

grates description and evaluation. In their ethics of practical discernment, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce developed the notion of "the fitting" which evaluates actions in an aesthetic manner. By discerning the action which is appropriate to the situation and to one's framework of meaning, this tradition provides a critical rationale for the "interplay of world-view and moral judgment" called for by MacNamara. Peirce's concept of the "normative sciences" which subordinates logic to ethics and ethics to aesthetics reverses the pattern of analytical ethics which measures ethics by the supposedly neutral arbiter of logic and ignores the aesthetic dimension entirely.

Richard A. McCormick initiated a lively discussion on the distinction of motive and content in ethics. He pointed out that those whom MacNamara dubbed the autonomy school are becoming less sanguine about the term "autonomy." Furthermore, they hold that actions whose moral content is derived from common human morality constitute a relatively minor portion of Christian moral experience. It was noted in reply that the earlier writings of both Fuchs and Schuller state that the New Testament presumes that most of Christian moral experience rests on common human morality with religious considerations employed as motivation rather than justification.

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A. THE SEARCH FOR A SOCIAL VOCABULARY

The first working group was moderated by Francis X. Meehan (Mount Carmel Parish, Doylestown, PA.). Dr. William Sullivan, political philosopher from LaSalle University and co-author of *Habits of the Heart*, opened the session by sharing how he felt the book impacted on the theme of the convention, specifically on moral theology's search for a moral social vocabulary. He saw "Habits" as crying out for a moral practice which holds the human good as less instrumental, more intrinsic. Western liberalism has too much focused on the autonomy of the individual and too little on socially structured cooperation for the commonweal. He sees "Habits" as sharing Alisdair MacIntyre's vision (indeed, Aristotle's vision as well) of what constitutes right moral practice, namely, a dimension of civic benefit.

Taking the issue of human work, Sullivan wondered if the very nature of our economy did not prevent people from really grasping any intrinsic value to their occupation. It seems even when people clearly contribute to society, they often speak of their work's value only in terms of spontaneous emotional fulfillment. This expressive individualism flows over into the rest of life's activities as well. "Habits" contended that life cannot be truly fulfilling when its good are pursued in such a subjective and instrumental manner; or, at least, that the poverty of articulation itself takes a human and societal toll. So much of the biblical and civic tradition which had given a common floor to social argument in this country has been eroded. And even when healthy social values are pursued, the poverty of language makes their attainment elusive and uncertain.

The discussion that followed Dr. Sullivan's introduction was very lively. Here are just a few of the insights:

—Not only are we suffering a loss of language with which to articulate common values, but a loss of community itself. Witness, as a symbol, the increasing rarity with which a family sits down to a common meal. This loss of community flows over into a diminished sense of play and thus also a dulled capacity for liturgy.

—Friendship itself is seen only in private terms. It no longer possesses a civic dimension, and further, the very idea of citizenship as a moral category seems alien to many of our students.

—The economic system must be seen as partly responsible for an increasing loss of intrinsic meaning. Capitalism is good for mediating an awareness of individual human rights and a respect for pluralism; but the pluralism is not necessarily an *ordered* pluralism.

—A key contribution of "Habits" was to help us name some of these societal flaws that had been on the surface of our consciousness. It has also helped us name a certain "neutrality" of the media where there is little sustained discussion over public policy's substance as distinguished from its extrinsic legalities. Witness the Iran-Contra television spectacle. Individualistic expressive individualism and its attendant ideology of tolerance muffles serious argument. Thus Dr. Sullivan pointed out a central point of "Habits" was that political argument itself is reduced to instrumental values. Impoverished social articulation most crucially affects our ability to do the central moral task of any society, namely, to transmit values to the next generation.

All the participants expressed appreciation for Dr. Sullivan's collaboration in such a significant and influential work.

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B. ON GENDER ROLES

The second working group in moral theology investigated the topic of "gender roles" in a session moderated by Judith Dwyer, with presentations by Eileen P. Flynn and Richard Grecco. Flynn articulated "twenty commandments" with which to evaluate the question of gender roles. These included the call for sound biblical exegesis, awareness of the patriarchal influence on the history of Christianity, the need for a more wholistic Christian anthropology, and the importance of listening to women's experience and stories.

Grecco opened his comments with a description of "women-church," as it is developed by Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza in *Bread Not Stone*. Grecco noted that the term itself indicates a shift in consciousness from women in the church to women who constitute church and who are therefore called to leadership and decision-making within the community. In responding to Schüssler-Fiorenza's development of "women-church," Grecco shared his own uncomfortableness with such a term, since men also make up the composition of the church; he acknowl-