

our cathedrals.

The biblical message works like yeast, slowly leavening, till the massive structures of our cultural system crumble. Our culture has already lost the old structures which keep some other cultures together even in our own days. We are living in a society which has as its declared aims equality and freedom ... in other words, is, for example, a society in which theoretically everybody has the right to compete with everybody. It has survived up to now because we have expanded the possibilities for competition to the extreme, on the one hand by producing all kinds of objects which are similar so that a conflict over one unique object is avoided, on the other hand by exporting our violence to the rest of the world, where two-thirds of the population suffers famine, instability and war. But how long can we go on doing this? Is the 'conservatism' which is the dominant mood in most western (and communist) countries a last attempt to save a culture based on fratricide?

Girard's ideas on human desire, rivalry and scapegoating are basically quite simple ones, although they are all paradoxes. As soon as we see what he is talking about working in our lives they lose the quality of made-up fantasies, and once we begin to think about their consequences they become almost mind-dazzling. Rediscovering the biblical tradition may be the only way forward, but for us this means giving up our pride, abandoning the old models by which we used to think, and finding structures for a community that is not based on scapegoating and violence.

Seeking the Glory of Him who sent us

Romuald Horn OP

The English Dominican Father Romuald Horn, who here, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, reflects on what the priesthood means for him, spent many years of his life as a priest in the once famous parish of St Dominic's, Newcastle upon Tyne (which in his early days contained some of the most deprived parts of Tyneside.) He is now a confessor at the Basilica of St Mary Major, Rome.

A golden jubilee is not an occasion for argument. If fifty years are not reason enough, it would seem useless to look further. For one can speak with the tongue, and one can say a word with one's whole life. Even to

change one's mind after so long a time, impressive as it may be, doesn't get rid of fifty years easily. In particular the golden jubilee of a priest contains a whole life, and a long one, because ordination comes at the beginning of maturity. Argument is still more out of place, because the priest is a minister, a servant. It is for his Lord to judge, not for himself. This is the true judgment, which the Lord will deliver at his own chosen time, a judgement which may not be anticipated. It remains for the minister to pass judgment on his ministry from his own point of view, as servants may compare one master with another, and one condition of service with alternative employment. This is what I am endeavouring to do now in this year of my golden jubilee, 1985.

There is a prayer attributed to St Dominic in which is found 'idoneum et fidelem ministrum'. St Dominic himself may be trusted to give a definition to 'idoneum', for he was a generous man. St Paul emphasises 'fidelem'. Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required of the dispensers that a man may be found faithful (1 Cor. 4. 1). Our Lord's emphasis is the same: 'Who is the faithful and wise steward whom his Lord setteth over his family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season' (Lk. 12. 42).

Through no fault of his own the faithful minister may become heroic. To enter a house where the whole family is down with influenza is a reminder of the cholera epidemic of the last century. Some priests died then; some survived although they were answering more than forty sick-calls a day. These priests were faithful and it was circumstances which set their fidelity on such a high plane.

Fidelity doesn't necessarily involve keeping the Faith. It may seem an unnecessary distinction and ridiculous to consider a man faithful to a Lord in whom he no longer believes. Yet the distinction is necessary. First, because it seems that there are such priests. Even if a priest no longer believes in the Eucharist, he still says a true Mass provided he is acting as a minister of Christ and his Church. The second and principle reason for the distinction is to emphasise that the heart of the priesthood is ministry. There are priests who seem to have forgotten this and their tragedy lies not so much in the retribution they earn, not so much in the distress they cause to the faithful, but rather the greater good they have thrown away. For all the faithful are alike sanctified by the grace of God in the operation of Faith, Hope and Charity. The priest within this framework has a character of his own, given at ordination and developed in his time of service. No-one can *choose* to be a priest; he is chosen. Our Lord stated this to the apostles, 'You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you'. Again when he said 'In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you' he was speaking of all in grace, but surely this promise has a rather special resonance for the priest. The relation of Lord and servant

belongs to all the sacraments but 'I in you' is more emphasised in the sacrament of Penance where the minister may seem to be acting largely on his own judgement; while 'you in me' belongs more to the Eucharist, where the minister does nothing more than repeat the words of his Lord and speaks in his Person 'my body; the chalice of my blood'. Here the priesthood rises to its greatest heights and all other work of the priest derives from this one source. In the Eucharist the servant is most one with his Lord and Master.

This emphasis on the priest as the servant and minister of Christ may appear to be at odds with our Lord's statement: 'I will not now call you servants' (Jn. 15.15). Yet in the same chapter of St John, our Lord reminds his apostles that the servant is not greater than his master. Remember the words of Our Lady in St Luke's gospel: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' and 'He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden'. We priests cannot begin to do justice to the call of God, unless we remember 'the foolish things of this world has God chosen that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are' (I Cor. 1.27). The violent language of St Paul and the comely phrase of Mary of Nazareth do not disagree in expressing the real relationship.

In some respects the priest is like any other instrument in the hands of a skilled workman. A pen does what the writer requires it do, while contributing its own characteristic. Even so, among several which lie to hand, one is usually favoured because long use has given it a facility. Any one pen will do for scribbling a note or for lending to someone else, but for serious writing the pen is chosen because it seems to settle in the hand of the writer, and this pen is not lent to anyone else. Doubtless the hand has learnt to adapt itself to a particular instrument, though it may seem the other way round, as though the instrument has lent itself to the guiding hand. When the instrument is more than an instrument but self-acting and conscious, the relation of master and servant takes on a more profound and universal expression, from both points of view.

Water is necessary in order to be born again. But that instrument of grace cannot hold grace. The water is not changed. The priest is able to hold grace, and though it is his office to be an instrument in our Lord's saving and sanctifying of his people, he shares in that flow of grace. The ox which treads out the corn may not be muzzled because the ox is interested in corn. So the priest is not left out when the Holy Spirit comes through his ministry. What this means in reality is beyond our understanding, just as the sorrow of Christ which has reconciled so many with God is a sorrow not shared by the priest

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except in faith. Indeed his ministry is of reality far beyond his wits. He is set between his Lord and the people, ministering to the one Redeemer, to the one teacher, to the one doctor of souls, to the one lover of the family of man. Being a conscious instrument of the many works of Christ, in his faith, the priest approaches the mind and heart of his Lord. What is more than this, is that the Lord himself is adapting his minister more and more to his purposes.

I have never found a priest willing to discuss this last point. Perhaps like me they do not know what it means. That it is so, there can be no doubt, but the nature of it remains concealed for the present. Some time of his own choosing the Lord will justify his choice.

A priest was talking to me the day before his golden jubilee, when he was going to concelebrate with the Pope. He had no good thing to say of himself. He had been for fifty years an unprofitable servant. He had only been faithful. He had only done what he ought to have done. He had not made a name for himself; he was anonymous, like so many other priests. There remains the judgement of our Lord: 'He who speaks of himself seeks his own glory: he who seeks the glory of him who sent him, he is true and there is no injustice in him' (Jn. 7.18).

By Rather Dim Lights

Michael Tatham

I don't see how the rather obnoxious Tory voters can be excommunicated. They are acting according to their rather dim lights (something that most 'progressive' Catholics applaud when it is a matter of *Humanae Vitae*).

Peter Hebblethwaite
New Blackfriars December 1984 p. 499

Perhaps one of the most rewarding things to remember when one is playing with ideas is that nothing remains as it is for very long, and, what is rather more awkward, just as ideas are soon outmoded and superseded, so too the nature of the problems with which we are engaged changes before our very eyes. It is as if the entire process is taking place on a cinema screen where the credits continuously merge into new lines.