

EXTRACTS

IN his first sermon Monseigneur Maurice Feltin, the new Archbishop of Paris, mentioned that although 70 per cent of the five million inhabitants of the diocese had been baptised, not more than 500,000 were practising Catholics. This fact alone makes the new forms of the apostolate, such as the Mission de Paris, an imperative necessity. Already a score of priests live as the poor live in Paris slums, giving their ministrations to whoever will accept them, and forming 'frontier' Christians who have little or nothing to do with the normal parochial and diocesan life.

But within the ordinary framework there is a vigorous new liturgical spirit at work. This is largely due to the drive and energy of the relatively small group, composed of priests and layfolk, known all over France as 'le C.P.L.' Like so many post-war developments the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* has developed beyond the hopes of its founders. Its purpose, *pour aider les fidèles à participer au culte chrétien avec intelligence et ferveur*, has been reinforced by the encyclical *Mediator Dei* and its publications such as *La Maison Dieu* and *Fêtes et Saisons* have spread the idea of the fullest participation of the laity not only in France but in other lands. Not long ago the director of *Fêtes et Saisons* was approached with a view to publishing a Dutch edition with a printing of 500,000 copies.

It is however the many well-attended congresses, or summer schools, of the C.P.L. which have done most to promote the good work. Some are enormous, like the week in Lyons last year which mustered several thousand *congressistes*; others are smaller and more closely devoted to study, like the meetings which look like becoming an annual feature at the college of Ste Geneviève at Versailles. Here some 350 priests and seminarians drawn from all over France spent the third week of September in a thorough study of the various aspects of the liturgy of parish life under the genial chairmanship of Fr A-M. Roguet, O.P., director of the C.P.L.

As well as the learned papers prepared by distinguished authorities such as Dom Hild of Clervaux and Dom Botte of Mont Cesar, which will doubtless appear in due course in the *Maison Dieu*, there were impressive illustrations of chant in the vernacular organised by Père Gelineau, S.J., and various para-liturgical matters were expounded by André Cruziat and Mme Lubienska de Lanval.

The crowded programme was punctuated by the recital *in situ* of parts of the Office at appropriate intervals during the lectures and the last days were made memorable by the spirited discussions on sacred art initiated by Père Regamey and Père Couturier.

After the congress an opportunity was given for visiting Fr Michonneau's parish at Colombes in which the spirit of the new movement is vividly demonstrated both by the corporate responses of the people and the enthusiasm of the half-dozen pupil-curates, among whom were Jesuits and Dominicans, and it satisfied a visitor from England that the new Archbishop of Paris has a tried and effective apostolic method ready to hand.

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PARISH MISSIONARIES were the subject of a congress held at Namur in June of this year, and the papers read thereat are published in the September issue of *Evangeliser* (Liège). The main subject was preparation for the mission, regular and secular clergy closely co-operating to make the days of study fruitful for both. Cardinal Saliège lays down four rules at the end of the volume.

(a) Every Mission is a parish mission, i.e. it should envisage not only reaching the greatest number possible in the given area, but moreover being of service to the future progress of a parish Community, without which perseverance is impossible.

(b) Every Mission is a general mission, i.e. it undertakes responsibility for the whole human group cared for by the parish priest.

(c) Every Mission is an original mission, i.e. it demands a preliminary and precise study of the place to be evangelised—no parish is 'just like the others'.

(d) Every Mission ought to fit into the parish scheme of action, i.e. the missionary has the right to know and the duty to discover from the parish priest the 'idée pastorale' of the parish—not only the actual state of religion, but the direction in which the Pastor is going in the formation of the parish.

The Cardinal also gives five points of a practical nature which include a visit to every family in the parish and the co-operation of the whole parish community in the work of the mission. The Congress ended with three resolutions on the need for the assistance of the laity in preparing and conducting the mission and the desirability that clergy retreats should always include questions on parish missions.

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ALL this is very pertinent to the present day when there has been a sudden revival of parish missions as well as a profound adaptation and variety of methods in conducting them. This has been the great achievement, in particular, of the Catholic Missionary Society, whose organ *The Catholic Gazette* continues to give news of the nation-wide mission which is now drawing to its close in England. Particularly valuable in the October issue of that journal is an article on the 'Priesthood of the Laity' by Mgr H. F. Davis; for the participation of the laity in the evangelisation of the world

depends upon their share in the royal priesthood of Christ. The doctrine is easily subjected to exaggeration by those who take a 'party line' about it, so that Mgr Davis's balanced treatment will provide a useful foundation for Catholic Action.

The true position is that the layman has a real priesthood but it must be in every way subject to the hierarchy in its function. They can offer the sacrifice with Christ, when Christ offers it through his priests. They can confer some sacraments and receive others in the manner laid down by the Church. They have a duty of representing God before men and men before God, but always in obedience to Christ's Vicar and those in Holy Orders under him. But their work is so important that without them much of God's work could not be done, and occasionally God deliberately chooses the laity in preference to priests to carry out his mission.

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PAX (Autumn) publishes a very interesting and sympathetic account of the contemplative community of non-Catholic laymen in California inspired and presided over by Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley. It is easy for the Catholic with the great tradition of the Church to draw on to be contemptuous of the Heards and Huxleys. The author of this article, who lived in the community, which followed a rule under vows and enjoined on its members among other things three hours' mental prayer a day, writes of Heard's outstanding merits and sincerity. The community was eventually abandoned in 1948 ostensibly on account of 'insufficient funds', but in reality, according to the author, for lack of the true authority which is in fact part of the texture of contemplative life. And there were other reasons too, which readers of Heard's works will understand. 'Blinded by our enthusiasm we failed to realise the dangers of Gnosticism and empty intellectualism into which this faith was apt to lead.' It is clear from his account, as well as from the books which have emanated from the group, that Gnosticism is not an ancient museum piece. For that reason, if for no other, Fr Victor White's lecture *Notes on Gnosticism* (Guild of Pastoral Psychology, lecture No. 59; price 1s.7d. for non-members) will be welcomed for its treatment of a topical issue:

The spiritual currents of the present, he writes, have a deep affinity with Gnosticism. There is even a Gnostic church in France today, and I know of two schools in Germany which openly declare themselves Gnostic.

But it was Dr Jung's interest in relating psychological phenomena to Gnostic experience which occasioned Fr White's lecture for there are often confusions, for which the psychologists themselves are not always free from blame, between the true psychological

approach and a 'non-committal mysticism, a mysticism without discipline, so that there remains a museum of religious experiences, with Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., collectors' items', to quote one of the antagonists referred to by Fr White. This latter is surely a description of the weaknesses of Heard's group. The body of Fr White's lecture is, however, devoted to an analysis of the original Gnostic heresies, an analysis which is not only theological but also psychological.

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LA VIE SPIRITUELLE (October) contains a *chronique* on English Spirituality by Illtud Evans, O.P. The major part of the issue is devoted to the Bible—three Dominicans, Congar, Chiffot and Lemoine, are its stars.

SPONSA REGIS (Collegeville, Minnesota) for October contains a timely article on 'Weekly Confession and Direction', and a Franciscan emulates Fr White's commentary on St Thomas's letter on study under the same title as the latter's booklet, 'How to Study'.

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ROME. In preparation for the Holy Year the editors of *Fêtes et Saisons* have published the eleventh *Album Liturgique* on the theme 'Rome, l'année sainte dans la ville sainte' (Blackfriars Publications; 1s.0d.). There are thirty-two pages covered with pictures of St Peter's, Roman churches and scenes, catacombs . . . with all the expert layout and interest which have come to be the hallmark of *Fêtes et Saisons*. The article will please and instruct not only those who are lucky enough to get to Rome next year but those too who will be sharing in the Holy Year at a distance. The *Albums Liturgiques* have proved to be of very great utility as well as of beauty—and this will be no exception to the series.

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CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS were first adopted as a conscious weapon against paganism by C.A.G.O. (Catholic Action Girls' Organisation, 22 Bramham Gardens, S.W.5) in 1939. Since then many others have adopted this apostolate, but C.A.G.O. continues its good work in this sphere and deserves to be supported. The prices of this year's selection range from 2d. to 5d. Another source of Christian Christmas Cards, with a speciality in lino cuts, is 'The Maryfield Press', Carmelite Convent, Woodcock Hill, Berkhamsted. Some of these are 1d., others reach to 1s. each. No one need be without a good supply this year to suit the tastes of all his friends.