

# Priest Offers Practical Ideas on CCD

Apparent "changes" in teachings of the Church confuse many who lack wide reading in theology. Father Douglas C. Hofman, assistant pastor of St. Margaret Mary's parish, Apalachin, after attending a recent "conference on teaching Catholic doctrine" offers some practical ideas for CCD teachers and preachers.

By FATHER DOUGLAS HOFFMAN

Does Catholic doctrine change? Or have some "implicit" truths of the Catholic Faith simply become "explicit" over the course of centuries? Is not the body of doctrine always and everywhere the same for Catholicism?

What is the "development of dogma"?

Today the issue of doctrinal development underpins very practical problems of quite practical people — preachers, CCD teachers, bishops, and moralists.

Our diocesan Clergy Conference (May 12-13) on religious education brought this home very dramatically to me. In our discussion of high school curriculum, the question of doctrines to be communicated was delicately sidestepped, I thought.

Further, whenever the Baltimore Catechism was mentioned

(and always apologetically), there seemed to be a consensus that its big fault was "too much doctrine." (Do we recall these days that the catechism was originally meant to be a digest of Christian doctrine for adults?)

I would like to put forward for consideration the leads taken by Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan on this notion of doctrinal development, and then suggest an application to the field of catechetics.

Fr. Rahner, in "Theological Investigations No. 1," compares the rise of dogma in the Church with the story of a couple in love. After being truly in love for some time, and coming to know one another through the experience, the pair are separated. She cherishes some very happy memories, and thinks about the many things he did and said. As time goes by, now one, now another truth about him comes to her. She continues to think of him, and in a certain sense understands him even better than before.

So with the Church. The Bride of Christ, now awaiting His second coming, discusses and reflects upon and cherishes in her memory the experiences with Christ, her Spouse. The knowledge that was only implicit in the earliest days becomes explicit for the Church at events like the Council of

Nicea, Ephesus, Chalcedon . . . Such is Rahner's basic thought.

Fr. Lonergan develops the theme in a slightly different way: Dogma is the articulation in clear propositional form of truths about God and our salvation. But dogmas emerge only sporadically in the Church and as a response to specific questions. They represent not merely a new formulation but a content new in the sense that the Christian community never previously specified these particular truths so clearly.

So, for example, that Jesus Christ is God and therefore eternal and consubstantial with the Father is nowhere in the Scriptures affirmed to include eternity and consubstantiality.

It took a man such as Arius, who did not believe that Jesus was God in that sense, to bring the dogma of the divinity of Christ into the clear consciousness of the Church. Before him (and others who questioned the "nature" of Christ), the Faith of the Church regarding Christ was embodied compactly in notions such as "Jesus is Lord," and "Jesus is the Lamb of God" . . .

Lonergan adds further that truths for human beings are always partial and particular truths, slices of a bigger pie, to be complemented by other truths as the individual or com-

munity moves to fuller knowledge.

As an instance, the dogma of papal infallibility embodies a truth of Catholic Faith. It needs to be completed by other particular truths (e.g. Collegial authority of the Bishops).

What may we gain from all this?

(1) Church doctrines always develop as statements of fidelity to "the One who is all in all."

(2) Doctrines "reflect" the preoccupations of the Church and its times in the sense that particular issues and conditions cause particular truths to surface.

(3) Doctrines of the Church often develop to the point of propositional clarity ("Something is . . . ; something is not . . .")

(4) Catholic doctrine changes in the sense that at any time in Her history she strives to clarify and affirm particular truths of Faith and later this truth is complemented by another partial truth, which together embody the fuller Catholic doctrine.

What are some practical implications for catechetics?

(1) Before one is tempted to say the Church has "changed her teaching", one should de-

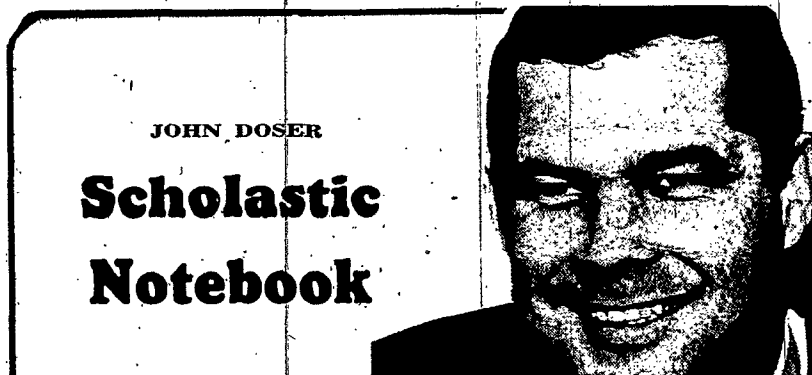
termine just what is affirmed in the doctrine at hand. Regarding the sacrament of the Eucharist, for example, I think the present teaching simply adds to the truth of Christ's real presence the truth of personal encounter.

(2) Catechists puzzled about curriculum and doctrine need more exposure to the history of the important doctrines of our Faith (including those of the first four councils).

To affirm that Jesus is our brother is a particular truth to be complemented by the truth of his divinity, his oneness with the Father and Holy Spirit . . . There are many truths about Jesus. Not many are defined. All are true. Not all are appropriate to the first grade classroom.

(3) Trainers of catechists need more background theology. The truths of the more person-oriented theologians need to be complemented by truths of the earlier stages in the Church's history.

(4) We priests must be more sophisticated in our understanding of Church doctrine. We need to notice when important doctrines are being neglected (e.g. Sin, perhaps), but also we need to know better when certain doctrines are inappropriate (e.g. angelology, perhaps).



JOHN DOSER  
**Scholastic Notebook**

"The boys did what was expected of them," Bishop Kearney track co-coach Brother DiLibero explained.

A simple reason why the BK runners, jumpers and throwers whipped McQuaid, 80-56, and won their first City - Catholic League track and field championship.

DiLibero, BK sophomore biology teacher, and Brother Pellegrino, junior American history teacher, guided the Kings to their first victory in varsity competition over McQuaid as well.

BK had been the bridesmaid several times, but never the bride. "We've had some fine teams here in the past six years," DiLibero said, but there's little doubt about which one DiLibero is most proud.

He could have mentioned every boy's name on the squad but did cite a few in particular.

The most outstanding achievement was senior Steve Mileo's shot put toss which hit 55 feet, 8 1/4 inches, good enough for a C-C and All-Catholic record.

Mileo, a 6-2, 230-lb. BK All-Catholic football tackle, is going to Villanova this fall on a grid scholarship.

Other BK heroes (and there were many) include middle distance runner Tom Neary, and low hurdler Tom Campione. Neary runs the 880 in 1:58 while Campione has done a 20.8 in the 180 low hurdles.

The title win lifted the Kings' record to 7-0-1 (the tie was against Aquinas) with the Diocesan and City-Catholic meets scheduled earlier this week and the Inter-Diocesan Meet at Albany this Sunday.

THE DE SALES Saints of the Wayne - Finger Lakes Western Division are no longer unbeaten. The Saints dropped a 5-4 nine inning decision to Victor

and fell to 8-1 in their division although they already wrapped up the championship.

Saints' pitcher Ron Roxstrom fanned 11 and walked only one while opposing moundsman Tom Peck, a sophomore, whiffed seven and walked two.

Aquinas' Jeff Saddler drew a game opening walk and turned out to be the only Irish runner to reach base as Jefferson's Chuck Steffen fanned 14 and fired no-hit ball the rest of the way . . . Jeff won, 4-0.

McQuaid, taking several lumps in one week in track, failed in its bid to win the Aquinas Relays four years in a row . . . The Knights placed 3rd behind winning St. Joe's of Buffalo and Charlotte . . . 24 schools competed.

The Knights fared best in Catholic League golf by whipping defending champion Bishop Kearney (does this make up for losing the track title?) 8-1, to win the championship. . . Tom Springer, Doug Miller and Bill Thaney have been medalists in the five league victories for coach Ed Markey. . . Thaney's 36 against Mooney was McQuaid's best score at Oak Hill this season. . . Springer had a 35 at Durand.

Aquinas' Bill Fox is headed for Fredonia State on a track and cross country scholarship. . . Art DiAntonio, ex-McQuaid jumper, set a school mark in the triple pump with 46-7 1/2 and owns a 23-4 long jump at Marquette.

New head football coach at BK is former assistant Don Della Vella. . . "I'm grateful Danny (Coughlin) gave me as much latitude this past couple of years as he did," Della Vella said. . . Coughlin resigned last month to go into business. . .

BK has a good club coming back, hopes to improve last year's 5-2-1 record in the new C-C football loop this fall.



Msgr. John F. Duffy, Senior Associate Pastor (far left), and Father Eugene G. Emo, Junior Associate Pastor (far right), draw attention (with a couple of the directional arrow signs that are posted throughout the area) to Fred Holmes, co-general chairman (second from right) and Jon Shay, co-general chairman (second from left), for the St. Mary's Summer Festival to be held in Dansville June 4 and 5. (Photography by Powell Studios of Dansville)

## Father Daly To Speak First Friday

Father Declan Daly, SS.CC. will address the June meeting of the Mass League and the First Friday Club of the K. of C. Father Daly's subject will be "Keeping Christians Young and Keeping Young Christians."

Father Daly, a Sacred Heart Father stationed at SS Peter & Pauls Church in Rochester, has been active in youth work. Since coming to SS Peter & Paul's, he has been moderator of the Youth Club. Before his arrival, he had worked with CYO organizations and with the State Juvenile Correctional Institute in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Father Daly was born in Roscommon, Ireland, and was ordained in 1964. He taught for two years at Queen of Peace Seminary in New Hampshire. In September, he will go to Washington, D.C. to teach in the "Coalition of Religious Seminaries."

The First Friday luncheons are held at the Top of the Plaza beginning at noon. They end promptly at 1:30. Men and women are invited.

Wednesday, June 2, 1971

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