

REVIEWS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1958 SISTERS' INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY: The Role of Authority in the Adaptation of the Religious Community for the Apostolate. Edited by Joseph E. Haley, c.s.c. (University of Notre Dame Press; \$4.)

Academic conferences in America tend to be strenuous and well-organized, and this one was no exception. Some four hundred and fifty sisters attended the six-day course, and the *Proceedings* run to more than three hundred pages, even although the 'workshops' (group-discussions) are represented only by each day's final plenary session.

The main part of the book consists of three courses of lectures, dealing respectively with the sociological, ascetical and canonical aspects of the subject. Fr Elio Gambari, s.m.m., of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, who deals with the canonical aspects, reminds us that the principle of adaptation is fully authorized: Pope Pius XII repeatedly urged religious superiors to see that their institutes are meeting the real needs of our time in the best possible way. The principle should be to act as our founders would do if they lived in our own day, to maintain the original spirit while adapting its application to our rapidly changing environment. Fr Louis J. Putz, c.s.c., speaking of the ascetical aspects, gives particular attention to the difficulty which hard-working religious find in reconciling the claims of prayer and the apostolate. Interior and exterior life should not be thought of as mutually opposed, but united as the human soul and body are. The goal of the Christian life is not the life of prayer as such, but rather union with God. This can be achieved through the proper use of creation, as well as through renunciation of the world. So we should look on our apostolic work as being itself the *askesis* which helps us towards union with God. Charity develops through involvement in the world for the sake of going beyond it, as the soul grows and develops through and with the body. As for the rapid changes, in the Church as in lay society, which many people find repugnant, these also should be seen as a form of asceticism—the best form, since we are suffering with the Church in her growing pains.

But perhaps the most original and interesting contribution is that of Fr Joseph H. Fichter, s.j., who makes a sociological analysis of the relationship between authority and apostolic efficiency in the religious community. He describes this approach as profane but realistic, since he prescind from the question of personal sanctification. Not that it can be separated from the apostolate in practice. Fr Fichter particularly

deplores the terminology which describes personal holiness as the primary end of religious life, and apostolic service as the secondary end, since it suggests that the apostolic mission is merely something accessory. The active community exists both to get the work of the Church done and to meet the spiritual needs of its members; and the latter should be achieved in doing the former as well as possible.

Fr Fichter then analyses the active religious community as a socio-cultural system. The bureaucratic form of organization which is necessary for any large-scale administrative task (such as running a government department or a large factory) is characterized by hierarchical authority and centralization of power, and allows relatively little initiative to the individual, who is subordinate to the organization and serves it. The professional form of organization, on the other hand, encourages initiative and personal responsibility; and the professional worker serves his client, the organization in this case being simply a means of helping the professional man to perform the function for which it was formed. Now the traditional system of authority in religious orders is derived from the bureaucratic mode of organization, but his apostolic functions pull the religious towards the professional mode, especially as more and more religious are becoming specialists of some kind. The bureaucratic and professional form of organization may often be combined in a workable way—for example, in a large hospital or a university. But in the case of religious communities there is a third principle of organization: the daily domestic life has a familial-communal form. This is why the members of an active religious community are involved in a unique social structure. They have to enact in the same group three social roles which people normally take in three separate groups: the family role, the religious role, and the occupational role. To be at once a good community member, a holy religious, and a professional man or woman, is not easy. The important question is whether the structure and organization of religious orders and congregations are as well adapted as they might be to help their members achieve this ideal. This is Fr Fichter's main theme, and he works it out in a masterly way, touching on several other questions in the course of his analysis—the different forms of leadership, the superior as servant of his subjects, the application of the 'management-principles' of the commercial world, different attitudes to work, and the importance of good communications upwards and downwards in the hierarchy of authority.

The 'Workshop Reports' range over a large number of practical questions. Two points are particularly interesting. Questioned about the usefulness of schools for aspirants, Fr Fichter reported that even the most successful minor seminary in the U.S.A. finds that only

sixteen per cent of those who enter it eventually become priests. (It is, incidentally, a day school, and Fr Fichter thinks this is why it is more successful than others.) On the other hand, two-thirds of those in major seminaries (over a wide area) have never been in a minor seminary. It may be that such schools have become an anachronism, expensive in man-power as well as money, in countries where a good education is available to all who can benefit from it. The second point concerns novitiates. Fr Putz reports that more and more men and women from various organizations in the lay apostolate are entering regular communities, and doing so from the best of motives. But in very many cases they find the novitiate difficult, because the spiritual formation, zeal, and community spirit there fall short of what they have known in the lay apostolate.

Finally, there are four papers, notable for their breadth of view, on post-novitiate training, on hospital work, on mission work, and on teaching, by sisters working in these fields. The first and last of these (by Sister Mary Emil, I.H.M., and Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J.) deal with education at different levels, and both emphasize the point that in a time of rapid change and instability the educated mind is more important than ever before. This has been recognized in the public educational system, and in the past ten years Americans have made strenuous efforts to raise standards, particularly by improving the education, status and salaries of teachers, and by ability grouping and the special education of the more gifted children. Catholic institutions must not only keep pace with these developments. If Catholics, who form a minority group, are to become a leaven in the mass, they must be better educated, both liberally and professionally, than the majority. This is particularly important for women religious, who have to do without many of the experiences of informal education.

This book has the weaknesses inevitable in a symposium, but it contains many stimulating observations which will interest all religious who do apostolic work.

A.G.

THE COMMUNICATION OF CONVICTION. By Michael Day, CONG. ORAT.
(2s. 6d.)

ABODES OF GOD: The Church, Our Lady. By René Voillaume.
(3s. 6d.) (Both Geoffrey Chapman, *Doctrine and Life* series.)

Faith needs to be based on personal conviction, today more than ever before, when the impacts of a secular environment are so numerous, and the suasions to conformity so insidious. This personal conviction does not come only from doctrinal instruction in schools, but rather by growing up in the faith, as a member of a family and of