

Sisterhood Considers 25 Changes

NC News Service
Boston—The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, largest community of nuns in the Boston archdiocese who staff more than 100 institutions in this area, is considering major changes within the organization.

The 25 proposed changes concern the community's relationship with other members of the Church; interpretation of the traditional religious vows; an individual nun's choice of leisure time; retaining baptismal names rather than names given in religious life.

The community in this area is affiliated with a nationwide Sisterhood which has members working in 19 archdioceses and dioceses. The Sisterhood was founded in France in 1848 and has a membership of some 30,000 nuns throughout the world.

Sisters would have final voice in the use of leisure time under the proposed changes. Their own judgment, deciding whether or not they would enroll in higher studies, engage in avocational pursuits like writing or community activities, visit homes of family and friends, and the like, would govern.

Instead of the vow of obedience being invoked strictly, more consideration would be given in future to the autonomy of the individual, to her mature and freely made choices considered in the light of professional needs and the fruitful use of available time.

Sisters would be free to travel alone and to attend public events without specific permission of superiors.

Also under consideration is the essential role of the Sister as a member of the civil or secular community in which she resides. The proposal is that the congregation adopt a firmer policy of openness, of a sharing of the Sisters in the active life of the neighborhood and, conversely, of the neighborhood feeling free to call upon the reservoir of energy and skills represented in convent populations.

A special feature of the program will be to determine "a second kind of living" for concerned Sisters, the kind that would make continued use of talent, energy and experience once a nun had, by the calendar, reached retirement age.

The nuns have been working in this area since 1873.

Don't Neglect Literary Forms For Religious Perspective

By PATRICK SAMWAY, S.J.
Theological student at Woodstock College, Maryland

Since the closing days of Vatican II, the Catholic populace of this country has been inundated with documents, pastoral letters, textual commentaries, and theological critiques. In an age of renewal, such material is necessary because it helps to articulate the growth process of the Church in today's world.

Theological documents, however, are not the only material available to reading Catholics. Novels and other works of literature offer the reader a vision of life which often gives a new perspective to the theological statements contained in the various documents. The literary imagination has always been one of man's most important resources in attempting to express what is of value in the world.

The following books are examples of literary material which dramatically portray men and women trying to work out their lives with the psychological and spiritual insights they gradually acquire.

Literature and the Christian Life, by Sallie TeSelle (Yale University Press, \$6.50). Mrs. TeSelle's concern is not to demonstrate an intrinsic relationship between theology and literature, but to interpret the relevance of literature in making the reader cognizant of the complexities of life.

The author explores the nature and function of literature and the nature of the Christian life. A novel is important because it is an excellent imaginal investigation of a man and the cosmos, because it offers a sort of learning about man and the world not otherwise available, learning by concrete, felt experience.

Literature with its creative depictions of the basic structure of human experience, in both its cosmological and anthropological aspects, offers Christians an invaluable entrée into the mysterious realms of wisdom and discernment. It gives the Christian an understanding of the meaning of his response to the world and to God, insofar as man is called upon to love in the depths of his heart all that is sacred.

Neither history, psychology, science, nor theology alone can give men the vision of life they so desperately need.

"It is this integral nature and function of literature that is important to the Christian in the task of realizing his salvation by becoming one who trusts God in spite of and in the midst of this complexity and who loves his fellow man," and, through his awareness of the intricate realities of human nature," Mrs. TeSelle's book is an excellent guide for evaluating literature in a religious context.

The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, by Brian Moore (Dell Publishing Company, \$1.55) is the story of a middle-aged Irish spinster who gradually looks at her adult life in light of the values which her traditional Catholicism has given her. Her passion, as the word implies, is one of suffering and desire. As she endures her existence in a Belfast boarding house, Judith questions whether her religious heritage has given her the maturity to live a full and meaningful life or not. Her future life depends on a brutally frank answer.

This book is a poignant portrait because it goes to the deepest recesses of Judith's being and searches out the basic ingredients of life. Faith, for Judith, had been a treasured possession locked in a black box which was never opened. Life, however, must be based on something more than an uncritical faith and, like Pandora, Judith must see that hope remains once the box has been opened.

Siddharta, by Hermann Hesse (New Directions Paperbook, \$1.25), penetrated by the rhythms and philosophies of India, centers around a young man's quest for life's authentic meaning and practice.

As a young man, Siddharta, a name often associated with Buddha himself, sets out to pursue the life of an ascetic, a life of renunciation and emptiness which looks to the fulfillment of Nirvana. Soon realizing that meditation, abandonment of the body, and fasting are only temporary palliatives against the pain and folly of life, he rejects his monkish ways and experiences the sensuous pleasures of life, particularly from the courtesan Kamala. Ultimately, he withdraws from his riches and success to become a ferryman, an ordinary worker contemplating self, love, and knowledge.

This novel should be read slowly on a quiet day in June under a eucalyptus tree by a murmuring river.

Light in August, by William Faulkner (Modern Library, \$1.65) is, in this reviewer's mind, Faulkner's most lyric and successful novel. The two main characters, Joe Christmas and Lena Grove, never meet even though the patterns of their lives interlock with one another. As with *The Sound and the Fury*, the meaning of this novel depends on the relationship of all the characters as they are curiously juxtaposed.

Christmas, a much diminished Christ figure, searches for physical and social identity. He wanders in circles facing a world drenched in Calvinism looking for a way to escape from the psychological inferno of his mind. The ambiguity of his black/white background and the murder of his mistress lead to his eventual crucifixion.

Counteracting this downward spiral, however, is the simple and earthy Lena Grove who is searching for the father of her child. In a poisonous world, she has the antidote: an appreciation of life and people.

The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, by James Joyce (The Viking Press, \$1.45) has been a favorite for the last 45 years. The story of Stephen Dedalus (a mirror of Joyce's early years) is

as one critic noted, a story of thoughts and crests, of defeats and triumphs. Stephen earnestly seeks religious, sexual, and aesthetic fulfillment against a background of Irish nationalism and religious traditionalism.

The climax, at the end of chapter four, after Stephen has rejected a vocation to the priesthood in the Jesuit order, comes with a twofold vision: that of a hawklike man flying above the sea, a symbol of the artistic life, and that of a girl standing in mid-stream, a symbol of the beauty of life.

Everything That Rises Must Converge, by Flannery O'Connor (The Noonday Press, \$1.95) is a title taken from the writings of Father Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. As Robert Fitzgerald has written, Flannery's writings "must be called religious but with no false note in our voices, because her writing will make any false note that is applied to it very clear indeed."

This book, a collection of nine short stories, comes from a climate of Christian violence tempered by a Georgian sense of the grotesque. The author, a devout Catholic who died in 1964, is the masterful storyteller of this generation.

Flannery believed that the sacramental view of life is one of the main supports of a writer if he is going to achieve any depth. The Church provides the writer with more advantages than he can possibly use. The weakness in any piece of fiction is not due to any limitations of the Church, but to a lack of control by the author.

The first story, which has the same title as the collection, dramatizes a confrontation of identities and counter-identities.

Flannery's characters live a passion week of the heart as the boy in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" learns when he leans over his mother "postponing from moment to moment his entry into the world of guilt and sorrow."

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By Ruth DeMallie

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MISINTERPRETED
 "I'm sorry I have to do this to you," he said as he reached for his back pocket. As this startling statement by the tall young man who had entered his store late on a Sunday night, the store owner braced himself, but his fright showed through. The shopper reached into his pocket and brought forth his money to pay for his quart of milk. He was apologizing for having to ask the grocer to change a \$20 bill for the purchase of a quart of milk.

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New Look at Luther

Joint Publishing Venture

New York — (RNS) — On the basis of the central issue in Reformer Martin Luther's protest against the Church of Rome, there is no reason why Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches should be separated, according to a leading Catholic scholar.

This position is set forth in "Luther: Right or Wrong?" by Father Harry J. McSorley, C.S.P. The book was issued in a unique venture by the Lutheran Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis and the Paulist Newman Press in New York.

Intended as a contribution to the ecumenical theological dialogue, the volume appeared two weeks before the 1969 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Augsburg is the printing agency of the American Lutheran Church and Newman Press is operated by the Paulist Fathers.

According to Father McSorley and many Protestant theologians, the key issue standing of the "unfreedom of the will," that is, that the first step toward re-establishing a right relation between man and God—come through God's grace and not through human initiative.

The book itself was a product of research into Protestant theology and ecumenical questions made possible by the Paulist Fathers. Father McSorley began his study in Europe in 1960. He did research for six years, during which the Decree of Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council underscored the usefulness of the kind of project he was already carrying out.

During 1967, the detailed study was issued in German as the first volume of a series on ecumenical theology. It was widely hailed in Europe.

On the basis of what Father McSorley identifies as Luther's original intention, the priest declares that the Reformer's protest is not one that must irrevocably divide Protestant and Catholic Christianity.

The author finds Luther a man of his day in many respects but also sees him as a thinker who came to see that many of the opinions he was

Father Harry J. McSorley, C.S.P., a recognized Luther scholar, is the author of a new book, "Luther: Right or Wrong?" (RNS)

taught were incompatible with the Christian Gospel.

Father McSorley states that some of the understandings of the relation of man to God which Luther heard expounded did indeed depart from biblical and ecclesiastical teachings. Some of the opinions had never been endorsed by the Church, he says, adding that Erasmus did not do justice to the traditional Catholic doctrine in arguing with Luther.

The Jesuit says that the separation of Lutheran Protestantism from the Church of Rome emerged from "a series of accidental misunderstandings and blameworthy conduct on both sides."

Industrial Theology

Man Must Understand Meaning of Work, Priest-Sociologist Tells Business Seminar

By GEORGE M. BARMANN
NC News Service

Dayton, Ohio — A priest-sociologist told a seminar on the role of management in the social action field there is a need for an "industrial theology" to help man understand the ultimate significance of business and industry, and the meaning of work.

Father Theodore V. Purcell, S.J., director of the Cambridge (Mass.) Center for Social Studies, at a conference of middle managers at the University of Dayton, said business ethics has not caught on as a vital subject.

The seminar focused mainly on the problem of hard-core unemployment. About 200 business and industry managers participated.

Father Purcell said executives tend to react unfavorably to the term "business ethics," because it is suggestive of "a lot of 'shalt nots'" and is "threatening and negative." The executives, in substance, say they already are ethical, he added.

He emphasized the personal character of work, through which man can fulfill himself and, in the sense, find God, who is the Maker, the Manager, the Accountant.

Man has to work in order to be a man, he said. Welfare or "dead end jobs" will not give him the fulfillment he must have, he added.

Father Purcell said theologians "haven't said very much that's meaningful to the business man," even though business people are interested in theology's message. He suggested that the logical answers ultimately can be given to such practical questions about the negative reaction of many college students to business recruitment programs.

"They don't want to be a man with a martini, an ulcer and a gray flannel suit," he continued. "They want to be significant and they feel the cold corporation isn't."

Actually, he said, there is more purpose and meaning in many corporations than youths imagine, citing the growth of corporate social responsibility.

Father Purcell called on management to revamp the supervisory system to give a foreman more credit for dealing with people "as persons" in his department.

"The foreman now is graded on quality, production and efficiency and not too much on how he holds the hand of somebody that needs help," the priest said. "Management needs to work this out."

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