

Translators Say 'Emotion, Ignorance' at Root of Criticism

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ament passages. In this case it is derived from an oversimplified explanation of Catholic teaching which is found in many elementary religion books which show no acquaintance with the mentality or the phraseology of the New Testament writers themselves. A translation that honestly reflects the development within the New Testament as to the understanding of the person of Jesus, his divinity, his Resurrection, the Trinity, etc., is bound to disturb those who facetiously try to impose the formulations of the twentieth century catechism on the early Church and the Apostles, without any regard for the genuine development of Catholic doctrine. Under this ignorance of the Scriptures might also be included ignorance of older English translations which frequently enough have crudities of expression not to be found in the new translation. In this connection, we may give as examples the Douay translation of 3 Kings 3, 21, 26; 16, 11 and Luke 11, 27; 23, 29.

The second sort of ignorance concerns the use of English. Many complaints about the inaccurate English usage of the translators have come from in-

dividuals who do not know the rules of English usage, and suggest "corrections" which are flagrantly wrong. The editor of a Canadian Catholic newspaper lodged a formal protest against the new translation of John 8, 53, "Just who do you pretend to be?" maintaining that it should be "Just whom..." (For the rules of correct usage in this matter, cf. H. W. Fowler, "A Dictionary of Modern English Usage," pp. 723-26). Many brand, as "colloquial" expressions that standard and even conservative English dictionaries do not so label for twentieth century usage. The word "jabbed" (John 19, 34) may or may not appeal to the ears of some, according to individual literary tastes, but to label it as "colloquial" is to go against the norms of Fowler (op. cit., p. 306) and Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language.

The foregoing criticisms stem from factors that are extrinsic to the translation itself. Once these are set aside as of little consequence, there are others which have their source in a basic difference of opinion in regard to Scripture itself. These are concerned with three things: (a) its dignity; (b) its apologetic value; (c) its theological character.

a) Dignity, Reverence: The translators are fully aware that they are dealing with the inspired Word of God and are trying to render it in a modern English idiom, particularly as acceptable in the United States and Canada. They will not tolerate the implication that in so doing they are in any way irreverent, inaccurate, or dishonest. There are parts of the Bible which are literary masterpieces in the original, every effort should be made to render them accordingly in a vernacular translation. However, there are many parts which are not such; in fact, they leave much to be desired from a literary standpoint. To attempt to make such parts literary masterpieces in a modern medium is to be false to the task of a translator. Nostalgia for King James style is the worst possible qualification for the work of producing a translation in modern English idiom. The translators of the new C.C.D. New Testament are quite aware of the instances of infelicitous phrasing, and these will be corrected. But they have no intention of changing the general style of the translation to present as the end-product a pastiche of Elizabethan English; if they had, they would not be faithful to the commission which they received from the Bishops' Committee. It is not the business of the translator to give the Word of God a "dignity" which the inspired original does not have.

b) Apologetic Value: The purpose of the Bible is not to supply "proof texts" for doctrines which are not explicitly contained in it. Consequently, if the translators are to be true to their role, they must not read later formulations of doctrine into the sacred text or eliminate expressions in it which create difficulties. Obviously, the translators of the new version have no wish to "give comfort to the enemy!" With all other Catholics, they firmly believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary, but they refuse to translate the Greek expression for "brothers and sisters of Jesus" any differently from that. There is a good Greek word for "cousin" (nepheos) which the evangelists did not see fit to use. The translation, "brothers of Jesus" causes difficulty; it has caused difficulty for centuries. But one cannot eliminate the difficult expression for apologetic reasons. The critics who have been "scandalized" by the "brothers of Jesus" would do well to recall the Douay translation of Matthew 1, 25, "And he knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son."

c) Theological Character: It is not easy to describe the mentality of those critics who approach Scripture with a theological conviction that all that developed from it in Catholic doctrine and tradition should somehow be found quite explicitly stated in Scripture. It is equally difficult to enter into the mind of those who, in order to exalt Jesus' divinity, wish the translators to gloss over elements of the Gospel which reflect his humanity. Such, for example, are those who take offence on hearing that Jesus "was raised." If anyone is really so unfamiliar with the New Testament as to ask "Raised-by-

whom?" he might be shown the many texts (about twenty) in which it is said quite unambiguously that God (the Father) raised him. The following are some examples (cited here in the Douay translation):

Acts 3, 15 "But the author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead." Acts 4, 10, "...our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead." Acts 5, 30, "The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus;" Acts 10, 40, "Him God raised up the third day;" 1 Corinthians 6, 14, "Now God hath both raised up the Lord, and will raise us up also by his power;" 1 Corinthians 15, 15, "...we have given testimony against God, that he hath raised up Christ, whom he hath not raised up, if the dead rise not again;" Colossians 2, 12, "Buried with him in baptism, in whom also you are risen again by faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him up from the dead."

These texts in which the verb *egairo* occurs in the active voice, with God as subject and Jesus as object, show quite plainly that the translators of the new C.C.D. New Testament are justified in translating the passive of that same verb as "was raised." (Interested students might consult C.F.D. Moule, *Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 29). It is interesting to see that Monsignor Knox, although generally translating the passive rendering in Romans 4, 25; 8, 4, in spite of the Vulgate's (re)surrexit, to demand the translation "is (or has) risen" simply because people may doubt the divinity of Jesus — a not very likely consequence, if preachers do not neglect their duty of explain-

ing the Scriptures! — is to impose on the New Testament a later, unannounced understanding of the mystery of the Resurrection which does not do justice to the variety of ways in which the early Church understood the mystery and in which God himself deigned to inspire our knowledge of it. Other aspects of the mystery, viz. that Jesus rose by his own divine power, the translators have always made that evident in their rendering, e.g. Mark 8, 31, "So he started to teach them that the Son of Man... must be put to death and rise three days later;" Luke 24, 46, "...the Messiah will suffer and will rise from the dead the third day;" John 2, 19, "Destroy this sanctuary... and in three days I will raise it up."

There are passages (e.g. Mark 3, 5) which reveal Jesus reacting emotionally in a quite normal human way; other passages show his opponents reacting to him as to any other human being. One cannot gloss these over. In this connection of the Douay and old Confraternity New Testament translations of Mark 3, 21, "He is become mad" (Douay); "He has gone mad" (old Confraternity). Many have taken exception to the use of "fellow" for Jesus. This rendering of the demonstrative pronoun *houtos*, when the enemies of Jesus are speaking, is by no means without precedent. If those critics who long for the English of the King James version will consult it on Matthew 26, 61; Luke 23, 2; John 9, 29, they will find that the C.C.D. translators were not the first to use this expression when translating these remarks of Jesus' enemies. One finds the same usage in the New English Bible (John 9, 29), not to mention the Revised

Standard Version (Matthew 26, 61). Christ reveals Himself here and now to man through the liturgy, the signs through which the Word of God comes to man must be meaningful to man here and now. Those whose approach to liturgy is essentially esthetic rather than theological or pastoral may well prefer the archaic English of the older translations, but they should keep in mind that the major concern of the biblical scholar is to translate the original text as accurately as possible. The

In concluding this statement, the members of the translation committee would like to quote from the article of Dom Kevin Seasoltz, cited above (p. 3). Since Father Seasoltz is a liturgist of reputation, his remarks are especially interesting in view of the fact that some of the critics have claimed that the new translation, while perhaps acceptable for private reading, is unsuited for public, liturgical use.

A brief comment should be made on the English text which appears in the missal. A new translation of the Bible regularly stirs up interest and often strong indignation; the present translation is no exception. Contrary to the claim made by some critics, the biblical scholars who worked on the translation were not careless or indifferent about literary effect; however, their major concern was to provide the people with a text which they would understand.

scholar's respect for the obscurity of the original text and for the refined nuances of language are more often unappreciated by his less-informed critics who glibly claim that they could have come up with a better rendition.

"No claim has been made that the Confraternity translation is a definitive translation; however the critics who understand what the biblical scholars attempted to do and who appreciate the difficulties underlying their task generally admit that they have come up with a text which is fresh and vital."

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24 Nuns

Pronounce Final Religious Vows

"Receive, my child, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; to which you are affixed with Him by the three vows..."

With these words, Monsignor Richard Burns, Vicar for Religious, bestowed upon twenty-four young Sisters of St. Joseph the brass-bound crucifix marking their profession of perpetual vows in the community, during the ceremony held at the East Avenue Motherhouse at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 26.

In the presence of their parents, other invited guests, and many Sisters of the Congregation, the Sisters had formally requested permission to make this final profession "in order to devote their whole lives to the service of God and of their neighbor."

Mother Agnes Cecilia, Mother General of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester responded to this request by stating that the community wished these young Sisters to have "by the grace of God, the happiness of living and dying in their Congregation."

Invited, then, by Monsignor Burns to "come and offer her vows to God her Creator," each Sister pronounced the solemn formula, after which she received her blessed crucifix symbolizing her consecration.

This year the profession ceremony was fittingly placed before the offertory of the Mass.

At the close of the Mass, all of the Sisters in this final profession band returned to the convents at which they have been missioned for this past year, to have dinner with their families and afternoon reception for their friends.

THE FOLLOWING Sisters made perpetual vows:

Sister M. Elizabeth Conheady, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. James Conheady, Assumption Parish, Fairport.

Sister M. Letitia Knight, daughter of Mrs. Leo Knight and the late Mr. Knight, St. Francis de Sales, Geneva.

Sister M. Sophia Bove, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Emil Bove, St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls.

Sister M. Eymard Clement, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Clement, Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Sister M. Clarina Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brown, St. Francis de Sales, Geneva.

Sister M. Joel Hayes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George LeFrois, Holy Name.

Sister M. Natalia Imhof, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Imhof, St. Andrew's.

Sister M. Joselle Composto, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Composto, St. Joseph's, Boonville.

Sister M. James Lynch, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. James Lynch, St. Stephen's, Geneva.

Sister M. Mildred Coughlin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Coughlin, Immaculate Conception.

Sister M. Antonine Wozniak, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Wozniak, St. Stanislaus.

Sister M. Joanita Cawley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cawley, Corpus Christi.

Sister Gilmory Cardinal, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Cardinal, St. John the Evangelist, Greece.

Sister M. Magdalena Kellmer, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Hugo Kellmer, St. Columba, Caledonia.

Sister M. Una Pilot, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Pilot, St. Charles Borromeo.

Sister M. St. Bernadette Drons, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Drons, Blessed Sacrament.

Sister M. Brian Madigan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Madigan, formerly of St. Stephen's, Geneva.

Sister M. Innocentia Bachman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bachman, Holy Family, Auburn.

Sister M. David Marshall, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Marshall, Blessed Sacrament.

Sister Maureen Murphy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Murphy, St. Agnes, Avon.

Sister M. Electa Spada, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Spada, Holy Rosary.

Sister M. Brenda Dewey, daughter of Mrs. Mary Estelle Dewey and the late Mr. James Dewey, Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish.

Sister M. Conchita Sullivan, daughter of Mrs. Amory Sullivan and the late Mr. Sullivan, Holy Rosary.

Sister M. de Lourdes Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, St. John the Baptist, Syracuse.

Rosary Sent To Sister Lucy

Fatima—(NC)—Pope Paul VI has sent a golden rosary to Sister Lucia of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, it was announced here.

Sister Lucia is the only survivor of the three children who were witnesses of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. She is now a nun at the Carmel in Coimbra.

The rosary follows the recent papal gift of the Golden Rose to the Fatima shrine.

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Letting nature make the beer takes more time, of course. But one mugful will tell you it's worth every minute of it.

We still let nature make the beer... because that's the way you like it.

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