

success, all the friendly give and take of life. No need, in St Thomas's view, to be tiresomely pious about it. If we want God's friendship, and make the sign he tells us to make before him, then our acts, like Bo-peep's sheep, can be left to come home by themselves. They are the fragments that remain, the left-overs as it were of the mass, gathered up by our Lord himself, and included in his offering to the Father.

---

## THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD—I

### An African Catholic Action

R. P. WALSH

**A**LAY organization whose major work is the giving of closed retreats is exceptional enough to be interesting. Such is the Banyakaroli movement to be found in parts of Tanganyika. This organization has changed somewhat during its existence but only in the sense that as a need was found the movement adapted itself to meet it.

The story began in 1941 when a Father Heise was at Kashozi, Tanganyika. This priest examined the local Catholic Action organization critically and decided that it had no influence in the parish, that its members were all getting on in years, their zeal had diminished and they were unable to adapt themselves to the problems of the younger generation. Considering that a complete renewal was necessary Father Heise selected three young married men to be the core of a new movement and sent them out to the villages to gain recruits. The nucleus were trained through a monthly day of recollection, observed in complete silence and followed by an instruction.

The aim of the new group was to assist the missionaries in a drive for a renewal of fervour in the parish. This was a necessity, for the record of this area at that time was of a falling-off of attendance at mass and the sacraments and an increase in the number of broken marriages.

The new movement had some seventy members during its

first years and the monthly short time of recollection and an annual four-day retreat made in complete silence were the basis of the training they received. In time the novelty wore off and numbers decreased. So once again Father Heise sent his leaders out to the villages but this time it was to invite people to come to meetings at which there would be refreshments. This move brought more members, but also more trouble, for no plan of work could be suggested without provoking a storm of opposition and the movement began to split with the teachers feeling superior to the uneducated members. Once again the numbers dropped until only ten remained. These ten held together and among other activities built their own hall, designed for retreats.

Once again they went to the villages looking for recruits. The monthly day of recollection was dropped and was replaced by retreats in the villages. By 1948 the movement achieved some stability and adopted the name of 'children of Caroli'—Blessed Caroli Lwanga, one of the martyrs of Uganda. Membership had at first been restricted to young married men but later married women and widows were accepted, and in time no restriction was placed on membership except that it was held that young unmarried girls were too flighty and too timid to be able to do the work of the movement.

Even lax Catholics or those whose marriages were irregular were welcomed as members, but only for a trial period of about two years. If after this time they have not remedied their situation they have to leave but are advised to join the 'Banya-Mattiasi', a movement called after another one of the Uganda martyrs, Mattiasi Murumba. This is a secondary movement that can hold these people on the fringe of the Church until such time as they solve their marriage problems.

One great reason for the growing success of the Banyakaroli is that it is lay action. There is a priest responsible for the movement but he stays in the background and all the responsibility is left in the hands of the members. The movement has a success that is not achieved by other societies of European origin. As a bishop pointed out in discussing these questions, many European movements, like the Legion of Mary, are a disciplined army with everything regulated. The Banyakaroli are more like commandos, ready to undertake anything under their elastic rules and with its life attuned to the mentality of the people. But it is

worth noting that the movement's leaders are all members of the Legion of Mary.

When a recruit joins the Banyakaroli he is on probation. If at the end of this period he is considered suitable he makes a promise to dedicate himself to the work of Catholic Action for one year: this promise is renewed for a second year and then he makes a final promise to give himself completely to the movement. This promise is renewed every year during the annual closed retreat.

Some Christians are able to devote themselves entirely to this work: widows, for example, or good women whose husbands have no further use for them, men whose wives have left them. These, if they have no home ties or children, are in a position to help in the work at all times. They live in houses built by the Banyakaroli, cultivate the fields attached to the houses, look after visitors and are at the service of the priest at any time.

The priests concerned with the movement train the chiefs through informal talks and through discussions of all the events of the village and of the topics of conversation in the villages. These chiefs train the ordinary members and pick out potential chiefs for special training.

The members of the organization will undertake any work for the spreading of the faith. Indeed, no work is foreign to them and the social and political development of the country are subjects that come within their province. They help the poor, providing them with shelter and food. They help young people to get work. They persuade pagans to attend the catechism instructions. They cultivate the old people in the villages and prepare them for baptism. The bringing back of lapsed Catholics is regarded as one of their more important works.

They also act as intermediaries in marital disputes and instruct married people in their duties and teach them how to bring their children up. The work with young married people is important in changing Africa. There was a time when this instruction was given naturally inside a tribe by the old people. Now the traditional ways of life are disappearing and the old women are not trustworthy, for among them lingers on the old paganism.

But the greatest work of the Banyakaroli is the giving of closed retreats. These retreats are preached by the Banyakaroli leaders with a priest coming in for an occasional instruction. The parish

priest just announces the date of the retreat and leaves everything else to the Banyakaroli. They organize it, contact the people in the district, visit the lapsed Catholics and persuade them to attend.

At present the movement exists in two dioceses. But the leaders have already preached retreats in the diocese controlled by the American Maryknoll Fathers, and bishop and priest speak enthusiastically of the results. Other Tanganyikan bishops are examining the movement and it is likely that it will spread to other parts of that country.

---

## REVIEWS

LITURGY AND DOCTRINE. By Charles Davis. (Sheed and Ward; 4s. 6d.)

This is an unusual book. For it is genuine theological work of real importance, and yet it is not a translation. Nor is it written in that private language in which theologians are accustomed to conceal any lack of originality or indeed content in their thought; it is written in an English which laymen can understand, as well as the professional theologians who will certainly not find it beneath their notice. It is in fact a good exemplification of its author's theme, which is the renewal of theology in our time, and the reflection of that in the renewal of liturgy.

The book begins with a general account of this liturgical revival, and its relation to the doctrinal one. But in England it is clear that little attempt has been made to put across the meaning of all this to people in general. 'So often it is taken for granted that we are already in full possession of what we have to get across, that our possession of it is perfect, stable and nicely balanced, so that all we have to do is to work out ways and means of getting it across. It never seems to occur to us that people sometimes do not listen, because what we tell them is not worth their attention and does not meet their legitimate needs and desires.'

Fr Davis next considers how we are to restore to people the sense of our Lord as mediator in his humanity—the essential structure of liturgical prayer 'through Christ our Lord' which means little or nothing to the devotional life of our congregations. Partly it is a