

EXTRACTS

THE VOCATION OF THE LAYBROTHER continues to be the object of discussion in the *Supplement de la Vie Spirituelle*. In the May issue there are two or three studies concerned with the extreme in which the distinction between the lay and the choir religious is practically ignored. The first instance is that of *Petits Frères de Jésus* who were founded by Père de Foucauld—or rather they were planted on his grave. In this congregation there is practically no distinction between the priests and the lay brethren. The majority of the brethren are lay but there are a few priests ordained for the service of the community. They all live a hidden and laborious life; they have the same novitiate so that the call to the priesthood does not necessarily appear until after the commencement of the religious life. What is more, the philosophical and theological formation required for the priesthood is not reserved for those few who are chosen for this office but is shared by all the brothers who are capable of it. The other instances given in this issue of the *Supplement* are those of Benedictine inspiration, there being an interesting letter from someone who has founded a community of monks living like St Bernard in the wilds. They have established themselves on a mountainside with a fine view and a fair acreage of virgin soil to till. Needless to say, in such a situation the earlier monastic ideal is more easily attainable, so that it is a question of having a vocation to be a monk, a solitary, rather than that of being called to be a priest or a laybrother. These instances are of course rather specialised, though they should be brought to the attention of many more people as one of the necessary means for the salvation of Europe on the same principle by which St Bernard and his monks saved Europe in its darkest hours. Nevertheless there are many Orders who still have the very clear and urgent vocation to be friars rather than monks. For these no doubt it will be seen that the Laybrotherhood is by no means a lost vocation but one which in days so given to the apostolate of the worker will call more and more to a perfect form of hidden work dedicated wholly to Christ and given specifically in the service of the conversion of sinners evangelised by the trained preacher. Yet even the most monastic of institutions in America, that of the Cistercians of the Abbey of Gethsemani, shows how very much alive this vocation remains. In 1949 of the 61 novices who were clothed there, 31 were laybrothers. (*Collectanea Cisterciensium*, April.)

THE PRIESTHOOD too finds its protagonists and helpers in many of the current reviews. Mgr P. Carlo Landucci writes in *Vita Christiana* (May-June) of priestly holiness in view of modern needs. The first point he states in view of the increased materialism of today, viz. that the priest must bring home to all men their vocation not merely to be saved but to be made holy 'in the sense of the perfect fulfilment of the whole of the divine will with the help of the unfailing and proportionate divine graces'. The application of priestly sanctity to the modern needs is that of the especially positive approach to the three great negative evils—the false liberty which is libertinism, the anti-religious foundations of the social structure, and the despair contained in the notion that Christianity has been tried and failed. Against these the priest must bring the answer of positive holiness. His Lordship the Bishop of Namur contributes an article in *Evangeliser* (May) on 'The priest in the parish of today'. The priest's duty, he insists, is to make present and to apply to every generation and every soul the priesthood of Christ. To the lies of the angel of darkness he must oppose the Truth most pure, to the mystery of iniquity the mystery of Christ in all its splendour and in all its power. The bishop demands a very pure and direct preaching and living of the gospel lest the modern priest be carried away with modern methods. It is possible for the priest to preach an 'integrisme' which is only the human fringe of the Truth which is Jesus Christ; it is also possible for him to confuse adaptation with originality; there is need for a very clear and unflinching sincerity in living and preaching the gospel.

The Church from year to year has always provided outstanding examples of men who have lived up to the highest ideals of this highest of vocations. Maria Winowska uses her vivid and inspiring gift for hagiography already tasted in LIFE OF THE SPIRIT (cf. her life of Father Maximilian in the May issue) to outline the life of the early Passionist who became Bishop of Tolentino and was lately canonised as Saint Vincent-Mary Strambi (*Vie Spirituelle*, June).

A long and faithful familiarity with the Fathers had led him to recognise a doctrine too often forgotten in the eighteenth century—that of the Mystical Body. He saw the poor as the suffering members of Christ.

And thus he became as every great bishop has become, a father and a servant and also a lover of the poor. The doctrine which lies at the root of this flower of Christianity is brought out in the writings of Dom Anscar Vonier who has begun since his death to receive his due praise from the continent. *Vita Christiana* (May-

June) contains a study of his work which is redolent throughout of the teaching of the Mystical Body which was the formative influence of so much of his work as Father and Abbot.

The S.P.C.K. has undertaken for the Church of England what the editors of the *Fêtes et Saisons* have been doing for the Catholic Church in France by publishing a large illustrated paper on the vocation of the priest called 'Whom Shall I Send?' (1s.). It shows a great deal of the process of training the clergy for the Church of England and much of their work among and for the people, and some of the photography is very striking. But there is little of the central, sacramental idea of the priesthood in evidence here, the effective sign of Christ re-presenting and applying his sanctifying power to men which is underlined by the writers referred to above. Perhaps the editors were a little too shy of showing 'pictures of clergymen conducting the Liturgy'.

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The WORK OF CHRIST was no activism but it was energetic and exhausting, as Father Hagspiel, S.V.D., shows in an article on the subject in the American *Sponsa Regis* (June):

Our Lord's labours were never a bustling type of activity, which many of us are inclined to substitute for genuine work. . . . This is not real work, in fact it is a certain kind of idleness that with empty gestures smothers a lack of accomplishment. The example of our Lord shows us the difference between such activity and genuine work. His work was always in fulfilment of a duty; therefore it exacted a full measure of effort and concentration, and it was exhausting. Our Lord suffered this fatigue frequently.

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Those interested in the application of modern psychology to the problems of religious vocation will find much of interest in the American *Review for Religious*. In the May issue Sister M. Digna, O.S.B., discusses the application of 'psychometrics' (which measure 'personality characteristics' by means of rating scales, intensive interviewing, anecdotal records and paper and pencil tests) to the discernment of religious vocation among those leaving college. Naturally such methods need a deal of common sense to prevent them from falling into the error of 'integrisme' referred to above. But Sister Digna seems to rely a good deal on the latter invaluable source of sound judgment and her article is consequently of much interest.

SECULAR INSTITUTES. The *Clergy Review* for June prints the Latin texts of the two Roman elucidations of the original constitution of *Provida Mater*. These are *Primo Feliciter* from His Holiness and an instruction from the Sacred Congregation for Religious.

BAPTISM in the doctrine of St Paul and in the Byzantine rite forms the subject of the two principal articles in *La Vie Spirituelle* (June).

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION OF WOMEN is the subject of the two leading articles of its *Supplement* for May.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Burns, Oates and Washbourne*. F. H. Drinkwater: The Abbreviated Catechism with Explanations, 2s.6d.; Katherine Kendall: Father Steuart, 15s.
Cerf. La Sainte Bible: La Sagesse, n.p.; Saint Matthieu, n.p.
Clonmore and Reynolds. William Barden, O.P.: What Happens at the Mass, 4s.6d.
Herder (Freiburg). Benedikt Baur, O.S.B.: Werde Licht, 12.80 DM.
Herder (U.S.A. and London). St Thomas Aquinas: The Soul, 30s.; The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect, 22s.6d.; Compendium of Theology, 30s.; R. Garrigou-Lagrange: The Three Ages of the Interior Life, 2 vols, 35s. and 56s.; Pierre Mandonnet: St Dominic and His Work, 37s.6d.; Charles J. Callan, O.P. (Editor): The New Psalter of Pius XII, 45s.; Sisters of St Dominic: Liturgical Meditations, 2 vols, 75s.; R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Christ the Saviour, 67s.6d.
Hollis and Carter. Thomas Merton: Waters of Silence, 15s.
Routledge and Kegan Paul. A. Poulain, S.J.: The Graces of Interior Prayer, 30s.
Sands. Doris Burton: Saints and Heroes for Boys, 6s.
Sheed and Ward. G. P. Feodotov (Editor): Treasury of Russian Spirituality, 25s.

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