

# Integral Evangelization

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The question of how the Church is to evangelize is no new one, and a principled answer would be worth stating in any age. The fact is, however, that urgency is added to the question by what are often seen as the peculiar difficulties of presenting the faith in the current cultural climate, at any rate at the European end of the North Atlantic civilization. (1) The provincial of the English Dominicans remarked recently of my own country, in our house journal, *New Blackfriars*, “The society in which we live no longer seems to resound to the rhythms of divine grace, it has lost the religious habits of the heart and can no longer speak the language of religious tradition.” (2) It is of course true that the rolling wave of secularization in Western Europe is much more of a gentle trickle in the United States, (3) and yet these two great human solidarities have enough in common—one thinks of the various secularizing judgments handed down by the American Supreme Court since 1947 (4)—for complacency anywhere to be out of place. Perhaps the beginning of the twenty-first century is as good a time as any to look around and take stock of both the challenges and the resources the Catholic tradition can bring to them; and this is so not least because the sort of society and culture we have now may be with us in much the same form for quite some time.

Just what sort of society and culture might that of the imminent future be? It has been suggested that the condition of things we are entering could best be described as a “steady-state post-industrial society.” (5) It is true that without the charism of prophecy, futurology is no well-grounded pursuit, but we cannot help noting that the structure of matter allows for exploration and exploitation only as finite as itself. The time will come, and perhaps is closer than we think, when the limits of technology-induced change are in effect reached, such that no fresh breakthroughs of a kind liable to transform dramatically human lives at large are likely, by this route, to occur. The “unlikelihood” involved is not simply that of indefinite new advances in knowledge. It is also a question of the disinclination of contemporary consumerist societies to fund massive technological projects of uncertain benefit, projects that of their nature would dominate, if not monopolize, disposable revenue. The phrase “the Middle Ages with computers” could sum up, albeit journalistically, the consequent notion of a technologically competent stasis. If there be any truth in this, it has the advantage that, should we be able to develop the right evangelical strategies now, they would stand us in good stead for years to come.

However this be, what is certain is how in various ways the state of things in the post-industrial West bears little relation to the historic Middle Ages of Christendom. We only have to think of such peculiarly modern phenomena as, for example, the dominance of commercial image in advertising and the media exploitation of personality cult, encouraging people as these do to value themselves and others for reasons disconnected from the virtues. There is also the anomie whereby the young arrive in the state of adulthood having neither internalized obligations nor an acquired sense of living under authority—so great has been the reduction in moral force of the family, extended or nuclear, and the weakening of deference to civic tradition and the State. In the past, such deference has been open to abuse, yet this danger must be balanced against the implications of a generalized unwillingness, outside Islamic polities at least, either to die for or, in any very costly way, to live for civilization-based ideals.

These two factors alone—the dominance of marketable image and the prevailing anomie—might suffice to explain a third difference in expectation that seems a distinctive malaise of societies of our kind. This is the replacement of neighborliness by indifference or neglect as people restrict their benevolence to those with whom for the moment they consider themselves in love, and/or those of whose economic good will they stand in need—employers, landlords, and the like. Emblematic is the way common friendly courtesies are tending to vanish from public thoroughfares and public transport, as also the reduced participation in local or national politics noted as a general trend in the European democracies. The disorientation bred in many by social and geographical mobility, with their tendency to wither lasting loyalty to firm or locality, adds to a general sense of the lack of meaning and order in life. To this the response in many cases will be a search for immediate gratification and the achieving of temporary oblivion through drink, drugs, or sex.

The wounds sustained in the culture-wars of Western modernity could be summed up, then, as: the draining away of human substance (as presentation becomes all), the severance of human roots (as the self becomes unanchored), and the fracturing of human bonds (as individual aggrandizement—dignified as the quest for “fulfillment”—becomes ever more relentless). Mercifully, considerable numbers of people resist these trends, but the determination so to do is starting to look really rather heroic. Furthermore, these particular wounds make even less probable the recovery of the patient from that universal post-Fall human sickness that declares itself to us in the seven deadly sins, whose bloodlines run through every age. The disorder of the vices is even harder to deal with when entire societies, through lack of substance, roots, and bonds, lose their sense of what might be the rightful ordering of the human world.

This makes it the more pressing that we should bring to bear on common life and personal life the healing and elevating resources of divine revelation, and the wisdom its marriage with human prudence has effected in the Catholic tradition. I believe that evangelization—at all times, but with special urgency in the present conjuncture—should be carried out as “integral evangelization.” By this I understand an evangelization that addresses all the dimensions of the person-in-society that Christian wisdom can help to flourish. This will mean treating divine revelation as a resource that can correct present errors, redress current vices, and unmask the ambient ugliness, while still revering it for what in itself it is. That qualifying clause is important. Revelation is not merely a salve for our sicknesses. It is also an invitation to deification in the most wonderful epiphany of goodness, truth, and beauty that humanity can ever know. The Catholic faith is not another ideology. It cannot be reduced to an instrument for the amelioration of culture. In evangelization we must not stress cultural utility at the expense of the divine mysteries themselves. This was the temptation of Catholics involved in the early twentieth century movement *L’Action française*. As Jacques Maritain saw in the nick of time, the spiritual must have the primacy. What the Church offers above all is food for the spirit and everlasting life with God. Authentic Christianity, and therefore authentic evangelization, is not about us; it is about God. Thus, as the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in the Modern World puts it: “If anyone wishes to devote himself to the ministry of God’s word, let him use the ways and means proper to the Gospel, which differ in many respects from those obtaining in the earthly city.”<sup>6</sup> *On the other hand*, as the Irish social commentator Desmond Fennell has pointed out, “savvy”—his term for the prudent circumspection that scans the environment and takes everything into account—can further acceptance of the Gospel, and that in two ways. In his words:

When the recipients are well-disposed, it evokes gratitude towards the evangeliser for a gift received, and consequently a greater trustful openness to his message's Gospel core. When the recipients are ill-disposed, it disconcerts them by its perceptible but unwelcome truth, reduces their public standing (if they have such) as definers of the situation, and consequently lessens their ability to offer confident opposition to the Church's teaching and to build support for this.<sup>(7)</sup>

Evidently, integral evangelization is so large a topic that it can only be justified as the subject of an essay if we accept the postulate of classical German philosophy that the true is the whole. To render it more manageable, I propose to break it down into three elements: intellectual, mystical, and institutional. These are the categories in which the Anglo-German philosopher, the Baron Friedrich von Hügel (strictly, a Scoto-German, or, as he put it, "half Scotch"), identified the principal elements of the Catholic religion in the opening chapter of his great two-volume investigation, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her Friends*.<sup>(8)</sup> The classification is not simply original but issues from the doctrinal tradition. Von Hügel based it on John Henry Newman's account of the three offices of Christ and his Church—prophetic, and thus intellectual; priestly, and thus mystical; and kingly, and thus institutional.<sup>(9)</sup> Newman's version—as with everything in Newman, far from standard or manualistic—is found in the "Preface" he composed for a work of his Oxford period when he reissued it in 1877, this time as a Catholic, under the title *The Via Media of the Anglican Church*. I shall take the three elements in the order in which I have given them: first intellectual, then mystical, then institutional, and ask in turn what issues they raise and materials they offer for "integral evangelization."

## The Intellectual Element

I begin with the intellectual element not least because in the tradition of thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the seat of the vision of God, though prepared by the loving will, is found in the mind. As Newman realized in his thoughtful retrospect on the evangelicalism of his youth and early manhood, a religion of the sentiments alone is not only dangerously inadequate when squalls of feeling arise in the storms of life, but also there is the problem that it cannot do justice to the way Christianity has an all-embracing "Idea," the divine revelation with, at its center, the Incarnation of the Word. The Anglo-Catholic writer Dorothy L. Sayers wrote in 1947, "It is hopeless to offer Christianity as a vaguely idealistic aspiration of a simple and consoling kind; it is, on the contrary, a hard, tough, exacting, and complex doctrine, steeped in a drastic and uncompromising realism."<sup>(10)</sup> Consequently, it is of the first importance to evangelization that the minds of the Church's members be not only alert to contemporary culture but also well-stocked with maturely reflected and apologetically honed dogmatic truth. A Church that retains some power of moral uplift through its ceremonies and ministrations will make no evangelical headway in a high culture—and every high culture also permeates the broad culture given time—if in the meanwhile it has lost the intellectual argument.

Here the Church must set out forthrightly to recover lost ground. Unfortunately, many of the institutions that ought to be flagships, taking the lead in presenting, in the words of St. Peter, the reasons for the faith that is in us,<sup>(11)</sup> have suffered shipwreck through secularization. Where it is too late to reclaim them, we should support initiatives to replace the services they once provided, even if at first these cannot replicate the material level of the lost facilities. The Church needs to devote renewed attention to apologetics, taking advantage in the English-speaking world of the new school

of apologists flourishing in the contemporary United States. Where the information media are hostile, we can bypass their hidden or not so hidden agenda by creating alternative forums for instruction and public debate. In this perspective, might the Church do more to encourage Catholic professionals to see themselves as members of a Catholic intelligentsia with a special mission to society? That would require of them, of course, a capacity to articulate the faith, but this is one important form of achieving maturity in it. Above all, the Church must make it a priority to educate young people thoroughly and persuasively in its creed. (12)

At the service of evangelization we have the inestimable advantage of our sapiential tradition of philosophy, a tradition that derives from meditation on the Scriptures in the light of the wisdom welling up from ancient pagan springs. It was by a singular dispensation of Providence that the Hellenes managed to transmit with comparatively few distortions the voices of creation, and such crackling as there was on their receivers the witness of biblical revelation permits us to edit out. I like the idea of the American Orthodox priest Patrick Henry Reardon that the missions of the Son and the Spirit are what give us the orientation we need in philosophical discernment. The Father sent the Son in our flesh to validate yet transform the external empirical, historical order. This is the Word who for the First Letter of St. John was manifested, whom the witnesses heard, saw, and handled. (13) The Father sent the Spirit into our hearts—for Scripture the seat of understanding—to validate yet transform the internal order of knowing and certitude. This is the Spirit who, so the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians declares, is “from God that we might know the things freely given us by God”—and know them, as the same apostle’s First Letter to the Thessalonians insists, “with complete certainty” (*plêrophoria pollê*). (14) In the light of the economies of Son and Spirit, we should have a serene trust both in the reliability of the empirical order and in the powers of the human mind really to know. (15) We should not fall into the trap indicated by the Anglican cleric and wit Sydney Smith when he reported on the negative results of philosophical inquiry in the century of his birth: “Bishop Berkeley destroyed this world in one volume octavo; and nothing remained, after his time, but mind, which experienced a similar fate from the hand of Mr. Hume in 1737.” (16) We by contrast have to hand a Christian philosophy that combines trust in the order of the senses with a confidence in the powers of mind. It bears the name of Thomas Aquinas, and its capacity to serve the Gospel is not yet exhausted. In Reardon’s words: “To know the truth is to have one’s mind shaped by real form, *rei forma*, ... to have one’s mind contoured by the shape of being.” (17) Knowledge, accordingly, is a communion (*cognitio* derives from *co-* as well as *gnosco*) in which we become one with the truth. Such a philosophy can act as a scourer to flush out of us the modern pseudo-spirituality that in the name of religion would replace determinate beliefs by an experiential, expressive quest for body, mind, and self, or similar formulations. It is an antidote to that misunderstanding whereby, as has been said: “[M]odern people do not expect religion to constitute a structure of doctrine, but to furnish a kind of personal screen on which they can project sympathetic images devised by themselves.” (18)

Now the varieties of theology that have found a place in the Catholic tradition are so many attempts to explore that communion of knowledge in the highest form known to humankind. This is the covenant communion of life and understanding established with us by the gracious divine initiative through the saving revelation made in Jesus Christ. I would like to see a synthetic convergence of these theologies, a pooling of their resources in the service of the Church’s common faith. We should be working toward a greater degree of unity in Catholic theological culture, on the basis of Scripture read in Tradition, and so with appropriate attention to the Fathers and the Liturgies, the Councils and the saints, as well as the distinctive contributions of medieval and modern divines.

That is a major *desideratum* if we are to practice evangelization and catechesis on the foundation of a manifestly self-identical faith. The creed is recited in the singular, *Credo* (not *credimus*) *in unum Deum*, because it is confessed *in persona Ecclesiae*, in the “person” of the one Church. Thus all attempts to expound the creed, theology’s essential task, should give primacy to unity not plurality, though a bounded plurality of different—but not contradictory—emphases and foci is not excluded.

In a university context, we are sometimes tempted to think that eliding or bracketing the supernatural component of Catholic theology is the only way to commend it to the academy. I am unconvinced of this, and not just for the reason that in Catholic Christianity “the supernatural” is no mere building block but, rather, what supplies the architecture for the structure as a whole. Drawing attention to the richness and complexity yet coherence and quasi-unity of our theology’s conceptual treasure is likely to gain it more sincere respect, and the only kind worth ultimately having. (That, after all, is how sympathetic scholars not themselves Buddhists consider Buddhology or, though not Hindus, the achievements of Indian philosophy.) Showing how our tradition provides generous nourishment for thought is another form of *praeparatio evangelica*.

### The Mystical Element

At its highest, such thought concerns the relations the Infinite has established with the finite. This brings us to the second of von Hügel’s “elements,” the *mystical* element in evangelization. The mystical element in the Christian life concerns the heart of personal salvation—namely, sanctification and its perfection: *theosis*, “deification.” Through the mystical element in our religion we are able in evangelization to present the Church as a school of prayer. I mean “we are able” here in two senses. We are able so to present the Church both because, *objectively*, the Church in fact is such a school, and because, *subjectively*, the mystical furnishes us with the personal spiritual energy that is necessary if we are to bear witness to her so being. This mystical element can be regarded as, in an important sense, formed by the element we have just been considering—by the intellectual, by doctrine. The mind of the Church, found in the monuments of Tradition as a whole and rendered where need be magisterially, gives us the key for interpreting what St. Paul calls our “reasonable worship.”<sup>(19)</sup> In its turn, as we shall see, the mystical element is to impact on the institutional, whose ethos it prevents from becoming, among other things, rationalist or bureaucratic.

In Catholicism, the heart of the mystical is provided by the liturgy, which forms the template for prayer of all kinds and shapes the ethos of the Church as a wondrous sacral home preparing us for the life of eternity—just as our domestic home is meant to prepare us for the life of time. Through the liturgy our personal entry into the mysteries of the divine saving plan for us takes place—once for all in Holy Baptism, reiteratively in the rest of liturgical prayer with the Mass at its heart. The Second Vatican Council’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium* reminds us: “Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.” That text continues: “In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, minister of the holy of holies and of the true tabernacle.”<sup>(20)</sup> The liturgical celebration of the Lord’s “cross-over,” his Pasch, is what has given authentically Christian mystical spirituality its most enduring features. These include its sense of the transience of the world and the glory of God; the fleeting nature of fortune and the mercy of God; the inevitability of tragedy and the victory of God; and the centrality of humility and the cognate

humility of God. It is through such spirituality that the liturgy forms our imaginations—a crucial part of becoming evangelists and getting others to grasp the inwardness of Catholic Christianity. When the liturgy fails to fulfill this function we must beware, bearing in mind Newman’s prediction that where belief falters it is above all because “the imagination is against us.”(21)

The liturgy should impact on civil society through public sacral times and spaces. Hence we see the importance of feast days kept as general holidays or what the mediaeval English called “fair days”—and in countries where Catholics, or Christians more widely, form a significant proportion of the population the dominant rhetoric of multi-culturalism could well be exploited to demand civic recognition of such festivals. Hence too we note the importance of the role of pilgrimages and processions, and of church buildings conceived not merely as houses of the community but houses of God, where a rich patrimony of sacral music, art, and architecture can assist the performance of rites and devotions that are themselves condensed forms of the mystical. All of these sensuous signs enable Christian mysticism to travel across the boundary between the inner and the outer world. This is appropriate because distinctively Christian mysticism has its origin in the synthesis of inner and outer that is the Word incarnate in his mysteries: Christ’s inner consciousness filled with the treasures of divine wisdom, his outward bearing full of grace and truth.(22)

The ability of the liturgy to sustain the mystical element in the Church is crucial to the Church’s survival as an agency of evangelization. In the powerful yet soft secularizing totalitarianism of distinctively modern culture, our greatest enemy is what an English Church historian has described as the Church’s “own internal secularisation,” which, when it occurs, does so through the “voluntary and largely unconscious” adoption of the “ideas and practices” of seemingly “benign adversaries.”(23) The ability of the liturgy to generate Christian mysticism is our most powerful antidote to what Edward Norman calls “the insistence of church leaders themselves on representing secular enthusiasm for humanity as core Christianity.”(24) Though this statement is made chiefly in regard to Anglicanism, it would be foolish to underestimate the extent to which it can apply to Catholicism also—and with it the prospect of an increasing evacuation of internal substance. A Church that travels this road is insufficiently distinct from its environment to be the focus of passionate loyalty. Its faithful, saddened and demoralized, gradually desert it. In the end it suffers social death by its own hand. That is why the re-enchantment of the liturgy and the full restoration of its sacral character are so vital an issue for us.

The appeal to the mystical element in our religion will always have evangelical force. As von Hügel saw, and here I cite from one of his most distinguished interpreters, “Man’s continual unrest and dissatisfaction with all purely immanent realities springs from the fact that he experiences this as immanent only in relation and in contrast to something other and permanent, transcending the mere process of this world.”(25) In von Hügel’s own words, it is because human beings “have the dim, inarticulate sense of what the Abiding means that the mere slush of change is so sickening.”(26) That heartsickness is something that through the liturgy, when celebrated and experienced *sub specie aeternitatis*, evangelization can address. Von Hügel was clear that, to return to interpreter J. J. Kelly, “even the most exclusively mystical soul always requires some contact with finite, contingent spatio-temporal reality and with society since the mystical sense is evoked only on such occasions.”(27) Above all, Christians who receive in Holy Baptism a call to contemplation must through a properly incarnational mysticism live simultaneously on the two levels, time and eternity, not separating these since they are “polar aspects of the same experience.”(28) This brings us inevitably to our third and final element, the institutional.

## The Institutional Element

The institutional element in the Church is concerned with polity and policy. Polity is the institutional element in the Church considered *ad intra*, in terms of the Church's own life and mission.

Institutional Christianity is impossible without Christian institutions. The fundamental Christian institutions are those that follow from the basic patterning of the Church in a sacred order or "hierarchy": the bishops, assisted by the deacons; the presbyters or ministerial priests of the second grade; the monks and other ascetics (what modern Catholicism calls "religious"); and the laity. On the health of this entire hierarchia, and not on that of any one order within it, turns the health of the whole Church. No expansion of the apostolic activity of the laity can compensate in a local church for the disappearance of the consecrated life, nor is it any consolation, if membership of the priesthood is hemorrhaging, to be told that vocations to the episcopate are never lacking.

Each of these orders, or primary institutions, has, corporately or in collaboration, responsibility for other—we can call them "secondary"—institutions. Such secondary institutions range from episcopal Conferences and parishes through schools, health-care institutions, and societies and movements of numerous specialized kinds, to the Christian household or, where there is the generation and nurture of new human beings, the Catholic family. From a sociological standpoint, the Catholic family is also an institution, and a crucial one for a Church that grows by birth and infant Baptism as well as by conversion and adult initiation. The family has been a tremendously diverse institution in human history, and what it stands for depends on the values it proposes to transmit. In our case that will mean of course the plenary Gospel.

There can be no fully efficacious evangelization unless the ethos of this institutional life draws people, because this varied common life, the life of the household of faith, is until the Lord's Parousia all we have to show when we say to inquirers, echoing the words of Jesus to the earliest candidates for discipleship, "Come and see."<sup>(29)</sup> The institutional life of the Church will not assist but rather hamper evangelization unless it has at all levels a corporate spiritual atmosphere that is detectable—or at any rate offers a modicum of sympathy. This is so not only in a presbytery but at an administrator's desk or in a scholar's study, or with the family gathered round the dining table. Some contemporary Eastern Orthodox theologians like to call this common institutional life and action of the Church "the liturgy after the liturgy." This formula makes the important point that every expression of the Church as polity should be treated as a continuation of the liturgy, of the Church's appropriation of her life received from the Trinity, in Christ, through the nuptial mystery of the Cross. The range of attitudes, of postures of mind and heart, that the liturgy calls forth from us ought to be perpetuated to the degree possible and in the manner pertinent throughout the day. Our religion is concerned with worship, service, and right personal conduct. For us, efficiency only ever means spiritual efficacy.

By "policy" I understand the institutional element in the Church considered *ad extra*—as facing out to the wider civil commonwealth beyond and encompassing the ecclesial society. This distinction between *ad intra* and *ad extra* is a necessary one, even if we were in the (hypothetically possible) position of living in a society all of whose members are Catholic Christians. Even then the forms of civil society, as well as the State itself, would continue to have their own rationale and thus legitimate autonomy. (So it was with the *regnum*, as distinct from *sacerdotium*, of the Middle Ages). This is the more obvious if, as is in modern conditions a good deal likelier, Catholic Christians are in the position of a minority in civil society or, indeed, the position of a *mere* majority—the word "mere"

indicating an important principle democracy is tempted to truncate. In speaking to civil society, or the State, the Church uses what some would call its “secular voice.” Personally, to avoid the ever-ambiguous language of secularity, I prefer to call this the tone in which, tutored by the saving revelation, the Church expresses in accents not heard since before the Fall the voice of creation.

The modern democratic State is ambivalent about the Church, no matter what the political color of the government in power. That State has emerged from the more modest—if sometimes in limited respects authoritarian—constitutional State of the world before the First World War and the succeeding Depression. Its characteristics are to encourage the equality and self-determination of individuals while setting no limits to the magnification of its own ruling power. In order to achieve the former goals, the latter is indispensable as means. Huge areas of social exchange are to become subject to State regulation if the currently approved practices and attitudes are to reign. Implied is the dissolution of any traditional authority—whether of clergy, parents, or local communities—that might impede the State’s work of emancipating individuals along these lines. Such emancipation takes the form of inculcating, where once the norms of Christian morality held sway, new rules more appropriate to the citizen as free consumer of commodities, not excluding sex. Increasingly this is a neo-pagan confessional-secular State with as its quasi-religion the “politically correct” moralism of the day.

In such a context, what might the institutional element in evangelization mean? Evangelization of the State power means its confrontation with the abiding objectivity of the natural moral law, itself an expression of the divine Wisdom and the measure of all positive law on earth. Human beings govern—whether as law-makers or legislators, law-enforcers or rulers, or law-adjudicators or judges—only by participation in a higher law, by sharing in the care of divine providence for the common good, as by reference to moral truth people build characters that can fit them for life everlasting. No State is excused from the worship of God and obedience to a moral law both integral to that worship and the only stable foundation for human rights.<sup>(30)</sup> Woe to that State that accepts the seduction of the serpent in the garden, “Ye shall be as gods,” and seeks to establish the “natural measures of good and evil.”<sup>(31)</sup>

The State’s recognition of a higher norm—something implied in different ways in the founding documents of the American Republic and in the coronation ritual of English monarchs—prepares the way for an acknowledgement of Christian revelation, of which the coronation ceremony indeed is a quasi-sacramental expression. This brings us to the distinctively Christian aspect in the evangelization of civil society.

What is specifically Christian in our message to the wider civil society is the message of theocentric humanism. The religion of the Incarnation, just because it is *so* theocentric, being lived for the Father’s glory, also knows the price God has placed on man. The divine prizing of humanity for which the Son died and the Spirit was poured out is the sign of God’s faithfulness to his original creative intent: Human beings are made in his image and likeness. There is then a real evangelical significance in the interventions the Church makes on behalf of the image of God in man, so often obscured and even despoiled. The Church cannot remain silent if legislators become libertarians, underwriting a radical individualism rooted in almost unrestricted optionality. Such libertarianism has little in common with the political Liberalism of earlier generations, which was founded on a common moral consensus. Here the litmus test must be the issue of abortion, since unless life, once created, survives it can inherit no other right. Here the natural law inscribed in the human

conscience finds transfigured expression by the light of the Crucifixion, in the Catholic defense of the weakest, the most vulnerable: the unborn. Pro-life activity is also Gospelling.

Policy must be directed evangelically to public officers but also to the world of work, the proper domain of the Catholic laity. We know that the lay vocation has what the Second Vatican Council calls an *indoles saecularis*,<sup>(32)</sup> an *indoles* or “innate character” that is *saecularis*, which has nothing to do with the English “secularism” or even “secularity” but simply means “of its time.” The home of the lay vocation is in the world of this age, the creation groaning with travail until now—unlike the priesthood and monastic life, which of their very nature look primarily to the eternal, to the abiding age to come. *Gaudium et Spes* invites the laity to “impress the divine law on the affairs of the earthly city”—in other words, to evangelize culture.<sup>(33)</sup> Sayers placed at the heart of the lay vocation in this context the issue of worthwhile work. “All good and creative handling of the material universe is holy and beautiful,” she wrote.<sup>(34)</sup> That notion of a holy tradition of working was at the centre of the social philosophy of various English Dominicans, including their Tertiaries, now called “Lay Dominicans,” in the first half of the twentieth century. It is a weightier and more central issue for the evangelization of culture than at first it seems. In retrospect, we can better discern the nature of the intervention these writers were making on behalf of a society expressive of the Gospel. They were not against technology as such—labor-saving devices of various kinds—even though the threat to traditions of craftsmanship worried them. Their protest was against what the American legal philosopher Russell Hittinger has called “the machine insofar as it promises an activity superior to the human act.”<sup>(35)</sup> The ensemble of technologies with which we live generates cultural habits that are or can be profoundly inimical to the Gospel and indeed to the humanity called to perfection in the natural as well as supernatural orders. When sufficiently sophisticated, serving an alliance of commerce and the managerial class, tools become not simple human instruments but—what they should never be—the measure of the human world. Thus, for example, the invention of the contraceptive pill has had profound effects on the heterosexual family, while the invention of in vitro technologies is making possible the homosexual family now arriving. Savvy in discerning the effects of such developments, and finding ways of enhancing the ability to counter them, if only in the mode of oracular warning used by the Hebrew prophets, belongs with integral evangelization as well.

Society benefits from civil recognition of the public significance of the Church. A Church does not need to be formally established as law, but a society moves the more toward illumination the better it can see in the Church’s values something of the identity and tradition it itself wishes to enjoy and transmit. In England we have a decayed Christian State that has surrendered its concern with the spiritual nurture of citizens. Failing to find any alternative body of principles, the resultant void is an evangelical problem. It is also, however, an evangelical opportunity.

## Conclusion

It might not unreasonably be thought a fatal weakness of this essay to have attempted so much, albeit organized by reference to a skeleton scheme, indebted to von Hügel, which, I hope, has saved my jellyfish from being totally invertebrate. My contention, however, is precisely that only a coordinated advance on a whole host of issues simultaneously really meets the need of the hour. One of the problems of the modern era is the way the various constitutive elements of culture do not fit into any meaningful totality. The sovereign territories of each field of endeavor do not converge on any horizon of meaning. Evangelization means offering a spiritual symbiosis of the sort

that alone can enable a community to survive as an organic unity. Such a symbiosis is only possible—this is the message of sacred Scripture if anything is—when a community submits to a transcendent *telos*, an overarching goal or end received, and received gladly, from beyond itself.(36)

The demands of evangelization are, then, not only analysis of what may be comprised in the intellectual, mystical, and institutional elements of revelation as carried in the Church's tradition. They also extend to the synthesis of what we have found by analysis, and its projection as a comprehensive vision of the faith as culture-creating as well as soul care. The Kingdom of God is, certainly, a destiny for persons, but not persons as atomically considered. It is a destiny for persons as inhabiting an entire ecology of salvation.

Evangelization so conceived also requires, like evangelization in any form, the gift of hope. At the present time, global business is said to be suffering from a mood of “irrational pessimism” of which the most obvious symptom is the mesmeric hold on managers of “risk aversion.” Of course some industries have been hit by real problems: information technology and airlines spring to mind. The problem runs deeper, however, in that risk aversion can become a permanent mind-set and mode of operation almost independent of what takes place in the world. In some places, even in this land of opportunity, an unwillingness to take chances has become factored into the everyday course of doing business. The issue of corporate reputation becomes dominant. Procedures for self-regulation take up increasing time and energy. Many initiatives are never undertaken since a possible negative outcome is so feared. Far more energy is devoted to retaining existing customers than to creating new markets with bold new products. Business, like the wider society, overreacts to developments such as terrorism that pose no huge threat to the great majority of people. It reacts to the world in a jittery, anxious fashion. Economic analysts have identified a new phenomenon: the ability to “talk oneself into a recession.”

I do not think that anyone even moderately familiar with states of mind in the Catholic Church in Western Europe and North America will find it too difficult to draw an instructive parallel. The newly-appointed bishop of my own diocese has called a consultation of clergy and people “Forward and Outward.” This is due of course to his evident belief that left to themselves their motto will be “Backward and Inward.” As we have seen, backward and inward, in a non-pejorative sense of those words, have a real place among us. Without continual reference to the apostolic Tradition as displayed and deployed in the different generations of the Church's life, her intellectual, liturgical, and institutional life will be shallow indeed. Retrospection in the Holy Spirit is a necessity for us. We of all people cannot be what W. B. Yeats called “unremembering hearts and heads,”(37) and we must be on guard against the attempt by pundits to deconstruct the moral authority of a Christian past now judged wanting by often crude and ill-informed argumentation soaked in secular moralism. Likewise, without the personal interior appropriation of that tradition in a way that ultimately has to be called mystical—without, namely, personal mystagogical catechesis by the divine Master—none of the rest is worth anything for us. Inwardness by the Holy Spirit is a necessity for us. Without the motion of forward and outward, however, without the missionary extension of the Church and the spread of her salvifically civilizing influence, we have simply not heard—or worse, if heard then not obeyed—the Great Command with which St. Matthew, the most ecclesial of all Gospels, ends.(38) That command is the ending with which we, as disciples, must over and again begin. •

## Notes

1. R. Rémond, *Religion et société en Europe: la sécularisation aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris, 2001).
2. A. White, OP, "Between Exile and Redemption: A View of the Catholic Church in England," *New Blackfriars* 85, no. 995 (2004): 5.
3. A lapse of twenty years is hardly sufficient to explain the contrast between, on the one hand, C. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2000), and E. Norman, *Secularisation* (London: Continuum, 2002); and on the other, R. J. Neuhaus, ed., *Unsecular America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986). For the problems of the principal Catholic (demographic) donor-nation to the Church in the United States, see D. Vincent Twomey, SVD, *The End of Irish Catholicism?* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2003).
4. R. Hittinger, *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2002), 163-182.
5. I owe this phrase and idea to the privately-based Cambridge analyst, William Hutton (conversation of February 18, 2004).
6. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965), no. 76.
7. D. Fennell, *Savvy and the Preaching of the Gospel: A Response to Vincent Twomey's 'The End of Irish Catholicism'* (Dublin: Veritas, 2003), 4.
8. F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and her Friends*, 2nd ed. (1908; London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923), 50-82. For the writing of this work, see J. J. Kelly, *Baron Friedrich von Hügel's Philosophy of Religion* (Leuven: University Press, 1983), 73-100.
9. I leave aside the question of the influence of William James' 1897 essay, "Reflex Action and Theism," on the concrete way von Hügel applied his tripartite scheme to the genetic development of the individual who, beginning from sense impressions, moves through reflection to the discharge of the will in action. This is not pertinent to my concern here with the *corporate* Church as the bearer of evangelization.
10. D. L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos?* (London: Methuen, 1947), 28.
11. Cf. 1 Peter 3:15.
12. White, "Between Exile and Redemption," 14.
13. 1 John 1:1-3.
14. 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:5.
15. P. H. Reardon, "Communion and Division: The Structure of Knowledge," *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity* 16, no. 6 (2003): 85-92, *passim*.

16. S. Smith, *Elementary Sketches of Moral Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1850), 6.
17. Reardon, 90.
18. Norman, 21.
19. Romans 12:1.
20. Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963), nos. 7-8.
21. C. S. Dessain et al., ed., *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 30 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 102.
22. Cf. Colossians 2:3; John 1:14.
23. Norman, ix.
24. Ibid.
25. Kelly, 166.
26. Baron Friedrich von Hügel, *Selected Letters, 1896-1924*, ed. B. Holland (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1927), 364.
27. Kelly, 172.
28. Ibid.
29. John 1:39.
30. In the words of Orestes Brownson, the natural law “is not a law founded or prescribed by nature, but the law for the moral government of nature, under which all moral natures are placed by the Author of nature as supreme law-giver. The law of nature is God’s law; and whatever rights it finds or are held from it are his rights, and ours only because they are his” (cited in Hittinger, xxv).
31. Ibid., 55.
32. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 1964), no. 31.
33. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 43.
34. Sayers, 35.
35. Hittinger, 264. Hittinger explains his indebtedness to the cultural historian Christopher Dawson, who in various of his writings declared the post-Liberal “planned society” had as its distinctive feature the aim of reproducing culture by technology.

36. L. Dupré, *Metaphysics and Culture* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1994), 15.

37. W. B. Yeats, *Under Ben Bulbin*, st. V.

38. Matthew 28:18-20.

\*Biographical information is true at time of publication.