



CHRISTMAS 1985

NO. 67

Mount Saviour Pine City, N.Y. 14871

Chronicle



Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Pine City, N. Y.
Permit No. 5

Human Culture as a Harvest Hope

At this time of year we change from the harvest fullness of Fall to the rest and hope of Winter. What is the hope of Winter? It is a hope for continuity of life and for newness of life in Spring. It is a hope that wants to Spring. It is the past and future in a new and vibrant unity. The earth's winter rest and our winter rest and hope are not to be times of idleness. It is a time in which "the human spirit can be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal Judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense." (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: in English, *The Church in the Modern World*.)

Harvest gives "bread for the eater and seed for the sower" in the words of Scripture. It sustains our life in the present and sustains a sure hope for the future. The Fall harvest has much in common with human culture at any given time and with the cornucopia of cultures that constitute humankind. The present harvest is a source of the future harvest but they won't be identical. For people who only know harvest as an endless row of cans of peas in a Supermarket, this won't have much impact. A can of peas is a can of peas and so on *ad infinitum*. A harvest isn't like that. One bushel of apples is not

Continued on Inside

Human Culture as a Harvest Hope Continued from Front Cover

identical with another bushel. No heap of grain is just like another heap of grain. Two lambs are not alike just as two snowflakes are not alike. A little time and patience, that is to say, a little experience, is needed to be convinced of this. Two human cultures aren't the same either and they shouldn't be made so even as the world moves towards a common culture.

A portion of the harvest at Mt. Saviour comes not from the soil but from our monastic culture which provides reading by one of the brothers to those gathered for meals. "Feed my lambs and feed my sheep" did not mean just grasses and nutritious weeds. Some tapes of Fr Michael Casey, an Australian Trappist turned our attention to the question of human culture in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Our interest was intensified by Daneil Boorstin's *The Democratic Experience*, Rosemary Houghton's *The Catholic Thing*, Madeline Adriance's article *Whence the Option for the Poor* in the winter 1984-5 *Cross Currents* (which is their current issue), and by the second draft of the U.S. Bishop's Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy.

Gaudium et Spes begins with a most beautiful sentence: "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially the poor and those in any way afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ". I urge you to read the few paragraphs dealing with the culture, i.e. No. 46 and Nos. 53-62. It does not surprise us that the Bishops assembled for Vatican Council II expressed concern about Atheism in its particularly modern forms. Nor are we surprised about their concern for marriage and the family, the economic, social, and political dimension of modern life, the bonds between the family of nations, and peace. Somehow it eluded us that an urgent concern, second only to marriage and the family, was human culture. The reason for their concern is clear. Human culture is the way we live our humanity, both as we receive it and express it. Since the Incarnation and the gift of the Spirit, that is the way God in Christ lives and expresses divinity. No one human culture can express the fullness of the Godhead corporally. It is through the richness, diversity, and vitality of human cultures that the heart and mind of Christ becomes available to us. It is not the only way, but to the whole Christ belongs every race and tongue, and nation, and it is Christ who is persecuted whenever his members are despised or persecuted.

Most of us think of culture as something artificially acquired. It is what we have time for after our more important business is finished. Those of us in the States, immersed in the dominant culture of our time, don't even ask: "What else is there?". *Gaudium et Spes* considers culture to

include all the ways we are human. It includes all the factors by which we refine and unfold our manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means the ways we try to bring the world under control by knowledge and labor. It is everything we do to improve social life, whether family, national customs, or institutions. It also has to do with conserving and expressing the great spiritual experiences and desire of the whole human family, not only those living today, but of all who lived before us. Culture embraces the great harvest of human experience, wisdom, and fruitfulness up to the present and our vital thrust in hope into the future.

The Pastoral notes the changing conditions in the modern world which cause us to speak of a new human situation in this century. Our values, our relationships to one another and to nature are being affected. The world of nature and that of human values are intimately related and so the old contradictions between them are being intensified and new tensions impinge on us today. For example, cultural exchanges, which are good in themselves, tend to destroy the uniqueness of each group. Technological advances clash with wisdom traditions of a people. Growth in knowledge is so rapid and extensive no one person can effect a synthesis. As sharing becomes more widespread, so does the tendency to form elite or enclosed cultures. As the autonomy of human culture strengthened, so are the bonds which limit us to this passing world.

The Council Fathers call for the strenuous efforts needed so that all can enjoy a human and civic culture favorable to personal dignity free from discrimination. They ask that deep thought be given to what culture and science mean in terms of the human person. Even the difficulties in harmonizing culture and Christian teaching can stimulate us to a more accurate and penetrating grasp of the faith. This is the purpose and hope of the Winter rest we mentioned earlier.

"American life is a powerful solvent" wrote George Santayana. We in the States don't realize how powerful the dissolving qualities of our culture really are. Value, in European and Asian cultures, resided in something i.e. an art object, a musical composition, a tool. By reason of advertizing and marketing technology, value for us in the States came to reside in the fact that thousands of others 'valued' it. No wonder David Riesman in his book, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, could conclude ours was an "other-directed" culture. He didn't mean directed to others in love and service, but by others who determine what we value, think, and do. Or becomes aware why we are so vulnerable to manipulation by the media. We are personally programmed so that it is a psychological necessity to look outside ourselves for pre-packaged opinions,

judgments, and discernment. Our own inner apparatus has atrophied from non or little use. This is a 'window of vulnerability' far more dangerous than being No. 2 or No. 2002 in the missile race.

When I was in Japan, I remember visiting the home of a Japanese physician and his wife with some others from our Army Hospital. One of the group picked up an object from the table and asked the person next to him: "What do you think this is worth in the States?" The doctor and his wife almost fainted. It was obvious what they were thinking. "Things have only a monetary value and that value is determined in the States". It devastated them and it devastates me to this day whenever I think of it. Unfortunately it was not an isolated incident. Boorstin helped me to see it had long been an ingrained feature of US culture. What is the value for us of the life and death of Jesus in Palestine?

Boorstin has sections on **Leveling times and Places**, **Mass Producing the Moment**, and **The Thinner Life of Things** which illustrate trivializing aspects of our culture. There was a time when a concert, a sporting event, even a birthday or anniversary was a unique historical event requiring considerable planning and ingenuity. With the advent of the phonograph record, the camera, TV, and now the Video Cassette, the uniqueness which had once been the hallmark of life, disappeared.

One too was the fleeting moment thought to be unrepeatable. Formerly to recapture the past required the artistry of a painter or sculptor, an actor or a person of letters. Now, images of the past can be repeated anytime by anyone who can push a button. Experience itself has become prefabricated, packaged, and repeatable. As a result, our quest for the spontaneous and for all that beckons us from realms beyond our present limits or control, has become focused on — would you believe it, the weather! It would never occur to someone in South Boston that their interest in the weather in Puget Sound on a given Tuesday morning was being evoked by, among other factors, their capacity for mystery, for spontaneity, and for God. There isn't space to develop this here, but without our realizing it, our culture has trivialized out of existence some of the deepest longings of the human heart. The numinous, to which other cultures would have responded with awe and ecstasy, emerges in us as an itch that gets scratched by ten minutes of Good Morning America. There is a genuine concern that with regard to the goal of US culture: "When you get there, there isn't any there".

Yet at this moment in world history, there are opportunities which the people of the United States have a special ability to bring to fruition. This is even more especially true for Catholics and other Christians. The option for the poor in Brazil and the Base Communities in that country are the result of

considerable cultural interaction. Helder Camera, the Bishops, academics and others in advantaged positions in society had and still have a most crucial role in the outcome of the crises. In Brazil (and elsewhere, certainly) middle-class persons have a special function in helping poor people to develop an organic ideology, a unifying belief system that will encourage solidarity between the different social sectors. We cannot be 'one of the people' or speak for those in severely deprived situations. We can be facilitators in the process of conscientization. Provided we accept ourselves without becoming paralyzed with guilt and we are humble enough to let others make their own decisions, we can often be open to the guidance of God in a manner not possible to the desperate. We don't need to romanticize the poor, but we do need to be seeking the kingdom of God.

That something as do-able and close at hand as self-acceptance and humility might lead us out of political paralysis and to the possibility of being allies of the poor in a process of mutual education, was re-emphasized by Rosemary Haughton in **The Catholic Thing**. Ultimate bliss, the goal of all human endeavour, is not liberation from material and bodily existence, but a transfiguration with it and in it. Catholic culture should enable us to reverence the unique and particular—not to say peculiar, in the context of a vision of the whole of creation re-capitulated in Christ. The divine and human culture are united in Christ Jesus without loss to either. That is the leaven in the world. We are also the leaven. As Reverend Edward K. Braxton wrote recently: "The Church does not lose its catholicity when it respects and builds upon a culture and traditions of people; it finds and deepens it".

We have a great responsibility, as those to whom more has been given, to enter into the dynamic of enculturation. We are co-workers with God and members of one another. The harvest is great and we laborers are part of it along with the rest of humankind, the animals clean and dirty, the land, the rivers and lakes, and all else. We are to be a part of Noah's new arch or rainbow or whatever. There is a lot to be done during the rest of Winter.

In XTO
J. Martin

Newsletter

It has been a year since the last Chronicle and as we review the events of 1985, it has been a little like the Lake Wobegon Days. Things have been very ordinary in their happening and often amusing in retrospect. The main difference here is that the men don't look that good and the women aren't so strong. At least, they can't lift much.

The year began with the profession of Paul Geraghty of the Montreal Priory, an excellent workshop with Br Columba Stewart of St John's Abbey, Collegeville Minn., and our Triennial Visitation. This was conducted by Fr Alban Boulwood of St Anselm's in Washington DC, Fr John Hammond of Weston, and Fr Edward McCorkle of the Trappist Abbey in Berryville Virginia. We benefited by the week-end conference the Community at Kirkridge held here in March. Gregory Baum was their speaker. (Sister Joan Chittister will be their guest in April 86).

We were saddened by the deaths of two long time friends, Clifford Benedict and Mary Schneider. Their courage and faith are with us still. Anne Enyedy, daughter of Joseph and Catherine Hoffbauer who owned the farm our hill-top occupies, gave us a delightful evening with pictures and stories of her childhood days here. We have a photo of Melchoir Nagle, the only other owner of the property, with a herd of sheep in front of St. Peter's barn, dated 1895. Anne gave us pictures of the evolution of what is now St Gertrude's which looks as if it were beyond repair.

Helmut Reuter was clothed as a novice on June 23 under the patronage of St Gereon, one of the Theban Legion martyred near Cologne. We are happy with this new sprout from our German roots in the same diocese as Maria Laach. Br Pierre joined other Benedictine Choirmasters at their biannual convention, this year at St Scholastica College in Duluth, Minn. In July the Montreal Priory Community gathered for a month in Ireland at St Kevin's monastic 'city' of Glendalough and Fr Martin joined them there briefly. July was also enlivened by the celebration of Fr Martin's 25th anniversary of Ordination.

We also rejoice in the award *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* given to Fr Ansgar for his work in the Apostolic Delegation in Denmark. Br Luke received Honorable Mention on the Palette Award of the Elmira Art Club for his painting of St James' barn (which we reproduced as a Post Card). He won the Award in 1980. The Howell Packaging Co. are using one of his paintings,

Bookstore - Ten Best Sellers

ST ANDREW BIBLE MISSAL We are concerned lest people bury their heads into books and thus inhibit liturgical action. However there is such a need for private and small group prayer in the Christian life that is closer to the public prayer and seasons of the Liturgy that we heartily recommend this new version of an old classic. In a very fine format, the liturgical orientation of each Sunday with a brief note on each of the Scripture readings. There are also helpful Scriptural references relating to the theme of the Sunday, a practical orientation for prayer and finally a selection of literature ancient or modern on the Sunday theme. \$24.95

A CHRISTIAN PRAYER BOOK; PSALMS, POEMS, & PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH YEAR. A good modified Divine Office Book \$4.50

SEEKING GOD: THE WAY OF ST BENEDICT. Esther de Waal. People often ask us: "What can I read to learn something about Benedictines?" This is what you should read and re-read \$4.95

GRATEFULNESS, THE HEART OF PRAYER: An approach to life in fullness Br David Steindl-Rast. the title tells it all, but you should read the book to find out why and how. \$6.95



MOUNT SAVIOUR YARNS

100% pure wool from our flock

100% wool Fishermen type yarns two and three ply and Icelandic type bulky.

Send a self addressed envelope for free samples and order forms.



Mount Saviour Monastery • Pine City, New York • 14871

October Landscape, on their calander this year.

The Fall Festival was a lovely event, thanks be to God, the good weather, and all of you who helped in any way. The ewes and the rams are enjoying the late Fall and we hope there will be lambs to enjoy the early Spring. We are not quite ready for this Winter, but we are all set for last May.

Guest Reservations

We can give you better service and the Guestmaster will be better able to attend to his many duties if reservations are made by mail as far in advance as possible. Phone reservations will only be taken by the Guestmaster from 10-10:30 AM and from 5:00-5:30 PM.

All reservations are made through the Monastery Guestmaster: (607) 734-1688. The new phone number at St Gertrude's guesthouse is (607) 733-1739. Please use this number only for cancellations or to change arrival time if you are to stay there.

Fr Damasus' old chicken-coop Casa has been re-born as a heterozygous twin to the New Casa which stood cheek-by-jowl next to it for 12 years. These two cottages, the East Casa and West Casa, have twin beds, a kitchenette, and a small living room. They are available to guests on a limited basis. The priority is for families of the monks, those who come especially to visit one of the community, and people with special needs. You are welcome to request the Casas, but we can't guarantee the space since you may be displaced due to these priorities. The newest, or East Casa, is in our Non Smoking Section.

Since we close early and many guests rise for Vigils, we ask people to arrive before 8:00 PM.

MOUNT SAVIOUR MONASTERY COOK BOOK: Recently selected by a national catalogue devoted exclusively to cook books. The Third Printing is about to begin and the price is about to rise. A great book at any price. \$6.00

CLIP ART FOR FEASTS AND SEASONS: Block Prints for Sunday Cycles ABC. Helen Siegl. Anyone with a photocopier can use this and especially Parishes and schools for Liturgy programs. \$11.95

ALL GOD'S PEOPLE: Catholic Identity after the 2nd Vatican Council Archbishop Rembert Weakland osb-\$7.95

THE CAPACITY TO LOVE: Jack Dominion \$5.95

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A CONSUMER SOCIETY: The spirituality of cultural resistance. John Francis Kavanaugh \$6.95

THE PRACTICE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION Wm Barry and Wm J. Connolly \$12.80

New York State customers, please add 7 percent sales tax. Postage and packing, please add \$1.00.

MOUNT SAVIOUR SHOP
1825 Mount Saviour road
Pine City, NY 14871-9770