

every day before Conventual Mass, and at the end of Mass to sing two antiphons, one for the Pope and one for the Order of St Dominic.

But the life of the Sisters also has its directly apostolic aspect. Their constant formation through the discipline of prayer and study makes them ready and properly equipped, when obedience demands it, to offer spiritual help to people who come to make private retreats at the convent, and indeed there are many who have found much consolation in the atmosphere of prayer and recollection, which for a few days they have been able to share with the Sisters.

At Servoz, in the Alps, the Sisters have many such visitors, including sometimes especially priests and religious who are in need of a rest, and who can find, together with the mountain air, spiritual refreshment in that quiet retreat. The guest house at Servoz also sometimes accommodates whole families and groups of children.

The house at Sens (105 rue Victor-Guichard) was severely damaged during the war, but the restoration is now (1957) almost complete, and visitors for private retreats are accommodated there once more.

The Congregation has had several requests for foundations in England, but the superiors have ruled that none shall be made until at least three English vocations have spent at least three years at the Mother House at Sens: a figure, however, which has never yet been reached.

The present article has been prepared on the basis of the French leaflet issued at Sens, to make more widely known a new and special aspect of Dominican life, and one which surely fulfils in a particularly Dominican way the ideal of the Order expressed in the motto *Contemplata aliis tradere*: 'to share with others the fruits of the contemplative life'. SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR FATHER EDITOR,

I was astonished at the peremptory style of your editorial in the June number, concerning my comment on the subject of the

baptism of converts. Since you have mentioned my name five times in trying to demolish my argument I must request you to give equal publicity to my reply. I may say that I see no reason to modify my original comment.

Your readers are entitled to know that Fr Hastings has no authority for his statement on the practice of the English clergy. He is resident abroad and not even incardinated in an English diocese. The responsibility is indeed grave, of a priest who, omitting conditional baptism, risks receiving into the Church a convert without being assured that his non-Catholic baptism was valid.

In my view the semi-political notion of stirring up public opinion, which you support, as a disciplinary corrective to the clergy, is to be repudiated on disciplinary and theological grounds. The Church was not founded as a kind of constitutional democracy, and where necessary it is for the hierarchy to issue admonitions on points of discipline.

I would draw your attention to the equivocation involved in speaking of 'public opinion residing in the minds of the faithful', which you state was brought into play in defining the dogma of the Assumption, and in relaxing the Eucharistic fast. Neither Dr Asmussen nor Fr Hastings makes use of 'public opinion' in this sense. And further, the term is inapplicable to the instances which you give. The Assumption was already universally taught by the ordinary magisterium of the Church, and was therefore a matter of belief and not of the *consensus* of public opinion. The Eucharistic fast was changed on the personal initiative of the Pope, for purely factual reasons. Your argument, therefore, and the reasons upon which it is based fall to the ground.

Yours, etc.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

Oxford,

17 June, 1957

We print the above in deference to Fr Farrell's wishes. We can only reiterate however what was said in our June Editorial; mildly, we had hoped, yet, as we thought, with sufficient clarity.

(a) We did not try to demolish Fr Farrell's argument, the substance of which was 'a clear and unequivocal statement of the law of the Church'. We simply pointed out that it was scarcely relevant to our

discussion which was not concerned 'to criticize or change the law, but to carry it out'.

(b) Fr Farrell's reflection that 'the responsibility is indeed grave of a priest who omitting conditional baptism, risks receiving a convert into the Church without being assured that his non-Catholic baptism was valid', shows that he still does not perceive this. His implication is that Fr Hastings and the Editor were advocating the undertaking of this grave responsibility. In fact we did just the opposite. Fr Farrell's sentiment though unexceptionable is misleadingly irrelevant.

(c) The fact that Fr Hastings is studying in one of the English Colleges in Rome and does not belong to an English diocese is hardly proof that he has no authority for his statements.

(d) The sense in which the Editor used 'public opinion' was that of Dr Asmussen, in his original article; viz. 'public opinion within the Catholic communion', i.e. residing in the minds of the faithful. Fr Farrell takes this phrase, gives it a quite different meaning, which he dubs Protestant, and more ambiguously semi-political, and foists it on Dr Asmussen, who did not mean that by it, and on Fr Hastings, who never used it at all.

(e) The Editor's attention is drawn to what Fr Farrell believes to be an equivocation. He is mistaken. He forgets that in the historical process that culminated in the definition of the Assumption that dogma began by being an opinion in the minds of the faithful. The same is true of the Immaculate Conception. 'The Eucharistic fast was changed on the personal initiative of the Pope for purely factual reasons', but does it follow from this that the expressed wishes and needs of the faithful in respect of those facts carried no weight in the making of the change?

No further comment on this subject will be published.—EDITOR.



EXTRACTS

SCRIPTURE, the Quarterly of the Catholic Biblical Association, should be regularly read at least by priests, nuns and all in any way engaged in teaching the Faith. It expounds the Scriptures to the non-specialist in a way that sets the Bible in its right place as the groundwork of doctrinal teaching.

The present number, July 1957, is a sample of the good things this review invariably contains, all *ad rem* in regard to the general theme of the July and August numbers of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.