

UNITY AND DIVERSITY: THE CATHOLIC CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH

The subject of diversity and unity in Catholicism is as old as the first Council of Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles and as new as the mission encyclicals of our times. It is as provocative now in missionary and ecumenical circles as it was when the Church first had to confront it at Antioch and later officially in Jerusalem. It stems from the dogmatic fact of the Catholic unity of the Church, her universality and her uniqueness. Père Gillou, O.P., wrote an article in *Istina* entitled, "Plénitude de catholicité et oecuménisme." It was a study of the Church as communion. In so presenting the Church he finds that it is: 1) *tradition*, since it cannot be anything other than the tradition of a given always identical with itself, 2) *mission*, since the communion is called to enclose within itself all men, 3) *development*—the communion is realized in history and this means development in the expression of the faith and the realization of its institutions. The faith in substance remains unchanged; in their substance the structures of the Church are unchanged. But the members are involved in history. They can preserve the mystery only in the development which it incites to safeguard through history its identity (*Istina*, 1957, 2, 237). The Church is essentially a *dynamic unity*.

Some Background Ideas

For a long time the rich expression of the catholicity of the Church as involving something more than geographical extension was inhibited by the controversies issuing from the rites questions in India and China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The controversy was solved, or rather suppressed, by forbidding adjustment to local customs and by the imposition of an oath on all missionaries to the Orient forbidding such activities. These adverse decisions restricted severely the presentation of the Church as truly universal to millions of people and gave her the appearance of an essentially, even totally, European system. One does not know the

secrets of divine providence. However, it should be said that neither the majority of the missionaries nor the leaders of the Church in Europe were prepared intellectually and scientifically for adapting the Church to a non-European context of life. Europe was living in the memory and presence of heresies and the Inquisition with the result that a careful conservatism and defense mentality prevailed. In religion or religions everything was black or white. Everything in the non-Christian world was considered to be either totally corrupt or so infected with error as to warrant destruction.

In the last century there appeared the *Syllabus* of Pope Pius IX and early in this century the *Oath against Modernism* prescribed by Saint Pius X which induced an extreme caution about procedures and studies which might have the appearance of unorthodox adjustment. The effort of some theologians and philosophers to bring Catholic thought into line with developments outside the Church provoked these condemnations, which indeed were necessary. But they did postpone a vigorous confrontation of the developments in the West and the systems of Asia and Africa. More recently the desire to present the Church as pertinent to modern society led to some extremes. The *Humani Generis* warned against an imprudent irenicism which is impatient with the method and terminology of our philosophy and theology as ill-adapted to the modern mind and the philosophies which it has constructed.

The extreme caution thus introduced into theology and philosophy affected the whole Church. The effect on the missionary Church was more marked, perhaps, because in mission lands the Church was confronting systems as old or older than Europe and quite different in their expressions. Many factors led the missionaries to transplant a total European context of Catholicism to the most diverse places. Missionary action was directed more to an imposition than to an assimilation whereby the genius of Catholicism is revealed. Diversity was suspect. The unity shown to other civilizations could not but give the impression of a foreign importation. This isolated the Church and Catholics from the mainstream of national life. In the last century and a half Protestant missionaries with their countless divisions entered the field, confusing and complicating the Christian task even more and leading our missionaries to em-

phasize *Roman* Christianity against the divided denominations of Protestants. The missionary had to confront heretical sects as well as the entrenched systems of non-Christian cultures. The conquest and conversion mentality prevailed so that missionary activity was conceived in terms of triumph over error and evil. More attention was given to the destruction of error than to the discovery, preservation and utilization of existing valid values. Unity there was, undoubtedly, but it was revealed in such a way as to ignore the possible legitimate diversity and richness of expression which are proper to a Church which alone is catholic.

Now we are at pains to reveal the universal pertinence of the Church and her high regard for the achievements and legitimate aspirations of all peoples. We are desperately trying to catch up with developments. The popes have noted that in our times Africa is trying to make a leap into modernity such as was achieved by other civilizations through centuries. The Church, too, especially in mission lands is trying to make a similar leap from the solidified mentality of several centuries to a mentality that is dynamic, vital, pertinent. It is not necessary to enumerate the many events which have promoted this change. Suffice it to mention some of the obvious reasons. *Outside the Church*, the colonial empires have vanished over most of the world leaving in their place sharpened nationalisms which emphasize the local culture and possessions often against European and American advances. There has been a rapid increase of information about cultures through the research of anthropology. Many aspects of western society have become internationalized. *In the Church*, there have been certain adjustments to circumstances in Manchukuo and Japan by Pope Pius XI which tacitly restored the earlier principles of adaptation. The mission encyclicals of the last three popes have shown a deep concern about the valuable possessions of other cultures. In mission lands there is great agitation for accommodation and the ecumenical movement among Protestants and the schismatic churches has drawn our attention to the fact of legitimate diversity within the unity of the faith.

The subject "Diversity in Unity: the Catholic Concept of the Church" has been further refined by these words: "the property of unity with a view to the division which it excludes; but even more

important, with a view to the diversity—*pluralism* in the good sense—which it does not exclude, but rather invites.” The centuries have shown that this is a problem which does not solve itself automatically. In the early Church it had to be met head-on. Now it must be confronted head-on, not by a few lone voices, but by the authoritative Church and the theologians and philosophers. Delay and procrastination could have serious unfortunate results for the missionary Church in her efforts to meet the needs and spirit of diverse and changing cultures. A fear of error and of extremism could paralyze the living Body of Christ and retard its wider revelation of catholicity. Fear would make the leaders of the Church excessively cautious in an area where there is great need of knowledge, imagination and inventiveness. A halting and hesitant traditionalism has in the past slowed the advance of the Church, and in fact, if not in doctrine, has obscured her admirable catholicity and vitality. At the same time an immoderate haste would expose one to the danger of taking positions which have not been sufficiently considered and thus of jeopardizing the heritage of the Church which is to be offered to all people. These observations will not be aimed directly at the schismatic and heretical groups in Christianity. Already there are many diversities in Catholic Eastern Churches which are certainly compatible with Catholic unity. However, a few points are here made with regard to the ecumenical movement. The development within the Protestant groups of the move toward unity has depended on the interest and concern of the missionary elements within the denominations. The movement originated with greatest strength in Protestantism as a consequence of this missionary activity. Missionary action was, of course, an attempt at universality but the effort forced the realization of the necessity of unity, since a divided Christianity should not be offered to non-Christians. The discussions on unity inevitably led to the attempt to formulate a theology of the Church which has been such a preoccupation of Protestant theologians in this century. The theologizing about the Church could not evade the necessity of authority and the location of authority in the Church. The earlier Protestant cry of *sola scriptura* has been tempered by a searching for some other authority than the written scriptures. The problem of authority still remains to be

solved. They strove for catholicity by missionary action. This led to the effort to restore unity. This effort has brought Protestants to recognize the centrality of the visible Church which in turn has presented the problem of authority. The schismatics and Protestants insist always on the preservation of diversity; unity is a goal to be striven for, which will not mean rigid uniformity. For us the preservation of unity has been paramount, diversity being considered a matter of expression and practical existence which must not obscure the unity. Basic to the whole problem is the theology of the Church. Many in the ecumenical movement want unity, not uniformity, and they presuppose that the Catholic Church buys unity at the deadening price of rigid uniformity. We should recognize that Church legislation has brought about a fair amount of uniformity. The centralization of Church government, the involvement of Roman Congregations in so many affairs on the local level, the dominating stature of the papacy do give the impression of a will to rigid uniformity to those outside the Church which we must explain. Kenneth Scott Latourette ten years ago thought that we had become more Roman than Catholic. In his judgment we had passed our peak and become fixed in forms that were proper to another age. We were too stereotyped to be able to engage in a movement of rejuvenation (*The Christian Outlook*, 299).

Possibly the solution will come from a more penetrating explanation of the Church, not only as a juridically constituted, visible society, but as a mystery. The relationship between the Incarnation and the Church, the implications of the visible in the Church call for continuing emphasis. There is in the Church both an intransigence and a comprehensiveness. The Anglican Church has maintained that it alone of all the Christian Churches has that comprehensiveness which will make it the bridge, the uniting point of a divided Christianity. It must be shown that the Catholic Church is both exclusive and inclusive, because for many Catholicism seems to be only exclusive. One of our contributions to the theological research of the ecumenical movement will be to assist them in discovering the true nature of the Church. Diversity within the unity of the Catholic Church is already evident to these groups if they make the effort to see it. They must be convinced that the Church

is not committed to rigid uniformity either by doctrine or practice.

It is among the two billion people of the non-Christian world with their many different cultures that the challenge of showing diversity in unity has its fuller significance. Christianity is more or less at home in the West and the Middle East. In the vast areas of the non-Christian world the Church is in a process of birth, or rather of gestation, where its features must slowly develop. What will issue forth must be genuine Catholicism, but it must also bear the features which are proper to the material out of which the Church is being formed. No doubt, and rightly so, it will be different from what we know in straight Latin Catholicism. But it will be different, too, from the purely Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and African cultures into which it is being inserted. In this connection there should be care in speaking of Christian culture, as though it were something completely developed, already established and to be imposed on the rest of the world. The cultures and the people formed by them are the material into which we infuse the form of Christ and the Church. We are not, then, engaged in a process of complete annihilation of pre-existing matter in order to create something entirely new both in matter and form. The objective is the transformation and elevation of the existing material. The process, indeed, involves the transference of souls from the kingdom of the prince of darkness to the Kingdom of God's beloved Son. But the assault of the prince of darkness has not completely corrupted this material. The *lumen rationis* is still communicated to every man by the Word and the *lumen fidei* was not designed by God to erase the *lumen rationis*.

For the most part in mission lands the Church is dealing with the products of reason which has revealed its limitations in erroneous religious systems. But the systems are not erroneous in every detail. Through the centuries reason has tried to construct ways of life, ways of liberation and salvation. We prescind from the speculation about a primitive revelation or the possibility of later enlightenment. To some extent, then, reason can be considered a tutor, destined eventually to lead people to Christ, even though wanderingly and obscurely. This tutelage of reason should not be ignored or contemned. The partial function of the Church will be to make straight its path and to mediate the truths of revelation which will

free from the sole rule of reason with its limitations: "so that through faith in Jesus Christ, they may be all now God's sons" (Gal 3, 24-26). Saint Paul spoke about the function of reason among the Gentiles and its discovery of a rule to guide them (Rom 2, 14-15). Because of the expanding knowledge of the condition of the Gentiles a sharper appreciation is possible of Paul's observations about the expectancy of creation for the coming of the sons of God and for liberation from the tyranny of corruption (Rom 8, 20-22). The reach for fulfilment and freedom is discoverable in most of the religious systems of the world. There is an aspiration which is good and at the same time a frustration and perversion. The aspiration has been expressed by many ideas and practices, many essentially sound, even though there be an admixture of error which vitiates the system as such. Our dogmatic premise, then, is that human nature was not totally corrupted by original or subsequent personal sin so that reason could not arrive at any truth.

The valid products of reason in its efforts to understand God, the spiritual world, man and the temporal world are acceptable wherever they are found. The transformation and elevation of the pre-existing material will take place, not in human nature, *in abstracto*, but in men and women and children in the concrete circumstances of their lives. Not all the expressions of man's relationship with God, himself and the world to be found in these systems will be false. What is true and good must be preserved. Since there is a tyranny of corruption, this necessarily imports a process of liberation and purification. But liberation should not mean alienation or separation from the total existing context of life. Rather it should mean the elimination of corruption. It means the communication of fuller truth, both of revelation and reason, the communication of divine life and incorporation into the mystery of Christ. In Christ, then, the legitimate diversities are brought together and preserved for the mutual enrichment of the Church and these people.

There are absolutes, essentials and invariables in Catholicism. But the centuries of Christian living show that there are variables and non-essentials which have changed with the developments and differences in society. The capacity of the Church for assimilation is rooted deep in her catholicity, in the universal headship of Christ.

The miraculous unity of the Church, now so enlightened by the teaching on the Church as the Body of Christ, should not obscure the prodigious multiplicity and variety of members. Heresy forced us to concentrate on unity. This so directed attention to the Church in the West that there was a tendency to petrify the Church in the entirety of its western and Latin expression. The time has come now for a richer development of the theology of catholicity. The argument for the moral miracle of the Church rests, among other things, on the *mira propagatio*. One of the elements in this extension has been the assimilation by the Church of valuable elements in the civilizations and cultures which she confronted. Nor must her admirable diversity in the earlier centuries be considered merely a temporary tactic required by the infancy of the Church and her limited external forms rather than a manifestation of her deepest nature, her true catholicity.

We Latins have learned the hard way just how native to the Church is a multiplicity and variety of expression, how necessary for her continuing life is a capacity for assimilation and adaptation. The spiritual descendants of Saints Cyril and Methodius were driven into schism by the demand of the German bishops that the Latin rite be adopted. The attempt to latinize the Saint Thomas Christians alienated them from us in the sixteenth century. We should face the fact that there is a tendency to petrify the Church in the forms and expressions proper to us. Yet orthodoxy does not mean rigid inflexibility in all things which concern the visible Church as we know it. Things which have been left by Christ to the judgment and decision of the Church should not be clothed with the supreme authority of a revelation that has been tortured. Nor should the Church be impoverished in the revelation of herself to the world by assuming that she has reached the perfection of her growth and expression in the Latin rite and the West. History is against that, as well as the teaching of the Church.

Pope Pius XII in his very first encyclical announced the mind and will of the Church:

The Church of Christ, the faithful depository of the teaching of Divine Wisdom, cannot and does not think of deprecating or disdaining the particular characteristics which each people, with

jealous and intelligible pride, cherishes and retains as a precious heritage. Her aim is a supernatural union in all-embracing love, deeply felt and practised, and not the unity which is exclusively external and superficial and by that very fact weak.

The Church hails with joy and follows with maternal blessing every method of guidance and care which aims at a wise and orderly evolution of particular forces and tendencies having their origin in the individual character of each race, provided that they are not opposed to the duties incumbent on men from their unity of origin and common destiny.

She has repeatedly shown in her missionary enterprises that such a principle of action is the guiding star of her universal apostolate. Pioneer research and investigation, involving sacrifice, devotedness and love on the part of her missionaries of every age, have been undertaken in order to facilitate the deeper appreciative insight into the most varied civilizations and to put their spiritual values to account for a living and vital preaching of the Gospel of Christ. All that in such usages and customs is not inseparably bound up with religious error will always be subject to kindly consideration and, when it is found possible, will be sponsored and developed (*Summi Pontificatus*, 44-46).

The Pope confirmed this mind by introducing many changes and adjustments. Theologians have been incited to develop the theology of the laity, their participation in the priesthood of Christ and their apostolic function. He reminded us in the *Mediator Dei* that we are not antiquarians and proved it by his readiness to introduce changes in the liturgy which have made for its greater vitalization and intelligibility. The last sentence in the citation tells us that our attitude must be kindly toward usages and customs and, when possible, we sponsor and develop them. These things must be studied without the presumption or prejudice that they are either totally right or totally wrong. In this matter there is a grave need for the theologian's virtue of docility—a readiness, more an eagerness, to learn, because what is learned will affect the expression of the Church's life and teaching in cultures other than our own.

Unity and Diversity in General

God committed himself to diversity by the act of creation. Saint Thomas notes that the perfection of the universe consists of a diversity of things. The distinction and multiplicity of things is not

haphazard. Rather it is the intention of God, the First Cause. His purpose in creation was the communication of his goodness. Goodness in God is simple and uniform; in creatures it is manifold and distinct. This manifold diversity is not without cohesion (*S. T.*, 1, 40, 1). In the third article of the same question it is stated that the very order of things created by God shows the unity of the world. The world is called one by the unity of order whereby things are ordered to others. Whatever things come from God have a relation of order to each other and to God himself. So it is necessary that all things belong to one world.

The treatment of the unity of God by Saint Thomas suggests other ideas (*S. T.*, 1, 11, 1).

Unum nihil aliud significat quam ens indivisum. Et ex hoc apparet quod unum convertitur ente. Nam omne ens aut est simplex aut compositum. Quod autem est simplex est indivisum actu et potentia. Quod autem est compositum non habet esse quamdiu partes ejus sunt divisae, sed postquam constituunt et componunt ipsum compositum. Unde manifestum est quod esse cuiuslibet rei consistit in indivisione; et unde est quod unumquodque sicut custodit suum esse, ita custodit suam unitatem.

The Church as a being must have unity, must be undivided; otherwise it could not exist as itself. It must resist division in order to preserve its existence. But the Church as composite necessarily implies the bringing together of diverse parts. The necessity of unity, however, should not lead to a conservatism which would limit the parts to be brought together or oppose present and future diversity. What the Church must resist in order to guard her being is not diversity, but the separation from the Head and other members. The differences among the members do not violate or threaten the unity of the Church. The diversities which cannot be composed with the Church would be those which contradict her nature. Thus there cannot be a composition of Hinduism or Islam with Catholicism, because these systems contain elements of error. But there are diversities which are not inextricably bound up with error and are proper to the people living under these systems. Such things are *in potentia* for incorporation into the Body of Christ. The being of the Church which she must guard in order to continue in her proper existence

must be more and more perfectly developed. Essential to the nature of the Church are both unity and diversity. As division must be resisted for the preservation of unity; so uniformity must be resisted for the preservation of diversity.

It is right to say that the Church must be presented to other systems without the trappings of the West, provided one defines accurately what is meant by the trappings of the West. The reformers were going to return Christianity to the pure gospel without the accretions of Rome. Failing to make clear distinction they finished as heretics. The impression should not be given that the Church should regret everything that has been called western in her when she reaches out to the ends of the earth and other cultures. The Church is destined to restore all things to God. It does not seem that she will appear before God at the end as some undifferentiated thing divested of all human features whether of East or West. These features, different as they may be, are the product of man's earthly history to be summed up forever in Christ. The being of the Church must be guarded against any attempt to rob her of the multiple beauty of diversified but valid human features. Her being is not to be constricted, when by her very nature she is open to the whole human race. However, one must guard against the assumption that every development and expression in the Church is merely the product of her experience in the West. These things are much more than merely western. Much of this development and expression is due to her experience with man, not just western man.

The discussion of unity and diversity could be placed in another context as the preservation of the authority and freedom of the Church. The authority is a guarantee of her unity. The freedom is a guarantee of her catholicity. The attacks on the freedom of the Church do not always come from Caesar, seeking to restrict and dominate her. They have come from within as well. Such an attack would be the inflexibility of those who would impose the total expression of the Latin rite in western forms. Such a threat to the Church's freedom is not often emphasized, because so many conceive the freedom of the Church in terms of her right to extend herself to all mankind without restriction from government or culture. Yet it is this freedom to express herself in many ways which reveals the

universality of the Church. The suppression of such freedom would despoil the Church; it would not protect her. It would result in the impoverishment and misrepresentation of the Church. The tendency to rigid conformism is a familiar experience in the history of the Church. The goal of restoring all things in Christ is achieved by the Church only if she is free from external resistance and internal restriction. The Church must be free to incorporate into herself the admirable diversities of the human race. To restrict the exercise of such freedom would be to mutilate the Church by the elimination of diversity and to force an atrophy on the living Body of Christ.

No one can say how much diversity is possible or permissible in the Church. It would be rash to maintain that the Church has exhausted all the possible expressions of her fulness in European and western Christianity, because the Church simply has not reached the fulness of her growth either in extension or legitimate diversity of expression.

Diversity in the Church

In her dogma the Church is catholic and absolute. There is no permissible diversity in the number of sacraments. A hierarchical Church is the institution of Christ. There will be popes, bishops and priests through whom Christ's headship and priesthood are made visible. However, the Church herself determines what is required for validity and liceity in her sacramental system, life of worship and the proper celebration of her mysteries. Legislation for the proper functioning of the Church as a visible society has often changed without changing her truth or her moral teaching. Her laws will continue to change, as conditions among her members and in society change, as her position with relation to society changes. The function of the membership in the Church has changed through the centuries; it has been restricted or expanded without destroying the hierarchical nature of the Church. The deposit of faith has been developed and variously applied without cancelling out any revealed truth. Dogmatic emphases have varied with the changes in society without weakening any of the truth committed to the Church. Her involvement in the affairs of the world has changed with the centuries and societies; from immersion in the temporal to

withdrawal, from union to relative separation, without destroying her essential mission and function in the world. Her clergy have been married and celibate without perverting the theology of holy orders. She has created new apostolic instruments and suppressed them. Her devotional emphases have constantly changed. She admits of a rich variety of modes of life, all designed for self-sanctification and the salvation of the world. Her liturgical language is varied. The art forms, music, painting, sculpture, architecture used by the Church have certainly been drawn from different cultures and modes of expression.

None of these changes has violated her orthodoxy, unity and continuity. In the midst of all such changes she has remained essentially herself. She has prohibited, prescribed, approved and tolerated, as a living society in the changing temporal scene must. Change or diversity is not a menace to the function of the Church. What can be perilous is the misunderstanding or misapplication of change, the exaggeration of unity or diversity at the expense of the other. The restoration of all things in Christ does not mean first the reduction of the human race to a formless, undifferentiated mass of prime matter, which is then to be informed with Christ.

The Church at Rome, after the initial period of growth, had assumed many of the features of Roman civilization. As it moved north it came into touch with less developed cultures and became the bearer of a culture strongly Roman. The Church became the binding force of a continent; its culture not purely Greek, Roman, Gallic or German; rather it was European. The continent was evolving into an entity. The Church gave it its religious thought, its social ideal and its moral unity. The separation between the East and West which religiously hardened into schism was a sorrow, because it deprived the Church of contact with the variety of the Eastern Churches. This resulted more or less in the solidification, almost canonization, of the western aspects of the Church. Yet the idea of diversity was not completely lost. John of Montecorvino, Archbishop of Peking in the 13th century, used the Tatar language for the celebration of Mass when passing through the territory of the Mongolian Khans.

The next possibility of diversity came in the 16th century, as the

Church moved into other civilizations in America, Africa and Asia. With few exceptions the flexibility of the Church was inhibited. The eventual condemnation of the Malabar and Chinese rites choked off any possibility of diversity. This meant the transference of total Latin Christianity to these various places. Lately the agitation for accommodation and assimilation has increased and there is now a readiness to consider and in some cases to grant diversity.

Each people thinks that it best expresses the Church and tends to look on other expressions of Catholicism with suspicion or superiority. Europeans criticize the kind of Catholicism in the United States and Americans criticize the Catholicism which they find in Europe. Criticism is not bad provided it is enlightened and is inspired by a love of the Church and not by a merely local loyalty. There are differences in emphasis from one country to another in the West, due to the varying circumstances of society and history. The Church always attempts to meet the society into which it is inserted as a leaven. This very necessity results in diversities in non-essentials which are quite compatible with the unity of the Church. The centralization of all decisions in the Roman Congregations, which has many advantages, also has slowed up the process of assimilation and, it would seem, inhibits decisiveness and inventiveness. The policy of widening the representation in the Congregations and the internationalization of the Church's administrative apparatus should introduce points of view and attitudes which will be more accurately informed. The time must come when Asians and Africans are to be found in the central administration of the Church. The increasing number of bishops and priests in Asia and Africa, solid in their theological and philosophical formation and thoroughly cognizant of the cultures of their own people, promises a freshness of view. It is to be hoped that they will not feel themselves overshadowed by European catholic thinking, as many in this country do. Much of the thinking of the Church about the changes taking place around the world should be done here, because we have already confronted change and worked out our destiny in a pluralistic society which will be the pattern of many new nations in the world. We will fail the Church in her present needs and efforts, if our theologians and philosophers are not thinking out the reference

of the Church to many phases of modern life which are being transferred to Asia and Africa.

Diversity in Theology and Philosophy

The encyclical *Humani Generis* has emphasized what is our official theology and philosophy. When, then, one thinks of permissible diversity, there can be no question of inventing a new theology or philosophy, more fitted to the modern Occidental, Oriental or African. The most it could mean would be a different theological or philosophical emphasis and enrichment of understanding in both disciplines. It is the will of the Church that all clergy be formed in traditional theology and philosophy and there can be no exception to that will. Obviously, there has to be diversity in the presentation of the truths on the non-clerical level. Mental backgrounds and perceptions differ from one culture to another and it is always valid procedure to move from the known to the unknown. Pius XII in an address to the Seminarians of Anagni stated that "They err, moved by a childish and immoderate desire for novelty, who weaken with their doctrines, actions, and disturbances the immutability of the Church. No less certain is it that they are deceived also who seek, scientifically or not, to petrify the Church in a sterile immobility" (Cf. *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1950, 578).

One may be permitted some misgivings at the increasingly loud complaint that the teaching of the Church is clothed too exclusively in the forms of Grecian and Roman thought, as though there had been no expansion and development in thought and assimilation since the days of Aristotle and Plato and Plotinus. It is stated that the Church must divest herself of these modes if she is to make any progress with other cultures, as though her philosophy might not be a development and refinement of the methods by which the *human* mind, not merely the western mind, investigates the object of knowledge. The observation is often made that this philosophy and theology are too intellectualist; other factors in the gaining of knowledge have been neglected (Cf. T. Ohm, *Asia Looks at Western Christianity*, 71ff.). If we must divest the Church of the enrichment of the thought and the method of centuries, do we expose ourselves to the danger of saying that the philosophy and theology in

the Church are merely particularistic and have not progressed into a really Catholic philosophy and theology? There is no just reason why the western mind should minimize or depreciate the *philosophia perennis* by which the Church has expressed and developed her teaching in order to convince the thinkers of Asia and Africa that we esteem their philosophies and their religious values. There is no reason why a philosophy of essences and object should be suppressed in favor of philosophies of existence and subject. However, Pius XII was not against clothing the essentials of this philosophy with more apt and rich vesture, strengthening them with more effective language, leaving aside certain questions of the schools less fitted to our times, carefully enriching traditional philosophy with certain elements of progressive human understanding (*A.A.S.*, 42, 573).

One should not expect to find well-developed philosophical systems in Asia or Africa which we can match with the traditional Christian system. At times some Christian writers seem to expect that, in their enthusiasm to respect the thought of other cultures. We are urged to recognize the limitations of Christian philosophy and theology and to reach out for the values of other systems. Yet the Church should not have to start from the bare message of the gospel and from a philosophical and theological zero when new cultures are confronted. But that seems to be the opinion of some who insist on the necessity of casting Christian revelation and truth in Asian and African forms in the philosophical and theological disciplines. It remains to be proved, not merely and often stated, that Asian and African minds generally are incapable of grasping the philosophical and theological procedures by which the Church has expressed the "universal formulation of the truths of the faith." That many are impatient with and uninclined to such mental discipline is a fact; but this does not prove a lack of capacity. After all, Asians and Africans are completely capable of expertness in the sciences. Impatience with the precision of thought obtained through the exercise of reason and logic arises not from a lack of capacity but from a contentment with vagueness. Vision, intuition, passivity which are extolled by Asian intellectuals as the great virtue of their systems, naturally lead to such contentment. One may say that the Asian and African do not approach reality in the way followed by

Christian philosophy. The nub of the question is—should they not approach reality in this way, if they are to establish a universal criterion? In all this discussion it seems that the other side of the coin is forgotten—the Church should give the value of her traditional philosophy to other cultures for their enrichment.

A distinction has to be made between the education of the Catholic philosopher and theologian from cultures other than the western, and the presentation of Catholic truth to people of cultures other than western. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., in discussing interpretation, notes that in Catholicism there are four procedures: an initial message in divine revelation; the work of teachers and preachers applying and communicating the initial message to a succession of different audiences; the work of the speculative theologian seeking universal formulation of the truths of faith; and the work of the historical theologian revealing the doctrinal identity in the preceding verbal and conceptual differences. He notes further that:

As true interpretation has to mount to a universal viewpoint, so the Church takes advantage of the *philosophia perennis* and its expansion into speculative theology. As there is a difference between interpretations adapted to particular audiences and particular times and the interpretation from the universal viewpoint, so also the Church distinguishes between authoritative pronouncements that call for dutiful submission and definitive pronouncements that the Church itself cannot contradict (*Insight*, 739).

The function of attaining the universal viewpoint proper to the philosopher and theologian should be called to the attention of those who are preoccupied with the task of the teacher and preacher, communicating and applying the message of revelation to different audiences. The functions are not the same, though too often they are identified in some highly emotional writing. The task of communicating and applying the message of revelation to different audiences is the task of the teacher and preacher; not the task of the theologian. But the function of the communicator certainly presupposes the fruit of philosophical and theological effort. Matteo Ricci and Roberto de Nobili made gigantic efforts to penetrate and grasp the content of Chinese and Hindu thought. But they did this from the

criterion of an already well-formulated metaphysics. Thus they were enabled to see where these systems in particular cases had determined what is real and where they failed to determine what is not real. Whatever insights there are in these systems can be incorporated into the metaphysical insights already attained. But there appears to be the assumption that these systems have all the insights which have been developed in our philosophy and theology and more, and that simply is not true. The *philosophia perennis* is open to further insights and developments; otherwise it would not be a valid system. It is this very openness which makes it a fit instrument for the analysis and appraisal of other systems. Consequently, there is no question of ignoring Asian and African insights into reality, much less of despising them, as some have come to interpret the Church's emphasis on her philosophy and theology.

The point is made that the Fathers of the Church effectively presented the gospel and assisted the development of theology in ways quite different from the way in which these things are done now. Such an idea cannot mean that there has been no advance in understanding in the living Church by the formulation of philosophy and theology. Most of the Fathers were teaching and preaching to particular audiences. But this does not change the value and fact of a well-formulated philosophy and theology that are universal, not particularistic. Much of the present discussion seems to have a false foundation, namely that the philosophy and theology of the Church are particularistic because they were developed in the West where Christianity first went, supposedly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Some people cry emotionally *Lux ex Oriente*, that Catholicism shall be saved and regenerated only by a transfusion into it of the East, as though it were in the throes of its last agony in the West. That is an unrealistic portrayal. This does not mean, however, that no enrichment will come to Christianity by the incorporation of Asian and African peoples. By all means the effort must be made to interpret revealed truth for such people; but that does not mean a new philosophy and theology.

There should be a diversity in the communication and application of the Christian revelation to particular audiences, but a diversity of, perhaps, verbal expression and emphasis, certainly not

diversity of doctrine. The work of the Institute of Mission Apologetics, staffed by former China missionaries, is evidence of the fact that missionaries appreciate the need for diversity in teaching the Christian truth. Here we are changing our methods of catechetics and the teaching of religion on the higher levels. Both the techniques and the truths emphasized are different from what they were a century ago. To do this effectively the particular audience and society have to be deeply analysed and understood. In Africa and Asia this requires a deeper understanding of the different cultures. Consequently, in the formation of missionaries and African and Asian clergy, in addition to traditional philosophy and theology, there is a most important place for the study of the content of these other cultures. In time the philosophy and theology of the Church may be enriched by the insights of African and Asian peoples. The western philosopher and theologian do not think that all possible insights and development have been exhausted. Recognizing the obstruction to insight caused by emotion, all must help to solve the present tension with intellectual humility and a universal desire to advance in wisdom and perception of Christian revealed truth. Local loyalties do not outweigh and should not obscure the universal spirit which should characterize thinkers in the Church.

In his book *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan, S.J., confronts the problem as to whether there can be more than one true metaphysics and his position is that there can be only one metaphysics. He states the objection:

A metaphysics in terms of potency, form and act is indigenous to Mediterranean and western thought; but is it not to be expected that, once we overcome the parochialism of our outlook and come to understand the mentality of the East, then we shall have to acknowledge a plurality of different yet true and so equivalent metaphysics?

He finds that an argument drawn from cultural differences does not affect his position.

For while those differences are profound and manifest, they are not differences which lie within the intellectual pattern of experience . . . metaphysics, as it has been conceived, arises in the intellectual pattern of experience, and, when an Easterner

inquires and understands, reflects and judges, he performs the same operations as a Westerner (*Insight*, 2, 734-736).

Oliver Lacombe in an article on natural mysticism in India observes with regard to yoga that:

it is a process in most instances which has the effect of emptying consciousness of all distinct representation. It puts in parentheses objective existence. This trait is important because it confirms the purely existential character of the terminal experience itself. It proceeds to disengage progressively the absolute existence of the subjects; absolute in the sense of freedom from all relations to any other being but the self.

Then he remarks that without an authentic metaphysics, metaphysical distinctions and elucidations, the method is dangerous. And one ventures the opinion that such a valid metaphysics is lacking at present in that system.

Louis Gardet in an article on "Philosophy and Religious Law in Medieval Islam and Judaism" remarks that one of the first demands of method in comparative philosophy or theology is not to apply univocally to religious climates specifically different a problem established by one of them. In Christianity one of the capital questions is that of faith and reason. But to transport it completely as such to Islam or Judaism always runs the risk of reaching an impasse. We have too much of a tendency to look for what could be a Moslem philosophy or theology conceived as a simple transposition of Christian philosophy or theology (*Revue Thomiste*, 51(111), 1951, 671). This confusion appears when people talk freely about the contemplative and intuitive genesis and term of Asian thought. Or when they talk so familiarly about the mysticism of the East. The fact that there are similarities between it and Christian mysticism has prompted some to speak about both in a way that obscures their enormous differences. It is further illustrated by the fact that some talk about the Trinity in Hinduism and of the sacraments of Hinduism and the concept of the Incarnation in Hinduism, using a terminology that is very precise and unique in Catholicism and has no strict counterpart in Asian religions. Christian doctrine is not just an evolution of natural truths nor can our metaphysics just be evoked from these systems of thought. It is hard to

see how there can be a Hindu or Bantu Catholic philosophy and theology any more than there is a Greek or Roman Catholic philosophy or theology.

The course in theology could be refashioned with profit for seminarians in other cultures. In mission lands doctrines for which there is a natural foundation in the local cultures could be emphasized without prejudice to the course in theology. Dogmatic emphases have changed from time to time in the history of the Church. The theological emphases which were the result of the conflict with the Reformation, a Christian heresy, do not seem to be the theological emphases needed in those places where the Church is confronting non-Christian religions. The Congregation of Seminaries might well take this into consideration. For instance, for African seminarians much more emphasis could be placed on the theology of solidarity in Adam, solidarity in Christ, solidarity in the Church in terms of a community of life, because that is the African's concept of himself taking his place in the continuity of life in his own society. The sacraments should receive more emphasis as communal facts as well as individual benefits. Their adversaries are not the *Novatores*. The headship and kingship of Christ could receive much more emphasis. The treatises on the devil, the angels, the communion of saints are more valuable for his society than other things which are given such long treatment in courses of theology. The theology of the priesthood is valuable for him in a society of medicine men and sorcerers, black and white magic. The same should be done for priests in other cultures. It is a question of emphasis rather than of difference or diversity. It must not be thought that one is thinking here in terms merely of the practical and utilitarian. One is speaking of the confrontation of revealed truth with specific groups and ideas. There is no need to be concerned about the communication to seminarians of the universal viewpoint of theology—that is guaranteed by our philosophy and theology.

A conference of the professors of the seminaries and scholasticates of India was held two years ago in Bangalore. The theme of the conference was the integration of Indian thought into the teaching of philosophy and theology. It was thought that Hindu writings might aid in a new presentation of some questions such as

creation and sanctifying grace. Work is in progress on a new set of text books. Fr. Thekaekara, S.J., noted that a thorough familiarity with Hindu thought past and present is necessary. But he indicated difficulties which could arise from such adaptation. Disastrous results could come not from varying the invariables, nor from a possible misconstruing of the effort as an indication that all religions are equally good. The primary danger in the presentation to particular audiences would be that prospective converts might accept this approach to Hindu thought as the final stage in their religious evolution and not as the first step in seeking completion in Christ. He cited as an example of this danger the book *To Christ through the Vedanta*, written by Fr. Johann, S.J. It was intended as an instruction manual for Hindu intellectuals seeking Christ. But it is being used as a text book in the Hindu college at Benares. The intellectuals successfully rendered ineffective the part "To Christ" in the book. (Notes for Mission Secretariat Meeting, Washington, September 1959.)

In his book *Is There a Christian Philosophy?*, Fr. Nedoncelle offers a chapter on the question "Can a Christian Philosophy Be Universal?" It is difficult to find out from Nedoncelle if there are several equally valid metaphysics or one. His insistence on the subjective influence on a metaphysics constructed by the thinking subject and the fact of different metaphysical orientations is countered by an equal insistence on the constant function and constant structure of metaphysics and on the fact that the broad outlines of a science of being remain constant. He obviously has a dread of presenting Christian philosophy as an ultimate and closed system. He fears the attempt to make philosophy just a disguised theology which has happened in the past. Surely revelation puts the Christian in touch with aspects of reality in the universe which are not open to others and the Christian cannot ignore such aspects—they condition his construction of the universe to some extent. They should, however, not destroy his fidelity to the process of philosophical inquiry.

What concerns Nedoncelle seems to be the will not to present our philosophy as complete and therefore unable to confront new and different insights. Our philosophy is not a closed system. Its

universality does not forbid its further enrichment. It should always be open to those strokes of genius which unearth different insights. At the same time it does possess a criterion for discriminating the real from the unreal which is lacking in purely personal, existential and subjective systems. Philosophers of these other systems admit that they lack a metaphysics of being and the person, no matter what other insights they have.

Whatever adaptation or assimilation is to be done in the sciences of philosophy and theology will undoubtedly best be done by Catholics who are saturated with their own cultures. But it will be done securely by them only if they have a solid formation in traditional philosophy and theology. Diversity is a valuable aspect of the Church. But continuity is also valuable and this is sometimes forgotten in the fever for rapid accommodation.

Diversity in Methods of Asceticism

In an article, "l'Inde et la Contemplation," Abbé Monchanin constructs a picture of what he thinks the Church must look like in India. Speaking of the clergy in India, he thinks that in the Indian priesthood the synthesis of the Christian mystery and Indian culture will prepare the future "Origenes and Augustines" of India. The Church should be a Church turned toward God, a contemplative Church, in India more than anywhere else. On that supposition there should be religious orders created along the lines of the experience of Christian monasticism—the cenobitic approaching the anchoritic form—and according to Indian monastic tradition with an important emphasis on begging, much along the lines of the Franciscan poverty idea. Furthermore, there should be monastic centers for the laity as tertiaries or oblates. The Church will be structured according to the castes by the lay apostolate and Catholic Action will be specialized according to castes (*Dieu Vivant*, 3, 11-50).

This is an interesting projection, though one would hesitate to predict that it would form the certain pattern of the visible life of the Church in India. Such a development would indeed be a diversity in emphasis and form and it would not undermine the unity of Christian life. Similar thoughts have been advanced by others

when they consider the Buddhistic monastic tradition, especially in southeast Asia and Japan. One hears much at present about Zen Buddhism. The basis for such ideas is that Asia is supposed to be more concerned with withdrawal from a created world, while the West is more concerned with involvement in and transformation of a created world. That seems to simplify the situation too much. Catholicism in the West shows both aspects of withdrawal and involvement, due undoubtedly to its more comprehensive grasp and confrontation of reality. The Indian spirit, often so extolled for its contemplative character, is undergoing some profound changes. Cardinal Gracias has warned against a spreading materialism and Frank Moraes, an Indian Catholic writer, maintains that the Indian spirit is more metaphysical than religious in its aspirations. Adaptation, then, of Christian life and practice to the emphases and methods of Hinduism and Buddhism—ascetical adaptation it might be called—must be grounded on a thorough understanding of these systems and of Catholic ascetical and mystical theology. Especially necessary is the preservation of a clear distinction between the natural and the supernatural in contemplation which could become obscured by unbalanced attention to similarities. Fr. Danielou gives a serious warning in this matter.

One does not gain souls with the help of concessions or flattery. Often cultured Asians have the impression, given by some missionaries because of their extremism in poetic praise of Asian cultures and an attitude of depreciation of their own cultures, that this is flattery, insincerity, a device, not perhaps a conscious device, but, worse, an unconscious device (*Dieu Vivant* 6, 127).

To be specific, should one consider adaptation of Christian spiritual practice to the methods of yoga in Hinduism? Is the experience of what is called its natural mysticism a preparation for the supernatural? Could it be a normal method for Christian contemplation? In this connection Louis Gardet has some interesting observations in an article in *Revue Thomiste*. His feeling is that if one who has this experience of natural mysticism is a humble person, such an experience could, because of its disregard of the contingent, prepare him (always inefficaciously) for a meeting with

God. But it is certain that it involves terrible risks of pride. The natural mystic finds himself enclosed in the deepest center of the self, in that aloneness which does not lead him to the God of truth and love, though it may please him to call this existential completeness God. Even greater caution is necessary when the forms of natural mysticism are expressed in terms of love. The forms derived from Bhakti are expressed freely in the language of love, the love even of the supreme Lord. This element of love is found also in some vedantic yoga. But Gardet notes that in this there is question of a love, an appetite which cannot not be, which confronts the transcendent amplitude of being but which is not the free love of friendship; which is not even the first act of elicited love in the will by which God is loved above all, first for himself and in as much as he is our good. Gardet shows how such techniques are easily open to illusion and recalls the aberrations of byzantine hesychasm in Christianity, japa-yoga and Islamic dikr. (*Revue Thomiste*, 1951, 2, 298 sqq.) O. Lacombe has done some interesting work in Indian spirituality. Speaking of yoga he observes that "without authentic metaphysical distinctions and elucidations, the method is dangerous, psychologically, doctrinally and spiritually" (*Revue Thomiste*, 1951, 1, 137).

Fr. Bernard Haring, C.S.S.R., has some interesting reflections in his treatment of "The Master Idea of Christian Morality" (cf. *The Idea of Catholicism*, 47).

Man is the center of all these ethical systems. His moral task is designated as the perfecting of himself . . . Religious language no longer speaks of perfecting oneself but of saving one's soul. From this point of view, the Hindu religions of salvation could be distinguished from the Stoic morality of self-perfection. But in reality, these two are only the extension into the religious order of man-centered ethics. Man must eventually come to think in a *personal* way. Where God is not considered as a person, or where in any case communion with Him is not sought, necessarily the person of man becomes the center of the moral system. And this happens even when salvation is conceived to be a dissolution of the personal, for example in some forms of Hinduism which are pantheistic. Nirvana is thought to be either the positive beatitude of the surviving soul or its extinction and vanishing. In either case at the center of all the asceticism and

all the virtuous effort there is only man and the salvation of his soul. But salvation of soul in the Christian sense is something completely different. It is neither a happy solitude nor a happy insertion into an impersonal being, but rather a society of love with the living God.

These remarks are a reminder of the need for caution in incorporating ascetical practices from other systems into the ascetical practice of the Church. A complete redirection of effort has to be introduced, as well as education to the supernatural. Salvation by the efforts of the individual alone is not Christianity.

A rather complete understanding concerning a spiritual method, its content and goal, must be available before adaptation is made to any system of ascetic practice. Diversity is not to be excluded *a priori*. Uniformity is not characteristic of the Church in these matters, even though there is unity of ascetical and mystical doctrine.

Much publicity has been given to the efforts of Abbé Monchanin and Dom Bede Griffiths to adopt the form of life of the Indian Sannyasi. It has been said that this would be the most effective approach to Hindus. Yet the observations of Abbé Monchanin towards the end of his life seem to express a tone of disappointment. Dom Griffiths has not been at the process long enough to form conclusive judgments on the value of the method. The hope of such a project is to reveal Christianity as a deeply contemplative religion with the capacity of withdrawal from the world similar to that which is characteristic of the lives of Hindu ascetics. It is stated that the complaint of the Hindu against the Catholic missionary is that he is not contemplative enough and lives too well. But it must be said here that the majority of Hindus would live better if their society were better organized and their methods of production greatly improved. It is not undeniably clear that the majority of Hindus would eschew material betterment if the material things were available in greater abundance. It is not always the road to truth to make a virtue out of a situation that could be remedied.

Those who appeal to the methods of de Nobili must not forget that his apostolate was aimed at a specific group in Hindu society—the Brahman caste—not at the whole population. Therefore his

accommodations were dictated by the customs of that particular stratum of society. This is obvious from the fact that he had to isolate himself from all other inferior castes. It was this necessary isolation that became a scandal to his fellow missionaries and to Catholics of the lower castes. It led to the unfortunate misrepresentation of the kind of apostolate he was undertaking. It is to be doubted if such a method would work at the present time because the Brahman caste has no monopoly on education and wisdom. There are many educated people in the lesser castes and there will be more as education is more widely extended. The way of wisdom is located in the school more than in the guru, surrounded by disciples learning the content of the Vedanta. This is not said to discredit the method being used by some. Rather it is meant to indicate that there is no one single method for the evangelization of a people.

Reflecting on the total and public character of so many religions in mission countries, it does seem that more emphasis could be given to those expressions of devotional life which enlist the participation of the whole community. The fear that public and communal expressions of Catholicism may be taken only as a continuation of pagan customs, thus obscuring the uniqueness of Catholicism, would make it impossible to show the meaning of Catholicism for total living which other religions show. Many of the public and communal expressions of the faith have dropped out in western Catholicism. Yet they were familiar in other centuries. We have to be careful lest our experience with the decadence and superficiality of these things among some people blind us to the real value and importance of such expression for people who are less inhibited in the public demonstration of religion than we are.

It would be a loss to the richness of the Church if we no longer had the imagination and understanding whereby we see the potential in customs and symbols for baptizing them and consecrating them to the fuller expression of spiritual life. The faith can be embodied in a local culture. It can be incarnated, as it were, in forms and expressions recognizable by other people. Religions for so many of these people is total living. Catholicism is supposed to be total living, a newness of life. But when it comes to expressing its total relationship to life, there is but limited success. Secularization and

laicization with their practical atheism have created an atmosphere in the West which makes such a realization most difficult. As yet such alienation has not taken place in many mission countries. Perhaps ways of impeding such an event by the Christianization of total living should be sought more vigorously. In some places Catholics are cut off from the traditional celebrations and practices of their societies. If nothing is done to establish Catholic practice with local color, it should not be surprising if the pressure of tradition and the drag of the community pull people back into former ways. The unity of worship is guaranteed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. How the spirit of worship is to be extended to the rest of living depends on the genius and creativeness of the living Church, meeting the needs and sensitivities of people. The specialized novenas and devotions in vogue in the West may be little suited to the minds of other people.

If at certain periods or in certain places, one or other civilization, one or other ethnic group or social class has made its influence felt in the Church above others, this does not mean that the Church is tied down to any such group or that she has become, as it were, fossilized at a certain moment of history, so as to make further development impossible (Pius XII, Allocution, *AAS*, 38, 1946, 146).

Liturgical Diversity

In the Liturgy there are human elements as well as divine. The latter, obviously, having been established by the Redeemer cannot under any circumstances be changed by man; but the human elements may be modified in various ways approved by the hierarchy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, according as time, circumstances, and the needs of the soul demand. This explains the admirable variety of rites in East and West; it explains the progressive development whereby particular religious customs and pious practises gradually come into existence . . . or are revived . . . (*Mediator Dei*, *AAS*, 39, 1947, 542).

Most discussion about adaptation and assimilation centers on the liturgy. The Church herself has taken the lead in promoting a liturgical renewal and has introduced changes which make the liturgy more fitted to the times and promote the active participation of the faithful. Of course, the use of the vernacular is everywhere

discussed. Christians in the early Church would find this bewildering, because the liturgy was always celebrated in their own tongues: Aramaic not Hebrew, Greek, the Latin of current speech not Ciceronian Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Punic, Celtic; later, Slavonic. The Roman Mass was translated into the Mongolian language, Greek, Slavic, Armenian, Arabic, Slavonic and celebrated in those languages. Paul V in 1615 granted the faculty to use Chinese for the liturgy. The present Prefect of Propaganda, Cardinal Agagianian, said recently:

In the eucharistic celebration itself, the missionary Church is actually giving more and more room to the indigenous factors capable of fomenting the active participation of the faithful from the various regions, by beginning with the adoption in a certain degree of the native music and of the vernacular, conscious of this, that the Church must be maternally at home everywhere.

Most informative in this question are the Nijmegen Conference Papers on Liturgy and the Missions. The problem of language was freely discussed and in general the bishops and priests desired a more liberal use of the vernacular. Many grants have already been given to the missionary hierarchy for the use of the local language. Most agreed that the hymnals of Europe and America were little suited to the peoples in mission lands, because the musical forms were foreign to them. The experiments that have been made in the use of local modes have produced some very captivating material. They do not sound like Perosi, Palaestrina or Gregorian; but they do sound very Asian and African without any loss of majesty and reverence. However, language and music were not the only concern of the conferees. There was discussion on the restoration of certain customs in the Latin liturgy which have disappeared but which would have great meaning for Asians and Africans. A certain amount of latitude in adapting the ritual to local customs, or embellishing it with local usages, was thought to be very desirable. This was considered important with regard to baptism, confirmation, matrimony and burial rites. The suggestion was made by one that perhaps one or other of the Oriental rites would be more suited to the mentality of people in Africa and Asia.

There is no strong opposition to the necessity and value of liturgical renewal and change. The still provocative question is—how much diversity should be allowed. One cannot predict how much diversity will be favorably considered in Rome but the atmosphere is less restrictive than it formerly was. It is quite understandable that Rome should desire to move slowly. But it should be taken for granted that the majority of those responsible for the establishment of the Church in other lands are orthodox and not just antiquarians or unreflecting innovators. The essential liturgical and sacramental system will be preserved. But there is no cogent reason why ceremonial accretions, valuable for people in Europe and America, should be canonized and universalized in their entirety, as though the Church had reached the summit of perfection in forms and expression in the West. In this area there is much room for diversity which would constitute no threat to the unity of the Church. For a long time the sacraments have been almost private things with us and the sense of community, of the Body, has been little stressed. Yet in mission countries the community means very much in their social system. That is why bishops and missionaries who think about it feel that the ceremonial could be simplified, enriched or restored according to circumstances so that the social implications of membership in the Body of Christ will be more manifest. In these lands Catholicism must be able to fill and surround the lives of these people as the non-Christian religions fill the lives of their countrymen. In the West we have regretted the fact that the Mass has become almost a private devotion, no matter how many people are present. Now we are desperate in an effort to recover the sense of the worshipping community, to make the liturgy "the heart and center of all Catholic life." There is not much wisdom in reproducing our own difficulties and failures all over the world.

Some fear that the use of the vernacular at this time of sharpened nationalism could be prejudicial to unity. But there is substantial agreement that such a fear is not well-founded, even though the existence of acute nationalism is not denied. The general attitude toward the introduction of one or other Eastern rite in mission lands was not favorable, because the majority thought that the

more simple Latin rite is better suited to the needs of people, while it could be enriched with local color. This was not said from any lack of esteem for other rites but seemed to be rooted in practical and pedagogical needs. On this question a young African priest has some interesting observations. He feels that there is a limit to adaptation of an African liturgy, because for generations the Latin rite has existed in most of Africa. For this reason one should be slow to think about the introduction of some Eastern rite, even though it is said that its exuberance and mentality are more suited to Africans. Because the education and formation of Negro Africa in recent times has been of a western type, he feels that the African constitutes a "third world," neither purely western nor Oriental. To be sure the African world resembles in some things the Oriental, but it has undergone deep changes. Consequently, the African must develop his own features. Adaptation must be an original effort, not just the transference of an already existing pattern. He notes that among the clergy in Africa there are two points of view. Some think in terms of a deep africanization of the liturgy, adapted to the traditional, which in their estimation will endure in spite of present developments which they think are but a passing crisis. Others think in terms of the evolution of a kind of world civilization, the internationalization of so many features of life, and so they think that adaptation should be undertaken in terms of the Church universal. This priest believes that the actual evolution of African society forbids an adaptation which would consider exclusively the elements of tradition and ancient cult which some presume will remain intact. He maintains that there would have to be a difference in adjustment within Africa itself between what is done in the urban areas and the rural areas. He mistrusts Europeans who push africanization to please national feelings or as something that is bound to come without any thought of spiritual and religious values in accord with the demands of worship. Vision must be purified by constant recourse to the unique and true sense of the divine and the Church. (Cf. T. Chibangu, "Une liturgie africaine," *Eglise Vivante*, 12, 1960, 116.) These observations show the problem and the uncertainty that still prevail in the matter of liturgical adaptation. But they do not deny the value and the need of such adaptation.

Pertinent to the discussion is the decision of Propaganda in 1659 which was little heeded but has been revived by the same Congregation in our times.

Nullum studium ponite, nullaque ratione suadete illis populis ut ritus suos, consuetudines et mores mutent modo non sint apertissime religioni et bonis moribus contraria . . . Fides nullius gentis ritus et consuetudines, modo prava non sint, aut respuit aut laedet, imo sarta tecta esse vult. Et quoniam ea paene est hominum natura, ut sua, et maxime ipsas nationes, caeteris et existimatione et amore praeferant, nulla odii et alienationis causa potentior existit quam patriarum consuetudinum immutatio, earum maxime quibus homines ab omni patrum memoria assuevere . . . Quae vero prava extiterint, nutibus magis et silentio quam verbis proscindenda, opportunitate nimirum captata, qua, dispositis animis ad veritatem capessendam, sensim sine sensu evellantur (*Collectanea*, I, 42, 135).

Cultural Diversity

The diversities which exist in the Church are due to the differences of cultures in which catholic life has been lived. A culture is the product of the ideas which a people has about God, man, human relations and the universe. Such ideas are expressed in external forms. Religious acts, family relations, social relations, human activity in the world express the theodicy, cosmology, psychology and sociology of a people. The nature of God, the relationship of God to man and the world, the spiritual world, the destiny of man, his temporal functions and relationships, the nature and purpose of the universe of material being are understood in different, often contradictory, ways as one moves from one culture to another. The human mind has always asked questions and has tried to answer them. Among many people original reasons may be lost and tradition, the teachings of the ancestors, is the reason given for the attitudes and rules of conduct which prevail.

Presumably an original knowledge possessed by Adam was transmitted but certainly suffered in the tradition from the limitations of reason and the influences of other forces on reason. In this connection Josef Pieper has an interesting observation.

It seems indisputable that in the legends of pre-Christian and non-Christian nations in which gods and men deal with each

other, a holy tradition has been and is operative. The concept of original revelation has always been an integral part of Catholic theology. In the pre-Christian mythical traditions there are elements which can be adequately understood only as an echo of an utterance made by God at the beginning of time (*Review of Politics*, 20, 1958, 465).

This fact of original knowledge imposes on us the obligation of not ignoring or contemning *in toto* the content of other cultures. We should expect to find a number of valuable ideas which may not be easily recognizable at first sight because of the mode of expression.

Jean Schlumberger maintains that Christianity must face the fact that it cannot break through certain great religious systems such as Islam or Hinduism. It makes progress only among aborigines. To quit a system of belief in order to take up another is to change one's civilization rather than one's religion. Christianity must accept the evidence that it is tied to a culture and modes of thought that simply are not universal. (Cf. H. de Lubac, *Le Fondement Théologique des Missions*, 66.) Others think that Christianity should attempt to change the religion of other cultures but should help to revitalize them. To some extent it is true that a change in religion means a change in culture, though it does not mean necessarily the uprooting or destruction of a culture, as Schlumberger seems to imply. There would be no point to Catholicism as the means of redemption if it did not require change and transformation of outlook on life and its relationships. But as every change does not mean progress, so every change does not mean deterioration or destruction of the valuable.

Actually great changes are taking place in most of the cultures of the world because of the spread of literacy, technological advance in production, the growing emphasis on the sciences and development of natural resources and the education of many people in Russia, Europe and America. So the fact of change should be less repugnant to people. The hope of gradualism in economic, social and political development is vain in those places where revolution and violence are introducing change. It could be that these changes in many areas of life will make change in religion less an event which once appeared to attack the foundations of a culture. Much

of the literature in this matter is based on the assumption that India must remain Hindu, that China must remain Confucianist and Buddhist, that Africa must remain animist in spite of all the changes. Such an assumption becomes less and less tenable. It remains to be proven that these systems can expand their knowledge and vision of reality sufficiently to support the changes.

When there is discussion of cultural adaptation by the Church to the local scene, usually it centers on language, dress, social attitudes and gestures, regard for art forms, respect for modes of religious expression. In the past certainly not enough attention was given to such elements. The complaint has been made that the local priesthood has been cut according to the total pattern of the priesthood in Europe and America. One cannot deny that. Many take on our manners and modes of expression to the extent that they are removed from their own people and do not, then, give the Church the leadership in adjustment which they could. The hope of making Catholicism truly catholic, universal, less foreign, must be placed in a hierarchy and priesthood drawn from the different cultures. With their knowledge both of the faith and their own cultures they should be better equipped to wed the supernatural to the natural. Foreign missionaries must be more flexible and show greater confidence in the local priesthood whose function it is to reveal the Church as truly catholic, yet recognizable as belonging to them by its emphases and expressions.

We have grown in our understanding of other cultures. We know that they have their own philosophy, that their procedures are rational and adult, not puerile as was once supposed. Undoubtedly, there will be need of exorcism. But the procedure recommended by Propaganda three centuries ago is still wise: *sensim sine sensu*.

Problem of Assimilation Now

At present it is often difficult to decide what or how much assimilation should take place, because so many cultures are not as fixed as they were in other generations. One cannot predict the cultural pattern of China after the Communist Revolution and its attempt to lift China out of antiquity and tradition and set it on the road to modernization and Communism. It has been customary

to speak of the deep spirituality of India. Already the bishops are warning against the tide of materialism sweeping over the nation. One cannot say what will happen in the face of economic improvement, political change and their consequences in social and religious life. The face of Africa is changing day by day in the wake of new political, economic and cultural forces.

The old static systems more or less petrified their societies. They lived for centuries outside the movements affecting the West. Now changes are occurring all over the world, even by violence. These changes are forcing these systems into involvement in the world scene. One thinks of the upheaval in the traditional in China as a result of the Communist idea of man and this world. The walled kingdoms of Asia and Africa are no longer impregnable. The walls were first cracked by colonialism which at least exposed these ancient systems to different attitudes toward life. They were further weakened by ideas which no walls could keep out and these ideas have been fermenting in these societies. Modern systems of philosophy, economics, social structure, political ideals have more than echoed against the walls of once closed systems; they have pierced them. Patriotism and loyalty to the traditional are not barriers strong enough to withstand infiltration, sometimes inundation from outside and discontent from within. Hence our attempt to assimilate and to accommodate to Vedantic Hinduism and Buddhism by studying their antiquities could be unrealistic in so far as such study would fail to take account of the revolutionary changes occurring.

Christopher Dawson wrote two articles on Christianity in Asia in which he attempted to appraise the present position and future of the Church. He took note of the fact that a large number of Asians have been educated in the West, that western philosophies are taught in the universities and the trained group assumes more and more of the leadership of Asia. The large urban centers across the world tend to resemble one another more and more; they are the crossroads of international ideas and movements. In the urban centers the challenge of trying to preserve the traditional and at the same time to incorporate the advances of the West is being met. Recalling the experience of the early Church, Dawson suggests that the Church should look for her leadership in the urban areas rather

than in the rural populations. This would not mean the neglect of the rural apostolate, but it does take account of the changes.

The present agitation for accommodation should not force us into positions from which we might have to withdraw soon because of the radical changes taking place. It would be unfortunate to accommodate to a phase of a culture which the people themselves might soon repudiate. Adaptation should not be the product of extreme nationalism and haste, nor of a knowledge merely of the antiquities of a culture. It must be the product of adequate knowledge of what a culture is here and now and of the forces at work on cultures, promoting and effecting change. There is a progressive universalization of many aspects of western advance, such as universal education, industrialization, political self-determination. There would be no profit in bemoaning the simpler ways of life which made evangelization comparatively easy. As Pius XII remarked, a new world is aborning and many elements in cultures are not yet sufficiently established to warrant immediate assimilation. At the same time there are elements which are fixed, expressing as they do the particular characteristics of a people. The problem is to know what is fixed and will remain and what is subject to change and what of the rich heritage of the Church's experience is to be communicated to these cultures. There can be no doubt about the will of the Church to assimilate. There should not be any doubt about her will to communicate many things which often are presumed to be merely the product of the western mind but which are really universal. The Christian community as was noted in the beginning is tradition as well as development. In the Church there is unity, catholicity and continuity.

Nothing has been said about diversity in art forms through which Catholic truth and life can be externally expressed, such as architecture, painting, sculpture, music, theater, dance, literary forms of poetry and prose. Suffice it to say that in general the Church is not now averse to diversity in these things. On the contrary, due in large measure to the influence of Cardinal Costantini, there is an attitude of encouragement. One would think that the leaders of the Church in mission lands would be in a better position to pass judgment on permissible variations than European or Amer-

ican commissions. They best understand the symbolism and the modes of expression of their people and so would be more competent in recognizing advantages and dangers. The Church for a number of centuries had a difficult time in making up her mind about customs and practices prevailing among the semi-Christianized, or semi-paganized, people in those centuries. Perhaps her mind is best revealed in a letter of Saint Gregory who wrote in part: "Sancta Mater Ecclesia, quaedam per fervorem corrigit, quaedam per mansuetudinem tolerat, quaedam per considerationem dissimulat et portat" (*P.L.*, 77, 1191). Such a statement seems to form a fitting conclusion to these observations, since it summarizes both doctrine and practice; it also establishes a state of mind about diversity which is wise and prudent and comprehensive.

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