

loped with increasing depth a criticism of any ecclesiology which tends to ignore the individual *charismata*,<sup>281</sup> and it has restored the doctrine of the mystical Body of Christ, in which the varying *charismata* receive their corporate completion in the saving act of Christ who, through the Spirit, lives in each of them. 'It may be said that the visible elements in the notion of the Body of Christ have receded in order to give an ever greater place to the invisible elements – the union of men with Jesus Christ either by sanctifying grace or by the grace of predestination.'<sup>282</sup> Recent discussions of the Petrine office and the collegiality of the episcopate even suggest a reform of the Catholic administrative outlook which would conform the Church's external structure more closely to its mission of incorporating all men in Christ,<sup>283</sup> and now that the kings and princes are gone who represented the lay people in all the Councils up to Trent, we may hope for a new system of representation of the corporate 'royal priesthood' in the present Council.<sup>284</sup>

The *schemata* and miscellaneous proposals before the second Vatican Council are many and varied. It is not clear that the Fathers will be able to deal with more than a fraction of them. We do not even know whether we may see the elementary reform of canon law whereby what the clergy have a duty to give will be re-defined as what the laity have a right to receive.<sup>285</sup> It is certain, however, that the will to reform and adapt, even though it proceed from the highest authority and mobilise prelates and theologians in its service, cannot become alive and effective without the co-operation of the lay people at large.<sup>286</sup> It is certain, too, that the Church cannot carry out any fruitful mission to the modern world if her lay members share within her what so many share outside her – the consciousness of being disinherited.<sup>287</sup> It is not enough for the Church to claim to give life and to favour lay initiative, nor even to be able to produce show-piece laity, which has never been difficult. The demand is for something both larger and deeper. As Paul Claudel says: 'The proof of bread is that it nourishes, the proof of wine is that it inebriates; the proof of truth is life; and the proof of life is that it makes one live.'<sup>288</sup>

<sup>281</sup> cf. K. Rahner, *Das Dynamische in der Kirche* (Freiburg, 1958), pp. 38-73.

<sup>282</sup> C. Liliane, 'Une étape en ecclésiologie', *Irénikon*, Vol. XIX (1946), p. 134.

<sup>283</sup> cf. K. Rahner and J. Ratzinger, *The Episcopate and the Primacy* (Eng. tr., (1962); H. Küng, *Strukturen der Kirche*, pp. 206-308.

<sup>284</sup> cf. H. Küng, *Strukturen der Kirche*, pp. 75-104.

<sup>285</sup> cf. Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, pp. xxv-xxvi.

<sup>286</sup> cf. Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Eglise*, p. 280.

<sup>287</sup> cf. A.G. Hebert, *The Form of the Church* (London, 1944), p. 68; W. Nutting, 'The Church's Proletariat', *Orate Fratres*, Vol. XXIII (1948-9), p. 70.

<sup>288</sup> Paul Claudel, *Positions et Propositions*, Vol. II, p. 136; qtd H. de Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*.

## FIVE POEMS

By J. AQUILINA

## ON A DISTINGUISHED DIPLOMAT

Here lies the skull not of Yorick but of a faithful man of rank  
Who served the government of the day with exemplary loyalty,  
Won confidences, distinctions, garters and medals galore,  
From the highest authorities of the land and even from Royalty.  
He was what one would call a very successful man of career.  
To prosper so much he had to be terribly shrewd,  
Cheating at the highest level for the sake of his masters;  
By training, therefore, a hypocrite, though never vulgar or rude,  
Till God had pity on him, relieved him of his monotonous duty,  
And through the Gates of Death introduced him for the first time  
To the ultimate Vision of Honesty and Beauty.  
Here ends our rhyme.

Sweet passer-by

Stop for a while;

Turn not your back on the

Buried diplomat

But

Pray God for him and for all diplomats who cheat at high level,

That His favourite Angel, St. Michael, may save them from the Devil.

6.7.1958

## THE CHASE

I chase a magnificent bird, blue-plumaged,

Red-breasted and heaven-eyed,

Swifter of nimble feet than wind, or

Romping clouds edged with

The tapestries of intricate lights.

I came all the way chasing it out of breath

With arms outstretched, camouflage of trees;

Calling it back with whistle, like a cuckoo,

But the bird flies on, to reach the wall

Of the outside garden before it grows dark,

And beyond

In time to go down,

With the setting sun:

My sunset – the sunset of the Bird of Youth.

14.1.1963

## YOUTH AND AGE

Guard them well, those pirate treasures  
That are your eyes;  
Crackless mirror of Youth's pleasures:  
Lovers' prize.

Guard them well, those garden creepers  
That are your hands:  
Intertwining avid feelers,  
Shy demands.

Guard them well, those raven tresses  
That are your hair  
Falling down like warm caresses:  
Laugh off cares!

Guard them well, those two curved petals  
That are your lips.  
Youth's own springs, like burning metals,  
Jerk your hips.

Guard your Youth, and guard it whole –  
Youth is magic.  
Stir the embers, fan the coal –  
Age is tragic.

19.3.1964

## DEATH

Death should have eyes and pity, should have ears;  
Eyes to admire the wonders of man's brains;  
And ears to catch the thrill of sweet refrains  
Which soothe the feverish brow, dispelling fears.  
Death should have hands to feel the falling tears  
Which flow from babies' eyes like silver grains;  
To feel the lightness, or the weight of chains  
Which bind our hands and feet, the thrust of spears.

But death, alas, is made of different stuff,  
Made of the nerveless stuff of which are made  
The soil we tread upon, hard flint and steel.  
Death is the Hungry Beast at large, wild, gruff,  
Pursuing Man and Time around a Wheel,  
Of which all living nature is afraid.

3.4.1964

## THE ESCAPE

"Stop now while you can! This is a long way  
From the mountain you spied in the distance.  
Do you know this is the Mansion of Despair,  
The Mansion of the Thief  
Who robs the eye of its iris  
And the Rainbow of its seven sashes,  
Whose regalia are the Seven Loots of Sin,  
The Word and the Flesh,  
The lust of the swine?"

Yes, I know – I know that God and I,  
Moving in opposite directions  
Like two thunderous winds  
Have parted company; got out of each other's way.  
I neither hear Him nor see Him in my mind's eye,  
And when I cry I doubt if my shout  
Falls into His bosom; but I know  
That He still lights the Traveller's Torch on His mountain,  
Sends urgent signals from His turrets  
To the Valley of Despair,  
But here, where evil spirits congregate  
Like shadows at sunset,  
Multiplying like the viruses of Cancer,  
I cannot yet espy the Traveller's Torch  
Lighting the wasteland and marshlands,  
Lighting the long way back,  
Because beyond the valley that holds me in thrall  
There are crags and cliffs  
Which tear the flesh of the knees.  
I must be left alone now to study the layout  
Of the Mansion of the Thief  
Who robs the eye of its iris  
And the rainbow of its seven sashes.  
Pray God send me from his *Seven Workshops*  
A ladder, hooks and spanners with a very long rope  
To help me escape:  
And of your goodness, God,  
Take me back!

23.4.1964