

REVIEWS

L'ÉGLISE EN ÉTAT DE MISSION. Par Mgr Léon-Joseph Suenens. (Desclée De Brouwer; 60 fr. belges.)

The Church on earth has always been the Church Militant, but the appeals of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII have made it clear that in this day and age a general mobilization is called for, or as Cardinal Feltrin has expressed it: 'The time has come for the whole Church to be put on a missionary basis.' In this penetrating and comprehensive work Bishop Suenens discusses the implications, for clergy, religious and laity, of the missionary apostolate. In recent years one of the most hotly argued questions, on the Continent if not in England, among those engaged in the apostolate has been the priority expressed by the phrase 'humanize or evangelize'. There were those, notably the group *Jeunesse de l'Église* (condemned by the Holy See in 1953), who took the extreme position that chronologically the apostolate must concern itself with temporal matters, with the social order, and only later with spiritual matters. Bishop Suenens deals with this problem in a balanced fashion, pointing out that the gospel is to be preached to everybody and that the divine life is not reserved to those who have achieved a certain level of material culture. From this point he is able to put the work of the specialized apostolate (of like by like) in its proper perspective, giving a wider meaning to environment but at the same time stressing the fact that every conversion is personal, involving a personal decision.

For the laity Bishop Suenens underlines the importance of the parish, that every parish must be a missionary parish and not just a depot for the Sacraments, and this in its turn demands that the clergy should seek out the leaven and form them for their direct apostolate.

The most original section of the book is devoted to the place of religious in the Church's apostolate, and here the author quotes with great effect the words of the Holy Father to the Congress of Religious in 1950: 'Most often the constitution makers of Religious Institutes began their new foundations to fulfil functions or to serve needs that had appeared in the Church and would brook no delay. So, if you wish to follow the example of your founders, model your attitude on theirs. Study the opinions, the judgments and the ways of your contemporaries among whom you live, and take over from them what you find good and right. If you do not you will not be able to enlighten, help, encourage and *guide* your neighbour.' He sees a place for all active religious in helping with the apostolic formation of girls and women, both in schools and in the parish, and deals thoroughly with all the likely objections; from lack of time, from the necessity of long

religious exercises, from Constitutions. Fundamentally his point is that every religious, before being a member of her Congregation, is a baptized Christian, belonging to the Church and with the duties of membership of a missionary Church.

Bishop Suenens's previous work, *The Theology of the Apostolate*, has already been published in an English translation and one hopes that this present work will soon find an English translator to the advantage of the Church in the English-speaking countries.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

1954 PROCEEDINGS OF THE SISTER'S INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY. Edited by A. Leonard Collins, C.S.C. (University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, U.S.A.; \$3.00.)

This is the second volume of proceedings of the Institute for Religious Sisters. During August of last year some eight hundred Superiors gathered for the meetings presided over by Valerio Cardinal Valeri, accompanied by several American bishops. The lectures were delivered by a group of religious priests, American and French. The two French Dominicans, Père A. Plé and Père P. Philippe, already known to readers of this review, concerned themselves with the nature of the adaptation of religious life, and the formation of the novice, respectively. Fr Gerard Kelly, S.J., dealt with some practical psychological problems which the Superior has to face; Fr C. Corcovan, C.S.C., was concerned with the Vow of Obedience; Fr G. Diefenbach, O.F.M.CAP, with the Life of Prayer, and Fr A. Riesner, C.S.S.R., with Canon Law as applied the Vow of Poverty. It will be seen at once that the volume is extremely practical. Père Philippe even gives a detailed horarium as a model for the novitiate. Fr Kelly has a section on scruples. Fr Riesner seems to deviate from St Thomas on the matter of poverty, holding, it would seem, that there is such a thing as the *virtue* of poverty as distinct from the vow. But that is not the main purpose of his paper, which deals with such things as 'expenses for postulancy and novitiate', 'the obligation to make a will', etc. Bishop Pursley, in the concluding address, gives a balanced appreciation of such gatherings. 'There is never on this earth a final solution for all problems. The old ones seem endowed with immortality and the new ones keep growing up out of the changing situations of life.' There is always need to face the present situation with its difficulties; but we must never think that we can provide a cut-and-dried solution which will remain always effective.

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