

Family Camping

A Family Camping Renewal is scheduled for July 1-4 at the Auriesville Shrine of the North American Martyrs. Local people may make reservations through June 15 with Jack McTigue, 889-2134, or Anne M.

Scheurman, 381-5998. Space is limited.

Father Joseph McBride, S.I. will be in charge, assisted by two host families and a staff of teenagers.

The Church 1978

By Father Andrew Greeley

Some Suggested Readings

Karl Rahner's long-awaited "summa" has at last appeared in English.



"Foundations of Christian Faith," a simplified and systematic summary of Rahner's Fr. Greeley immense theological work, lives up to all advance notice. It confirms that we live in an extraordinary theological era. Within the space of a couple of years we have had major theological summaries by Kung and Rahner which are likely to be read for a long time to come.

While "Foundations" is in some places very difficult reading, it is considerably easier to understand than most of Rahner's other works; it is written in non-technical style with none of the elaborate scholarly apparatus of vast footnote references so dearly loved in German theological scholarship. Some passages are difficult because of the complexity of the thought, not because of the obscurity of the language; but the thought is well worth wrestling with. Rahner is a philosophical theologian—indeed, a transcendental Thomist like Bernard Lonergan and David Tracy.

Philosophical theology may not be your bag, but no intelligent Christian in the modern world can afford to be without some philosophical sophistication when he discusses religion. Rahner roots his philosophy in the human experience of the transcendent and develops an extraordinarily powerful argument for Christianity out of that experience.

Atheist and agnostic philosophers pay little attention to the challenge of transcendental Thomism, perhaps because they have not bothered to distinguish between the old scholastic Thomism and the new transcendental approach. At some point, however, if they have any intellectual honesty about them at all, they are going to have to address themselves to the challenge of Lonergan and Tracy. They will find, I suspect, the arguments of Rahner's "Foundations" extremely difficult to answer. In a hundred years or two, historians of philosophy will mark the last quarter of the 20th century as an era of major victory for a revived Catholic philosophical theology.

A comparison between "Foundations" and "On Being a Christian" is difficult, since Kung is every bit as much a "positive" theologian as Rahner is a philosophical theologian. Yet I am hard put to find any important differences in their Christology. Of the two, I think Rahner's might be moderately more useful in American classrooms, and I am particularly impressed with his notion of Jesus as the "complete savior" for whom we all long. The idea that soteriology precedes Christology seems to be a very important insight.

However, Rahner's Christology, like Kung's, is very much a "Christology from below." If the German hierarchy can jump all over Kung for his Christology, one wonders why they leave Rahner alone. He is even more brusque than Kung in dismissing the relevancy of the language of the Council of Chalcedon for contemporary human beings.

I do not see how you can charge Kung with denying the divinity of Jesus and not charge Rahner with the same thing. For the German bishops to choose one man as a scapegoat and leave the other alone is monumentally unjust. Both men are well within the bounds of orthodoxy; Kung simply made the mistake of being a popular success, stirring up both clerical and academic envy. Both books deserve to be popular successes; both should be read by Americans free from the obfuscation of heavy-handed Teutonic rivalry.

Another book well worth looking at, by the way, is the reissue (by Paulist Press) of G. K. Chesterton's dazzling, imaginative, "Napoleon of Notting Hill." It has been all too long out of print. "Notting Hill" is a celebration of neighborhoods, perhaps the best ever written in the English language. It incarnates the principle of subsidiarity, the cornerstone of the Catholic social theory, which the recent Catholic social action crowd (witness the tent-show debacle at Detroit) seems to have forgotten. "Notting Hill" offers a marvelous, concrete, vigorous alternative to the arid academic junk on "mediating structures" which Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus recently ground out for the American Enterprise Institute. (an institution which would be utterly horrified if it grasped the heretical implications of subsidiarity).



The final session of the SALT Conference last week at the Notre Dame Retreat House.

22 Complete SALT Training

The Supervision and Leadership Training (SALT) Conference took place last week at the Notre Dame Retreat House on Canandaigua Lake. The three-day program culminated with

Mass Thursday celebrated by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan.

The 22 participants in the program were Monsignor Richard Burns and Fathers Henry Adamski, Robert

Bradler, William Cosgrove, Bernard Carges, Joseph D'Aurizio, Albert Delmonte, William Gordinier, William Graf, M. Gerard Hafner, Richard Hart, and Joseph Jankowiak.

Correction

Father Robert Donovan, a silver jubilarian, was incorrectly identified in last week's Courier-Journal. Father Donovan is pastor of St. Dominic's Church in

Shortsville. Father Eugene Weis is pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Newark Valley/St. Francis in Catatunk.

Also Fathers Winfred Kellner, Chester Klocek, Kevin Murphy, Edwin Metzger, John O'Connor, Foster Rogers, Andrew Teuschel, Anthony Valente, John Walsh, and James Wolfe.

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