

CONVICTIONS

The background features a stylized globe with latitude and longitude lines. Overlaid on the globe is a network of black human silhouettes. Each silhouette is positioned on a circular base, and they are interconnected by a series of black lines, forming a web-like structure. The overall color palette is dominated by yellow and light blue, with a soft, glowing effect.

number 25 - July - August 2010

Social Network Services

New ways of communication

Dear readers,

Online social networking services – such as Facebook, bebo, and LinkedIn – are overrunning the domain of human communications. These services especially fascinate the young, and great numbers of them own a Facebook account. Five-hundred million, many of them for example, spend three hours or more each day on Facebook, monitoring their personal profile, connecting with friends, chatting, exchanging news, publicizing the details of their lives, exploring the experiences of others; thus they live out their “friendships.” Other online

services such as Twitter focus on “microblogage” and permit their users to remain in contact everywhere, always, and instantly. The little details of daily life are transmitted by these small messages of 140 letters or less. These “tweets” cause subscribers’ cell-phones to vibrate, and they appear on the followers’ computer screens every moment of the day. The original slogan of Twitter asked, “What are you doing?” – a statement which aptly defines this service as it broadcasts every mundane detail of day-to-day life across the globe.

Yes, these services undeniably open doors to new possibilities of communication and facilitate the sharing of information. Let us, however, focus our attention on the negative aspects of these methods. As these new techniques of electronic communication rapidly develop, one finds himself increasingly at home in the domain of the virtual, the impersonal, and even the inhuman. Young internet surfers, long before they become integrated into society, lose themselves in these imaginary cyber optic networks. They spend their time behind screens and judge themselves by the number of their virtual friends, evaluate their self-worth according to the online social networks of which they are a member. These unfortunate youth glory in the photos which they post online and revel in their “e-peers” reactions: proverbial awards hung on their “e-wall.” At thirteen years of age (the age when children may legally use Facebook), these children should and must start taking their place in real society, thus practicing the arts of communication, learning how to follow adult conversations, deciphering the non-verbal messages of face, body, voice, and general behavior. They then must begin to explain their own ideas, to express their feelings, to assume their position in the family, within a student body, and in the larger world of adults. It is a key moment in their lives when they realize how difficult it can be to speak in front of a large group, how unpleasant it can be to refuse the importunate request of a resolute solicitor, how serious it is to sign for the first time a binding contract, one which obliges prompt and regular payments.

The internet, on the contrary, creates a very different reality as it never presents these developing children with real people. The “e-surfer” never looks into the eyes of the person in front of them, never perceives deception, and contrariwise

never witnesses first-hand the fruit of true friendship: joy. Virtual contact, a mock friendship at best, easily becomes an easy way out, an escape from the difficulties of reality.

Cicero, nearly 2000 years ago, said that the face is a reflection of the soul. This maxim expresses the idea that most of our feelings and dispositions are reflected in our countenance. Emotions of fear, joy, sadness, surprise, and distaste are revealed there in all their complexity. Body-contact also plays an important role in communication. One may touch his neighbor – by accident or intentionally – in different ways. The physical contact may feel pleasant or disagreeable, reassuring or repulsive, erotic or menacing, all according to the type of contact, the other person’s character, and the context of the situation. Physical contact, consequently, often sends very different messages: affection, power, sexual desire, aggression, even love.

Scientific experiments have shown that the efficacy of any message depends 55% on body language, and that 38% of the efficacy of a speech is determined by tone of voice; the content itself only counts for 7%! Sufficient, therefore, is the proof. We cannot overestimate the importance of non-verbal signals in the domain of communication.

Let us now consider this same question from the divine perspective. God, when He wished to make Himself comprehensible to man, assumed a certain face, specific eyes, a voice and body. He became incarnate. His human nature was the chosen instrument through which he proclaimed divine truth. His contemporaries could touch Him, hear His voice, and experience with their own senses God made Man; they thus could understand His good news, the Gospel. In our times we can still approach Him physically through the sacraments, above all in the Eucharist where he is really present.

Christ’s companions, most notably St. Thomas, waived in their faith: “If I do not see in his hands the mark of the nails, and if I do not put my fingers in the place of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” Only the physical and human reality of Jesus after His resurrection put an end to their doubts. Thomas put his finger into the wounds of Jesus and exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” Saint John confirmed this principle in his first epistle, stating, “That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have contemplated and that which our hands have touched, the Word of life, we announce to you, so that you also may be in communion with us, and that our communion may be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John, 1: 1-3).

Online social networking services pose a real danger to true human communication. They destroy the social capacities of man and thus place in peril the fruits of the Incarnation. Is this not a sign of the Antichrist? “For many seducers have gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a seducer and an antichrist” (2 John 1: 7).

Father Jürgen Wegner



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number 25 July - August 2010

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“Forming Catholic Minds”

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Printer:

Dave's Quick Print, Winnipeg

Subscription Rates:

Canada: \$ 25.00 CND, USA: 30.00 USD

International: 35 USD or 28 Euro

Price per issue: Canada: \$ 3.00 CND

In the USA: \$ 4.00 USD

Contributions:

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Responsibility:

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Official Publication of the Priestly
Society of Saint Pius X for Canada

CONVICTIONS is a work of apostolate done under the patronage of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Pius X, and is published ten times a year.

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Let's CONNECT

Fr. Jürgen Wegner, SSPX

*"Bob's surgery went well. We're optimistic. Thanks to all who kept their fingers crossed for him!"
"Will the crisis come soon? The news reports are diverse." "I will just give water to my flowers and
then I will go to bed. Good night to all of you!"*

Whoever has experienced that someone in the middle of a conversation grabbed his cell phone to read an incoming Twitter message, knows how dominant modern ways of communication can be. One is chatting, mailing, blogging on the computer, leaves pins on sites such as Facebook or Bebo or follows the life of others on the net. A cell phone with data service makes it possible that one maintains permanent virtual contact on his way without saying a word. Virtual communication invades our lives more and more.

What thoughts can we have about the new ways of communication?

Social network services

A social network service focuses on the building of social networks or social relations among people. A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user, his or her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.

The main types of social networking services are those which contain category places (such as former school-year or classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages) and a recommendation system linked to trust. Facebook, Bebo and Twitter, which are widely used throughout the world combine many of these methods.

History

The notion that individual computers linked electronically could form the basis of computer-

mediated social interaction and networking was suggested already some time ago. Early social networking websites started in the form of generalized online communities such as The WELL (1985), Theglobe.com (1994), Geocities (1994) and Tripod.com (1995). These early communities focused on bringing people together by interacting with one another through chat rooms, and by sharing personal information and ideas about any topic. Some communities took a different approach by simply having people linked to each other via email addresses. These sites included Classmates.com (1995), focusing on ties with former school mates, and SixDegrees.com (1997), focusing on indirect ties. User profiles could be created, messages sent to users held on a "friends list" and other members could be sought out who had similar interests in their profiles.

New social networking methods were quickly developed by the end of the 1990s, which changed the social networking models from ones that simply recommended additions to users to ones they could manage themselves. These sites included Epinions.com, using a system called 'The Web of Trust', which allowed users to build social networks based on whom they trusted. These systems began to flourish with the emergence of Friendster in 2002, causing such sites to become part of mainstream users globally. Friendster was followed by MySpace and LinkedIn a year later, and finally, Bebo. By 2005, MySpace, emerging as the biggest of them all, was reportedly getting more page views than Google. 2004 saw the emergence of Facebook, a competitor, also rapidly growing in size. In 2006, Facebook opened up to the non US college community, and by allowing externally-developed add-on applications, and some applications enabling the graphing of a user's own social network - thus linked social networks and social networking, becoming the largest and fastest growing site in the world, not limited by particular geographical followings. Since January, 2007, Facebook has had an average of 250,000 new registrations per day, resulting in an average of 3% weekly growth. Its active users are doubling every 6 months and more than half of all active users visit the site daily. In 2010, 400 million people all over the world have a profile on Facebook, 38% of the users being between 13 and 18 years of age. The fastest growing demo-

graphic is the 25 years old and older and more than half of the users are now outside of college. People spend an average of 20 minutes per day on the site.

Typical structure

In general, social networking services allow users to create a profile for themselves, and can be broken down into two broad categories: internal social networking (ISN); and external social networking (ESN) with sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and Bebo. An ISN is a closed, private community that consists of a group of people within a company, association, or society; an ESN is open and public and available to all web users to communicate.

However, whether specialized or generic there is commonness across the general approach of social networking sites. Users can upload a picture of themselves; create their 'profile' and can often be "friends" with other users. In most social networking services, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice's friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a "favorites" feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networking sites typically have a section dedicated to comments by friends. On Friendster, this section is called "Testimonials". On Facebook, this section is called "The Wall". In the beginning, this was a feature that encouraged people to write messages about the person in the profile. But over time, people started writing creative testimonials back, creating a form of conversation.

Additional features

Some social networks have additional features, such as the ability to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload or stream live videos, and hold discussions in forums.

Lately, mobile social networking has become popular. In most mobile communities, mobile phone users can now create their own profiles, make friends, participate in chat rooms, create chat rooms, hold private conversations, share photos and videos, and share blogs by using their mobile phone. Mobile phone users are ba-

sically open to every option that someone sitting on the computer has. One of the most popular wireless services for social networking in North America is Facebook Mobile.

Another social networking feature in a professional aspect is LinkedIn.com. This social network allows professionals to exchange information, opportunities, and ideas. Professionals are able to stay informed with new knowledge about their field.

Emerging trends in social networks

As the increase in popularity of social networking is on a constant rise, new uses for the technology are constantly being observed. At the forefront of emerging trends in social networking sites is the concept of "real time" and "loca-

tion based." Real time allows users to contribute content, which is then broadcasted as it is being uploaded - the concept is similar to live television broadcasts. Twitter set the trend for "real time" services, where users can broadcast to the world what they are doing, or what is on their minds within a 140 character limit. Facebook followed suit with their "Live Feed" where users' activities are streamed as soon as it happens. While Twitter focuses on words, Clixtr, another real time service, focuses on group photo sharing where users can update their photo streams with photos while at an event.

Privacy

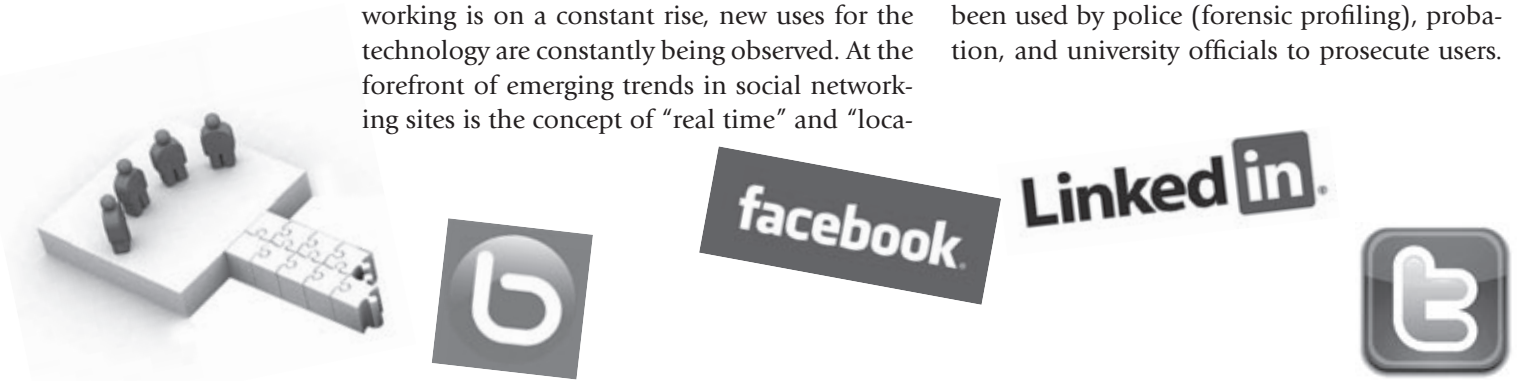
In an interview to the German magazine "Der Spiegel", on January 15th 2007, MySpace's co-founder Christ de Wolfe explains that these sites are meant to be tools for everybody to introduce themselves on the web: "It's like a platform to quickly show the whole world who you are. That didn't exist before. It's like a snapshot, not just your picture, but everything you're interested in - the look of your site, the sound file in the background. You get a visual and acoustic

feeling of what a person is like by looking at it. This generation wants to be more expressive. It's probably a renaissance in wanting to be creative. It's pretty hard to show creativity in other ways, but it's easy on MySpace."

Over the years there have been growing concerns about a perceived privacy threat by placing too much personal information in the hands of large corporations or governmental bodies, allowing a profile to be produced on an individual's behavior on which decisions, detrimental to an individual, may be taken. Information posted on sites such as MySpace and Facebook has been used by police (forensic profiling), probation, and university officials to prosecute users.

In some situations, content posted on MySpace has been used in court. Facebook is increasingly being used by school administrations and law enforcement agencies as a source of evidence against student users. The Site allows users to create profile pages with personal details. These pages can be viewed by other registered users which often include police who have signed up for the service. One UK police force has sifted pictures from Facebook and arrested some people who had been photographed in a public place holding a weapon such as a knife (having a weapon in a public place is illegal).

Furthermore, there is an issue over the control of data - information which was altered or removed by the user could in fact be retained and/or passed to 3rd parties. In medical and scientific research, asking subjects for information about their behaviors is normally strictly scrutinized by institutional review boards. It is not clear whether the same rules apply to researchers who collect data from social networking sites. These sites often contain a great deal of data that is hard to obtain via traditional means. Privacy on Facebook is undermined by three principal factors: users disclose too much, Facebook



does not take adequate steps to protect user privacy, and third parties are actively seeking out end-user information using Facebook. Every day teens go on social networking sites and reveal their most inner thoughts for the whole world to see. Information and the Instant Messaging name are disclosed to an unknown population in cyberspace. What's more, for the Net generation, social networking sites have become the preferred forum for social interactions, from posturing and role playing to simply sounding off. Since such forums are relatively easy to access, posted content can be reviewed by anyone with an interest in the user's personal information. Privacy on the net is a rare thing and ultimately it is left to the user to be responsible and improve his or her privacy online.

Interpersonal communication

In the above mentioned interview to the



German magazine "Der Spiegel" MySpace's founders Tom Anderson and Christ de Wolfe explain how the Web site killed television and changed the world. The magazine asked Tom Anderson if he thought that we were undergoing a fundamental shift in the way people communicate with each other. Tom Anderson's answer was unambiguously: "Definitely. What's culturally significant about MySpace is that it has become so pervasive that people of all ages are now using it. Even people who didn't grow up with it are getting used to it. People just get sucked in. A 35-year old person doesn't find it strange anymore to be on MySpace. Just two years ago, we would have had no chance of attracting that person."

Mass media, cell phone, email and social network services have gradually replaced interpersonal communication. This is coupled with a distancing from the stress of face-to-face, real-life conversation, which is far more perilous. Meeting up with a person occurs in real time and requires the sensitivity to voice tone and body

language. Looking at the rise of virtual communication we have to fear that real conversation in real time may eventually give way to these sanitized and easier screen dialogues, in much the same way as killing, skinning and butchering an animal to eat has been replaced by the convenience of packages of meat on the supermarket shelf. Perhaps future generations will recoil with similar horror at the messiness, unpredictability and immediate personal involvement of a three-dimensional, real-time interaction.

Archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nichols, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, in August 2009, for the same reason has warned that social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo and MySpace were "dehumanizing" community life and that relationships had been weakened by the decline in face-to-face meetings. "I think there's a concern that an excessive use or an almost exclusive use of text and emails means that as a society we're losing some of the ability to build interpersonal communication that's necessary for living to-



gether and building a community. We're losing social skills, the human interaction skills, how to read a person's mood, to read their body language, how to be patient until the moment is right to make or press a point. Too much exclusive use of electronic information dehumanizes what is a very, very important part of community life and living together."

Parents – a big problem to teens

Many social networking services, such as Facebook, provide the user with a choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized user(s) from accessing their information. Parents have become a big problem to teens who want to prevent their parents to access their MySpace or Facebook accounts. By choosing to

make their profile private, teens are able to select who can see their page and this prevents unwanted parents from lurking. Teens are constantly trying to create a structural barrier between their private life and their parents. Here is the testimony of a father: "While setting up my page in Facebook, I decided to invite my daughter to become a friend. She's a college freshman and has been using Facebook for several months. When I spoke to her on the phone about it, she said that it felt a little awkward having her father enter her Facebook space. It was something for her and her friends, and not for parents. That made sense to me. And it also reminded me of how people attach specific meanings, feelings, and purposes to their online spaces. The world of Facebook has the distinct energy and excitement of a 'college student' atmosphere. If you get a chance to enter it, you'll see what I mean."

Attention span in jeopardy

In a startling warning from Lady Greenfield, professor of synaptic pharmacology at Lincoln college, Oxford, and director of the Royal Institution, February 2009, she told the House of Lords that children's experiences on social networking sites "are devoid of cohesive narrative and long-term significance. As a consequence, the mid-21st century mind might almost be infantilized, characterized by short attention spans, sensationalism, inability to empathize and a shaky sense of identity". Arguing that social network sites are putting attention span in jeopardy, she said: "If the young brain is exposed from the outset to a world of fast action and reaction, of instant new screen images flashing up with the press of a key, such rapid interchange might accustom the brain to operate over such timescales. Perhaps when in the real world such responses are not immediately forthcoming, we will see such behaviors and call them attention-deficit disorder. It might be helpful to investigate whether the near total submersion of our culture in screen technologies over the last decade might in some way be linked to the three-fold increase over this period in prescriptions for methylphenidate, the drug prescribed for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder."

Immediacy

Lady Greenfield in the above mentioned article also warned against "a much greater and marked preference for the here-and-now, where

the immediacy of an experience trumps any regard for the consequences. After all, whenever you play a computer game, you can always just play it again; everything you do is reversible. The emphasis is on the thrill of the moment, the buzz of rescuing the princess in the game. No care is given for the princess herself, for the content or for any long-term significance, because there is none. This type of activity, a disregard for consequence, can be compared with the thrill of compulsive gambling or compulsive eating."

Addictive

Ben Mezrich, author of "The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook" stated in an interview with CNBC, the recognized world leader in business news, about Facebook: "I really think that Facebook is the next step in human evolution. The majority of people who go on it spend three or four hours on it. Students in high schools spend their whole life on it. Dating comes through it, they meet one another through it, and they live on it. This is the new form of human life."

Facebook to its audience is like a spider to its prey! Where does this fascination come from? There are manifold reasons, the most important ones are summarized by a Facebook user as follows: "The way I see it, the most loyal Facebook users are in a trance or, for better use of words, under a spell – the spell of technology: wanting to be up-to-date with the newest trends and keeping in touch with present advancements in the field of technology".

But what else does Facebook use to capture its audience?

- The Desire to Compare: Facebook nourishes our desire, or even need, to compare ourselves to others in terms of looks, travels, shopping sprees, spouses, friends, and so on.

- The Curiosity Factor: How many times did you find yourselves snooping around in your friend's albums to see what she was doing on that day when you called and she didn't pick up? Better yet, how many times did you spend half an hour or more reading your friend's wall posts to know who said what to her or him? Facebook fulfills the curiosity factor that breeds on our need-to-know need!

- The Boredom Variable: What could be more addictive than finding something to fill the

hours of boredom we suffer at least once a day? Facebook is that bridge which gaps boredom on many levels through games, applications, music and much more.

- Jealousy Disease: Are you too jealous? Maybe somewhat insecure about your relationship? Facebook is your pill to getting better! Through its ability to track conversations, events, whereabouts and so on, Facebook provides a perfect platform for solving jealousy issues through stalking options!

- The Loneliness Phenomenon: Let us be frank here and admit that many of us, at least at one point or another, feel lonely. Facebook has the power to be the cure for loneliness! (It might also cause it in certain events, but that's besides our point here). If you are feeling lonely, you can call a friend, go out with a group, or just spend hours sending messages to your friends' Facebook inbox, comment on their pictures, write something fun on their wall and so on!

- The Ache to Belong: Have you been in a situation where you were asked: "REALLY? You don't have an account on Facebook? How come?" I am sure at least someone you know has been in this situation. Facebook exploits the ache to belong through its great number of users and affiliates.

Herd mentality

The right message at the right time can start a movement that changes the world. Social media has the ability to spread that message and organize that movement in ways not possible in the recent past. Of all the psychological triggers that lead to persuasive messages that spread, one stands above the rest. In fact, this one element of influence drives the entire concept of social media. What is it? Blog posts with lots of comments get more comments, items that are heavily bookmarked get even more bookmarks; blogs that display high subscriber counts attract more subscribers faster. Users often decide to give a message a chance based on initial indicators that have nothing to do with the actual quality of the content.

People tend to follow the crowd without evaluating wrong or right. Given the vast amount of information by social network sites we naturally look for quick cues about the quality of what we come across. And we're wired to look to others for those indications of quality. Especially if the

topic is new, someone will likely be influenced by the raw popularity of the piece, plus the specific comments of others who've come before.

Risks for child safety

Citizens and governments have been concerned about a misuse from children and teenagers of social network services, particularly in relation to online sexual predators. A certain number of actions have been engaged by governments to better understand the problem and find some solutions. A 2008 panel concluded that technological fixes such as age verification and scans are relatively ineffective means of apprehending online predators.

Trolling

A common misuse of social networking sites such as Facebook is that it is occasionally used to emotionally abuse individuals. Such actions are often referred to as trolling. It is not rare for confrontations in the real world to be translated online. Online bullying is a relatively common occurrence and it can often result in emotional trauma for the victim. Depending on the networking outlet, up to 39% of users admit to being "cyber-bullied". There are not many limitations as to what individuals can post when online. Inherently individuals are given the power to post offensive remarks or pictures.

Conclusion

It is hard to see how living this way on a daily basis will not result in brains, or rather minds, differing from those of previous, Christian generations. The virtual ways of communication will inevitably de-familiarize man from reality. Modern technology is intended to threaten real contact between men. Sitting behind a screen all day long, constantly pushing an internet profile and instant chat messages will result in forgetting the real person. Once the living person is annihilated, charity – the principle virtue in human existence – will be destroyed in its roots. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" (1 John 4:20)

Herd mentality, trolling, all the dangers for child's safety and the loss of privacy will accelerate the destructive effects of all these modern inventions.

Vatican II and Tradition

Our Reproaches against the Council

Part II

Conference given by Fr. Niklaus Pfluger, SSPX

at St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, March 30th, 2010

The break with the past

First of all, it's not a question of conservatism, it's a question of truth. "He who is Catholic, is conservative and up to date (If you want progressive!) at the same time." To the Catholic belongs a conservative spirit, the preserving, and just as well the development of all the richness of what we have to preserve, the richness of Tradition as a whole. In fact, that's the true progress.

We do not deplore that in the Council and in the "post-conciliar era" (the time after the Council with all the liturgical and theological reforms) something new has happened, because 'the father of the house brings new and old from his treasure' (Mt 13: 52). No, we deplore only that this new treasure is wrong. We do not deplore that a train departed, we deplore that it has gone in the wrong direction. We say, the train has to go back again, so that it can then go in the right direction."¹ True progress is a development of what has been received and, hence, includes preservation. Conservatism and progress

are dimensions of the ecclesiastical existence which enclose themselves and cause each other. The Catholic does not look for the truth, like in the Council document "Gaudium et spes" (article 16). Such thinking is a direct attack against the truth (the truth is Jesus Christ Himself), it's incorrect and wrong. In fact, it looks in the already revealed truth for deepening and enlargement. Clearly that fatal mistake of the Council is found in the encyclical "Ut unum sint" (Art. 33) from John Paul II, where it says: "In the understanding of the council that ecumenical dialogue has the character of a common search for the truth."

The traditional self-image of the Church

The Catholic Church and She alone is founded by God. Christ said to Peter "And I say to you: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16.18). Therefore, the Catholic Church taught in all ages that it is exclusively identical with the Church of Jesus Christ, briefly: The Catholic Church is the Church of Jesus

Christ. This equation founds the Catholic claim to absoluteness; there She alone is a means of salvation which is expressed in the dogma: "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus – outside the Church there is no salvation."

From this traditional self-image of the Church follows the true ecumenism which was represented in the Church up to the Second Vatican Council. Pius XI explains in his encyclical *Mortalium animos*: "The union of Christians cannot be fostered otherwise than by promoting the return of the dissident to the one true Church of Christ, which in the past they so unfortunately abandoned."

The Council presents a completely different self-image of the Catholic Church. The Council witnessed a formidable about-turn which Paul VI described as follows: "One can even say that the majority of the bishops betook to the school desk or to the auditorium. And many were surprised at the fact that their position after four years was another..., that they endorsed what they had held for unacceptable [!] or "risqué" before the Council."² By the way, the Second Vatican Council, in contrast to Vatican I and to the Council of Trent, was only a pastoral council, i.e. we don't have a strict obligation to accept any of the new ideas it proposed. Now we will state some central points, which were for the bishops "unacceptable before the Council"³, using the mode of expression of Pope Paul VI.

A new self-image of the Catholic Church: Ecumenism

As everyone knows, the council wanted to change the relation of the Catholic Church to the world and to other religions. However, the traditional self-image of the Church stood in the way of this intention, which is why they departed from it. The focus of the Catholic self-image is the mentioned, continual doctrine of the Church, according to which the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church is one and the same. The council wanted to revise this doctrine, and decided against it in order to be able to realise the ecumenism of the council! Therefore, one did not say any more that the Catholic Church "is" the Church of Christ [latin EST], but that the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church [latin SUBSISTIT IN]. With the turning away from "est" the council carried out a se-

rious break with the traditional doctrine of the Church. This turning away from the traditional self-image of the Catholic Church opened the door to the ecumenism which the council introduced in contradiction to the traditional doctrine. The consequence is a new claim of salvation for all the other confessions and religions; from now on they are ways to salvation; from now on they are true churches. With the awarding of a mediation of salvation to other communities (the Protestants included), the Council abandons the truth about the Catholic Church and teaches that no "church" has the full truth, but only elements of the truth.

A new relationship to non-Christian religions.

The turning away of the Pastoral Council from the traditional self-image of the Church, entailed not only a basic change of the relation of the Church to other Christian communities, but also a basic change of the attitude toward non-Christian religions, which is explained in the Decree "Nostra aetate". The high esteem for non-Christian religions which is expressed in this Pastoral Council document is incompatible with traditional teaching, according to which these religions are aberrations. Therefore, Jesus Christ Himself and the Church have directed a global mission, to save all from sin and error.

The Catholic Church taught that these non-Christian religions have a number of natural truths (to respect older people, to help those who are in misery, to be wise in one's behaviour, prudent in one's actions, etc). Secondly, those religions sometimes have elements of truth, which are remnants of the primitive revelation of God. And finally, sometimes they have taken elements from the Catholic Church (for example Islam, which confesses one, unique God, takes this belief from the Christian religion)⁴. But on the other hand, these non-Christian religions not only do not lead to salvation but, very often, are in themselves obstacles to finding the truth, systems of resistance to the Holy Ghost.

Such a misguided sympathy of Vatican II toward the other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism) leads necessarily not only to a religious indifferentism, but also will destroy the supernatural order. There is no longer any concern for faith and sanctifying grace, but this is

replaced by campaigns against racism, by manifestations for peace in the world, taking care of the environment and milieu, developing technology, social progress, etc.⁵ "Apostleship does not mean to make Muslims or Buddhists into Christians, but to make them better Muslims and better Buddhists" was a slogan of a popular German theologian. Concerning the other religions, the council used words which are on the very limits of Catholic thinking. If you take the Bible, one thing is clear: the rejection of pagan religions. But the Council finds a lot of warm words for pagan religions; in the sense that these religions can do a lot for conserving peace on earth and other strictly secular problems. This was misunderstood as an acceptance of other religions even in religious aspects, in such a way that all religions are valuable even for salvation, that they are just different ways, maybe not as powerful as Catholicism is, but also valuable in God's plan. And here the Church did a lot to support this misunderstanding, which is a clear attack on the basis of Christianity and the first commandment. In 1986, Pope John Paul II invited leaders of nearly all non-Christian religions to Assisi, an Italian town, for common prayer for peace. He gave them Catholic cha-

pels for their religious ceremonies. So there was a statue of Buddha, for instance, on a Catholic altar, on the tabernacle, and the cross was taken away. One must understand this as an acceptance of Buddhism as another way to God. But if anything goes; why remain Catholic? People lost their Catholic minds. They lost their trust in the promise of salvation, which Christ has given to the Christians and only to the Christians in John 14, 6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me."

The change of direction of the Council in this area led greatly to the breakdown of the apostolate and was replaced by inter-religious dialogue. Such behaviour is very far from the apostolic order of Christ: "Go ye unto all nations and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised, will be saved: he who does not believe, will be condemned." (Mk 16: 15-16)

A new relationship to the world

The Council's declaration on religious liberty: *Dignitatis humanae*

"One Lord, one faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through-



out all, and in us all.”⁶ The Catholic doctrine up to the Second Vatican Council, on the question of religious liberty, says that there is only one God, one Redeemer and one Church. This God, this Redeemer and this Church must be recognized by every creature, each and every individual, and also by social bodies: families, schools, states.⁷ They have to recognize Our Lord, basing their constitutions, their laws, and their lives on Him. This means that all countries, especially those with a majority of Catholic citizens, should officially recognize Our Lord, and His Church, as the only true religion, and put limits to the public manifestations of other religions.

With “*Dignitatis humanae*” we have an inversion of values. The Truth, who is a person, Jesus Christ, has no longer the right to reign in parliaments, governments and constitutions, in courts and schools. He has to be silent; He is put on the same level with other religions, opinions and errors. The pastoral Council asked and demanded that no religion should be hindered from spreading its errors, that every religion is to be treated with equality before the law. “This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom.” (No. 2) So, religious freedom would be a natural right. “This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in religious matters no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs.” (No. 2) We agree, because nobody can be forced to embrace the faith. Faith is an interior act. What is new, follows: “Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly.” (No. 2)

Consequence

The consequence is an unlimited freedom even of choice in moral matters (abortion, euthanasia, etc.) With the Council’s religious liberty, anyone can have the right to act against the law of God, or, if you want, the unlimited freedom of conscience is more important than God’s will or law. The old doctrine taught: a State can only tolerate evil. Our Lord said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.” (Jn 14: 6) “I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth (Jn 18: 37). And Pilate answered: “What is truth?”

(Jn 18: 38). The Council teaches: “You have the right to choose between Barabbas and Jesus.” And the modern governments have chosen Barabbas.

The problem with a true religious liberty

Liberties are only for individuals, not the state. Freedom is given to the single human being. Only those who have freedom have this human dignity. The state has no human dignity. The state is committed to save and protect this dignity of each citizen, on the one hand. But it is also committed to the eternal order of things, on the other hand. A state can’t love, the state is not free. It’s the single person who is free, the state is committed to truth and justice. And God is true. That sounds very academic, doesn’t it? Maybe it was so in the 1960s. But it is not any longer. In Switzerland, my home country, the people have decided in a plebiscite to forbid the construction of minarets, which are the towers of mosques from which the muezzin calls for the Muslim prayer. In France, president Sarkozy plans to abolish the burka, what is a sack under which extreme Muslims hide their wives and daughters, not because they’re ugly, but to discriminate them. All over Europe the courts are tackled with the problems of the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women in public buildings, of Muslim parents who are not willing to allow their children to go swimming in school, and so on. The western countries are confronted with the aggressive claims of other religions, especially Islam. These states have found that religious liberty in the sense of Vatican II is not possible, there must be limits.

In the 1960s those questions were not of interest. But now we have to ask ourselves who we are. “Who we are” is, by the way, a book of Samuel Huntington, who best described the rise of religion at the end of the cold war in the “Clash of Civilizations”. When the book came into debate in the 90s, most western politicians and intellectuals, who had learned that God is dead, and hence, were focused on secular questions such as social discrepancies, tried to ignore Huntington’s analysis. After 9/11 things have changed. Religion is a reality, and it influences public life. The Western world has seen a fundamental cultural change since the 1960s. This was caused in large part by the collapse of the biggest religious institution in the west, the Catholic Church. Be-

cause the majority of people here were Catholic, and the majority of Catholics had lost their faith, our politics and our societies have lost orientation. Now we are faced with the question, how to answer the claims Islam is making. So we must ask ourselves who we are. Are we just consumers? What are our principles? I'm sure, no one who tries to answer this question can do it without considering Christianity. So after some decades of godlessness we will see the return of Jesus Christ. To prepare for this it is important to understand how the Catholic Church could have come into such a crisis.

There is no way to the Father but by Jesus Christ. That is not really clear to today's Catholics, be they clergy or laymen. So we have a lack in basic Catholic consciousness. But people who don't know what is Catholic, can't act in a Catholic way. They can't vote for Catholic positions as they don't know what is the Catholic position and so on. "The faith is evaporating", said Pope Benedict XVI in 2009, and he is right. In the short period after Vatican II, the faith has evaporated in nearly every aspect. And thus, Catholic positions in politics, like on abortion, gay-marriage, the value of a family, sex education in school, and so on, have gone away. So I ask you for two things: First, to take religion into consideration when analysing politics and the history of the last decades. Religion influences people a lot, and people make politics. My thesis is: the developments of the last 40 years and today's politics are only to be understood when taking the collapse of Catholicism into consideration.

Secondly, to research the influence Vatican II has had on this development. My thesis from the beginning was: Vatican II is not the only, but the main cause for the collapse of the Church. Don't stop with this thesis. Go further and investigate how Vatican II caused the collapse, in which ways. I gave you some ideas. To understand such a religious crisis is important in a time when religion obviously is back in business. And as in the West it will be the Christian religion which will dominate – otherwise the West wouldn't be the West any longer – it is necessary to research the developments within Christianity.

At last, I want to speak to you as a priest: God will come back. The renaissance of both religion and its institution, the Church, can be taken as

a certitude. Maybe today it is still a bit avant-garde to promote a Catholic standpoint, but shouldn't young academics and universities always be avant-garde? The time is right for this, as the Church is in a deep crisis, unfortunately. So, as you know in the financial market, they say: buy when the price is low. The Catholic Church is surely a blue chip, and now, at the end of the period of Vatican II, the price is low, but expectations and potentials are high.

Just a word of what I expect in the upcoming years: The Pope will make clear that Vatican II has never propagated a break and a rupture with the doctrine of all Christian centuries. He will reject the wrong interpretation⁸ which has made Vatican II to be the basis of a new religion. He will defeat the spirit of the 1960s, at least 30 years too late; but what are 30 years for the Church? Catholicism will become popular at first among the educated people, who are searching for the sense of life. The ordinary people are fallen into brutal hedonism; unfortunately, you can't build a society on alcohol, sex, and consumption. Ernest Hello (1828 – 1885), a French writer and philosopher said: "The only true problem is that we aren't saints." The importance of religion will increase, and it won't be the religion of Vatican II, but the Religion of all time.

1 Pfarrrer Hans Milch, zitiert in: "Das Konzil muss auf den Prüfstand." Der Standpunkt der actio spes unica zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil.

2 J. Guitton: "Dialogue with Paul VI", Wien 1967, S. 215.

3 A "pastoral" council in which no dogma was defined and no errors solemnly condemned, which make the council and infallible one, like all previous Ecumenical councils of the Church.

4 Conference by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, 16.

5 Ibid.

6 Eph 4: 5-6.

7 Cf. Conference by Fr. Franz Schmidberger, 23.

8 He promotes the so-called "hermeneutic of continuity", Address to the Curia on December 22nd, 2005.

Angels and Demons

By Mrs. Martie Dieperink

The Bible tells us – not systematically, but if we read carefully – quite a lot about the unseen world of spirits. Most people believe that there is more between heaven and earth. There is ‘something.’ That belief is, however, rather vague. One does not know how everything fits together. The Bible, on the other hand, - and this is the reason we consult the Bible – does not use vague language, but gives us a clear and concrete picture of the unseen reality and also clear insight into the working of unseen forces in the universe. We learn that God exists, his nature, and that also angels exist, both good and evil. We learn how to discern between positive and negative forces.

Do angels really exist?

In the world of the New Age credence is given to the existence of spirit guides or angels. Books have been published on personal experiences with angels. Nevertheless, some readers

may wonder whether angels really do exist. Were the people who claimed to have seen angels perhaps hallucinatory, or do they fantasize? Hallucinations are usually concerned with a clinical picture and they have a negative effect on people. They don't leave a deep impression and will not bring about a positive change in the person's life. Let us therefore examine which effect a vision of angels has on people in the Bible.

Examples in the bible

There are numerous examples of experiences with angels. At all crucial events in the history of salvation they appear. Let me give two examples. In the Old Testament the patriarch Jacob had a dream at Bethel.

“Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of



the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the LORD, and he said: 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.'" (Genesis 28:10-13) This dream left a deep impression on Jacob and he exclaimed: "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I was not aware of it." (Genesis 28:16) It is understandable that, at first, what happened frightened him, but he did not become depressed or passive, on the contrary, it inspired him to action and he had confidence in God. When we look at Jacob's life, we see that from this vision he received the strength to stay abroad with his uncle Laban and to work there for many years. He knew that God had a plan with his life.

Angels in the New Testament

In the New Testament we read that an angel, called Gabriel, appears to Mary and announces that she is to bear a son and she is to give him the name Jesus. He would be great and would be called the Son of God. We might think that Mary had an overactive imagination, she dreamed of a famous son. But Jesus was a unique personality; that was not just a fantasy. Mary was deeply impressed by the appearance. Of course she was frightened at first, but, like Jacob, she did not become depressed or passive. Her experience made her actually happy and inspired her to speak out the Magnificat. (Luke 1:30-31;46) Both examples – and there are many others – point to the fact that these experiences have nothing to do with fantasy or hallucination, but with a genuine religious experience of the appearance of heavenly beings. Let us not detract from people who have religious experiences. But what kind of beings are angels?

Angels adore

In the account of Jacob these beings are called "angels of God." They belong to God and were created by Him for His glory. Angels adore and praise God. The prophet Isaiah had an awesome vision in which he saw angels calling out: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3)

Angels also adore Jesus as the Saviour of the world. When Jesus is born, the angel of God ap-

pears to the shepherds: "An angel of the LORD appeared to them, and the glory of the LORD shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the LORD.'" (Luke 2:9-11) Because of this great event the angels were singing: "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.'" (Luke 2:13,14)

In the book of the Apocalypse we read how angels adore Jesus in heaven: "Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!'" (Apoc. 5:11,12)

Angels are messengers

Angels are messengers who convey God's message. As Moses received his calling from God in the desert, first an angel of God appeared. "There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within the bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up." (Exodus 3:2)

An angel having the appearance of a human being came to the prophet Daniel. "I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist... He said, 'Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling." (Daniel 10:5,11)

The angel Gabriel announces the birth of Christ. Two angels announce the resurrection of the crucified Lord. "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in

clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with us in Galilee.'" (Luke 24:1-6)

Ministering spirits

Angels are ministering spirits. They served Jesus Christ during his life on earth, and they also serve those who believe. We read: "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)

In Psalm 91 we read that they protect men: "Then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your way." (Psalm 91:10,11)

When the prophet Elijah was threatened by Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, and was not able to see a way out of the dilemma, he was helped by an angel. "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lie down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God." (1 Kings 19:3-8)

In the New Testament the apostle Peter was freed from the prison by an angel. "The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the

angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was going was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord send his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating.'" (Acts 12:6-11)

Guardian Angel

The following account makes mention of belief in a personal guardian angel: "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!' 'You're out of your mind,' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so they said, 'It must be his angel.'" (Acts 12:12-15)

So we see that angels help us in difficult situations. Many people in these times also have received help from angels. Let me give an example. The well-known preacher in India, Sadhu Sundar Singh (born in 1889) had the following experience in Tibet. In a certain village he had tried to get his message across but in vain; people refused to listen to him. Because of their threatening attitude he had to retreat to a cave. At night the inhabitants, armed with clubs and stones, went to his hiding place in order to kill him. Then suddenly they shrank back, frightened and shouted to him from a distance: "Tell us, who is that man in that shining garment beside you and who are the others around you?" Sundar Singh answered that he was alone, but the men stuck to their assertion... Angels of God had saved his life.

Fighting Angels

There are also fighting angels. Michael is the best-known fighting angel. When a battle is rag-

ing on earth, we mostly don't realise that a fierce battle is going on in the heavenly realms: a battle between God with his angels and Satan with his demons. As the apostle John received his revelation on the island of Patmos and the heaven was opened, he witnessed a fierce battle in heaven. "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him." (Apocalypse 12:7-9)

In the Old Testament we read that an angel assisted king Hezekiah, when he was attacked by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. "King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. And the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword." (2 Chronicles 32:20-21)

Do evil spirits also exist?

New Age people tell us that they communicate with angels who convey messages and they maintain they have special spirit guides. Princess Irene has a spirit guide, called Zoro. Do people in the New Age also have good angels at their side to help them? It is necessary to ask this question because, according to the Bible, there are evil spirits who come to us as angels of light. Therefore, we must know very clearly which spirits we contact. People in the New Age also admit that negative entities exist. However, when it comes to their own spirit guides they are not critical at all; they believe them to be good spirits. They do not question whether a devil exists. They maintain that there is no devil or fallen angel who rules over evil spirits; also that belief in a devil is only a primitive superstition from ancient times. I too had brushed aside the belief in a devil and hell. God was love.

According to "A Course in Miracles" Satan would be a projection of our own fears. This is a strange argument. At one time a serial rapist was operating near Utrecht in the Netherlands

and out of fear of this man women in this area did not dare to go out cycling alone when it was dark. Is the serial rapist therefore a projection of the women's fear and does it nullify his existence? Usually we have fear of something that does exist and threatens us. If Satan exists, one has good reason to fear him. But does he exist?

I was surprised to read in a book written by the Mother, the guru in India, that a depression comes straight from the devil. Also others in the New Age movement like David Spangler write about the devil, called by him Lucifer. He writes: "The light that reveals to us the path to Christ comes from Lucifer... the great initiator ... Lucifer comes to give us the final ... Lucifer initiation ... that many people in the days ahead will be facing, for it is an invitation into the New Age.

Christ is the same force as Lucifer ... Lucifer prepares man for the experience of Christhood ... Lucifer works within each of us to bring us to wholeness as we move into the New Age."¹

Existence of Satan

Just like Satanists who openly adore Satan, he believes that Lucifer, the devil, is a good spirit. But why do we face so much misery in the world? Isn't it only understandable if we take the existence of Satan as an evil spirit into consideration? Sometimes you hear people saying: "How can we believe in God after Auschwitz? It is, however, more correct to pose another question to them: "How can you not yet believe in Satan after Auschwitz? Satan invents such cruelties. At least this is what the Bible teaches us.

Not only the existence of Satan and his demons explains things we do not otherwise understand, but as many people have experienced God somehow or other, so many others have gained experiences of Satan and his demons. We have to take these experiences seriously. A lot of people who have entered the paranormal world have heard voices. In psychiatry, the hearing of voices is often brushed aside as a tingling in the brain or a fantasy, which, of course, can sometimes happen. But in most cases we do not do justice to the people themselves. Often they are affected by these voices, which seem to come from outside, and they suffer terribly as a consequence. There is no way that they invent these tortures themselves. They want to get rid of it, but they do not know how. Drugs can only par-

tially subdue this phenomenon. The most plausible explanation to this phenomenon is that people are affected by evil spirits. From olden times people – also people in the Bible – have believed that evil spirits exist and that they can affect people in a negative way. Especially people who are involved in praying for people who are bound and possessed have to cope with manifestations of evil spirits and Satan himself. Being experienced in this field, he cannot but admit: Satan does exist. Let us see what the Bible tells us about this evil being.

but it is to the sense of oneness in the New Age, which regards one and all, basically, as divine. This sense of oneness is idealistic, but not realistic, because the existence of Satan is a reality.

Satan was created as a high-ranking angel with power and majesty. That he is a good angel according to Satanists and those of the New Age is only a half-truth. The Bible teaches that he, being arrogant, revolted against God and so he became the devil. His fall was due to his haughtiness. A false spirit can be recognized by his ar-



Satan

According to the Bible one of the highest angels, called Lucifer in the tradition of the Church, was created as a good angel. According to the late professor H. van Praag, a Dutch parapsychologist, the existence of Satan is alien to the biblical tradition since it acknowledges only one God. We are not allowed to turn the evil into a 'counter-god.' Indeed, he is not a 'counter-god.' He is a created being, an angel. The Bible does not have a dualistic vision like the Persian religion in which a good and an evil god are opposed to each other. Acknowledging the existence of Satan is not alien to biblical thinking,

rogance. After his fall he took a great number of the angels with him and he also tried to ensnare men. The story of the fall, which is only found in the Bible, in Genesis 3, explains how all misery came into the world.

Buddha was burdened with the suffering of the world and therefore could not believe in a Creator. The ancient problem is how we can reconcile God's love and omnipotence with the suffering we see around us. But Buddha could not see the problem in its true perspective because he was not aware of the event of the fall and so he offered man a solution without God. He

could not explain the cause of the misery, but invented the solution to negate the evil within by extinguishing all desires and to accept that the soul simply does not exist. Then there is also no ego that could suffer pain.

Negate the evil

In the Hindu philosophy you also have to negate the evil by thinking that earthly life is an illusion and that you are divine. The soul is divine and eternal and does not suffer. This is a beautiful philosophy, but it does not stop a man being downhearted. If we are locked up in a prison, we can imagine that the prison is an illusion, but we are not yet released from that prison.

Islam has chosen for resignation: what happens to me is the holy will of Allah.

Thanks to the biblical account of the fall, we get a totally different perspective on the problem as to why all misery came into the world: man listened to the devil. We read: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' 'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" (Genesis 3:1-5)

Satan approached Eve with a beautiful promise: you shall not die, you shall be like God. In the New Age we get the same beautiful promise: you shall reach a higher divine consciousness. Because Adam and Eve listened to the snake, the speaking voice of Satan, man came under his dominion. When God created man, He gave dominion over the world to Adam and his wife (Genesis 1:28). But when they obeyed Satan, they forfeited their governorship to Satan. Satan became 'the ruler of this world' (John 14:30). A ruler is a high official who is subordinate to the king or emperor. God has remained the real LORD, but through the fall Satan is granted access to this world. Therefore one blames God for things Satan does. One wonders why God permits all these things. Why doesn't He intervene?

God is love and He does not want our suffering, but He permits things because we have allowed Satan to enter this world and have chosen evil and God respects our freewill.

Man under Satan's thumb

Because the world has come under the influence of the Evil one, we can no longer say, "Paranormal capacities are gifts that belong to creation, therefore they are all right." Unfortunately, we can also contact evil powers and forces at the present time through our paranormal antenna.

As man has come under Satan's thumb, God did not leave it at that but offered a solution: He has given mankind a Saviour. In these days demons know Jesus Christ better than many people who believe that Jesus is only a man. When Jesus approached a possessed person, the demons started to cry: "When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 'What do you want with us, Son of God?' they shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?'" (Matthew 8:28-29)

Jesus has freed mankind from Satan's slavery through his crucifixion. Therefore Satan hates his crucifixion and he will always try to discredit or falsify the gospel of salvation through Christ's crucifixion. On Golgotha Jesus overcame Satan and dethroned the evil powers. That does not mean, however, that Satan cannot affect the world any longer. He is not yet bound. We could compare him with a person who is found guilty of a crime, but is still able to go around freely before he is sentenced. We live in an interim period, in which Satan can still exert his power. Now more than ever he is extremely active because he knows his time will soon come to an end.

"Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." (Apoc. 12:12)

I David Spangler. Reflections of the Christ, Scotland: Findhorn, 1977, pp. 40-44.

Education and the Liturgical Year

Part II

Fr. Peter Scott, SSPX

The living of the Liturgical Year

In a previous article it was pointed out that the Church educates through the sequence of the liturgical year, and that to profit from this education one must at the same time appreciate the reality of the historical events that make up this celebration, and meditate on their mystical signification, being applied and relived in our own human lives.

Advent

In effect, each of the Church's times and seasons has a special significance and a "treasure of sanctity for us to make our own" (Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, § 153). The year starts with Advent, a time of longing for God Our Lord to come into our souls, in union with the longing of the prophets of old, for the Messiah to come. The historical prophecies of the eight centuries before Christ pass before our eyes, giving us the sense of the Faith on the necessity for the Incarnation for the Redemption of mankind. However, at the same time we understand our own deficiencies, in which we resemble the blindness of those centuries before the Redeemer, become more aware of our sins, desirous of restraining our selfish desires and practicing voluntary mortification. Just as the prophet Isaias acknowledges that "a Virgin shall conceive and bear forth a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, God with us" (7:14), so likewise do we reflect on our need that the Saviour be born into our souls, and meditate on the "longing desire to return to God Who alone can free us by His grace from the stain of sin and from its evil consequences (Ib. § 154).

Advent is, in fact, one of the liturgical seasons that is in general little appreciated. The focus is altogether on Christmas. Yet, without this season of preparation, Christmas falls flat, and remains superficial in its appreciation. This happens in particular when Christmas parties are celebrated during Advent, or Christmas trees and Nativity scenes are erected during Advent, and when there is no effort to observe the Ember Days of Advent, and the Vigil of Christmas as a day of fast and abstinence. A good missal or explanation of the season of Advent, will give much food for thought. Likewise the prayers and readings, the Vespers' antiphons and the "O" antiphons recited every day from December 17 - 23, expressing as they do the eager expectation for Incarnate Wisdom. A common practice is to prepare a crib, adding a straw for each sacrifice through Advent, as a token of love for the divine Infant. Likewise is popular the use of the Jesse tree, a small tree indicating symbolically the genealogy of our Divine Saviour, and named after the father of King David, Jesse. The purpose is to attach to its branches a symbol, representation or text from the great figures of the Old Testament who prepared for Christ to come, such as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David. One can be done every day during the Advent, with the reading of the corresponding story or text from the Old Testament, according to creativity, imagination and enthusiasm.

Incarnation

Whilst everybody observes Christmas, it is not well understood that this liturgical season continues until the feast of the Purification, on

the 40th day after Christmas. Consequently, the Incarnation is frequently not celebrated as the central event in human history. More regular visits to the Blessed Sacrament or more faithful recitation of the Angelus ought to characterize this time. Furthermore, since we celebrate God's gift of Himself to mankind, all our gifts ought to express this, and ought to be self-sacrificing, rather than with the intention of receiving another's gift in return. To achieve this, some gifts ought to be reserved for the poor or others who are unable to return the favour. Such generosity is the outward symbol of the complete rebirth

by grace that is the special fruit of the Incarnation, and entirely gratuitous gift that cannot be returned.

The meaning of the time of the Epiphany is also poorly appreciated. It is the manifestation of God made man to the world. The real visit of the three kings from the East, the miracle of the first sign by which water was changed into wine, and the baptism of Our Divine Saviour by St. John the Baptist, are the three events in which God

made man manifests himself and receives the adoration due to his divinity. The feast is a call to conversion, to publicly acknowledge Christ as the King of kings, and to shine forth that Faith by our confidence in Divine Providence. The custom of blessing and marking with blessed chalk the lintels of doorways with the year and the names of the three kings from the east (Caspar, Melchior & Balthazar) is an outward sign of our internal submission to this divine King.



The special beauty of Candlemas escapes no Catholic soul. The candles that are blessed, carried in procession, and held during the singing of the Gospel and during the Canon of the Mass, are powerful symbols of the Sacred Humanity of Christ, "light of revelation to the Gentiles and glory of Thy people Israel." (Lk 2:32). Just as they burn, are consumed and give forth light, so also Christ, who Himself declared: "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), was consumed by the fire of his love to give us the light of everlasting life. The blessed candles that we take home to burn in times of temptation, trouble, family discord, tempest etc. are consequently the constant reminder of our Divine Saviour's offering of himself in the temple, with which we unite our own offering of ourselves at each Mass.

The time of Septuagesima has its particular focus also: the weakness of man's nature after the Fall, at which he lost not only sanctifying grace, but also the preternatural gifts. This weakness, most particularly manifest by the four wounds of ignorance, malice, weakness and concupiscence, is the reason why our daily spiritual lives must necessarily be a constant struggle to resist temptation and to overcome the spirit of the world. The absence of the Alleluia at Mass is a reminder to get back to the serious things of life, and to "work out your salvation in fear and trembling" (Phil 2:13). It is a time to take special care about making one's daily sacrifices.

The different Masses in the missal for every day in Lent are one of the great treasures of the liturgical year. In so many different ways, with different stories of God's mercy from the Old and New Testament, they urge us to amend our lives, detest our sins and expiate them by prayer and penance. During Passiontide the sufferings of the innocent, persecuted prophet Jeremias are the figure that leads us to understand the depth of the betrayal and anguish that Our Divine Saviour suffered in His Passion, culminating on Holy Wednesday in Isaia's prophecy of the suffering servant of God, meek as a lamb led to the slaughter, upon whom the Lord has laid the iniquity of us all. (Is 53:6). During the unspeakably poignant symbolism of the Holy Triduum, of the Tenebrae as well as of the Masses and Solemn Liturgy, we relive the mysteries of the Passion, for which all our sins are responsible, begging the help and grace of making them our own.

The educational power of the liturgical year is not yet fully accomplished. Man's nature is to be happy, and he will only learn when he sees that this learning is the key to the greatest happiness possible. And so the Liturgy lifts a man up to the things of heaven, that he may no longer be preoccupied with the things of this earthly existence. This is the fruit of the Paschal season, for "we must rise, in union with the Redeemer, from our cold and slothful life to one of greater fervour and holiness by giving ourselves completely and generously to God" (Ib. § 159). Yet this is still not enough, for the Church would have us learn our entire dependence upon the Sacred Humanity of Our Divine Saviour, gone before us to prepare us a place, now always living on the right hand of the Father to intercede on our behalf. This is the purpose of the time of the Ascension.

During the Octave of Pentecost, during which the external mission of the Holy Ghost onto the Church is celebrated, we are set on fire with divine love, so as to strive daily to advance in virtue, to correspond with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to become holy, "for this is the will of God, your sanctification" (I Th 4:3). The temporal cycle is then completed by the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, of Corpus Christi, and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, bringing to our minds the principal mysteries of our Faith, upon which our eternal salvation depends, and finally by the time after the Pentecost, during which time the soul puts into practice all these virtues and graces, inspired by the teachings of the Apostle of the Gentiles in selections from his many epistles, and the examples from the life of Our Lord taken from the Gospels. On the Last Sunday of October we have the opportunity to profess our Faith in Christ's Social Kingship, praying that His absolute dominion may be recognized by society as a whole. Then on the Last Sunday after Pentecost, we prepare for the end of the world and the second coming by meditating on the Last Judgment.

Sanctoral Cycle

The temporal cycle is not, however, complete in itself. Constantly interwoven with it, overlapping with it, and enriching it, is the sanctoral cycle. As a true pedagogue, the Church knows that man learns more effectively by example than by any other means. The saints' feast days, remind-

ing us constantly of examples of heroic virtue, inspire us to cultivate the divine life of Christ in our souls. This is how Pope Pius XII puts it: "The Sacred Liturgy puts all these gems of sanctity before us so that we may consider them for our salvation, and 'rejoicing at their merits, we may be inflamed by their example'....These are the footprints left by the Saints in their journey homeward, that guided by them we might follow them into glory" (Ib. § 167).

If the Church presents a brief life of each day's saint in the office of Matins and instructs that a summary be read during the office of Prime of the preceding day, it is certainly the mind of the Church that every Catholic be desirous of reading a little of the life of the saints of every day. What an encouraging practice! If we cannot do so every day, at least let us remember the most important feast days of saints, namely those of first or second class. Mark them off on the calendar, become familiar with them, celebrate the feast with some special solemnity, and you will become educated in the life of grace that was theirs. In particular, let us welcome the feast of the Apostles, columns of the Church, that come around nearly every month, and the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother and highest educator, who will protect and help us in proportion as we honour each one of the privileges that each feast celebrates: - from her Immaculate Conception to her Assumption into heaven: from her Annunciation to her Transfixion at the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows: from being the Mother of God to becoming the Mediatrix of all graces.

Let, then, no truly Catholic home be without the resources to learn to adore, pray and love in the school of the Liturgy. It will have a daily Missal with commentary. It will have a liturgical calendar for every day of the year. It will have a commentary on the liturgical year. It will have a complete Bible. It will have a collection of lives of saints. But most of all it will have a love for what the monks call the "opus Dei", "the work of God" - the Church's public praise, adoration, petition and thanksgiving in the sacred Liturgy.

Coast to Coast

News and photos from the canadian district activities !!!



St. Joseph Pilgrimage 2010

Miss Aileen Holeksa

A pilgrimage is a journey to a destination with our focus being on Christ. It is how we should live our lives daily. But with many distractions of the world we tend to forget what truly is important. By going on a pilgrimage we become in a sense like a child. We leave behind our daily worries of work and what needs to be done and focus on our basic needs: food, sleep, and giving praise to Our Father. It is a spiritual high being able to walk on a journey and leave your daily tasks behind to focus on your heavenly goal.



supper for the pilgrims. The men volunteered for the transportation of the pilgrim's vehicles as well as tired pilgrims who needed rest, as well as many others behind the scene jobs to ease the journey. They are truly a gift to have along the way to the shrine.

The conclusion of the pilgrimage was on Sunday, beginning with a small procession of the statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph to the shrine followed by a Solemn High Mass. Each year dedicated and patient men spend the previous night roasting a pig for the Sunday afternoon picnic. The women from Calgary contribute the salads and desserts and the celebration begins! Dark clouds loomed over the picnic, threatening to ruin it, but the only thing that broke out was an organized soccer game. Even tired pilgrims enjoyed running around after a joyous journey.

The St. Joseph pilgrimage starts in Rocky Mountain House every May long weekend. Beginning Thursday after mass with a hearty breakfast, provided by the parish ladies. The pilgrims set out carrying St. Joseph in procession for their 96 km journey through the streets of town. This year the high school boys and girls of St. John Bosco School were given Thursday and Friday off, in order to come out for the pilgrimage. It's always encouraging to see the youth of our parish participate with such good spirit.

The walking was eased by meditation, prayer and singing as well as occasional conversations among pilgrims. The Rosary was recited regularly and sung in different languages, to take away from monotonous vocal prayer. Learning the songs took practice and patience, but thankfully there was plenty of both.

Throughout the pilgrimage the Rocky Mountain House ladies worked hard and set up snacks for mid-morning and afternoon breaks and also prepare lunch and

The 11th year pilgrimage intention was for an increase of vocations within our parish. May Our Lady give this precious gift and inspire generous souls.



News from New Hamburg, ON

By Father Peter Scott

A competitive spirit reigned in preparation for the school's first Jog-a-thon, to be held on the afternoon of Corpus Christi, June 3. Although the fifth and sixth grade class already had victory clearly in the bag, there was still competi-



tion to see who could raise the most, and of course who could run the most laps of 1/8 of a mile. After the morning's High Mass, the students were scheduled to run at two different times, the grade school students first, and then the boys in grades 7 - 12 afterwards. However, as the grade school students set out it started to rain, then to rain more heavily, until the thunder and lightning and torrential downpour entirely saturated everybody. The rain had, however, stopped by the time that the older boys set out to make their run, and so they were able to clock up a higher number of laps, as many as 55 for the leader. We thank God for the success of this fundraiser, and for the efforts that many of our students put into finding sponsors.

Just the day before the novena in preparation for the consecration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy had begun. Students and faculty recited this novena, that the graces of the consecration might abound in the school, especially

the practical commitment to the Kingship of Christ by the practice of the virtues of truthfulness, patience, kindness, thoughtfulness and charity - virtues that do not come naturally to youth. Meanwhile the school prepared to attend the solemn procession for the Sunday after Corpus Christi, which was celebrated by Father Wegner at Holy Face of Jesus chapel in St. Catharines, followed by a long public procession through the streets of the city, including three Benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament. The boys had the honour of serving this ceremony.

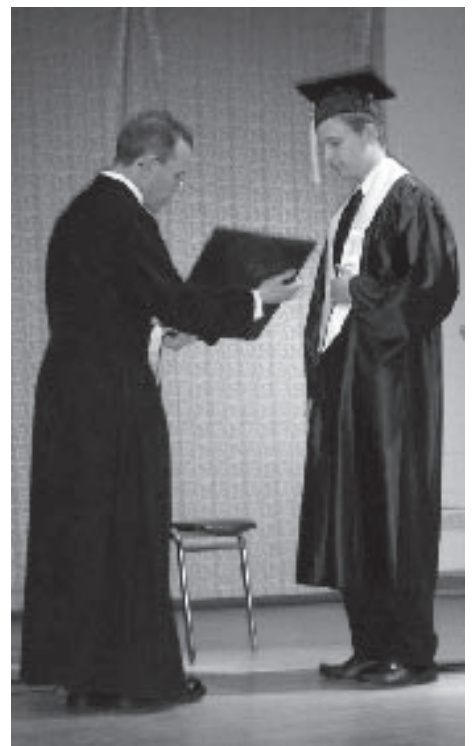
On Friday June 11, feast of the Sacred Heart, a High Mass was celebrated, attended by the entire school. Meanwhile a support for a large statue of the Sacred Heart had been erected in the school's main hallway. After Mass the entire school, including parents and friends, processed from the chapel to the location of the enthronement. The statue was then placed permanent in the place of honour and the school began the recitation of the prayers of consecration to the Sacred Heart. Afterwards, during the singing of hymns to the Sacred Heart, all students, faculty, parents and friends signed the certificate of enthronement, then framed and placed it on the wall as a perpetual reminder of the consecration. Hereafter the students will recite every day the brief formulary renewing the consecration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

It was just a few days later, on Tuesday June 15, that the first graduation ceremony took place. The faculty was busy at the last moment obtaining the graduation gowns and certificates, the honour roll and excellence pins, the t-shirts and sweat shirts with the school's name and emblem especially designed for the occasion.

The evening ceremony began with the singing of the Votive Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in thanksgiving for all the graces of the past year. After brief refresh-

ments, everybody headed for the gymnasium for the commencement ceremonies. After the Principal's address, came the awarding of the certificates of graduation. The first was given to the one 12th grader, who after two years spent at Our Lady of Mount Carmel has now completed his 12th grade studies. Next came the presentation of the certificates of graduation from eighth grade for our four students who completed their grade school. The two boys will continue on into the high school next year. Then finally came the awarding of the five certificates of graduation from Kindergarten.

The chief amongst the prizes was the 2009-2010 Honour Roll. Only three students qualified for this, and were presented with their certificates and excellence pins. In addition, special awards were given for exceptional performance in History and in Athletics, and for Consistency in all studies. Finally the three students who had perfect attendance were honored also for their efforts. The spirit of celebration was also encouraged by the availability of the 2009-2010 Year Book for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy, available for \$20, having a photographic record of the major events in the school year.



A Henry IV Play at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy

By Thomas R. Moynihan, student and actor

Who would ever think that a school just in the making would be able to pull off such a masterpiece? Under the direction of Miss Jane Stannus and flight captain Mr. Marcel Stannus, the boys in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Drama Club did just that. The boys have been working on this production since the beginning of 2010, making sure they had it set in store before presenting it. Then, on May 24, 2010, with about 200 people in attendance including some from St. Catharines and our very own superior, Fr. Wegner from Toronto, the play premiered.

The play starts with the king seeing a rebellion in England, turns from the Holy Land to encounter it, while his son Prince Hal is gallivanting around the country side robbing people with his „trustworthy“ friend, Fallstaff. The king, furious about the complaints against his son, calls upon him to stand before him so he can rebuke him. But during all this you observe the rebels led by Hotspur plotting to overthrow the king and divide England among themselves. When the action starts you

watch, holding on the edge of your seat, as the Earl of Douglas confronts and slays, Sir Walter Blunt, then afterwards attacking the king, he being about to kill the king, Prince Hal steps in saving his life by challenging Douglas to fight. You finally see Hotspur partake in the action by challenging Prince Hal, but Hotspur being prideful is cut down by Prince Hal thus ending the rebellion. The play ends with King Henry's court rejoicing at their success and that they have brought peace to England.

At the end the actors came out and collected a silver collection. The audience congratulated them, told them how good they did, and said that they hope they will do another one next year. Let me conclude by saying thank you to all who participated in making this happen especially the actors, as without them we would have never had a great production as this.



Ordinations Winona

Dici.org

The Priestly Society of St. Pius X has 20 new priests since the end of June.



On the 18th, at the seminary in Winona (USA), Bishop Alfonso de Galaretta ordained 8 priests: 7 Americans and 1 Swiss. On June 26, at the seminary of Zaitzkofen (Germany), Bishop Bernard Fellay ordained 3 priests: a Czech, an Italian and a Swede, Fr. Sten Sandmark, formerly a Lutheran pastor who solemnly abjured his errors on July 30, 2006 at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet (Paris), in which church he will celebrate one of his first solemn masses on August 15 at 10:30 a.m. (the sermon will be preached by Rev. Fr. Jean-Dominique, O.P.). Lastly, on June 29 at Ecône (Switzerland), Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais ordained 9 priests: 8 French and 1 Swiss.

These 20 priests will be joined by 5 others who will be ordained in December at the seminary of La Reja (Argentina), where the end of the academic year corresponds with the end of the civil year.

From wild nature to supernatural!

Mr. Marcus Tonogai

Have you ever been pushed to the edge of your limits and found it exhilarating? The SSPX Canoe Camp was a trip that did just that. From Restoule Lake to the Georgian Bay a small band of canoers braved the labyrinth-like waterways of Northern Ontario. It was an experience none would ever want to forget.



Two priests, three seminarians, two ladies, and eight boys all came together to make the canoeing trip a reality. These people came from all over, including Canada, the USA, and even Germany. The thirteen men and boys set out in six canoes from the shores of Lake Restoule on a journey that would take them to places most had never heard of or seen before. On this trip they encountered thundering rapids and waterfalls, swarms of blood-sucking monsters known as mosquitoes, pouring rain, burning sunlight, delicious fish, starving foxes, and so many other things found only in the mostly untamed wilderness surrounding the mighty French River. This trip made the boys into men. They had to paddle constantly in all sorts of weather, sleep in tents for ten days without respite, eat food cooked over an open fire, and yet they loved it. The camp was hard work and, at the same time, great fun. They got to go swimming, jump off cliffs into the water, and ride down rapids in canoes as well as out of them, go fishing, and feast on the blueberries and raspberries growing all over the shores and islands. When the camp was over, everyone was exhausted, some could not even drive home without falling asleep, but they also had a great feeling of accomplishment.

One of the reasons for choosing the French River as the location for the canoe camp, besides the fact that it is a well-traveled route with many campsites along its bank, was that the Jesuit missionaries of old traveled the very same route to and from their missions. Thanks to the leader and navigator, Fa-



ther May, they were able to traverse through the maze of rivers and lakes to their destination without ever losing their way. They visited some of the sites where those brave priests walked and were buried, such as Cross Island and Recollet Falls. Traveling through these places gave them the chance to meditate on the lives of these courageous men. This, coupled with frequent mass, catechism, and devotions, gave a simple canoe trip a spiritual side which made it into a semi-retreat bringing everyone closer to God as they came closer to nature. It also helped them survive the sunburns, bugs, and hunger in the Catholic spirit, offering these hardships to God. The priests' sermons on the Mass and the Mystical Body gave the rest of the camp a greater understanding of these subjects and a desire to apply what they had learned in their daily lives. When the exciting adventure came to a close the participants had not only matured in mind and body but in soul as well.

The Canoe Camp was a great and memorable experience for all the boys, cooks, seminarians, and priests. Fr. May and Fr. Wegner along with their right hand men and women, the seminarians, Mark Potvin, Christopher Polley,



Lawrence Barrett, and the cooks, Claire Hartman, and Teresa Herrmann, all contributed to making the trip a thoroughly delightful and exciting adventure. Everyone returned home morally, spiritually, and physically stronger with a firm resolve to use what virtues they had learned in the wilderness out in the world. This Canoe Camp was truly an experience no one of its participants would ever forget!



Our Lady of Mount Carmel academy. Graduations and Shakespeare play Henry IV



Saint Joseph's pilgrimage: 96 km from Rocky Mountain House to Sundre. Lunch pauze, walk and prayer, final Mass and pigroast on Sunday.



Canoe-Camp in Ontario: 10 days on the French River following the footsteps of the Missionaries. Real adventure for the boys from 14-18 years!



Ordinations at Winona: Prostration during the Litanies of All Saints, Imposition of the hands by the priests and the new priest touching the chalice after the anointing of his hands.

