

## Editorial

"...OUT OF HIS TREASURE THINGS NEW AND OLD"

THE VERB "to teach," like so many of the other verbs involved in the pastoral ministry, takes a double object. Something must be taught to somebody. This is one of the basic problems in the communication of the Christian faith both in the realm of theological education and in the parish ministry. In a theological college, it is possible to over-emphasize either the something or the somebody. There is a tension and dilemma because a theological college is both an academic institution dedicated to high standards and integrity in its scholarship and also a training school for the pastoral ministry to which most of its graduates will go. In pastoral courses, it is difficult to involve students in a realistic manner with the parish ministry, and too often courses degenerate into courses *about* the pastoral ministry drawing upon the past experience of the lecturer.

In the colleges, many efforts are being made to achieve a greater integration of the academic and the practical training of their students. Clinical training and a more effective use of field work are both areas where we may look for help. The replacing of "practical" lectures by seminars in the college instruction may be also of service. The introduction of the tape recorder, films and studies of case histories can help, but even here we operate in an unreal situation. The temptation is to give answers on the basis of rule and law, and pastoral concern is not communicated effectively. In some sense the minister only becomes a minister when he is involved in a pastoral situation where he, and he alone, can and must do the ministering.

This dilemma of communicating something to somebody is not only a problem for the colleges. It is a problem in the parish ministry too. The eternal Gospel—the givens of the faith—must be made relevant, alive and saving to these people in this parish at this time and in the context of their present needs. It is the same dilemma. In a Confirmation class or classes for "joining the Church," the clergyman will want to get across certain given information about God, the faith, the Church, ethics and so on. He must teach *about* God, but he must also help these persons to meet and to know God. To know the catechism *in toto* may not be an adequate preparation, but not to know anything of the catechism may be even worse. To preach a sermon, to teach a lesson, to direct a discussion involves the priest or minister in this task of communicating something to someone. Knowing does not make a Christian—but being and doing.

This journal suffers from a lack of articles on the strategy used at the local parish level to meet this dilemma. This issue carries an article by

Professor Jay on a strategy of parish ministry with emphasis on the preparation and follow up of Baptism. He suggests that a parish ministry can be centred in the ministry of this primary sacrament. Professor Jay's article recognizes the acute problem of time in a parish. There are more things to be done than the clergyman can do. The question is not always what needs to be done, or what it would be desirable to do, but which, of the many things that he can actually do, is the most important and makes the greatest claim on his time and energy.

This generation has seen in the colleges a great flurry of courses related to personal ministries and the techniques of pastoral counselling. There is something unrealistic here. There is obviously not time enough to minister effectively in the parish in a one-to-one relationship. It is impractical and too often an escape from the real job. We need to see the Church as a fellowship and community—creative, saving, healing, and the place of meeting between God and his people and through his people, where God reaches out to the unchurched. The Church is the society in which redemption is happening, but more than that, it is the redeeming society. In the words of Richard Cabot, it is the "growing edge" of the Kingdom.

Much more thought and study needs to be given to the use of groups—the dynamics, relations and interaction of persons—in the communication of a real, lively Christian faith and practice. The answer is not necessarily a proliferation of clubs, societies and organizations. The Church itself is *the* group, community or fellowship expressing itself in worship and love, concern and service. A careful balance is needed, for what we do must be based firmly on what we believe. Pastoral strategy without theology may well descend into gimmicks but it is no less true that theology without pastoral concern, imagination and ingenuity can be cold, irrelevant and ineffective. We invite our readers in the pastoral ministry to share their insights on this crucial area of concern.

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