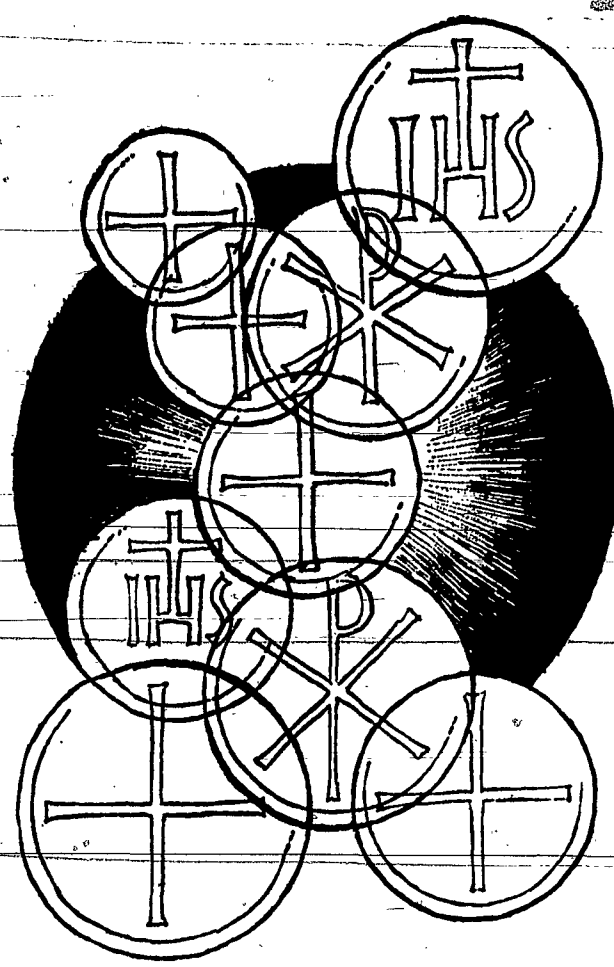


# Four School Questions Test Hearts of U.S. Catholics



"Not by bread alone does man live, our Lord once said. And so also without bread he does not live either. At Mass, man's earthly bread is placed on the paten and transformed at the consecration into that Bread which if any man eats he shall live forever."

Atlantic City — (RNS) — Bishop Ernest J. Primeau, president general of the National Catholic Educational Association, warned Catholic educators to take action now on the problems facing Catholic education and avoid an extended period of drift and indecision.

Specifically, the Bishop of Manchester, N.H., asked that the NCEA launch a study which he indicated would have "the full support of my fellow bishops," detailing and re-examining "all aspects and all problems of Christian formation, embracing not simply the Catholic school system but our entire educational effort. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Newman-apolostate, adult education, and youth programs."

Addressing some 20,000 persons gathered in the huge Convention Hall here for the 64th annual NCEA convention, Bishop Primeau said he is optimistic about the future of Catholic education.

"I hope you share this optimism," he told the delegates. "You have good reason to. In the Church, the Vatican Council has unleashed powerful forces of renewal which, properly channeled, can lead to a great rebirth. In the nation, the forces of division and discord are anachronistic holdovers from the past, while harmony and cooperation are the wave of the future."

"In such times, there may be an excuse for uncertainty, but there is no reason for discouragement. Catholic education has the brains and the skill to solve its problems; the only real question now is whether it has the heart and the will."

Bishop Primeau pointed to four issues that warrant the immediate attention of Catholic

educators. Warning that he was not ready to supply any answers, he told the NCEA that the questions he was raising were those which he considered "basic for developing a rationale of Catholic education adequate to our present time and condition." His four questions were:

• Why should the Church be operating schools at all?

mentary and secondary schools enroll only about half the Catholic school-age children in the country, and Catholic colleges and universities a far smaller proportion?

• Should we (Catholics) concentrate on one level of education or should we instead seek to provide education across the board on all levels?

Bishop Primeau reminded

educators doing—and what are we going to do—about the millions of Catholics who are not in Catholic schools?

The prelate said that he was not thinking exclusively of young people. He explained:

"To be precise, what are we doing for our Catholic adults to help them adjust to life in the post-conciliar Church? Confusion and alarm are more widespread today in the Church than we like to admit. Many people feel adrift, cut off from the safe moorings on which they had depended up to now. Have Catholic educators even begun to think about the problems and needs of these people?"

Bishop Primeau said that the logical instrument for seeking answers to these questions was the NCEA working with the U.S. Catholic bishops.

"Surely the answers to the problems of education should come from within the house of education itself," the Bishop said. "I do not know what method the NCEA might finally settle on for meeting the challenge—whether the establishment of a special commission or commissions, the convening of a seminar or series of seminars to wrestle with fundamental issues, or some other means—but I do know that the association has the high duty of taking action now. Later could be too late."

In discussing the role of the laity in Catholic education, both that of the lay teacher and of the parent, Bishop Primeau said:

"Perhaps the greatest obstacle to continued progress in this area is—not ill will, not the lust for power or reluctance to relinquish it—but ordinary, understandable timidity."

"Clergy, religious and laymen alike, we are all so new at this business of working with one another as essential equals

— as members of the People of God—that we tend at times to withdraw nervously into old patterns of behavior—authoritarian on the one hand, submissive on the other—which are no longer adequate to the new insights and needs of our day," he said.

Bishop Primeau touched on the subject of secularization of Catholic educational institutions and challenged the notion that academic freedom and pursuit of truth are impossible in a church-related school.

"There is no reason for the Catholic educator to offer apologies for his commitments or to accept the hourly old notion that a Catholic cannot be a true intellectual," he said. "We have our commitments, others have theirs."

"And those who demand absolute non-commitment as a prerequisite for the intellectual life are, it seems to me, demanding an impossibility which never has existed and never will; and which, were it by some miracle to be realized, would produce only intellectual sterility."

## Moral Scrutiny Needed

New York—(RNS)—An open letter, scheduled for publication in eight Roman Catholic newspapers and magazines "as close to Easter as possible," urged Catholics to join in protesting American actions in Vietnam.

"We do not pretend to be competent to resolve all the issues at stake in this war," the letter states. "However, it is difficult to see how any man of conscience, regardless of his basic position on the war, can condone certain recurrent features of this conflict."

The statement has been signed by more than 800 Catholics including one bishop, Auxiliary Bishop James Shannon of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Among the elements of American involvement in Vietnam which the statement condemns "emphatically and unambiguously" are:

- "Indiscriminate bombing, which grossly destroys any sufficient distinction between combatant and civilian;
- "The horrible destruction of human life by means of napalm and fragmentation bombs;
- "Depriving the populace of necessary food supplies through crop destruction;
- "The torture of prisoners in any form whatsoever."

"We strongly believe," the statement says, "that immoral acts on one side do not justify immoral acts of retaliation on the other, and as Americans and Catholics we feel it necessary to call attention to our own responsibilities."

The statement is sponsored by an organization called the Catholic Committee on Vietnam which originated among students and professors at the graduate school of theology, Fordham University. It began as a local New York effort but reached the national level largely through the efforts of John Leo, associate editor of Commonweal magazine, weekly journal of opinion edited by Catholic laymen. The committee is an ad hoc group supported by voluntary contributions.

According to a committee coordinator, Thomas J. Sheehan, a graduate student at Fordham, more than 800 signatures endorsing the statement have been given by American Catholics. The statement will be printed as an advertisement in the following Catholic publications: America, Ave Maria, Commonweal, Continuum, the Delmarva Dialog, the National Catholic Reporter, the Oakland Catholic Voice and the St. Louis Review.

Among the signatories are the presidents of eight Catholic colleges (none from Rochester) and many Catholic leaders in education, scholarship, journalism, literature and social action.

## No More 'Strangulation'?

Monsignor William M. Roche, diocesan superintendent of schools, has been quite articulate the past few weeks in expressing ideas on up-dating Catholic education.

At the Atlantic City meeting of the Catholic educators this week he said the present parish control of schools is "a slow and agonizing strangulation."

In an article in the Catholic School Journal he said that a "diocesan congress on Catholic education" would be a possible first step at liberating the schools and, in an article in America magazine, he proposed that the over-all present program of teaching religion be "completely restructured."

A more detailed report will be published in a subsequent issue of the Courier.

Conceding the "long and distinguished tradition" of Catholic education, Bishop Primeau stressed that it is the duty of the association "to formulate the reasons for the existence of a Catholic school system in the United States at this particular moment in history."

• Does the goal of "every Catholic child in a Catholic school" remain a possible and desirable one today?

"In answering it," Bishop Primeau said, "We need to start with the truth that after more than a century of tremendous effort in human and financial terms, Catholic ele-

the delegates of the report of Father Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi which showed that the maximum impact of Catholic education did not come from any one level but rather from the cumulative process of value-formation and value-reinforcement in cooperation with the home.

"If Greeley and Rossi are right, it is the young person who has attended a Catholic grammar school; Catholic high school, and Catholic college who will benefit most from what Catholic education has to offer," he said.

• What are we as Catholic

## The New Poverty — Prosperity OK

Pope Paul's — and Bishop Sheen's — concern for the world's poor people reflects the concern of Jesus, our divine Lord, for the lowly and by-passed people of the world.

The whole life example of Jesus Himself is one of choosing poverty rather than riches, obscurity rather than honors, suffering rather than comforts. He told His disciples they'd be happier if they'd always be poor — "Happy the poor in spirit," He said, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

His disciples from that day to this have generally found that statement of His disconcerting.

Like truth and charity, poverty is also an essential characteristic of the Christian spirit. It is no secret that even the Church is a bit ambivalent about poverty — commending it but never very content to endure it.

Part of the problem is in stating precisely what is really meant by poverty — is it only an interior intention about not being preoccupied with wealth, or does it require a radical break from the world's way of doing business, does it mean Catholics — indeed all Christians — should impudently give away all their property and savings and live as the beggars of India or the hungry hordes in Latin America, ought we to live at a subsistence level and give all we earn above that to charity?

This is the paradox — poverty is essential to the Gospel and here we are, close to twenty centuries since the Gospel was given, and we don't yet know how to put it into practice.

Jesuit Father Jean Danielou, noted French Scripture scholar, went into this precise problem in an article in Cross Currents magazine in 1959. "Here, as in most instances," he said, "if we want to understand the New Testament, we must take as our starting point the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, where the poor, the 'anawim,' are often mentioned. The description given us is initially shocking."

Father Danielou describes the Old Testament's "anawim" as "oppressed . . . the object of persecution by the powerful . . . caught in a web of misfortune . . . (and) before anything else 'the pious,' the just." Material poverty, according to Father Danielou, is only one aspect of the poor man's trials. Poverty's fundamental meaning, the Jesuit scholar said, "is defined essentially in its relation to God and not primarily in relation to material goods or to other men. . . . The poor man is one who observes God's law, who suffers from not seeing God's law observed in the world . . . (and) as a result, the poor man is inevitably put in conflict with the powers of this world."

Pascal, said Father Danielou, once remarked that truth can be made an idol. "So, too," he wrote, "can poverty be made an idol." This idol-making is done by identifying poverty with one particular sociological or economic condition of life.

"Instead, evangelical poverty is free, even in regard to poverty. It consists in being free in regard to everything save the will of God," Father Danielou stated, "Privation will be good, when it is willed with God; so will prosperity, when it is willed with God."

This interpretation of "poverty" — leaving room for prosperity — may seem to some to be nothing more than a quibble, a "new poverty" to match, it would seem, the "new theology" and the "new liturgy." It is, rather, I think, a profound and historic resolution of an age-old conflict that has too often been debated at merely a superficial level.

This superficial understanding of the question has actually lulled too many of us into complacency with the frightening poverty which haunts at least half the world's population — we let that half endure vicariously what we ourselves were too reluctant to endure, or even alleviate.

Now we realize that this other half should enjoy affluence as do we — and, like the ancient "anawim," we must be restless and a reproach to the status quo until the good things of God's creation are enjoyed by all His people.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

## Blame the Greeks, They Confused Us

Toronto — (CPF)—Could our idea of God be all wrong?

This is the question asked—and answered in the affirmative—by a lay Catholic philosopher in what is quickly becoming the most discussed and best-selling book of its kind since the Second Vatican Council inspired open inquiry into once-closed subjects involving faith and morals.

The book, "The Future of Belief," has brought international attention to Leslie Dewart, a 43-year-old professor of philosophy at St. Michael's College who has, in the opinion of United Press International religion editor Louis Cassella, "clearly established his place among the most brilliant and creative minds of our time."

In his book, which is currently one of the fastest-selling items in Catholic bookstores ("America" magazine's latest best-seller list has it No. 2, right behind "The Jerusalem Bible") Dewart suggests that the widespread notion of God as a Supreme Being is erroneous.

In fact, he says, God may not even "exist" at all, as we understand the word "exist."

Dewart's ideas, which he insists are "tentative and exploratory" and are being offered for "public examination," stem from his opinion that our concept of God was originally shaped in and for a Greek culture. Now that Greek patterns of thought and activity no longer influence man's daily existence—he says this de-hellenization has taken place mostly in the last 150 years—our idea of God must change or religion will continue to have little relevance in man's daily life.

For, with the continuing emphasis on God's omnipotence, omniscience, infinity and other qualities that were of prime concern to Greek metaphysics, man's idea of God—after two thousand years of Christianity—is still a "primitive" one, Dewart maintains.

"The implication seems to be that the Christian faith believes in exactly the same God as any intelligent, well-disposed non-

Christian might well believe in," he says. Dewart argues that our preoccupation with assigning to God "the infinite degree of the creaturely perfections"—again, the way the Greek mind worked—has, in effect, removed God from our lives.

"Christianity," he charges, "enjoys the doubtful distinction of being the only higher religion to have become preoccupied with the existence of God to the extent of having neglected his reality."

Christian theology must not, Dewart says, concern itself with "demonstrating that a God whom 'everyone' knows actually exists," but, rather, should be concerned with "showing how God himself in his reality is present to human experience."

The first step that Christian theology must take in this direction, he goes on, is to re-examine its concept of God and determine whether God really is a being. Dewart maintains that such an examination will reveal that God is a Supreme Being because the Greeks, with their concern over such matters as "essence," "substance," "immutability" and their bent for arranging everything in a hierarchical scale, from lowest to highest, made God a Supreme Being.



LESLIE DEWART  
A De-Greeked Theology

Dewart calls this "anthropomorphism"—giving human qualities to the non-human—and says this is where the idea that God "exists" comes from.

"The proposition that 'God cannot be said to exist' can be properly and literally understood by the Christian believer in God, on the grounds that 'to exist' is proper to a being, that is, to that which is created or creates itself and is, therefore, a thing, a that-which-has-essence. . . . What the religious experience of God discloses is a reality beyond being. For unless we retain the Greek metaphysical outlook, the ordinary facts of Christian experience are sufficient to establish that we do 'experience' God, but that we do not 'experience' him" as being."

Dewart suggests that "Christianity may in the future conceive God as a historical presence, indeed as History." He explains:

"What Christians may realize better in the future is that, as man's consciousness develops, we must conceive God as historical or not at all. We must understand God either as present in history, or otherwise as altogether absent to man. That may be why to the same degree that we have in the past discouraged the world's — and our own — understanding of God as present in history, we have facilitated the disbelief in God of modern times."

Dewart refers here specifically to our concern with God's omnipotence and suggests that not until we stop thinking of God primarily as "Almighty" will man, who is quickly gaining control of once-feared elements of nature, see God as meaningful to him. What's more, "God's omnipotence" may be interfering with the doing of his will, in Dewart's view.

"The moral implication of this is that once it is no longer 'God's omnipotence' to fall back on, our Christian conscience may be awakened to feel its adult responsibilities for taking the full initiative in 'restoring all things in Christ' and for exercising its creative ingenu-

## A Christian Layman is More than a Serf

By GARY MacCOIN

Rome—Will the laity survive the reform of the code of canon law? It will probably be several years before the question is answered. The reform initiated by Pope John is taking much longer than had been anticipated, and present indications are that agreement is still lacking on basic issues which must be resolved before a real start can be made.

Those accustomed to seeing the Church in the mentality of the present code will not find it easy to conceive the possibility that the concept of laity as there enshrined could be eliminated, even if the reform took a century to accomplish. One must remember, however, as Father Peter M. Shannon, a recent past president of the Canon Law Society of America, has observed, that the 1917 code was compiled by "a few cardinals, a few bishops and a few canon lawyers." Its mentality is not that of 1918 but simply a reformation of principles of a much earlier age.

One of the most outdated of those principles is that of two class structure, a principle rooted in the notion of slave and

freeman basic to the society of ancient Greece and Rome formulated in the serfdom of feudal Europe. As any one familiar with the fossilized remains of this society in contemporary Latin America and parts of Europe knows, the upper class has rights without corresponding duties, and the lower class duties without corresponding rights.

Historically, the layman of the code is the serf, the one who is not a cleric, that is to say, who cannot read or write. Of the 617 canons which deal with persons, 574 concern clerics and those assimilated to the clergy because they are in "the state of clericality" and 43 concern the laity. The first two things it says about the laity is that they have the right to receive spiritual goods from the clergy, and that they are forbidden to wear clerical dress.

The class origin of the distinctive dress is too obvious to merit comment. The "right to receive" is more interesting. The phrase represents an intermediate stage between being a non-person and a person. It proclaims a passive right, the

right to be given, to receive. It is rather an authorization to the cleric to give than a claim existing in the recipient to be given what he needs to save his soul.

The logic of the class system demands that existentially everyone must be on one side of the dividing line or the other. The slave could be freed. The son of the serf could be knighted. It was rare, but it was possible. The effect, however, was that he thereby ceased to be slave or serf. He entered the other class, the upper class, abandoning his own.

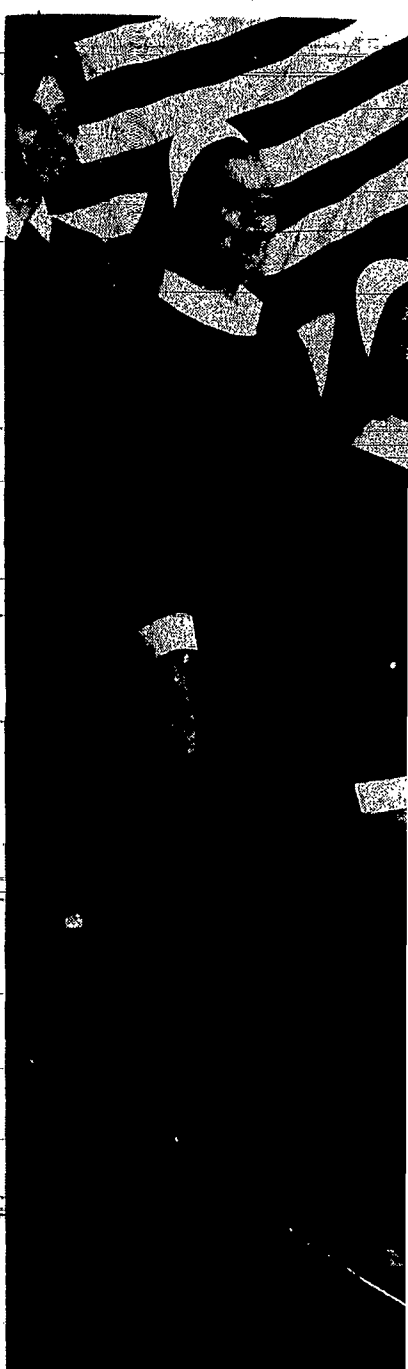
That is why I think the code must be put aside if the concept of lay and cleric on which it is based. It is a concept in direct conflict with the notion of Christian as expressed in Vatican II's constitution on the nature of the Church. That document recognizes the essential difference between the general priesthood of every baptized person and the special priesthood of the ordained priest. It recognizes the unique service to which his consecration calls the bishop.

But it proclaims with equal emphasis that neither priest nor bishop ceases to

be an equal member of the Christian community, with all the corresponding rights and duties.

Any meaningful reform of the code of canon law must incorporate the same principle. Theoretically, the words lay and cleric could be retained with totally different definitions, but they are so encrusted with emotional overtones that I think it would be simpler to scrap them, just as I think it would be simpler and more in tune with today's realities to dump the framework of Roman law and start from the common law or possibly the new international law which the United Nations is laboriously creating.

Elimination of the false clerical-lay dichotomy would lay the ground-work for removing many of our confusions. Catholic Action would automatically become the work of Christians, not of laymen. The crisis over control of Catholic schools and colleges would evaporate. And a priest would no longer have to prove his right to carry a placard, operate a lathe or edit a newspaper, if he has the technical and professional qualifications to perform these or other functions.



Chorus of 100 is made up of professed Sisters from

## Requiem For Father

Father Charles Hall, only Rochester Negro to become a Catholic priest, died on Holy Saturday after a short but dynamic career. He was 38.

St. Augustine's High School, where Father Hall was stationed throughout his priestly career, received high praise in "Time" magazine two years ago.

Through the work of the Josephite Fathers, it stated, the



FATHER HALL

## Clergy Institute On Prophets

Dr. Sheldon H. Blank, professor of Scripture at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, who has influenced the ministry of hundreds of liberal rabbis in the country through his interpretation of the meaning of the Hebrew Bible and, particularly, the prophetic faith, will be guest lecturer at the day-long Annual Institute for the Clergy to be held at Temple Beth Kodesh, (1 Monday, April 10. His topics will be "The Prophet and the Way to Survival" and "The Prophet and God."

## Southern

For the first time in the Elmira area, Protestant ministers and Catholic priests will come together for an Inter-Faith Seminar to be held Wednesday, April 5, at the Holiday Inn in Horseheads.

Jesuit Father David Bowman, newly appointed assistant-director of the Faith and Order Department of the National Council of Churches will address the group. Father Bowman, from the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, teaches at

## You'd S



Three St. Agnes High School students

## The Catholic COURIER

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