

LA VIE SPIRITUELLE AND PAX CHRISTI

With pleasure we welcome once more the arrival of the *Vie Spirituelle* in this country. It was not found wanting in the time of trial for it continued to appear throughout the occupation and has maintained its high standard. We wish it prosperity in the future and judging from the vitality of the first two numbers for 1946, it will play an important part in the work of spiritual reconstruction. Everyone knows the chaos of the present world, but few have any definite ideas as to what is to be done to remedy this state of affairs. The *Vie Spirituelle* tackles the problems in a most concrete and realistic way. The January number has a searching article on the nature and purpose of religious life, for the religious has to provide a concrete pattern of holiness to the world. Another article deals with the aims and methods of the formation of seminary students. Both make fundamental suggestions and criticisms. There is also in this same number a most moving account of the charity shown by German Catholics to Frenchmen conscripted for labour in Germany. As chaplains were not allowed to accompany these workers, priests went in disguise among them. The writer of the article, Fr J. Doyen, O.P., gives numerous instances of the help he was given by Germans, frequently with considerable danger to their own safety. One incident, particularly worthy of mention, records how he was able to say Mass every evening in a parish church without fear of being betrayed, although the whole parish knew about it. One hears too little of such incidents which help to the realisation that the spiritual bonds which unite members of the Mystical Body are deeper than those which unite citizens of the same country.

A practical way of expressing and achieving this unity is prayer through which the mind is raised to God in union with the whole Church. This universality should be implicit in all prayer, but it is good for us to particularise when human nature might lead us to exclude "natural enemies." To pray for them preserves us from the worst effect of war which is hatred. A concrete way of being reminded of this need for prayer is offered by the *Pax Christi* movement which has been started in France under the patronage of Cardinal Saliege, the fearless "resistance" Archbishop of Toulouse, who was not blinded by nationalism either at home or abroad. Its aims are the conversion of Germany, its chief means prayer. No one is suggesting that England and France are not also in need of conversion: one of the *Pax Christi* bulletins we have received welcomes a similar movement initiated by German seminarists for the reconversion of France. Those desiring to become members should send their names to *Pax Christi*, 171 Bd. du Monparnasse, Paris VI; a

subscription sufficient to cover the cost of a small quarterly bulletin (and postage) should be sent to R. Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., Blackfriars School, Laxton, Kettering, Northants.

REVIEWS

A PREFACE TO NEWMAN'S THEOLOGY. By Edmond D. Benard. (n.p.; B. Herder Book Co.).

Part One of this book deserves the title of the whole and could be useful to others than students of Newman. Fr. Benard argues for the observance of four principles in any interpretation of or appeal to Newman's thought. To repeat them in a review is almost to tell who committed the crime, but their statement makes the book to a far greater degree than the dénouement of any mystery story. The first principle is that: "A work of Cardinal Newman must always be interpreted and judged in the light of the particular phase of religious and intellectual development during which it was written, and his later and more mature views on a question must be preferred to the earlier." The second states that, "Any particular work of Cardinal Newman must always be interpreted and judged in the light of the precise purpose for which it was written and of the persons for whom it was intended." The third emphasises an important contrast by saying: "Any particular work of Cardinal Newman must never be interpreted and judged as a work of systematic theology, or in the light of scholastic terminology or of conventional logical method, or with a meaning attached to the words different from that which Newman intended." The last gives an internal clue to interpretation. "Any particular work of Newman must always be interpreted and judged in the light of the two doctrines which form the foundation of his idea of religion, the principle of dogma and the principle of the existence of a visible Church, with sacraments and rites that are the channels of invisible grace."

The biographical sketch which precedes the construction of those principles is designed to show their particular necessity in the treatment of Newman's thought; the chapters that follow are applications of them in the refutations of many criticisms of his theories of the development of dogma and the genesis of belief. The defence itself is not uncritical. Newman's orthodoxy is well maintained but the writer admits the structural weakness caused by Newman's disparagement of the status of universals. In tacit accordance with Principle Three, Fr. Benard does not draw out the consequences for theology which would result from Newman's own solution of the problem raised by his own inadequate philosophy, but this moment in the book makes one reflect that structural weaknesses cannot be wholly discounted by a reminder that no structure was intended. Ex-