Rome Converted and Paris Preserved

by Louis Allen

'Has Rome been converted?' is the question put by the title of Henri Fesquet's book on Vatican II and its aftermath (*Rome s'est-elle convertie*? Paris, Grasset, 1966, 12.00 Frs.). Better placed than most to sound the reactions of the French bishops to events in Rome, Fesquet is *Le Monde*'s correspondent on religious matters, and a very well-informed one he is. This makes the only slightly muted optimism of his book all the more surprising. He is convinced that the question must be answered in the affirmative, and he selects a number of themes to illustrate this – the new concept of the priest, the concern with the ecumenical spirit, with world poverty, with public opinion, and with the role of women in the Church.

'Thanks to Vatican II,' he writes in the preface, 'Catholicism is giving the impression of taking the Gospel more seriously. The Council's most essential task . . . was for the Church to look at herself in the light of the New Testament. What does the Gospel tell us, if not that all progress passes through death? The Church will only renew herself by accepting immolation in the image of her Founder.' Immolation of the old, to direct the development of the new. A renewed Christian eschatology, for example, which will present itself to twentieth century man as the accomplishment and metamorphosis of humanity. And a way has been shown of reducing the tragic opposition between Marxism and Christianity, which only developed in the first place because Christians had forgotten their most urgent duty. Will Catholicism take control of the evolution of mankind, and act as a focus for the convergence of the other religions of the planet?

That these possibilities should even be considered shows that the Church is forsaking its role of sulky fixedness, and remembering that in Christ's description of himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life, at least two of the terms are dynamic. This is not to praise change as a good in itself – clearly it is not, and truth lies in the dialectic between change and immobility. But there must at any rate be some fresh presentation of Catholic doctrine in terms of the age, as was made clear by John XXIII in his opening address: 'The certain and unchanging doctrine which must be faithfully respected must be deepened and presented in a way that corresponds to the demands of the age. The substance of the ancient doctrine contained in the deposit of faith is one thing, the formulation in which it is clothed is

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another.' Claude Tresmontant has observed that words as fundamental as incarnation, redemption, transubstantiation, salvation, original sin, sacrifice, are increasingly misunderstood and must be rendered into modern speech. The terms used will be bound to cause disagreement: when the term *consubstantialem* in the Creed was translated as *de même nature* (*of the same nature*), Etienne Gilson wrote in *La France Catholique* (July 2, 1965) that this represented 'sloppy theological thinking'; but what *is* the value to the faithful of a technical term they do not understand?

Perhaps the translation of the Mass will spur on further effort in the translation of ideas. Both in the pulpit and in theological manuals a certain verbalism is current, and few Catholics are very demanding on this point. Fesquet points out that lack of theological courage on the part of censors has blocked research into the subject of original sin, which has become taboo. But if fresh presentation of dogma is not undertaken, the Church will fail in her most important job at present: the evangelisation of the world of the working class, the scientist and the technologist. This implies, also, using the social sciences, psychology and psycho-analysis, which can increase the lucid awareness of ourselves as believers; and dropping the habit of condemnation, a mania of which, Fesquet declares, John XXIII and Paul VI have rid the Church.

In all that happens to the Church after the Council, the role of the priest is paramount, since nothing is possible without him, still less against him. On the other hand, the priest does not have the monopoly of the priesthood, nor is his own domain reduced to that of the sacred. Vatican II rightly did not devote itself entirely to the episcopate, to supply the lacuna of Vatican I, it also produced one of the most original decrees, that on the priesthood. This does not mean that all is well in the priestly world. Certain churchmen too easily believe that sanctity is a universal remedy, and they neglect, as a result, the adaptation of structures. But pious exhortations will not stop what M. Fesquet calls the 'terrifying haemorrhage of priestly vocations'. The priest must be present everywhere in the world, in all classes and social groups; hence the priest's task has many functions and requires fresh adaptations. And only those ignorant of clerical *milieux* would suggest it is a commonplace to say that the pastoral needs of the community to be evangelised should be the first priority. The priesthood is a vocation, not a *métier*, and this should imply its co-existence with a *métier*. Sometimes it may be necessary to encourage *late* vocations (why do we always assume that youth has a monopoly of God's call?) and the question of celibacy is bound to be raised.

Here M. Fesquet questions the taboo imposed on this topic, and wonders whether it is not unhealthy. 'If this problem seems to burn the lips of all those who dare to speak of it, the reason is obviously because it touches wounds to the quick'. The presence of Catholic bishops of the oriental churches, which permit of a married clergy,

was bound to lead to the matter being raised at the Council, which in fact paid homage specifically to such priests (Decree on Priests, Cp. III, art. 6.). The shortage of priests in Latin America is another reason for discussing this. In the year 2000, (only a generation ahead), Latin America will have a population of 600,000,000, i.e. half the Catholics in the world. They will need 120,000 priests, if there is to be one priest for every 5,000 souls. At present, in Brazil, there are 60,000,000 without regular contact with priests, who are few and far between. Mgr. Koop of Lins (Brazil) therefore proposed the adoption of priestly assistants who could be admitted to orders five years after marriage, but the Pope forbade him to make his speech, the polycopied text of which was handed to the press. The Pope did not wish Vatican II to question obligatory celibacy for priests of the Latin Church. It was such an important theme, he said, and required the most prudent handling, that he did not want it to become a matter for public debate. This was no doubt, adds Fesquet, in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the Council Fathers; but of course it also meant that that majority was unable to declare itself hostile to Mgr. Koop's proposal – a development which would have barred the way into the future for a considerable period. In diplomatic terms which suggest either a direct verbal statement, or one made at close remove, M. Fesquet adds, 'we have personally very serious reasons for thinking that the present Pope is in no way opposed to the solution of an auxiliary married clergy for Latin America.'

This leads him to suggest that the debate may shift from the special case of Latin America on more general grounds – (*i*) it will be an inevitable concomitant of the growth in the numbers of priests holding down professional jobs; (*ii*) we are living through a change in type of civilisation, from a masculine type to a 'civilisation du couple' in which woman will have a vastly greater role to play: the Church is right to react against the exclusively aphrodisiac nature of our society which is from many points of view a sign of decadence, but the general renewal of the concept of femininity far transcends this, and there are reflections of this in a developing theology of marriage and fecundity; (*iii*) because the number of priests who are unfaithful to their vows – relatively high, he declares (though he makes no regional distinctions, vital in a matter like this) – compels those in charge of seminaries to be more and more circumspect when passing candidates for ordination. If there is greater stringency in rejecting those whose celibate vocation is suspect, then the shortage of priests will increase. This is not to deny the pre-eminent value of continence for priests who can assume it lucidly, or the greater dedication to the ministry, or the tremendous witness, in a hyper-sensual age, of a life lived in this type of sacrifice. Celibacy has an evangelical value. But there is also a problem of supplying priests to a growing world population. The secular priest, though he too is bound to holiness, is not meant to be simply another version of the monk, living on the margin

of the world. He must sanctify it from within, by *being within.*

Two names, Peter and Mary, are stumbling-blocks to unity, continues M. Fesquet. The Council has emphasized the Christocentric nature of the Church, and what he calls the 'dogmatic itch of certain mariologists' (to proclaim Mary mediatrix and coredemptrix) has met with general reticence. On the other hand, a restrictive mentality has its own excesses, and to minimise mariology on behalf of Protestants might imply offending the Eastern Churches; and, of course, as the work of Max Thurian shows, the Reformed Churches have seen their own revival of Marial devotion. Peter is a more difficult problem, since it is a question of doctrine and discipline rather than one of degrees of piety. Even Protestants who admit a certain primacy for Peter refuse the Pope's universal jurisdiction as defined by Vatican I, and it is not easy to see how this basic disagreement can be solved, even though the constitutional power of the bishops has been stressed. 'It would be dishonest', says Fesquet, 'to be silent on the deplorable habits of the contemporary papacy. It has taken advantage of the prerogative granted by Vatican I to weigh down on the bishops with its authority – sometimes in an arbitrary fashion. Roman legalism – which has advantages and uses – has stifled the just freedom and initiative of bishops.' And he quotes a French Cardinal saying in Rome, in a private conversation, 'I've spent my whole life having my bottom kicked!' The tragedy has lain, not in the personal attitude of the Popes, but in that of the Curia, whose members, in the Pope's name, have imposed their limited views even though they may have lacked pastoral competence. The indomitable Maximos IV, the Greek Catholic Patriarch, proclaimed in the Council itself, 'It is not Peter I fear, but his bureaux! We are not subordinates!' The doctrine of collegiality should now ensure that the authority of the Church should not reside in a single individual, though of course the Pope's theoretical powers have not been removed. 'We must take care not to confuse the right of the pontifical primacy with its exercise. The first is intangible. The second is susceptible of unlimited variations which give room for all kinds of behaviour'.

Not that the reformed Churches do not need continually to reform themselves – this is true of any church, including Rome. Mgr. Hermanuk, the Ukrainian Metropolitan of Winnipeg, gave the Council an account of the fishy procedures of Cardinal Humbert, in 1054, to extrude Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, from the Church. Later still, there would have been no Reformation in the sixteenth century without a scandalous slackness in morals and doctrine throughout the Church. There can be no question of forcing all the bodies, which resulted from the various splits, to come to Canossa. Thanks to the Orthodox, for instance, oriental spirituality, liturgy and theology have been preserved, which might have been stifled under the juridical desiccation and Roman authoritarianism of the West (the Orient cultivated,

more carefully than Rome did, the theology of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit, eschatology, the Resurrection of the Body, and the communion of saints). There is much to give, and much to receive. Mutual concessions are the wrong ecumenical method; if we desire a *rapprochement*, the only answer is for each community to explore its own patrimony in depth. We are still at the apprentice stage in the mutual love which is needed.

From relations with other Churches to relations with the poor in our own. Here there seems to have been a division, not of minds, but of attitudes, among the bishops. A group of them, who felt their ideas were misunderstood, called themselves 'the bishops of the catacombs' where they went daily to pray. They drew up a list of reforms which they thought desirable for their own behaviour as bishops:

i To live according to the ordinary manner of the people of their diocese.
ii To renounce wealth in clothes and insignia.
iii To renounce personal possessions – property, furniture, bank accounts.
iv To give to competent laity the financial administration of their dioceses.
v To renounce all titles save that of 'Father'.
vi In social relations, to avoid whatever may seem to give privileges to the rich and powerful, (banquets offered or accepted, class divisions in religious services).
vii To avoid flattering vanity in the hope of receiving gifts.
viii To care for the apostolic and pastoral welfare of the poor.
ix To transform works of charity into social works.
x To see that governmental and public services create laws and structures devoted to a harmonious social order.
xi To see that their ministry becomes a genuine service; to examine the need for reform in their lives, along with priests and laity; to be present to all, welcoming to all, whatever their religion.
xii To share their decisions with the members of their dioceses; and seek their help in applying them.

The Pope, declares M. Fesquet, has given the lead in this matter by giving away his personal tiara, wearing a simple ring, and dispensing with the privileges and services of the Roman nobility – though in a country where public vanity and decorum go hand in hand, he has had to move slowly. M. Fesquet adds that he hopes Vatican II will be the last Council where over a hundred bishops were seen in Rome's most luxurious hotels without seeming in the least perturbed about the simpler lodgings of their poorer colleagues, some of whom had to wash their own clothes. . . . What an example, he adds, of episcopal solidarity!

This whole question of poverty has not made on the bishops the impact it should, save when it has been presented in specific and

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familiar garb, such as that of the worker-priests. Weeks were spent on purely ecclesiastical problems such as collegiality and the use of Latin, but no reaction was evident on the drama of a world split in two between rich countries and poor. Here too, the Pope's symbolic visit to Bombay was a lead for all the bishops.

And a pointer, also, to the need for Catholicism to cut its umbilical cord with the West. In spite of the representation of most of the countries of the world at Vatican II, it was still by and large a 'Western' Council, an assembly of 'white men', prepared, thought out and carried out by European bishops and theologians, a preponderance shown clearly in Schema 13 on the Church and the modern world. We must drop the idea that the concepts of Western civilization are the only or the best concepts with which to express the mysteries of Christianity. The role played by the Eastern Uniate Churches at the Council is perhaps a foretaste of a revival of oriental Catholicism. The Greek Melchite Patriarch, Maximos IV, with his insistence on the dignity of his patriarchate as distinct from the cardinalate, and his refusal to speak Latin, emphasised the separateness of the eastern contribution to the Church. Though it should be added, *pace* M. Fesquet, that the patriarch's use of French was hardly the correct ecumenical substitute his argument logically demands. Why did Maximos IV not address the Council in Arabic? It is, after all, as M. Fesquet should know, a language in which the words of the Consecration are spoken daily within a stone's throw of Notre Dame.

Asia and Africa still have a vast role to play in the Church – are they not the half of mankind? But if we look at the half of mankind in another way, as Cardinal Suenens reminded the Council fathers, we shall see that half of mankind has, in a certain long and tenacious ecclesiastical tradition, been suspected or rejected: woman. Catholicism is often presented as a religion which undervalues sexual love and everything related to woman, apart from her maternal function. Even in questions which concern them most deeply, such as birth regulation, women have in the past taken no part in the elaboration of dogma and morality. There is a patent anachronism in the exclusively masculine approach of the Church in these matters: sexual discrimination is no less hateful than racial discrimination. The inheritance is as old as the Scriptures: woman as the bringer of sin, as physiologically impure, unfit to approach the Sacraments while menstruating, and yet so strongly attractive to man that those constrained to celibacy cannot forgive her for being a permanent source of sin. This deformation of the image of woman was noted by John XXIII in his diary. Speaking of his priestly training, 'Of women or matters concerning them,' he wrote, 'not a word, not a single word, as if there were no women in the world. This total silence was one of the most profound lessons of my youth as a priest'. 'This tendency,' comments Fr. Tilliette, 'has made its mark on generations of seminarists. How can we be surprised that confessors misunderstand women, their idea of

love, their painful conflicts?' Even at Vatican II itself, women had no right to go to communion at a Council Mass, and the Pope's own sister-in-law, Signora Montini, was turned away when she accompanied her husband to the altar rails. Women journalists were refused press cards, and Paul VI caused consternation in conservative Roman circles when he announced the decision to admit women into the *aula.*

Priests or religious, for whom celibacy has become too heavy a burden, says M. Fesquet, have tended to view women either as an instrument of pleasure or, at best, as a means of perpetuating the race. Marriage has been represented as a remedy for concupiscence: the spirituality of marriage based on love is, for the clergy, a comparatively recent notion. This makes the victory of Schema 13, confirming conjugal love as an intrinsic end of marriage, even more startling. But there are other social issues besides the ends of marriage. When women have attempted to shake off the yoke of society, the Church has usually defended the 'women's place is in the home' angle as the only solution compatible with Christian morality. On the other hand, the Church has also, in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, placed woman at the pinnacle of mankind: the dogmatic archetype being, as so often, in advance of the rational structures. And it was to women that Christ appeared first, after his Resurrection. Further, a glance at the role of women in unevangelized societies will make us appreciate the benefits of Christianity. Vatican II has been catching up with the superior role of woman implicit in certain parts of Catholic theology: women were nominated to the pontifical commission on birth control, and the presence of the oriental bishops reminded Latin prelates that marriage and the priesthood are not incompatible. Again, we must ask if the refusal to admit women to the priesthood has a real theological basis. This is not to say that twenty centuries of tradition were in error. That is not the point. The question looks towards the future: will the conditions which validated that tradition remain? Even if we refuse to admit the social functions of man and woman as interchangeable, there is no need to deduce that woman always be confined to her role as wife, mother, and mistress of the household. In all these various ways, the Catholic Church of the latter half of the twentieth century could liberate woman from the traps of egalitarianism (the expression is M. Fesquet's) and eroticism (itself basically the expression of a masculine society) by deepening the meaning of the act of love and conjugal spirituality.

M. Fesquet is clearly looking very far into the future at this point. A similar optimism governs his view that 'for anyone in good faith, Vatican II was the council of the progressives,' and that 'the best of their demands have been satisfied or are on the way to being satisfied.' On the other hand, his millennial vision has perhaps something to be said for it, since a good deal of the more repressive doctrinal speculation often results from a too restricted view of the course of human history. 'Perhaps,' he writes, 'Judeo-Christianity is just emerging from

its pre-history, and Vatican II is the prelude to a new era,' – or, in the terms used by Roger Garaudy, 'the apocalyptic aspect has won ground from the Constantinian.'

It is impossible not to feel, on reading M. Fesquet's book, that English Catholics will in some cases be interested in different aspects of the Council from those which concern him. Not that we are not involved in the same general issues. But the tradition of delation and integrism which has been an incubus on the French Catholic Church will probably be thought to loom less large here; and we have not had the searing experience of occupation by a cruel enemy, as the French have had, an occupation which, although it came to an end over two decades ago, sharpened (and in some cases dulled) the consciences of French Catholics in extreme ways we have not known. The full extent of this has recently been depicted in detail in Jacques Duquesne's *Les Catholiques Français sous l'Occupation* (Paris, Grasset, 1966, 24.00 Frs.). The author has made a flowing and exciting narrative from a mass of documentation, interviews and personal stories. The basic outlines are no doubt familiar: the defeat of June, 1940, was regarded as the excuse for a nation-wide orgy of breast-beating (usually in the form of *tua culpa*): how could the Germans do other than defeat a nation run by republicans and freemasons who refused aid for Catholic schools? Catholic support for the mildly agnostic Pétain was massive and monolithic – like that of most other Frenchmen. It took more than an act of faith to see any future for the rebel general de Gaulle in those days: you needed an almost sacred madness, and a fierce appetite for justice.

It was not long before the real significance of collaboration with Nazi Germany began to trickle into the minds of the bewildered French: along with the correctly behaved Wehrmacht went the black uniformed SS and plain-clothes Gestapo, bearing the threat of torture and oppression. The hierarchy in most cases was too far committed to Pétain to change its views even when the horrors of racial persecution became evident in the capital itself, though the dragooning of helpless Jewish families into the Vélodrome d'Hiver made an unforgettable imprint on the minds of those French Catholics who witnessed it. But for many others, to resist this sort of thing meant allying themselves with communists and perfidious Albion. It seemed much more natural to identify themselves with a government which openly proclaimed the Catholic values of 'Work, Family, Country' as the national policy of the 'French Renovation'. As Cardinal Gerlier of Lyons had proclaimed, 'Vive la France and Vive Pétain had become fused into one single shout of acclaim, since Pétain is France, and France, today, is Pétain.'

By and large, the episcopate – individually, and later as a body – endorsed Vichy as the 'established power' in France, claiming later that in so doing it was merely following traditional Catholic moral teaching, which was to respect the established power. Some bishops

went further and declared that Vichy was not only established but the legitimate authority. With the conspicuous exception, almost from the start, of the courageous and outspoken Mgr. Salièges, Archbishop of Toulouse, the political attitude of the bishops began to produce theological results: 'lack of discipline and trust in the Head of State' began to be equated with grave sin. 'He has buried the Republic', ran a dithyrambic prayer to the Marshal printed in the parish magazine of St. Joseph's, Pau, in 1941,

A régime born in murder
which lived by sowing hatred
by persecuting Religion
by betraying the Country.
He has suppressed Freemasonry
an anti-patriotic and anti-religious sect
acting in secret against the best Frenchmen
He has re-established freedom of teaching
taken away from Religious by the Freemasons
He has put God back in his rightful place in the schools
whence the Freemasons had expelled him
For us Catholics
There is already more than enough cause
To stand up
And shout
Long Live the Marshal!

Even more egregious was Georges Gérard's adaptation of the Our Father current at the same time: 'Our Father, who art/At our head/Hallowed be thy name/Thy kingdom come/Thy will be done/On earth so that we may live/Remain for ever and ever/Our daily bread/Give life back to France/Lead us not again/Into empty dreams/And lies/And deliver us from evil,/O Marshal of France.' Little wonder that in an atmosphere where such sacrilege was current, Cardinal Gerlier could say 'In former times, discussions or disagreement may have been possible, legitimate, perhaps even fruitful. Today, they seem more like a crime. We are at a moment of history in which it is really necessary for all Frenchmen to unite around the man who has called them to make their union once more around him, around our country, whose glorious defender he was and whose magnificent restorer he will be, by this union; and this need not imply, for anyone with courage and a loyal heart, abdication from fidelity to what he believes to be the truth.' (January 15, 1941).

On the pastoral level, the attitude had far-reaching results. Emmanuel Mounier, the founder of *Esprit*, had been by no means hostile to the renewal of France which Vichy promised to begin with. By 1942 his views had radically changed. In May of that year he was arrested and transferred to Vals-les-Bains, where he began a hunger-strike – though because of his moral convictions he asked the doctor to bring it to an end when his life was in danger. He likewise asked to receive communion, and the *curé* of Vals came to see him and explained that he

was not sure he could legitimately administer the sacrament, given Mounier's rebellious attitude to the government. The *curé* referred the matter to a professor of moral theology at the seminary. 'Perhaps,' noted Mounier in his diary, 'my act would not be complete without this abandonment by the Church as it seems to be (*l' Eglise apparente*), which is not even the visible Church.' Two days later, the *curé* came back. The seminary professor had confirmed him in his refusal to give communion. Mounier, no stranger to moral theology, argued his case. The *curé* began to weep, and told Mounier he (the *curé*) wanted Germany to win, in order to save France from the bolshevism to which England was going to surrender Europe. The following day, Mounier was transferred to a hospital. The superior of the nuns there was charged by the authorities with convincing him he should stop his hunger-strike, and she frequently made the sign of the cross in front of him. 'My church, alas', Mounier confided to his diary, 'mixed up in all this!'

Vichy did attempt a social revolution, in a restricted sense, but its artificiality, based as it was on Nazi tyranny, became more and more obvious as infringements of the natural law increased. The German invasion of Russia brought the most extreme views into the open; but it was from the period of six months between June 1941 and Pearl Harbour that those in France who had decided the war was over, and that Hitler had won it, began to revise their stance. Not all, of course. The octogenarian Cardinal Baudrillart, Rector of the Institut Catholique in Paris, put the weight of his authority behind what he described as a twentieth century crusade: 'As a Priest and a Frenchman, in such a decisive moment, should I refuse to approve the noble common enterprise, directed by Germany, which may deliver France, Europe and the world from the most dangerous of chimeras, and may establish between peoples a holy brotherhood derived from the Christian Middle Ages? The time has come for a new crusade. I proclaim that the tomb of Christ will be delivered. Through the sadness of the times, shines the dawn.' It should be added that Baudrillart's extreme views profited from the doubts and hesitations of French lay Catholics who, although sceptical of the New Order's benefits, thought they saw some advantage in the collapse of the Soviet dictatorship. 'We are all ready to greet the downfall of the sombre Stalinist régime,' wrote Mounier in *Esprit* (July, 1941) 'on the day this happens, as a deliverance for Europe, so long as (*si*) it is not accompanied by consequences which are its equal in evil.' Much virtue in *si*.

The Cardinal was, of course, quite gaga by this time, but the words even of a senile prelate were bound to have some resonance; and there were others, slightly less exalted in the prelatial scale, whose actions were even more extreme. Mgr. Mayol de Luppé, unofficial chaplain to the Legion of French Volunteers against Bolshevism, stood in his German uniform beside Doriot at the Vél' d'Hiv to preach the virtues

of collaboration. The Germans were highly appreciative of his efforts on their behalf. His photograph appeared on the front page of the German soldiers' magazine *Signal* which pointed out that Monseigneur wore sixteen decorations, but was particularly proud of two of them: the rosette of the Légion d'Honneur, which he was awarded in 1938, and the German Iron Cross which he had won on the Eastern Front . . .

The bishops must have viewed these manoeuvres with some distaste, and they began to drag their heels. In September, 1941, in a conversation with the Protestant pastor, Marc Boegner, Cardinal Gerlier declared the Church could not accept collaboration with Nazi Germany, and repeated what Pius XII had told him: 'If Germany wins the war, I believe it would be the greatest misfortune the Church would have suffered for centuries.' A few months later the Gestapo was reporting from Bordeaux that the clergy had become unmistakably active in its hostility to collaboration, and that Archbishop Feltin was an active Gaullist.

Not that this refusal to collaborate with Germany implied a condemnation of Vichy when Vichy proclaimed it as official policy. Many Catholics felt it their duty to condemn Gaullism and Great Britain. In October 1941, the director of the Paris university seminary published – with the *imprimatur* – a declaration that his unhesitating recognition of the authority and government of Marshal Pétain, his refusal to be either Gaullist or anglophile, and his submission to the occupying authorities all sprang from purest Catholic doctrine. Quoting Leo XIII's reproof of those who rebelled against legitimate authority, 'Are long arguments necessary,' he asked, 'to show that de Gaulle is condemned by this reproof? Those who are his followers resist, by that very token, the divine order.'

The laity played an interesting role at both extremes of opinion. Philippe Henriot had been, before the war, a leader of the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française*. Ultimately he became Vichy's Minister of Information and twice daily from Radio Paris virulently attacked non-collaboration and Resistance in all its forms. On the other hand, the movement of which he had been an important member became a nucleus of resistance, and later had its own representative with de Gaulle in Algiers. Henriot was assassinated in 1944. François Mauriac remained silent in the depths of his province – and it is interesting to recall that at the same time both Sartre and Camus had plays performed in Paris under the eyes of the Germans. Later, under the pseudonym Forez, Mauriac began to write against the Germans in the clandestine pamphlets of the Editions de Minuit. Bernanos and Maritain attacked the so-called 'realism' of those who collaborated with the Germans and who were concerned, in full conformity with the *Action Française* notions of a backward-looking France based on the French soil and the French dead, to preserve a tangible France while risking the loss of its soul. Ultimately, what they preached,

according to Maritain, was a preference for material values over spiritual. But Bernanos and Maritain were writing at a safe distance, one in Brazil, the other in Canada. Those who were faced with the concrete problems of collaboration were, like Mounier, understandably more hesitant about their final choice, however clearly it was made in the end. As with the clergy, the spectrum went from the Xavier Vallat, Vichy's first administrator of the anti-Jewish laws, to the young naval officer, the Comte d'Estienne d'Orves, one of the earliest members of the Resistance, who was sent across the Channel by de Gaulle to organise an information network and was arrested by German counter-espionage in January, 1941. D'Estienne d'Orves was held in prison for eight months before being shot. 'I pray God,' he wrote to the German prison chaplain, Fr Stock, 'to give France and Germany peace in justice, setting up once more the greatness of my country. And that our governments will give to God the place which is His.' In front of the firing squad, he embraced the German chaplain, and then turned to Keyser, the president of the German court-martial which had condemned him. 'You are a German officer. I am a French officer. We have both done our duty. Allow me to embrace you.' And they did.

That mood of natural gallantry did not survive. Circumstances soon put an end to it, as it did to many friendships between Frenchmen. Perhaps the internal conflict can be pictured in Catholic terms by the relations between the ebullient Dominican Père Bruckberger, who had served under Joseph Darnand in a commando unit – one of the few which, on the French side, turned the phoney war into a real one in the months before the *débâcle*. Wounded and taken prisoner in 1940, Père Bruckberger escaped and joined up again with his old friend and commanding officer at Nice. Darnand by this time was in a state of impotent anguish at the surrender, and spoke of joining de Gaulle at once. He made the mistake of deciding to go to Vichy to put his case to Pétain in person. Pétain, who knew his man – loads of courage, but no political sense – simply said, 'Oh, come now, Darnand, old man, you wouldn't do that to *me*!' and Darnand caved in at once. He decided to form groups of ex-servicemen as a nucleus for Vichy's national regeneration, though he was somewhat uncertain how to go about it. Bruckberger, already a convinced Gaullist himself, nonetheless offered Darnand his help, and they stood together at the first public parade of the Legion in the main square at Nice.

The Legion's servile adherence to the extremes of collaboration soon disgusted Bruckberger, and when Pétain asked for each member's oath of loyalty to the régime, he decided that the time had come for him to break with it. But he had joined the Legion publicly and felt he must sever his connection publicly. At a lecture given by Henri Massis before the Prefect and Mgr. Rémond, Bishop of Nice, Bruckberger interrupted to rectify a tendentious misquotation from Péguy which Massis had used (it was standard practice) to show that Péguy would

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have approved of Franco-German collaboration. The next day Bruckberger was summoned before the Bishop, rebuked for his intervention and told he must leave the diocese. The prefect, said the bishop, had insisted on his leaving the district. 'Let the prefect do as he feels he must, My Lord,' begged Bruckberger. 'If he wants to expel me, let him publish an official expulsion order. But don't *you* get mixed up in this yourself! I haven't done anything against Catholic moral teaching. I have in no way harmed the faith or public morals.' 'Father Bruckberger,' replied the bishop, 'I cannot refuse the Prefect. And the Minister of the Interior has telephoned me about you.' The bishop remained firm in support of the secular arm, and Bruckberger was expelled from the *département* and the diocese. Before he left, he went to see Darnand, to announce they were no longer travelling the same road. 'No, I know,' said Darnand, 'But I'm too old, Bruck – if I were a young man again, I'd do the same as you.' The Germans arrested the Dominican in 1942, and after five months in prison he went over to de Gaulle, and was with him during that famous *Te Deum* in Notre Dame in August 1944, when the General refused to be welcomed into the Cathedral by Caridnal Suhard, since the Cardinal had only recently given an official welcome there to the German commandant of the Gross-Paris district. No doubt some of Darnand's men, in the hatred of final despair, were involved in the fusillade which greeted de Gaulle as he entered Notre Dame and walked up the nave. Darnand had diverged from Bruckberger farther than either of them could have believed possible in 1940. Darnand's Legion had become the infamous Vichy Militia, an evil mixture of fanatical idealists and sadistic torturers whose passions were satiated on the suffering bodies of fellow Frenchmen. But when Darnand was condemned to death after the Liberation, the Dominican stayed with him in his cell at Fresnes, right up to the moment of his execution.

'It will not have escaped your notice,' wrote General Oberg, the hard-faced supreme head of the SS in France, to Cardinal Suhard, late in 1943, 'that the majority of the French bishops, and a great number of the priests subject to them, have done all they could in recent months to prevent young Frenchmen, entrusted to their pastoral care, from going to work in Germany.' Indeed Suhard himself had protested against the *Service du Travail Obligatoire*, publishing a letter signed by three French Cardinals which openly spoke of the constraints operating against French workers and asking them to endure them in a Christ-like fashion, and to use their sufferings to prepare the resurrection of their country. It was hardly recruiting material, and the official censorship had forbidden the letter to be circulated. In fact, in a great many churches it was ignored, but Suhard himself read it at High Mass in Notre Dame. When it was pointed out to him that little effect would be produced by a reading at High Mass, since few people went, Suhard replied 'there is a tacit agreement between the occupying forces and myself, thanks to which

our activities are still more or less normal. If I overstep the mark, I run the risk of unleashing persecution. Have our Christian people the strength to accept this? I very much doubt it.' As M. Duquesne comments, the question was a real one; but, he adds, 'what must we think of a church whose leaders judge it to be incapable of facing persecution?'

This is no doubt why, M. Duquesne points out towards the close of his magnificent and passionately interesting book, those who were most shocked by the attitude of the compromised bishops, priests and laymen were the most convinced and fervent Catholics. The less fervent, and the unbelievers, were not in the least surprised to see the Church side with Vichy, with the established order, with those who held power. This seemed to them to be in conformity with the logic of events and even with the deepest nature of the Church. Whenever the Church ranged herself on the side of the persecuted and the oppressed they were agreeably surprised – they hadn't expected it of her . . . And these moments of non-conformity were what saved the Church in the eyes of the people in 1944 and 1945, when the long knives were out. Mgr. Rémond, who had dismissed Père Bruckberger, and celebrated High Mass for the Legion in the open air at Nice, was acclaimed by the crowds at the Liberation: he had also concealed fugitive Jewish children, and it was this they remembered, not what had gone before.

'An attitude like this,' concludes M. Duquesne, 'does not condemn the face the Church wore between 1940 and 1944, but the one she wore in the years before 1940. There are certainly lessons Catholics can learn from this, even today.' The actual events he describes make this seem a rather charitable assessment.

Most of the bishops greeted or accepted de Gaulle in 1944 as the new established power, though it appears some of them were convinced Pétain would still be Head of State even after the Liberation. One or two had over-compromised themselves and discreetly packed their bags. Mgr. Théas, Bishop of Montauban, was sent to Rome to negotiate their removal. Very different reports of Vatican reactions seem to have been current at the time. Pius XII received Mgr. Théas twice, and reproached him for his statement that he 'loved the communists' and for having written a letter to the president of the young communists in the Tarn in which he declared 'Yes, I love the communists and always will, whatever may be their position in relation to the Church, that Catholic Church without which it is impossible to build a world in which justice and brotherhood prevail.' One can see that Pius XII may not have felt the impact of the spirit of fraternity engendered in the *maquis*; and he was shocked that bishops should be the object of criticism. 'We will put the whole weight of our pontifical authority,' he told the bishop, 'behind the defence and protection of the authority and rights of the bishops, and we will preach submission to them.' And Mgr. Théas was told to

repeat that sentence *verbatim* in public when he got back. A tricky situation with the new French authorities was averted by the slow patience of the new nuncio, Mgr. Roncalli, later to become John XXIII. ('Angelo, fais l'imbécile' he said to himself). This didn't prevent sharp criticisms making themselves felt. 'My Lord Bishop,' wrote André Mandouze to the Bishop of Marseilles in *Témoignage Chrétien*, exactly a year after D-Day, 'humble yourself, and acknowledge your mistakes. If a certain number of your flock, priests and laity, had not had the courage to disobey you for four years, in order to obey their conscience, neither you, nor the majority of your colleagues, would be at present occupying your episcopal palaces.'

Cardinal Tisserant, whose views were strongly opposed to those of the majority of the French bishops, arrived in France from Rome in the autumn of 1944 and gave a rather different version of Vatican opinion. Just as Mgr. Valeri, the nuncio in the days of defeat, had counselled the French bishops not to commit themselves beyond the possibility of honourable withdrawal, Tisserant reported to a journalist of *Témoignage Chrétien*, in September 1943, that the Pope had remarked how feeble the French pastoral letters were. 'It is the Resistance which is appreciated here,' he said, 'not the others. The Pope and Cardinal Maglione have often said to me about the latter: "We would never have believed that France would have descended to such a state of abjection." The deformation of consciences is an immense misfortune.'

Indeed this was where the conflict was bound to lie; and if M. Duquesne's book is taken together with Gordon Zahn and Carl Amery on Catholicism in Germany, we are bound to reach some pretty disquieting conclusions about the role of the conscience in modern national churches.

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