among perhaps fifty films on a given night. The same principles hold for restaurants, schools, and even in some measure for job opportunities or prospective marriage partners. Urban man is free to choose from a wider range of alternatives.³

Modern man, although he has great advantages accruing from city life has also the problem of anonymity. In other words he wants his cake and eat it at the same time. He wants all the advantages of city life and at the same time he would like the personalism and individuality found in the small community. The secularity of the big city has created theological problems that today man must wrestle

³ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 40.

with and solve. Whether it be in the great theme of love or in the relationship of the I-Thou of Martin Buber. . .he must find an answer. We have tended to make our relationships with our fellow man as so many I-It forms of encounters that the very heart and core of modern man's spirituality, of his approach to God is threatened because of this dominant, impersonal relationship in the form of an I-It. It is true that we can achieve few I-Thou relationships as understood by the Jewish philosopher, but there might be developed far more I-You encounters of which Harvey Cox has been perhaps the first to label.

The danger with an I-Thou typology is that all relationships which are not deeply personal and significant tend to be swept or shoved into the I-It category. But they need not be. The development of an I-You theology would greatly clarify the human possibilities of urban life, and would help stall attempts to lure urban people back into pre-urban conviviality under the color of saving their souls.⁴

The perhaps perfect example of the I-You relationship would be the parable of the Good Samaritan of the Gospel. The fellow who fell among thieves. . .and the Good Samaritan who took care of him bound up his wounds and took him to the Inn, and paid for his recovery. . . this encounter was the ideal of the I-You relationship according to Cox. The Good Samaritan did not stay on to care for the robbed man and

⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

establish an I-Thou relationship and friendship, but he did show true personal charity and promised to return on the morrow and pay the Inn keeper for whatever in addition he might owe for his keep. Unless the student can begin to relate to his fellow man in the I-You kind of relationship, he might well find it impossible to cope with the anonymity of secularity. How many students go through high school and college with the impersonal encounter of their fellow students in the style of the secular city? How many students do not know how to pray or even want to pray, because they do not live in their daily lives the encounter and charity of the Good Samaritan of the Gospel.

Urban anonymity need not be heartless. Village sociability can mask a murderous hostility. Loneliness is, undoubtedly, a serious problem in the city, but it cannot be met by dragging urban people into relationships which decimate their privacy and reduce their capacity to live responsibly with increasing numbers of neighbors.⁵

It is no secret that the Church today is finding its parishes outdated and out-structured. No longer is the parish in the larger cities the center of man's entire existence, as perhaps the parish was in the Middle Ages. Culturally, intellectually, socially. . . the parish has ceased being the center. Even for the average high school student, the parish is no longer the center of his social or

⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

intellectual life. The high school is the center, and it might well be that even in his Catholic religious life the school has more direct influence on him than the parish, where he often neither knows the pastor nor the assistants. Some dioceses have already structured college life and the campus into a parish, an entity all its own. It would seem logical that the big, modern university, which houses not only undergraduates but also many graduate students (often married students) would be the normal place for baptisms, weddings and other functions now restricted solely to the parish. Might the same be said for high schools? Could not a type of parish center be set up in the high school where the Mass and the approach to the Liturgy would be in the style and taste of the young and not according to the often conservative taste of the older members of the parish? It is no secret that after the 8th grade the home is no longer the chief center of influence in the life of the teen-ager. Much of the above is the result of secularity, the central high school and the effects of the big city. Ought we not adjust to such changing situations instead of fighting a losing or rear-guard action.

To speak of the vital importance of the family, however, does not mean that it must remain as the determining focus of church structure. At this point we must raise a biblical question, an historical caveat and a sociological question.

It is true, biblically, that the primary relationship of the Church must always be to the family? Of course, the family is God-given; and of course the Christian church must seek to make the family an expression in miniature of the fullness of life in the fellowship of Christ. But when Jesus called the Twelve he created a new society--free to move freely across the range of varying human associations.⁶

SOCIAL LIFE AND SEX IN SECULARITY

There remain many other elements directly affected by the secularity of the world and the approach to this secularity in the presented theology of secularity. But of the many elements that could be treated we will touch on only one: sex and social life of the youth. That the world has challenged in a most direct manner the Judaec-Christian interpretation of sex is obvious to the most casual observer. That sex is an experience rather than something sacred and bound up with life, that any normal form of sex expression, including relations, is permitted to those who wish to express their love, that premarital sex has been advocated, even by some far out priests as a better insurance against bad marriages. . . these are realities of our culture. Certain sociologists (Margaret Mead seems to be such an advocate) endorse with the perfection of the pill two types of marriage: marriages where people are capable of having and

⁶ Colin Williams, What in the World, New York, National Council of Churches of Christ, 1963, p. 7.

raising children properly and other marriages where children, all children, would be positively excluded from the marriage.

Our age is one where there is no more precious right than freedom. Catholic students now challenge the Church's authority and right to tell them what movies they may see and not see. . . this is in addition to all the conflicting opinions on the morality of the pill. All these problems might be most profitably discussed by seniors in high schools today. One thing is evident, one condition stands out amidst all the interpretations and confusion of sex. . . Man is living in a pluralistic society; no longer is his society monolythic, no longer is there simply one Christian approach and interpretation to the word of Christ in the Scriptures. There are knotty questions such as the morality of abortion, birth control, the stand on Catholic schools that the sincere Catholic must pick his way with intelligence and prudence. Guiding principles are definitely needed. The world without a rudder, the city without guiding principles means secularity without God, and this is no true secularity at all. It would seem that especially in the area of the social and sex life of the student he must be determined not to have a closed world view on secularity which degenerates into secularism.

Authentic secularity demands that no world-view, no tradition, no ideology be allowed to become the officially enforced world-view beside which no others are tolerated. This in turn requires pluralistic social and political institutions.⁷

It was not too long ago that the Church had succeeded in creating a kind of model for youth in the Virgin Mary. She was the symbol of womanhood, she was the symbol of purity. Christ was the ideal of every Christian. No longer can the above be asserted as effective and living symbols for Catholic youths. In place of the above symbols we now have Miss America as the symbol of ideal womanhood, and Playboy philosophy as the philosophy of man. To have one's playmate, to have sex experience but never to get serious, never to get involved--this is Playboy philosophy. The modern Catholic student finds in Playboy more than mere nudity and excellent photography. He finds a philosophy which tells who he should be, shows him how to act, guides him in the choice of things to do: the proper liquor to serve, the best taste in high-Fi and sports cars. . .in a word tells him and gives him identity and a philosophy. The greatest sin of the Playboy advocate is: I goofed. Most young people of high school and college age are very insecure. They want to be one of the in-group, they want

7 Harvey Cox, The Secular City, p. 69.

to know how to act with the jet set. All of this adds up to a philosophy which challenges Christian asceticism. No longer is the Virgin Mary the symbol of womanhood, no longer is she a model of purity for youth, no longer is Christ the motivating force in the lives of our young Christians. And this, considered in toto, leads one to pose the question: Has the world influenced our Catholic youths or have they influenced the world for good by their own Christlike lives? With these latest developments Harvey Cox was forced to write:

Perhaps the most ironic element in the rise of the cult of THE Girl is that Protestantism has almost completely failed to notice it, while Roman Catholics have at least given some evidence of sensing its significance. . . why has Protestantism kept its attention obsessively fastened on the development of Mariolatry in Catholicism and not noticed the sinister rise of this vampire-like cult of The Girl in our society?⁸

One wonders with all the developments in the area of man's approach to sex whether we are reading secularity correctly. We repeat and emphasize, secularity without God is no secularity at all. Yet what student is convinced that his many actions, his varied and involved social life is Christic? That the philosophy of Hugh Hefner is not Christic, that our influence as the Catholic youth of America

⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

is often anything but Christic can hardly be denied. To discern the double standards of Mr. Hefner we have only to cite his very own words in an exclusive interview:

Mr. Hefner, you have a daughter 14 years old. What would you think if she posed in four years, let's say for Playboy? Well. . .let us see. . .I would be personally pleased, I think. I would consider it a compliment to me and to my work, I think. But I wouldn't like my daughter to have a promiscuous life. I would not like my daughter to be immoral. . .9

ASSIMILATION

- 1--Comment on the prayer of Michael Quoist and the Scriptural orientation.
- 2--What is meant by anonymity?
- 3--Comment on Pius XII's statement on the urbanization and anonymity.
- 4--What are the advantages of anonymity?
- 5--Comment on the I-Thou, the I-You and the I-It relationships found in our personal lives.
- 6--Do you feel that the Virgin Mary or Christ has still a positive dominant influence in the lives of youths?

PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1--Discuss Playboy philosophy
- 2--Do you feel that the average high school student is guilty of the very common I-It relationship with his fellow students? What is the relationship of the senior-freshman in your school?

9 O. Fallaci, "An Exclusive Interview with Hugh Hefner", in Look, January 10, 1967, p. 45.

- 3--Comment on Mr. Hoefner's quotation.
- 4--Do you feel the Catholic Church should guide you in your choice of movies?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- 1--Set up a program in your school for creating a true Christian relationship between the upper-classmen and the underclassmen.
- 2--Set up a program to establish an I-You relationship with students in public schools, with the poor or the colored of your community.
- 3--Set up a coffee house for the students where the above topics can be thoroughly discussed.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation with these appended lessons an attempt was made, first to show the justification for the topic chosen. A crisis in Catechetics exists today. More generally a great dissatisfaction exists among teachers of religion on the high school level as to the quality of work in which they are engaged. They realize more and more that not only is the message of Christ not getting through to the student, but that the basic message as presented is not kerygmatic, is not attractive, and does not relate to the secularity life of the student. Furthermore, because of this crisis the writer of this dissertation felt a critical need both for the subject matter presented and the style of presentation.

It would have been incongruous to try to present a living, practical course in "lay theology" without at the same time getting down to working out the practical daily lessons which the students themselves would read and use in the class periods. When it comes to lay theology for high school students, material and presentation seem to be inseparably linked together. The writer considers that he would meet with sharp and just criticism if he were to divorce theology from catechetics when that theology is destined for a high-school audience. Simply to remain in the

area of theory would not seem to do justice to the topic chosen: "The Kerygmatic Approach to Lay Theology on the High School Level."

In the second and more extensive part of the dissertation the writer endeavored to develop and apply these principles in an eight-week course in lay theology. There are two basic propositions of this part: 1st. the layman, formed to the image and likeness of God, and receiving the added dignity of a Christian has responsibilities and privileges in the Community of the Church; 2nd. the layman is furthermore a member of the Community of the World. As such he should be presented with the theology of secularity. This, in the present writer's view, is most important for the layman's approach to the world. In the final chapter ("Unit" if one adheres to the methodology of the Adaptive Way) the writer attempted to show applications of the theology of secularity in the secular-city milieu of the student's daily living. These final lessons are related to the lines of thought represented in the great thinkers of today, men as Fr. Johannes Metz and Karl Rahner and Dr. Harvey Cox and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.