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Catholicism for Everyman: The Idea of Catholicism

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The authors, comparing the Aglipay period with the present, find great reason for optimism among Catholics. They several times mention the large number of archbishops and bishops, and how many of them are Filipinos. No doubt this is a certain mark of progress, but the grim figures cited from Cavanna will bid fair to stifle any intemperate cheering. In 1900 there were about 825 Filipino priests and about 7 million Catholics. Today there are somewhat less than twice the number of Filipino priests (about 1600) and almost three times as many Catholics. On the other hand, it probably would not be difficult today to swell the ranks with subjects as carelessly admitted as Aglipay.

The story of Aglipayanism is a sobering one. The Catholic Church came near to being reduced to the status of a minority sect. Aglipayanism had every advantage. It rode high on the wave of nationalism. It had strong, even violent, support from Filipino government officials. American authorities were to some extent friendly; Protestants welcomed it as a noble rejection of the Scarlet Woman. The Masons loved it. Against all these forces was the old Church labelled as foreign, captained by maligned Spanish religious. If it has survived in its present splendor, by an ironic quirk of history it is due principally to the fairness of a Supreme Court decision rendered by six Justices, three of whom were American Protestants.

RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES carries three appendices, a copious bibliography, chronological tables comparing dates in Aglipay's life with dates of national events, and finally three detailed indices, one of persons, one of places and the third of subject matter. This apparatus forms a fitting crown of scholarly perfection to a thoroughly competent job.

LEO A. CULLUM

CATHOLICISM FOR EVERYMAN

THE IDEA OF CATHOLICISM. An Introduction to the Thought and Worship of the Church. Edited by Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., and William F. Lynch, S.J. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960. 479p.

In the last few years a number of "introductions to Catholicism" have appeared in English; elsewhere in this issue one such introduction, CHRIST IN US, is reviewed in some detail. Now Meridian has given us THE IDEA OF CATHOLICISM, a book which, by all standards, deserves a place with the very best. "After all," the Preface tells us, "there can be a book on Catholicism for every man." The "serious

man of books" (it is for him that this work was intended) should find here solid fare for thought and study, excellently prepared and just as excellently presented. The names of the editors are already an assurance of quality: Father Walter Burghardt of Woodstock College, patristic scholar and managing editor of *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, and Father William F. Lynch of Georgetown University, who has within the last few years published several important works—*THE IMAGE INDUSTRIES*, *CHRIST AND APOLLO*, and a valuable study of Plato's metaphysics. What Fathers Burghardt and Lynch have tried to do is "to provide the serious student of Catholicism, . . . Catholic or non-Catholic, with those materials which will put him in basic and solid contact with the theology and prayer of the Church." For their point of focus they have chosen "the idea and reality of Christ": Christ, His Person and His Church. "This book wishes to say that these two things, Christ and the Church, *are* religion; they are not parts of it but dominate it and define it as God sees it. They either cancel out every other form or bring it to perfect fruition."

Father Lynch's "The Catholic Idea," the key essay in the volume, enlarges on this central theme. Enlarges on it, we may add, with depth and eloquence.

To many these two new things [Christ and the Church] seem, at least on the surface, only to disturb the wonder, the majesty, the purity of the soul's bond with its Maker. This new pair of terms appears suddenly out of history; they are both covered with all the reality and blood and dust of the past. Therefore they are a scandal to the mathematical intelligence of our time, whose gifts have nothing to do with the handling of blood and dust, or with a Christ who was born at an unpredictable year, or with a Church claiming to be without spot or wrinkle but covered on the outside with all the grimeful reality of the reader and the writer; they are also a scandal to every devotee of pure and unpolluted religion, that is to say, all those forms of it . . . which cannot tolerate the invasion of the glorious concept of religion by history, by men, by sacraments, by salt, fish, water, by bread and wine and priests. It is exactly this scandal that has been predicted and declared from the beginning: "What we preach is Christ crucified: to the Jews a discouragement, to the Gentiles mere folly." . . . These two historical facts are, therefore, the content, the glory, and the problem of Catholicism. . . . In Christ God and man meet and are one person, and the Church unites resolutely, scandalously, to be Christ Himself. (pp. 58-59)

We of modern man tempted, openly or subtly, to ask: Is God as great as our knowledge or our suffering? (That religion belongs to the surge of our minds, of our nerves, both today undeniably anonymous? But God is so relevant to both that His only insistence is to push the process further. God is so relevant to both our knowledge and our suffering that His only insistence is to push them beyond themselves, so that, without asking anything, they come to rest in Him. Now, then, shall He, in the very act of respecting these two things, force their majestic logic and meaning beyond themselves to Him?

We will not understand Christ, or perhaps even be interested in Him, until we begin to sense that He has been offered as the answer to that question. He does not mean something different. He does not go in a different direction, from that which we wish. He wishes to deepen the process of knowledge. The God of St. Paul has established His Son among us to do exactly this, to lead us to *total consciousness*. But for this it is necessary to drive us below and above the wisdom of our categories, our tentative shining knowledge, below every conceivable brilliance and experience, down into the depths of being itself, into a union not unobservant of observance and clear knowledge, but deeper still than these. (pp. 62-63)

This book's mission, we are told, is to show how Christ's own vocation is to be the Mediator, standing midway between the eternal life of the Trinity and that eternal life which will be given to us in

Heaven, and "giving life to all things in-between." Surely an ambitious mission, but **THE IDEA OF CATHOLICISM**—thanks to the painstaking labor that has obviously gone into its making—is probably as well-equipped as any one book can be to fulfill its vocation.

A word about the content of the volume: The *first part* of **THE IDEA OF CATHOLICISM** brings together 18 studies — by almost as many writers — in Catholic thought.

There is first a discussion of the religious problem: the meaning for man, especially man today, of God transcendent and immanent; human reason and belief; Christian morality as "responsibility in Christ," loving commitment to the following of Christ. Secondly, the central thesis is taken up: religion is Christ and His Church. The next section traces the major themes of the history of salvation through the Sacred Scriptures: these themes are shown as converging on Christ who is their focal point. A sort of triptych on the mystery of Christ follows: the Incarnation, the Mystical Body, Christ and the Christian. The great dogmas of Catholicism are then presented: the Trinity, the Church, Mary as *typus Ecclesiae*, the sacraments, the Mass and the eucharistic presence of the Lord, the papacy and the hierarchy. The first part concludes with a description of the Christian life as a journeying to man's eternal destiny—in and through Christ and the Christian community.

The *second part* (somewhat of a novelty) is an *enchiridion* of some basic texts of Catholicism: various creeds and symbols (from Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi to the creed of the Council of Trent); the complete text of the Christmas midnight Mass and the rites for all seven sacraments; selected psalms, liturgical prayers and a sampling of more familiar devotional-forms; spiritual documents, mainly excerpts from the writings of the saints; selected passages from the pronouncements of modern Popes, especially Pius XII, on the relationship of the Church to the problems of our contemporary world. These last 180-odd pages are, the editors tell us, "an attempt to form a little library of essential things."

We might single out, almost at random, a few selections: Dom Charlier's "The Word of God" (45 pages of his **CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO THE BIBLE** have been reproduced) is a noteworthy compendium of recent writing on biblical themes. Salet's meditation on the Trinity (which has long clamored for translation), Benoit's study on the Eucharist, Karl Adam and Yves de Montcheuil on the papacy and the episcopacy — all are happy choices. Yves Congar's "The Oneness of the Church" — although in one or two instances its phrasing and its emphases perhaps betray its pre-*Mystici Corporis* origin—is an illuminating analysis on the structure of the Church. The schema reproduced in this chapter is fundamental in Congar's own ecclesio-

gical thought and one is grateful it has been made available here. The editors' own contributions are among the high points of the book: surely Father Lynch's beautiful and moving chapter calls for several thoughtful readings; Father Burghardt's admirable "*Theotokos: the Mother of God*" has already won high, and well-merited, praise since its first publication in 1956. — If we may be allowed to cavil: perhaps something more recent (and something less committed to de la Taille) on the theology of the Mass could have been found.

In all, then, a valuable book, one which will probably become a standard work in its genre. One, certainly, which every library would do well to have on its shelves. There are few books around better calculated to do to death the notion that Catholicism is "a narrow servitude for the mind." We might add that an amazing amount of matter has been crammed into these pages, and as we have already said, most of it really excellent. The publishers, too, have done well by this book; printing, layout, binding, jacket — the whole volume has been handsomely turned out. May it find a welcome, then, among many, many readers: men of books and study, especially, who have so much need of hearing its intelligent and articulate witness to Christ.

C. G. AREVALO

GOVERNMENT IN CONTEXT

OF MAN AND POLITICS. By Otto Butz. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1960. viii, 296p.

This book is designed as an introduction to the principles, institutions, and practices of government. However, the author's purpose is a much broader one. "My purpose," he says, "has been not only to introduce the reader to an array of political facts but, in so doing, to stimulate him to reflect upon those facts in their most meaningful possible philosophical, historical, and analytical contexts."

After an introductory chapter defining and illustrating the meaning of politics, the book is divided into three major parts. Part One traces the ideas, ideals, and objectives that philosophically and historically underlie our twentieth-century politics. Part Two describes how these ideas, ideals, and objectives are applied in the governmental structures and political processes of the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the underdeveloped countries. A concluding chapter examines some of the key aspects of present-day