



# BULLETIN

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Happy New Year! I will take this one opportunity I will have to wish you as well a Happy New Decade, a Happy New Century and a Happy New Millennium. An occasion like this comes only once in a thousand years and I would be remiss in not taking advantage of it.

I have been doing the customary New Year's reflecting on what the new decade and century might mean to the faith/science dialogue. I have not come up with stunning revelations about the work we are attempting to do — apart from a vague restlessness about the whole enterprise as it is currently portrayed in the literature. I am not sure of the source of this restlessness. It certainly is not the faith exhibited by so many scientists who are deeply engaged in scientific investigation and are eminently concerned about their religion. They are to be highly praised and thanked.

Do we need a brand new theology? I doubt it. We might eventually decide that we need a new way to approach the old, but I have not seen a good new paradigm. Revelation must be the base of our faith and consequently our approach to the faith/science apostolate. What's the best way to get at this? I am not sure. I know that I am vaguely dissatisfied. All the more reason to keep on working, I guess.

ITEST's contribution to this discussion of new questions of who we are and what we will be has been an ongoing anthropological discussion, especially on the body. The body is the pivot on which the argument will turn. We are aware we cannot define the person solely in terms of the body, but our physical nature is more important than has been generally recognized in the Church. We have to think along the lines of our being re-embodied in heaven. That is the whole reason behind the incarnation — the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. He must be re-embodied that we might be re-embodied. We are promised that in the final Kingdom of Christ, He will transfigure our bodies into copies of His own glorified body. We wait for that transfiguration in faith. What will it be like? We have no idea. Still, we must work toward an understanding of this mystery, knowing that our best answers may be wildly off the mark. In the meantime, a Joyous New Year!

*Robert Brungs, S.J.*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. We have finally secured a date and location for our workshop on *Genetically Engineered Food*. Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Illinois will host the workshop from October 5-7, 2001.

The ITEST staff has had preliminary meetings with three scientists who agreed to work together on two presentations exploring the benefits of genetically enhanced food. We are, however, still searching for a scientist(s) who would be willing to present the perceived dangers of this technology. (If you have any suggestions, please send us names quickly.) Remember, however, we do not want this workshop to become a shouting match. Experience has shown us that with a topic this volatile, tempers can easily flare. Therefore, we need essayists who can present the "cons" of this technology in a professional manner.

We are also making every effort to engage a theologian and/or philosopher to view this issue from his or her specific perspective. (Suggestions?) Just to refresh your memory on the topic, we are reprinting the following two paragraphs from the Fall Bulletin.

We need philosophers, sociologists, theologians, "food" scientists, technologists, agricultural and soil scientists among others, to attend the conference and to contribute not a prepared paper necessarily but their own views and knowledge based on their experience in the area. Have you studied or read about genetically modified food? What is your response to questions of the science involved in genetically modifying seed, for example, safety issues, labeling products, consumer protection? These are some of the questions we plan to discuss among many others.

A caveat: The ITEST Staff and Board of Directors have designed this weekend conference/workshop to allow for expression of multiple views. We do not propose to take a stand "for" or "against" genetically modified food; rather, we intend to listen to each other, interact in formal and informal sessions, and gather information and insights from the presenters and participants. The edited book of proceedings published following the conference and distributed to ITEST members, workshop participants and selected media outlets will provide an alternative to the hysteria which often accompanies discussions of this topic.

2. Our heartfelt thanks to those members who have not only renewed for calendar year, 2001, but who have also contributed generously to the ITEST coffers, always in need of replenishing. There is no inflation, of course,

but somehow or other our costs have skyrocketed: among these areas are postage, printing and costs associated with our weekend workshops. So, any extra "farthing" or "pfennig" you can contribute would be appreciated.

3. We are making progress editing the proceedings of the October, 2000 workshop on "A Theology of the Human Body" held at Mercy Center in St. Louis. We plan to have the manuscript to the printer by early March for a release in May. The essays, well prepared and researched, gave the participants much food for thought leading to discussion as they attempted to formulate a working description (not definition) of "a" theology of the human body. What does it mean to be "bodied?"; what does our body have to do with our covenantal relationship with the Trinity?; how does the sequencing of the human genome affect our concept of the body, especially within the Christian Faith tradition?. These were some of the points raised for discussion during the weekend.

If you have never participated in an ITEST weekend workshop, you are in for a treat. Join us for the October, 2001 event in Belleville, Illinois at the beautiful Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows.

4. Kudos from a new member, a Catholic journalist with interest in biotechnology and agriculture, at the University of Delaware: "...Please allow me to thank you for your terrific Web site. I never dreamed it would be anything like it is... I knew you were online, but I just assumed you had a typical wee little Web site like I've been finding for most Catholic sites...My sincerest appreciation for all your efforts."

If you haven't seen the ITEST web site, you may access it at <http://ITEST.slu.edu> — see front page of bulletin for e-mail as well. We welcome praise of course, but we also welcome constructive suggestions for the bulletin. For instance, we would like to re-establish our list of writers for the Bulletin. If you would like to have an article considered for publication in a future issue, please let us know.

5. Be sure to access the following WebSite: <http://www.stmarys-schools.pvt.k12.md.us/parish/purplerelsci.html> It is excellent. Frank Andrews is the organizer and facilitator of "A Religion/Science Read and Write Discussion Group" at St. Mary's Parish in Annapolis, Maryland which could be used as a model for similar groups around the nation. Besides the excellent material, he has helpful links to other sites in the field. Congratulations, Frank.

**THEOLOGY: METHOD AND CONTENT**

**Joseph Murphy, S.J.**

[Continued]

*[In the last issue of the ITEST Bulletin (Vol. 31, No. 4) we began to reprint an article "Theology: Method and Content," published in Transfiguration: Elements of Science and Christian Faith, ITEST Faith/Science Press, St. Louis, 1993, pp. 184-212. Fr. Joseph Murphy, S.J. is currently teaching theology and bioethics at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. We conclude the reprint of this article in this issue of the Bulletin.]*

**Theology, Philosophy and the Sciences**

Put simply, botanists study plants and theologians study the Christian faith. Though the former ought to incorporate their findings into the larger harmony between God and the world created in Christ, they try to know plants as such and not primarily the whole of creation. But in formal Christian worship, of which theology is a part, theologians can limit their concern to a more immediate worship of God, an opportunity given from the gift of faith. This worship takes many forms. Prayer is a form of emotional worship, whereas almsgiving is finally a love of God through charity toward the poor. The Chartres Cathedral and the Pietà constitute artistic explanations of the Gospel mystery and communicate the truth of faith through artistic worship.

Mother Teresa worships God through care for the sick and so explains to us in her deeds the Gospel of Christ. The married worship God through love of each other in Christ and the religious through their vows. It is this same faith, the ground of all worship, that theologians explain in intellectual categories in worshipping God through the gifts of their minds. Their charism, however, is not shared by all believers. Mother Teresa need not be a theologian to exercise sanctity any more than lovers need be poets. The botanist can make a terrible gardener and the aeronautical engineer a bad pilot. The saint can fall silent in explaining the Creed and get headaches from systematic theology while the theologian has no ticket to a sinless life, although the very recognition of sinfulness itself depends on the light of faith.

Can we call theology a science, a method surrounding a body of truths and having first principles? Yes. But, because the faith is a gift from without and a prior condition of theological activity, the "science" obeys the data in a special way. Theology remains hypothetical, an attempt to make a mystery as intelligible as possible. Hence, theologians are grasped by the Revelation in advance rather than in search of it. They are not so much discovering by some arbitrary empirical method what they do not know but explaining what they first know implicitly in the *lumen fidei*, the light

of faith. The faith controls their method and judges it. Better, the Church, as guardian of the Revelation, recognizes a theological explanation as consistent or not with received doctrine and with the faith of the whole Church.

Scientists make deductions from first principles, which ought to be evident, but the first principles of theology remain beyond theological reflection. St. Thomas affirmed this uniqueness when he claimed that theology's first principles are evident to God and the saints. The cleverness of his distinction tries to answer charges that theologians are fideists who think with blinders on and are unfree to examine their own starting point and its reasonableness. Theologians are not free to unthink the Revelation, not because they are fideists but because they know by the light of faith, a faith which can never be rationalized and reduced to the canons of necessary reasons. Man is free only before a mystery. Human life, however objective or empirically available, does not obey the structures of the logical syllogism.

It would help now to relate theology to the other disciplines, especially philosophy, even if the description is slightly superficial. If we grant — and this is oversimplifying — that the natural sciences, in their material and formal objects, deal with the lower world of nature but that the human sciences, like psychology, sociology and political science, begin to include the scientist and the method as part of what is studied, we can examine briefly the disputes on methodology between "hard" and "soft" sciences.

The "soft" scientist has more of a subjective choice, but a slightly more vulnerable starting point than the natural scientist. Consider disputes within psychology. Behavioral psychologists, for example, hoping to compare their discipline to a hard science, might do research from the gratuitous presumption that the psyche, the self, the consciousness, or whatever, behaves like a sophisticated lower organism. Thus, devotees of Skinner and Watson reduce the self to the unfreedom of the organic world, portrayed so violently in Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*. He sees his movie as a story of mankind risen from the apes, not fallen

from the angels, a judgment he supposes should console us. On the other hand, a humanistic psychologist does not begin with the presumption of organic determinism but perhaps with the problem of anxiety, the nature of despair and hope, the existential self as a spirit in the world, not as victim of the environment or of Freud's inner determinism.<sup>4</sup>

The argument between the two psychologies is really about their *a priori*. The self studied is so inseparable from the studying itself that no unbiased starting point seems possible. Why, it is asked, can there be no "objectivity" here, no once-and-for-all right way to do psychology? There is, after all, a right way to fly a plane from New York to London and a right theory of aerodynamics behind it. We don't particularly care whether the pilot is an atheist or a Moslem. The pilot is not free to experiment; we prefer that religious views remain out of the way. Why cannot the human sciences also be natural sciences employing simple empirical skills and progressing by trial and error and insight, the way Galileo improved on Aristotle's theory of falling bodies?

As we said earlier, even natural scientists must move beyond the "right way" to make a bomb or a baby to evaluate the morality of their choice, however much their religion or moral viewpoint initially does not intrude on the data. But social scientists from the start can barely keep higher humanistic values in the background. Otherwise they risk reductionism or at best a tallying of trends to no final purpose. Our point is that the inevitable involvement of the valuing self in the activity of the science is not blind subjectivism. In this way we come to appreciate that the "limits" of theology have hidden analogues in any scientific undertaking. That is, all scientists must eventually reveal a stance they implicitly took before beginning the experiment.

Thus, rather than a conflict between the natural and human sciences, we can affirm an *order*. The natural sciences deal with reality as fragmented for specialization, however much a final integration of the data is necessary. The human sciences simply include more of the human world and society and the higher elements of humanity itself in the data. The more these sciences abandon fragmentation to grow in comprehensiveness, the more they risk attack for a subjective imposition of values. That is, they approach a total *philosophy* of the human and the world. Dewey rightly saw philosophy as a criticism of criticisms, like a science of sciences, a knowledge of the knowns, close to the Christian definition of wisdom as the ordination of all things to their end.

Let us look at philosophy. The complaint that it is the ultimate subjectivism is not alleviated by narrowing its scope or fragmenting its object. Limiting philosophy, as in the twentieth century, to the correct use of language at the expense of content and then conceding to other philosophies a vague value in "pluralism," the way behaviorists might concede that there are such things as humanists, does little to remedy either the alleged subjectivism or hostility. In the end, some real discipline, a genuine philosophy, should survive which, while respecting the rigor of formal analysis, embraces the wealth of content of the traditional systems, which wealth is the world to be known in all its manifestations. No wonder philosophy has characteristically been so comprehensive and its proponents dogmatic and ideological. There must be some formal cause by which the world is a world at all.<sup>5</sup>

We can now compare theology and philosophy. Theology is comprehensive and speaks definitively about the intelligibility of man, God and the world in relation. Theology is not just a philosophy of God nor is it mere philosophical human endeavor. In one sense both philosophy and theology have the same formal object, "being itself," taken comprehensively to include the entire cosmos and the intelligent subject. But for theology, being itself is present to the mind in the *a priori* of faith and not first as an object of empirical reason.

More properly, theology contains and circumscribes philosophy, speaks its language, borrows its expressions and accomplishes its goals. We are used to hearing that grace builds on nature or faith adds to reason. But more accurately one can say that faith encompasses reason and, as we must argue later, the order of grace is the true order of creation rather than accidental to it. Theology, while not a philosophy of God, is an explication of the knowledge one already has about God's action in history. The procedure for theology, as in Thomas' analytic method, is not philosophy's question "Does God exist?" with an uncommitted openness to a negative answer. Rather, the question is "God exists, and given this, how is it possible that children suffer, and so on?" Belief, the light of faith and not some variation of Descartes' unconditioned doubt, is the *a priori* for theological reason.

Theology, then, initially depends on the Revelation, the Christ, and on the faith in which the mind worships, a worship of Christ that conditions the very activity of intellectual examination and requires that its results stand up against the doctrine of the Church. Hence, we called theology intellectual worship; it is not an act of autonomous reason or of a trans-disci-

plinary critical method applied to a new set of data. It is not possible to do theology outside of the faith. One cannot simply present the data to nonbelievers unless the gift of the Holy Spirit moves them.

Fallen human reason inclines to self-worship, as the history of the most labored philosophies and sincerest social ideologies of history remind us. It is perhaps the poorest learned lesson from the doctrine on Original Sin that human reason is disordered and incapable of overcoming its own darkness. We cannot be Augustinian morally and Pelagian intellectually, but this realization escapes those who would construct a too sufficient "natural" theology as a premise to a revealed theology which completes the former almost by accident. We will point out below some problems with any natural theology that fails to see its dependence on the Christian revelation. Having risked a definition and some remarks on a comparative scientific method, we must now look closely at the starting point and content of theology.

### The Centrality of the Christ Event

If theology's task is the intellectual articulation of the faith, we can ask what content of faith a good theology must measure itself against. The active faith of the theologian is his or her worshipful stance, the traditional *fides qua* with which he or she holds to the content of Revelation. That content, the *fides quae*, is the "information" around which theology revolves. The theologian's resulting *hypothetical* construct, be it Thomism, Augustinianism, Lonerganism or any other system, must check its truth by submission to the doctrine of faith taught in the Church's preaching. We will later note how such submission is not enslavement and how the theologian's academic freedom is not under threat by the obligation to worship in the Church. First we must identify the content of the Revelation worshiped.

Theology has, as does philosophy, the entire universe for its object of study. More properly, it investigates the universe as ordered in harmony with God and in relation to humanity. It begins, then, with the primordial or central fact of existence. Rather than invoking the traditional philosophical questions of natural theology such as "Does God exist?" or "What is man?" or "Why is there evil?", the theologian in the light of faith accepts the truth about the meaning of the universe already revealed in a primary existential intuition. This primordial "fact" is really a dynamic event: In the beginning the Father sends the Son to give the Spirit.

This event, traced through the history of salvation,

since all history now is salvific and not secular or merely cosmic, turns out to be, at least in the Catholic tradition, a continuing event, the work of the Son still present to the world sacramentally and centrally in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the holy-making and validating action of Christ which is at one with His Incarnation, life, death and Resurrection. In other words, the world in all its parts and strivings is created in Christ and freely united to Him as its free formal cause. It is only in Christ that it has any meaning at all as a unified world.

Such a "fact" or holy action contrasts sharply with static descriptions of the content of faith. Notice that the theologian does not study a set of higher or secondary or accidental additions to other disciplines but rather the integration of all disciplines around their coherent center. Theology is not about the "things of God" but about the entire cosmos whose origin and end is in God through the action of Christ. To assert this, we have inferred from the Christ event that the only God we know is the one revealed in Jesus. Therefore the doctrine of the Trinity is not a subsequent set of data added to the "Deity" or *Deus Unus* who resides in familiar textbooks on the philosophy of God. Rather, it is a doctrine inseparable from all those conclusions about the divine attributes which we normally predicate of the classical Supreme Being.

One weakness of traditional natural theology has been its implicit designation of the centrality and ontological priority of the Christ event as only a *propter peccatum* (because of sin) reality, a coming to our world only "after" sin. If this were true, and such a position remains a common and permissible view — one I believe burdened with difficulty — the world would have an original stability independent of the Christ and a basis in nature or in an imaging of God apart from the material presence of Jesus and His Mother in our creation. Since the time of Scotus in the fourteenth century, however, the notion of a primordial Christ, along with a primordial Mary, as the historical new Adam and new Eve, has been gaining theological respectability for the unity it affords the doctrines of faith. We can allude to the several advantages of this notion.

Alongside the doctrine of the good creation is the Christian doctrine of Original Sin, the Fall. This condition of estrangement from our true origin and final end is the equivalent of a wound on the level of substance, a creation by us of a disintegrity only restorable by the equivalent of a new creation. The estrangement is, in Tillich's explanation, a practical separation of existence from essence and a temptation to explain the evil of the world by a dualism that

blames our imperfection on some part of the original good creation, usually the material or bodily order. Because of our alienation, manifest by the conditions of despair and universal anxiety within the human species, and confirmed by death and the threat of punishment or annihilation, we cannot comfortably return to our "beginning" and stand with God at the moment of creation to see what went wrong. Our sin, a mysterious abuse of freedom, is also *ex nihilo* (from nothing), our own negative act of creating.

Attempts to rationalize the cosmos or reconstruct it by finding an intelligibility in it apart from God or from our last end as members of the Body of Christ fall short of the wholeness of the Christian faith. Because of the Fall the finest attempts of philosophy and science verge on pantheism or atheism. Even a careful philosophy of God, if it relies on reason alone, risks seeing the Christian "supernatural" revelation as almost arbitrary rather than free. We learn from the texts of Colossians and Ephesians, for example, that the "beginning," that moment of integrity and purity which only God can give, must depend on Christ for its intelligibility. The Fall does not allow us to restore the world by pieces. Moreover, as a Protestant tradition following Tillich or Barth could agree, to arrive at even the bare existence of God by our own efforts would indicate a successful transition, at least noetically, from the fallen existential order to the essential order of being in itself. It would be a transition from the world of sin, including brokenness of mind, to the world of goodness, an exercise of a kind of forbidden Pelagian intellectualism.

Secondly, the admission of fallenness is itself a grace, an empowerment toward identifying evil as our responsibility rather than as a preexisting cosmic flaw emanating from a co-creator or demon competing with the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both our integrity and our fallenness are known from the Revelation, which is not "new" information but is the active presence of God within creation through Christ. In other words the creation of the human species is not an incident in a classical chain of works when a divinity creates stars and trees and eventually humans, whereby creation refers simply to placing things outside their causes.

Our creation is not like that of a stone because the world is not cosmic-centered but anthropocentric. This anthropocentrism, however, is not just the resultant relation between a spiritual deity and individual spiritual humans, isolated persons, who image him by their spiritual souls. It is the creation of humanity in the image of the Trinity as the only "deity" we know. According to Genesis 1:27, God created man in his

image, male and female. The man, the woman, and their holy union or co-personal substantial relation images on earth the tri-relationship of Father, Son and Spirit. Thus, men and women share the same nature but differ as persons. The human substance mirrors the divine.

The theological enterprise responds to these doctrines of faith, a faith which now, as the first stage of integrity, is the basis for the meaning of the world. Far from being a mere instance of additional information about higher things or future salvation, the faith answers the yearnings of Plato and Aristotle and their many successors in their search for the ground of our complex world. As doctrine, the faith is not discoverable by a theologian but only expressible through intelligent hypothesis.

Moreover, any other discipline, when it finally serves the human good beyond its more immediate goals of initial discoveries, will in the end either acknowledge the doctrines of the faith or else create its own total intelligibility, its own faith, in an attempt at self-validation. Thus, the theologian has the important task of making the faith intelligible to all, including people of science and the arts who may not yet be believers. This he or she does by that intellectual endeavor which cannot lose the quality of worship in the face of the mystery of faith which grounds every thinker's being.<sup>6</sup>

There is another reason for beginning with creation in Christ as the formal cause of the universe and ground of its meaning. Any science will insist on evidence which is ideally empirical. Every theory must remain hypothetical rather than controlling, so that practice will prove it out. Hence, to be of any value, the faith too must be empirically visible and historical, not gnostic. The Christ event which we identify as the ground of goodness within creation is more than a static presence of God's Son in space and time. The presence is inseparably relational in its historical offer of union with the Creator through a free response from His creatures. This union is the New Covenant, that harmony between the Lord and human history which restores to God's creatures peace and moral goodness through cooperation with Christ in the power of the Spirit sent by Christ Himself.

To call the Covenant new, however, is only to recognize its appearance in our temporal order as central, preceded by the history of Israel. That history itself is the history of the whole world in sin, even for those still awaiting Christ today; it is not merely the geographical or ethnic story of an early Semitic people. In fact, the New Covenant, if we take creation in Christ

seriously, is the real covenant, at least the historical one, since the old covenants with Noah and especially with Adam before him are not graspable by the procedures of paleontology, archaeology or the study of comparative myths. Thus, the New Covenant is *ontologically* prior to the old. Christ, as the Son of God incarnate and especially as primordial, is ontologically prior to Adam and is, as Paul describes Him in 1 Corinthians, the image of the Father; this image (Christ the Son) is imaged by man from whom woman is taken as his glory.

One theologian has referred to the New Covenant, the union of God with his people, as the prime analogate in reference to the traditional analogy of being. Where classically the prime analogate referred to the Supreme Being and the secondary analogate to the creature, the analogy suffered from its non-historicity, being present to the fallen mind by certain syllogisms and deductions about first causes. But if theology is based on an empirical faith, then beliefs of faith report historical events. One can then truly say that the *Deus unus*, the prime analogate or "deity" of classical natural theology, is really always the Father sending the Son to give the Spirit, which yields the historical Christ as a concrete figure.

This event, the prime analogate around which the world moves, its historical center, must be the Incarnation and in two special senses. First, we do not mean by Incarnation only the union of two natures in Christ since this is not immediately historically perceptible. We mean rather the union of Christ with His Mother in an event participated in by a free creature. The Incarnation in the fuller sense of the New Covenant, the relation between the all-holy God and his sinless creation, the moment of purity and worth sought after by centuries of unsuccessful philosophy, is thus an event in space and time such that the Trinitarian economy is historically realized in the creation.

Second, the Incarnation is not an isolated static event of Marian receptivity infused by the divine presence of the Christ but is, by the fullness of His presence, also effectively the full Christ event, his presence unto death and its Eucharistic continuance. This includes its receptivity in the Church when the Church becomes indeed the Spouse of Christ, the Second Eve. The world continues to be real around the visible historical action of God's presence in the Church's worship, a presence which is cause of that worship itself.<sup>7</sup>

### Truth, Doctrine and Bad Theology

We have continued to say that theology is not possible outside the worship of the Church. Theologians can-

not explain what they do not know. Lacking the data of faith, theology risks becoming a kind of speculative philosophy of religion. We may now correct some other definitions of it. For example, theology is not simply reflection on religious experience. Although the theologian has the "experience" of faith as a point of departure through the infusion of a gift, a *lumen* (light), this faith is mediated by the Church through Scriptural interpretation, doctrinal development and official preaching. It is, in addition to his or her response to it, objectively and publicly independent of the theologian in a way that private experiences of a mystical or numinous sort, even moments of ecstasy or rapture, are not.

The preaching of the Church over the centuries is consistent and historically public whereas the faith enhanced by, say, a miraculous apparition, is normally private and extra-sacramental, if not also extra-ecclesial. Thus, private religious experiences, if valid for the theologian so blessed, may contribute to his or her public ecclesial proclamation of the faith but must also be judged against the entire tradition. This in no way denies that theology progresses through the ages by enriching itself with Christian experiences, those deeds and charismatic actions of the faithful across the multiplicity of cultures. The Church's history of martyrdom, for example, inspires a theology of commitment just as her immersion in Greek culture imports Platonic and Aristotelian terminology into theological and credal proclamations. Today, the current expanding of technology into the frightening areas of genetic manipulation provokes a renewed theology of the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of the body.

To claim, as we have, that theology is not primarily reflection on someone's religious experience is to locate its primary source outside the subjectivity of the believer even though it may blossom in the charismatic mind of the theologian. Of course, theology is a human endeavor. Yet an atheist too can have sincere validating "experiences" around a position he or she might be willing to die for. But a believer, and especially the theologian, should not confuse grace with a phenomenon of consciousness or with an "experience" of the Spirit, which is often suspect and incommunicable. The *ex opere operato* effect of the Catholic sacraments, after all, is not an interiorly "perceived" or felt reality but is, like creation itself, out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, an action of God rather than an experience of the recipient.

We have effectively said, then, that theology, like other sciences, is empirical in that its method must obey an available historical actuality, in this case, the

New Covenant. Its task is not to construct theories or organize searches for God but, when the threat of heresy lurks, to formulate intellectual hypotheses, by which believers can better understand the faith of the Church. A hypothesis is always a free response to a freely given reality. The scientist who looks for the grand controlling theory by which matter can cease to be surprising will soon be disappointed. The theologian's intellectual activity is therefore not an arranging of immanent or necessary syllogisms to which the content of faith must conform. Rather, it is the intellectual equivalent of art, and of science also if one so grants the hypothetical nature of the latter.

Just as various schools of art each depict the Nativity or the Passion of Christ differently, so also intellectual systems, like Augustine's phenomenological method inspired by Platonism and Thomas' analytic method inspired by Aristotle, validly portray the truths of faith through differing structures. Thus, bad theology is more like pornography than like faulty logic. The difference between Michelangelo's *David* and Serrano's painful-to-mention *Piss Christ* is not ascertainable by a closed system of rules for measurement, form and color but by submission of the artistic creation to the test of the public faith, the consensus of the believing community which knows by a gifted intuition truth from error, good from evil and beauty from ugliness.

Likewise the difference between the theologies of Henri de Lubac and Matthew Fox is measurable not only by quantity of publications, colorfulness of prose or internal logical rigor but by checking the product against the norm of faith. The natural temptation of any system is self-perpetuation, an idolatry of method, and great theologians occasionally, if unwittingly, flirt with such a distortion of the faith. We too quickly forget that Augustine and Thomas were primarily theologians, not philosophers. They were not seeking the truth only from within the structures of thought; they were using these structures and special language to communicate a truth already possessed.

We have no need to wonder, therefore, if God is in the end a Thomist or a Rahnerian or a Barthian, as if one entire system could capture the revelation by rationalizing it through mental categories or empirical canons, as if some theologian finally got it right to the exclusion of others. The system, because hypothetical, remains free, able to be transcended. The best books of Rahner, Lonergan or von Balthasar need not be played off against each other for a final answer, but each system must be checked against all-too-possible wanderings into ideological or exclusivist confusion of the faith with the method or of the data with the observer's mental instrument.

The comparison between the truth of theology and the beauty of art, or between their negations in heresy and pornography, allows us more clearly to describe the content of revelation as a communication of a whole, a bestowal of a relation, an order within history, a harmony between God and the world which cannot be intelligible only in fragments. Of course, every heresy contains some information about God and the world just as all pornography displays some partial correctness of sexual function. Calvinist predestinationism and Lutheran pessimism over good works exemplify in part the beautiful Christian doctrines of Original Sin and grace. Their error lies primarily in the isolation of the partial truth from the whole of revelation and from the fuller doctrine of the good creation, a difficulty a philosopher might recognize as the failure to link individual truths to wisdom.

A "heretical" scientist acts no differently. The pain-inducing biological experiments of the Nazi doctors yielded the isolated information that turned them into medical pornographers, unable to distinguish torture from delight, and made them prophets of the Masters and Johnson laboratory a quarter century later where in a similar antiseptic civilized surrounding the "victims" were wired and calibrated for how much pleasure they could tolerate. Such de-personalized surrogacy replaces intimacy and makes the objects of the "experiment" interchangeable. Stripped of intrinsic goodness, the body, the person, the otherwise good creation, cannot be spoiled if all value is only subjective and all order only randomness. Pornography is merely the futile attempt to fragment and rationalize the beautiful, to re-create the given, to refuse to be in the image of God and instead to prefer the serpent's offer of self-creation and eventual self-worship.

If theology, as intellectually ordered to truth, cannot avoid the good and the beautiful, it is because the revelation is one and because its "parts," the doctrines of faith, coherently define the relation of the world to God around the primary act of the Trinitarian economy, the loving mission of Christ in His life-giving presence. For this reason we noted that the starting point of thought for a theologian is the historical New Covenant rather than the possible nature of the "deity." Theologians know themselves in relation to a universe ordered to the divine. Their primary experience of self is, from their faith, fully in and through another, the way Christ described Himself as totally received from and transparent toward His Father.

The first act of true integral being for a person created in the image of God ought to be this spontaneous worship of the Other from whom one came forth, in this case Christ in whom one is created. This sponta-



neous worship is itself the further free gift of the Spirit. Yet, since our world is fallen, worship in the Spirit, being free and unforced, does not always follow upon creation in Christ because iniquitous self-worship can intervene and confirm in us that substantial flaw of Original Sin by which we ceased to belong to God. Since the Fall thoroughly distorts even the lower orders of creation in rebellion against the higher, the restoration must be equally all-embracing, a re-integration on the level of substance. For a Christian this is initially Baptism as ordered to the Christ of the Eucharist by which the world is free.

Since this integrity is no less a gift than the creation itself, it is a response in worship not decided upon by the believer but only received. Subsequently, the intellectual articulation of this gift by the theologian is a true vocational gift or charism ordered to the faith in worship and inseparable from it. It is not a skill for every Christian.

We have noted how schools of theology can differ, not unlike the way periods of art do. It would be extreme, however, to designate all theological inadequacies as heresy. Poor art is not automatically pornographic. Deficient art can still have coherent form aimed at expressing the beautiful and yet fail to be self-forgetful in allowing the communication of its "revelation." Poor theology can issue "coherently" from orthodox believers who fail to see that their conclusions violate this particular Council, creed or papal teaching. Such a theology of half-truths cannot survive since it is isolated from the doctrinal tradition as a whole.

Let me mention three examples: Fr. Leonard Feeney was doctrinally correct in insisting that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation but was theologically, and thereafter also doctrinally, incorrect in explaining the mystery too narrowly. Elizabeth Johnson is ultimately incorrect in renaming the Christian God *She Who Is*, however forgivably new her insight or book title may be. Sandra Schneiders is so insignificantly correct in complaining that "God is more than two men and a bird" that even initial agreement with the small truth in her caricature risks a mockery of centuries-old accomplishments of Trinitarian wisdom.

Bad theology, however sincere, almost inevitably yields at least a minor heresy. Nor may one take refuge for the sake of ecumenism in some diluted and non-literal "doctrine behind the doctrine," some neo-Platonic unity of thought which absorbs and negates all material particularity. Doctrines are not generalities. They exist in a world of particulars and for the damnation or salvation of their adherents. For this reason theology is not simply about "the mystery" but always refers

to the historical concreteness of Jesus and Mary of Nazareth. The mysteries of their lives, not just spiritually symbolic, are materially salvific and for us sacramentally effective.

### Pluralism and Dissent

The doctrinal unity of the faith and its clarification down the centuries with the help of good theologians must confront the painful divisions within Christianity and question their relation to theology. Thus far we have focused on the following doctrines: the New Covenant, the good creation, the centrality of the primordial Christ, mankind as male and female in the image of God, the radical disintegrity effected by the Fall, the Eucharist as cause of the Church for the effective sacramental restoration of the world. These are items of Catholic faith and doctrine, not negotiable theological hypotheses.

Some fellow Christians, sharing the same faith in Baptism and professing a similar creed, hold, however, that the world is not restored to integrity by the death of Christ except at the end of time! In their view marriage is not necessarily indissoluble nor are certain moral acts always and everywhere wrong. Or again, Christ is present for them in the Eucharist only in a spiritual way, concomitant with His spiritual presence in the assembly. Furthermore, Christ's maleness is not historically significant for some fellow Christian denominations who are in conflict with the Catholic understanding of sexual symbolism found in Scripture from Genesis to Ephesians and in the teaching of current papal encyclicals. Examples abound.

What is the relation of theology to these disputes? Though good theology can explain the faith or resolve fights, and though bad theology can invite heresy, the test is ultimately the Church's teaching authority. An orthodox confession of faith can override a theology which testifies to it poorly. Conversely, the choice to continue in actual disbelief or even to apostatize is not always a conclusion of careless reasoning or bad theology. Sometimes it is a participation in the darkness of the Fall and a temptation to sin against the faith.

A Catholic and a Lutheran, both baptized, may share the same *lumen* (light of faith) unthematically, a presence to their minds of the Revelation itself, but they may differ in the doctrinal teachings of their confessions in understanding the faith concretely. Bad theology may have contributed to this, even if present-day Lutherans and Catholics appear non-culpable in each other's eyes. But apostasy in the early Church could never have been a sin only on the basis of mis-

understanding. What bad theology alone could not cause — apostasy — good theology alone cannot simply heal. It can, however, defend the true faith against the inconsistencies of heresy.

Berengarius thought, for example, that this bread "over here" could not be the Body of Christ, which is not here. Good theology can expose the limits of Berengarius' philosophical nominalism, display its consequences beyond the Eucharist, and then explain the consistency in language and truth that the doctrine of transubstantiation enjoys. In so doing the theologian is serving the given faith and defending the doctrine, not creating either one as a conclusion to a syllogism which would make Berengarius believe, for he could only confess the true faith freely. Just as his confession of true faith is not ruined by his weak theology, so a denial of the true faith by whatever intelligent heretic is not salvaged by elaborate or clever theological argument. Yet such an arrangement does not make theology gratuitous or turn believers into fideists. Rather, theology embodies the possible concrete coherence between religious mystery and rational thought. Good theology will not make up for an absence in faith by outstripping it, but it will yield an understanding which will buttress the faith exposed to the dangers of unbelief.

A current example of theology at work touches the ordination of women. Proper theological argument makes non-ordination a doctrinal position, but today's Christians often confuse the doctrinal nature of the issue with mere theological opinion, as if a different theology could create a change in what the Church considers a doctrinal practice. The theologian's task is not to find reasons for the Church to change doctrine but rather to display the sources of the doctrine in tradition based on Scripture and the Eucharist. Of course, proponents of women's orders often question whether the Church's true self-understanding, the total *sensus fidelium*, needs to exclude the ordination of women. But the magisterial nature of recent official documents from Vatican II down through the letters of all contemporary popes suggests that it does.

The teaching Church can only propose for belief what the Church knows intuitively. But what it knows, this very *sensus fidelium*, it has received first from Christ and the Holy Spirit, and not generated it by theological reflection, however much the charismatic contributions of brilliant theological minds have fed the Church's clarification of faith. Yet anyone who upholds today the Church's position that the non-ordination of women is a closed issue cannot but welcome both an enrichment and a proclamation of the heretofore largely implicit theological reasoning behind it,

reasoning about which many defenders of the teaching are indeed ignorant.

Similar theological enrichment is needed for almost every "hard saying" in the Church's sexual doctrine over the last twenty-five years. Dissent from doctrine parades mistakenly as dissent from the theology or philosophy of a pope or a Vatican congregation. Opponents reduce teaching about reproduction, for example, to a philosophical argument on nature, accuse it of physicalism or biologism, and accept it only as a "provisional" pastoral ideal. But, the Church's doctrine is not hostage to any philosophy, nor even to a hypothetical theology. Furthermore, *ideal*, as a moral category, is misused by these opponents, as if some sexual norms were obligatory, as if from nature or reason, while others were ideal, as if from a higher order of faith, or from an ethical system known only to Catholics. Recall, however, that our explanation of the revelation according to the Trinitarian economy refused to allow a natural secular order of history to stand outside of or to precede that sacred time or space which is salvation history. All history is a history of sin and grace, rather than of nature and super-nature. Take an "ideal" virtuous act, for example, like living among the poverty-stricken. Such an act, which most of us might deem supererogatory (beyond any duty), can seem obligatory to saintly persons. Conversely, the worst of sinners appear to us obligated to escape their addictions by embracing what for us, blessed by the grace of God, is a matter of everyday worship, but which for them might be the heroic ideal, the next step. In other words, the moral lives of good or sinful people can no more submit to a rationalization than can their intellectual life of faith. The rich young man in the Gospel was trapped between the obligatory and the optional because he could not understand true moral freedom.

Sincere dissenters from a *doctrine* of the faith, then, are not simply offering a variant theology, for such dissent is not really a theological category but, when honestly registered, is a statement of one's inability to see what a doctrine means, not an attempt to change it. Such humility awaits a better theology. Today, however, dissent does not so humbly pretend to be a lack of understanding about what the Church teaches but about whether it teaches or can teach. Moral theologian Charles Curran admits that the Church can pronounce in matters dogmatic but doubts that it has doctrinal competence in matters practical. He maintains this in spite of the proclamation by Vatican Council I of papal infallibility in both faith and morals. Still other ethicists claim to be mainstream Catholic theologians in holding that the Church has not always declared abortion wrong. They say that

early papal prohibitions of it were to keep clerics from concealing pregnancies they caused in violation of celibacy.

It is one thing to say, as many dissenters do, "I believe all that the Catholic Church teaches — just tell me what it is"; it is another to submit Church authority to the historical-critical method of the academy to find out when or where or even if the Church has truly been the Church. We cannot examine it now, nor can we debate the wisdom of a certain American bishop in calling contraception the Galileo affair of our century. Suffice it to say that the Church's right to teach is, *a priori* by the gift of faith, already a part of the Church's teaching. That is, infallibility does not submit to a secular academic proof before it enlightens other doctrines. The seeming "circularity" of this insight is not fideistic but is only a claim that no secular rational world exists ahead of the faith and sitting in judgment over it as if faith were intrusive. If, on the other hand, we did enjoy a secular autonomy of reason, an intellectual independence inherited from the Enlightenment, all faith would then be but extra information of a finally curious sort.

The faith, however, is either comprehensive or superfluous and accidental. For this reason we refused to categorize the life of grace as only an accidental enhancement of a natural substance. Rather we considered sufficient grace to be creation in Christ, who is the free formal cause of the universe. "Human nature" abstracted from grace can last in theology only about as long as a natural deity can survive abstracted from the Trinity.

If the teaching of the faith is not to be a contest of wits between a pope and the theological academy, the teaching must issue not originally from theological competence but from the Christ event as the cause of all truth and goodness. Again, this event is the Eucharist and the bishops are in service of it. That is, in Catholicism there is no room for a *sola doctrina* (doctrine alone) so to speak, which, comprised of historical conciliar pronouncements across the centuries, would parallel the *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) of a Protestant tradition. Such a *sola doctrina* would submit Catholic faith to the arbitrariness of a critical method, thus narrowing the true "tradition" and isolating it from the Eucharist by placing it in a secular historical culture. The search for the true doctrine would then suffer the same failures afforded the search for the historical Jesus.

The faith is not words but is communication of the person of Christ who gives the Spirit. Thus, those who are empowered to say, "This is my Body," are then

qualified to say what these words mean, to teach, and are so qualified primarily by their ordination and not by theological charism or language skills. Doctrine issues from the living event of the Eucharist, which across time and space ties us to the Apostles. It does not proceed from a verbal heritage of historically linear time-bound pronouncements which are to be checked against the canons of historiography or cultural sociology. The Eucharist as cause of the Church and indeed of the whole historical order is thereby the cause of the truth which theology investigates.

### An Example

We can close by using a current case of a doctrine under challenge which theology can defend. The trend today would have it that God is equally female, archetypal of the holy feminine within the creation. Or again, if God is totally transcendent, then female images, it is said, apply equally as well as male metaphors do. The task of the theologian here is not to speculate philosophically outside the faith and construct anew all variations on the nature of God. He or she does not begin by saying, "Why not?" Yet the theologian's stance is not dismissive of counter opinions but gives them a respectability with which one may dialogue. Certainly, a humble investigation of the history of ancient religions reveals a plenitude of female deities and a host of arguments by brilliant minds in their favor. While the theologian must deal with these, if feasible, he or she can sufficiently answer from within the history of Catholic theology alone. We can now formulate an initial, if incomplete, answer to this contemporary question: Is God a mother?<sup>8</sup>

Many religions promote female deities, but let's confine ourselves to Christianity. Some biblical references speak of God being "like" a mother or Jesus, like a mother, gathering the disciples as a hen would gather chicks. The tenderness of God's love for the people throughout the Covenant shows maternal virtues and traits. Yet, God is called Father and He acquires many masculine names throughout the Scriptural texts. Can one then simply regard the transcendent God as either beyond all names or, on the other hand, as equally named by all, subject to any metaphor or image appropriate to a given culture?

Eunomius in the fourth century could only call this nameless God *agennetos*, the Unbegotten One. The Fathers and Scholastics remind us that true conceptual knowledge of God is not possible and that all terms about God are almost as non-expressive as they are properly predicative. Such philosophical reasoning is fairly unassailable if we stop here. But we have not

begun to *theologize* unless we respond to doctrine. Is there a doctrine of God in the Church and in Scripture whereby God is clearly a Father?

In addition to Jesus' addressing God as his Father, our creed expresses the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Moreover, we learn from the Council of Ephesus that Mary, who the Church teaches is ever Virgin, is the Mother of God, not only the Mother of Jesus. The Council of Chalcedon affirms of Jesus one person and two natures, like us in all but sin, as St. Paul teaches. Today, however, though it is correct to say that God is Father, the doctrine needs a fuller theological explanation and an interpretation respectful of this new concern about God being a mother. To those who say with speculative philosophical clarity that the transcendent God is our mother, the theologian notes first that Jesus, because he is like us in all but sin, should also have a father and a mother. Mary is this Mother.

But if Mary is the Mother of *God* and not simply of a human nature or a human person, as Nestorius wrongly taught, then she is the only Mother Jesus knew. He does not have two mothers, one on earth and one in heaven. Nor is He the product of a mother and a "source" or a demiurge or a vague deity. He has, also like us, a true Father, the same Father we have. Jesus Christ did not have a human father as symbol and transmitter of this fatherhood; Mary is ever Virgin. To deny fatherhood to God is to give Jesus no Father, very much unlike us. To give him a divine mother as well is to deny the appropriateness of calling Mary the Mother of God. What Ephesus can then say to the twentieth-century person is that Mary exhausts in the case of Jesus all that Mother can mean for Him and that God exhausts in His life all that Father can be, to which Father he refers so often and through which Mother the Church continues to pray.

The issue is doctrinal and historical before it is theological. Our approach once more begins with the revelation as the single order of reality. "The Father sends the Son to give the Spirit." To start here is to pass over otherwise valid philosophical possibilities of female deities as archetypes for created females. One could draw further theological applications. If Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Mary and Son of the Father, is one incarnate male person who also describes His Father as one with Him, the Father is then to Jesus, who is properly called Son, as human fathers are to their children, except that this Father is immediately "fathering" without being sexual, male or bodied. Moreover, the way in which human father and mother differ from each other in respect to their children,

that is, not just as parent A and parent B, reflects an irreducible difference between the sexes pointing to a masculinity and a femininity having primordial significance.

God the Father, the transcendent source, not identical with the creation and having the identity of its separate ground, is origin of the eternal Son and then of all creation through this Christ. We know Jesus only as always for us the Son of the Father, not as first the eternal Word and then, on account of sin, accidentally incarnate and then Son of Mary. Mary, Mother of Jesus, is doctrinally fully the only Mother of God. She is also our Mother and represents the immanent uniqueness of the creation as intrinsically other than God and yet holy in itself. Motherhood is non-existent before creation and becomes creation's sign of its own being and its immediate responsiveness to its Creator.

The creation can now stand alongside the Creator in dynamic relation, a relation first revealed in Genesis in the equality and co-personhood of the sexes, which in turn are the human substance, analogously imaging by their bond the tri-relationship of the divine substance. Mary, furthermore, as Queen of angels and saints is now "in the beginning" with her Son as a primordial figure. St. Paul, if we carry sexual symbolism further, speaks of God as head of Christ, who in turn is head of every man, and then of man as head of woman. He is expressing, by analogy, the directionality in the created order of the Father sending the Son to give the Spirit.

Paul is not endorsing some sort of sexual inequality. Rather, "head" in this context means "source." As the Father is a source and has a glory in the Son so the Son images the Father by being a source and having a glory. So then the man is a source of woman who is his glory. The woman is not head because she is not source of a further image or glory beyond herself. She turns out to be a "glory" but not an image much the way the Spirit is glory without being image. But at no time does order within either the Trinitarian or the human economy signify inferiority. Consequently, to call God Father is to assert a loving relation of origin, not of oppression. We do this not from an intuition of preferential maleness in a deity but from the historical free experiential presence of Jesus who reveals Himself as Son of the Father, His masculine but nonsexual "source."

Outside this historical and doctrinal beginning, theology cannot make a contribution. To put it another way, if the Scripture is not inspired and canonical, it too is of little interest. But inside the doctrinal tradition, theology has much to say. A still further applica-

tion of Chalcedon and Ephesus, in reliance upon further Pauline material, as in Ephesians, would clarify the connection between the priest as male and the maleness of Christ as it relates to the foundational sexual imagery of both the conciliar and biblical traditions. If sexuality is at the heart of creation it is also, *ipso facto*, at the heart of redemption in the Eucharist, a place where both masculine and feminine imagery are abundant.

In so briefly developing a theological response to these neuralgic issues, we have meant to show the difference between faith seeking understanding, which we call intellectual worship, and what is otherwise only philosophical reflection or an analysis of religious experience or of traditions outside the faith. The neglect of this difference is at the heart of a number of ecumenical and ecclesial problems today. For example, the proper understanding of academic freedom in a Catholic university allows the incorporation of the many truths of several disciplines into the one Truth, the basic truth of the cosmos itself. No part of a Catholic university is ever completely secular or neutral, for if it touches the human good, it touches it as finally meaningful around the Christ event. Freedom is not the ability to reject the whole for the part, nor is it the power to fragment the universe. Freedom is the ability to embrace the good given as gift, not the chance to pick from arbitrary or indifferent options presented by the autonomy of the mind.

We have come full circle. Designating theology as intellectual *worship*, a non-judicial definition, relates it to all the questions of ultimacy which require commitment, not just distant examination. Moreover, the element of worship signifies the irreducible mystery of the revelation present to the worshipping mind, which makes of theology not just another philosophy concerned with critical ultimacy. Thirdly, and lastly, this worship must be historical and concrete, a sacramental response in physical space and time to the historical event of the Christ, which event continues for the Catholic in the Eucharist as this sacrament causes the Church to be Church and thereby the world to be a meaningful world.

In this covenantal relation, re-enacted in the Eucharist and imaged in the sacramental, marital and moral lives of the believer, the theologian stands ready to testify to the faith through a sharing of some of the intellectual categories employed by fellow scientists and artists in their search for the human good. His or her hypothesis, like theirs, is subject to correction because both answer not to the unfree truths of a fallen rationality or of a dogmatic critical method but to the unavoidable beauty of the free and revealed

creation taught by the Church.

This creation itself is for every scientist and artist alike the occasion for the humble worship required of creatures, who can control neither Creator nor the creation, but can learn the interrelation of creation's elements, powers and "laws" in the final service of humanity. In Christian terms scientists are building up the Body of Christ. In secular terms, they must in the end be doing something like that or else they are in slavery either to their method or to the vagaries of a hostile cosmos. That is, they must in some way, however implicitly, be investigating that pleroma, that final beauty or fullness of which the Scripture speaks, and which the theologian enunciates first when relating the world to its origin and end in the light of faith.

The theologian excludes *a priori* a hostile, irregular, or domineering cosmos and accepts instead a free one expressive of the love of its Creator. Such a process is not a bias, but is indicative of the creative relation between a thinker and the thought. In our faith, the thinker is not only creative of his or her thoughts but is already by creation in Christ objectively "thought forth" by God. Of this reality there is no undoing. There is only a free acceptance of it in worship, an unforced self-acceptance through acceptance of Another, the antithesis of that autonomous pride of the isolated and secure self. Theology, if stripped of genuine historical worship and left entirely to its own critical system or method, will busy itself with the all-too-conclusive pantheisms of a New Age or with the curiosities of the now common gnostic salvation schemes parading as ecumenical.

Science, if stripped of the same worship, will forever ask "Why not?" and mistake the possible for the beneficial and the empirical for the ultimate. But from just such a fate both have been freed. Indeed God does not offer this freedom by playing dice with us from the stance of an invincible or hatefully indifferent creator. Nor is the correction for indifference an oppressive determinism that relieves us of responsibility. There is no more freedom in the randomness of dice than in the servility of determinism. In taking on the form of a slave, God Himself in Christ has offered us the liberation from all servility, not by the pagan flight from history nor by the worship of things, but by the covenantal freedom which makes us our own in Him in whom we have our being.

#### Endnotes

4. For an introduction to debates in psychology and sociology and the contrast between behavioristic or reductionistic views and those of Christian human-

ism see C. Stephen Evans, *Preserving the Person: A Look at the Human Sciences* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1977); Floyd Matson, *The Idea of Man* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1976); Ashley Montagu and Floyd Matson, *The Dehumanization of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983).

5. See Macquarrie, *Principles*, Chapter 2 on the relation of philosophy to theology. Also see John MacMurray, *The Self as Agent* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953); idem, *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954) on the need for a philosophy both formally analytic and comprehensive and on the relation between science, art and religion.

On the relation between theology and the natural sciences, a classic text is Ian Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). A more recent work is Holmes Rolston, *Science and Religion: A Critical Survey* (New York: Random House, 1987). On theology's connection to creation, quantum physics and natural theology see, in addition to the ITEST seminar above, Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger, and George V. Coyne, eds., *Physics, Philosophy and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding* (Vatican City: Vatican Observatory, 1988). Also, Christopher Mooney, "Theology and Science: A New Commitment to Dialogue," *Theological Studies* 52:2 (June, 1991) 289-329; John H. Wright, "Theology, Philosophy, and the Natural Sciences," *Theological Studies* 52:4 (December, 1991) 651-668; William Stoeger, "Theology and the Contemporary Challenge of the Natural Sciences," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 46 (1991), 21-43.

6. For a classical treatment on the nature of revelation and faith and on the connection between truth and the human mind see Edward Schillebeeckx, *Revelation and Theology*, II, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968). Also, C. Stephen Evans, *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking About Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1985); Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985).

7. This interpretation of the centrality of the New Covenant is the basic premise in Keefe, *Covenantal Theology*. It is intent on making all history salvation history, thereby denying a purely secular cosmos prior to the Christ Event. The Christ is then seen as primordial ontologically and the entire temporal order "before and after" as actually subsequent to Him, that is, as fallen and in need of integration.

8. We could barely begin to mention the abundance of feminist literature on the question of God. For a recent book by a Catholic theologian opposed to the view in this paper see, for example, Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992.) For a view supporting our thesis see Paul Mankowski, "Old Testament Iconology and the Nature of God," *The Politics of Prayer*, edited by Helen Hull Hitchcock (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992).

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[A month ago ITEST received a letter from a member of the Spanish Assistancy of the Society of Jesus and member of ITEST. Enclosed was a Summary expressing concern about the abandonment of the traditional presence of Jesuits in science-technological matters. It was then presented to the Biannual meeting of European Jesuits in Frankfurt, Germany. We were given permission to publish it as well.]

### CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt about the continuing contemporary influence of science and technology on our culture. This is a matter not only of technological advances, which so deeply affect human life and have revolutionized the fields of communications, transportation and medicine. Equally important, science today also provides the structure of those images which men use to think about themselves and about the universe. These images then condition our image of God. Faith and Christian moral reflection, similarly influenced by the modern world must also respond to the challenges of science; for example those posed by new discoveries

in cosmology and biology. In this situation, which demands an open dialogue between science and religion, the church needs a supply as much of dedicated and qualified lay people as of priests. Only such persons can carry on the dialogue (between scientists who are believers and scientists who are not.)

The Society of Jesus since its foundation (which coincides with the beginning of modern science) has always maintained as its own a tradition of investigation into the natural sciences. In the older Society as in the more recent, a significant number of Jesuits has

always worked in different areas of the sciences from biology to astronomy, in colleges and universities, in observatories and in centers of scientific research. So did the 31st General Congregation affirm: "Jesuits much esteem scientific work and especially that of pure research and consider it as one of the most necessary works of the Society... The same can be said of the so-called positive sciences, which deal with man and society as the mathematico-natural sciences and the technical sciences which are derived from them and which so profoundly penetrate the mind-set of our time." (Dec 5, 1929). It is hard to find in the church another institution with a similar scientific tradition. In Spain the modern Society has created Institutes and Observatories and most recently has maintained a significant presence in the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas*. There can be no doubt that this presence of Jesuits in science has been of multifaceted benefit to the Church and has promoted the dialogue between Faith and Science.

The present situation, with a smaller number of vocations and the demands of other apostolic works, requires that the presence of Jesuits in the sciences simply cannot be so numerous as in those times more richly endowed with vocations. Nonetheless, it continues to be true that in the evangelization of the modern world we cannot ignore the scientific and technical spheres, which so influence our society. The Church continues to look to the Society for fulfillment of this task. The task is proper to the Society by reason of its

tradition in working on the frontiers, geographical and intellectual. Although other necessities today might appear more pressing (in the area of Justice and the Social Contract) we cannot forget this (scientific) work which is so important and so bound to the tradition of the Society. Thus we may affirm that today Jesuit scientific work continues to be valid.

Present conditions of the scientific world as much as of the Society of Jesus indicate that the forms of our presence in scientific areas in the past may be no longer valid. We must seek new means of being present to the scientific world. On the one hand, the applicability of science has acquired great importance for engineering, information systems, and genetics. On the other, the number of young Jesuits has decreased considerably and access to the highest levels of prowess in scientific-technical education has gotten extremely difficult. Nonetheless, there remains a small number of young Jesuits desirous of committing themselves to the work we are discussing and in helping them progress from it to the evangelization of our culture. Consequently, despite all the difficulties, we still see the continuity of this apostolic work, so important to the Church and so proper to the Society. In our meeting, we observed the need of seeking new forms of coordinating the work of Jesuits in the scientific-technical fields. This coordination could be institutionalized in such a way that a new agency might replace MUIINISI, which today has practically disappeared.

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### BROTHER ISIDORE: KEEPS THE FLAME BURNING

*[Brother Isidore Harden, O.S.B. has been a member of ITEST for several years. We would like to honor him as well as inform you of his many accomplishments. We received the article reprinted below a few months ago. It was included in Concepts for Action, Life and Love, August 1998. We reprint it with permission.]*

"Horseback riding is his passion and he is one of the frontranking instructors, but what makes Brother Isidore so special is his commitment to the cause of developmental delays. He has been using his skill to heal — he gives children with handicapping conditions the opportunity to experience horseback riding. To Brother Isidore of the Oklahoma Benedictine Institute, horseback riding for people with disabilities is not only a passion, but also a cause close to his heart. Hundreds of children with disabilities have experienced the magical moments of riding, thanks to him. He helps children to find a new way to liberate themselves from the limiting conditions they encounter.

"Children are heaven's gift to earth; and by helping them to grow, one creates a new definition to love and care." For the last fifteen years Brother Isidore

has been helping Father Paul in his mission to help children grow and overcome their limitations. He is the coordinator of the Therapeutic Horseback Riding Program of the Oklahoma Benedictine Institute. This is one of the many activities that this program offers. Brother Isidore is a person of varied interests and many accomplishments. He is a member of the Association of Horsemanship, Safety and Education and is also an instructor certified by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association. In 1990, he took a one-month training at the CHEF Center for Handicapped Therapeutic Riding Program in Augusta, Michigan with Linda McCowan. This was the first therapeutic riding program in the United States, having been brought to this country from England. Brother Isidore's involvement is not confined to therapeutic riding alone. He serves as the Assistant

director of Camp Benedictine and is also a Red Cross Certified Instructor. He is a certified Habilitation Training Specialist and works in the homes of the agency consumers when the need arises. As the computer consultant of the institute, he is always ready with solutions to complex problems. He has a Master's Degree in Computer Science from Oklahoma State University. Previously he was an instructor in computer science at St. Gregory's University. In addition to all of this, he is currently the Equestrian Instructor at St. Gregory's University...."

"Brother Isidore says, 'Because I grew up with my sister, I had no problem working with people with disabilities, it is a part of the human condition. If people with handicapping conditions were more out into society, people would understand better. It is good to see the institutions close and the people coming back into the community.'

"Children and horses make a special bond in the course of their interaction,' Brother Isidore observes. Horses are majestic animals. Which child would not love to ride a horse — an activity that provides proud memories and a feeling of self-worth. Introducing a horse to a rider is not an easy job. So, for a handicapped person it is not easy to realize this dream. "To accomplish the dream of a child we have to provide a safe and secure environment along with caring and qualified individuals that dedicate their lives to enhance the growth of a child," Father Paul says.

"Brother Isidore has been making use of his equestrian skills to make it possible for children to ride the horse like any normal child. Brother Isidore is providing a riding program for individuals with disabilities, unmindful of the obstacles he has to face. His never-ending spirit keeps the flame burning that Fr. Denis lit long ago."

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#### SISTER LEO RITA VOLK, FSM

*[Sister Leo Rita, FSM was a member of ITEST until her retirement a few years ago. She is currently retired and, at 86, has moved on to other pursuits — along with her genetics. The following excerpts are from an article published in the St. Louis Review, October 6, 2000 by Jean M. Schildz. The article is entitled The untold story of 'Sr. Mary Chromosome.' Parts of it are printed here — with permission.]*

"Time for a short science quiz. First, name the local institution of higher learning that is part of the Human Genome Project, the publicly funded consortium that helped to decode all genetic information in the human body.

"The answer: Washington University. So far, so good. Now on to something much harder.

"Who taught Washington University about a successful method to grow and analyze chromosomes, the study that set the school on its path to ultimately deciphering the human genetic code?

"Give up? Sister Leo Rita Volk, FSM, that's who.

"Ever hear of her? We should have, said several prominent St. Louis physicians, along with the CEO of a local genomic firm. Sister Volk's work in genetics is characterized as 'groundbreaking' and 'pioneering,' they all agreed.

"We're kind of carrying on the tradition of the research they started,' said Terry Kungel, CEO of DzGenes LLC, speaking of Sister Volk and her genetics research team. Kungel's company uses the same lab space where Sister Volk and her staff worked several years ago at St. Mary's Hospital...

"Some of the work they did (in genetics) really was terrific, said Kungel... 'It's unfortunate it sort of didn't get more publicity at the time because it really was a great piece of work.'

"Though he admitted being biased about the subject, Dr. William A. Knight Jr. called the work he did together with Sister Volk on cancer cell cloning groundbreaking. Knight served for many years as chairman of the department of medicine and chairman of the division of gastroenterology at St. Mary's until retiring this past November. 'I did notice,' the physician pointed out, 'nobody else was doing it — nobody else in the city....'"

"She'll never tell you this,' [Dr.] Mehan added, referring to Sister Volk's natural reluctance to toot her own horn. 'She has never got the appropriate credit for what she has done.'"

[ITEST Editors] Congratulations, Sister Leo Rita. It's a bit late and more than a dollar short. But we appreciate your passion and dedication to this work, Dr. Mehan was wrong: you have lasting credit in heaven, where it counts, for your work. The Lord knows what you did and is certainly pleased with it. You personify all the qualities of a superb faith/science apostle.



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**IN MEMORIAM**

Doctor Robert Doyle

We also ask your prayers for ITEST members who are ill. May they feel the restoring hand of the Lord.