THE STORY OF A BETRAYAL

'It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.' (St.Luke 17.2).

DESTROYING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THIS COUNTRY

If, for some reason you wanted to destroy the Church here, or even to change it, how would you go about it? Wouldn't infiltration be much better than hammering from outside? And wouldn't you target the children and youngsters, the future adult Church members? We know the Marxist State, in power behind the Iron Curtain for so many years, wanted to destroy the Church. So they aimed especially at the school children. They made them walk over crucifixes at the School entrance, gave them bread when they asked Stalin for it and left them hungry when they prayed to God. But even those efforts were not as successful in destroying the Faith as the False Catechesis given in many Catholic Schools in the West for the last twenty-five years. We have seen children who attended Catholic Schools, even when they come from good homes, leave the Church in droves, or lead a partially Catholic life hampered by an abysmal ignorance of the Church's teaching.

Teaching which is only partly true leads to an encouragement of dissent, a serious basic misunderstanding of the divine status and authority of the Catholic Church and a false concept of conscience. The damage is so extensive that the official report of the 1990 summer school on Catholic education in Southwark Archdiocese, stated on page 11 of *Together in Mission*: 'People have become selective about the Creed and have adopted partial identification.'! When the sad decline in Mass attendance and the widespread but quietly ignored rejection of 'Humanae Vitae' are jointly considered, we are entitled to ask why it has all happened, why are so many parents desperate at the Catholic state of their children and gradually losing confidence in the willingness of their bishops and priests to get to the roots of the problems. Why do they feel they have been betrayed? There is, of course, no one single root but there is one which is common to all the causes of our decline - namely the lack of real Catholic affirmation in Catholic schools. The part played by the type of catechesis now provided is the subject of a detailed study, *Catechisms and Controversies: R.E. in the Post-Conciliar Years* by Msgr.Michael J. Wrenn. It is a study every Catholic should read. In it the author explains how the tragic situation has come about. He is American and devotes some space to the American scene, but his main thesis is a well supported account of the rise of the totally false catechesis now taught to most Catholic children throughout the world.

BRAINWASHING SESSIONS

Msgr.Wrenn documents the crucial 'Study Weeks' held in many different parts of the world, and attended by catechists from every country, all through the nineteen- sixties. He has carefully researched and analysed the papers read at these meetings, and shows how, beginning with the discrediting of pre-Vatican II catechesis (although it stood the Church in good stead for generations), the 'experts' went on to substitute a liberal social justice for Catholic doctrine. Once they had established to their satisfaction, that 'one cannot teach religion in the sense of inculcating any kind of Catholic ready-answers' true catechesis seemed impossible.

This was the message with which catechists returned to their own countries and the door was opened for the 'doctrine-less, non-cognitive experiential kind of catechesis' which has been the norm ever since. Basically, we have seen a shift from God to man and to a concentration on human concerns which is incompatible with transmitting the revealed Faith. In our own country the dreadful effects of Corpus Christi College, which Cardinal Heenan ultimately had to close, are still being felt. .They were compounded when official institutions like Upholland Northern Institute invited dissenting theologian, Fr Charles Curran, to take part in summer schools. (It will be recalled that he later had his credentials as a Catholic theologian withdrawn by the Vatican).

HOW THE TEACHING WAS CHANGED

Catechisms and Controversies explores the notorious Dutch Catechism (1966) and demonstrates how its erroneous teachings have influenced religious schemes all over the world, in spite of Pope Paul VI's efforts to correct it with his *Credo of the People of God* (1968) - the latter having been largely ignored. The author shows, with examples, how cleverly some Catechists use Catholic terms to give non-Catholic teaching, and how they sometimes state a doctrine correctly but then immediately qualify it, thus making it meaningless.

Very fairly Msgr.Wrenn explains that the Religious Educational Establishment has been left free to wreak this havoc because this is the 'age of the expert,' so bishops and priests disclaim competence when faced with a professional. Likewise, hosts of well-meaning Catholic teachers have been misled into believing this is the right way to teach the Faith. If they read it, Msgr.Wrenn's book will enlighten them all and show bishops, priests and teachers the only role they can honourably take in future.
This leaflet is not written to attack teachers, or anyone else, but simply to suggest a remedy which will help staunch the haemorrhage of young people leaving the Church at present. Surely every Catholic will want to investigate any suggested remedy for this potentially fatal situation.

We must work and pray for an end to the inaccurate catechesis which now permeates R.E. in Catholic schools, - for example, in not stating unequivocally the Divinity of Our Blessed Lord or the status and authority of the Catholic Church. Such inaccuarte catechesis must be replaced by schemes, resources, syllabuses, and programmes all completely in harmony in content and method with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* the *General Catechetical Directory, 'Catechesi Tradenae',* the *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* and, of course, the aforementioned *Credo of the People of God* (1968).

FALSE PROPAGANDA THAT MUST BE CHALLENGED

1. *'We don't want to go back to the bad old days of the Penny Catechism'.* Why not? Perhaps religious instruction wasn't always as good as it should be, but Catholic school-leavers, on the whole, did stay in the Church and they did know Her basic teachings. Religious Houses and Seminaries were full and marriage vows were kept. Judging by the results, pre-Vatican II religious instruction was vastly better than modern catechetics.

2. *'Little children won't understand complex doctrines like The Blessed Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, Sanctifying Grace, etc. so don't teach them'.* No human being understands the great Mysteries of our Faith but they still need to know about them, and they need this knowledge as soon as possible. The *General Catechetical Directory* from Rome (1972) tells us to give the youngest children 'a simple presentation of the entire structure of the Christian message'.(n.38) We should obey Rome. Religious instruction given in Catholic schools should service Faith received at Baptism which is 'a supernatural gift of God, which enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed' (Question 9, *Catechism of Christian Doctrine,* approved by the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales and directed to be used in all their dioceses. Revised edition 1985).

3. *'Revelation is God speaking to each of us in our hearts'.* This is in most R.E. schemes produced in this country, and although of course it can happen from time to time, it is not the only or even the normal way to learn the Faith. When God became Man, He deliberately instituted a Church to pass on His teachings to each succeeding generation. This, then is how He wants us to learn: from our elders, who were taught by their elders, who were taught by their elders, and so on back for generations.
This Revelation is of prime importance and superior to experience which may be, and often is, both restricted and restricting. The Second Vatican Council confirms that Revelation is a definitive once-for-all affair and that 'no new public revelation is to be expected'. (Dei Verbum n.4).

4. *'It's what is in the heart that matters not what is in the head'.* No. There should be no dichotomy here. We are made in God's image with both intelligence and freewill, and we must use both if we are to reach Heaven. Concentrating only on the 'heart' is as fatal as concentrating only on the 'head' would be.

5. *'Religion should not be taught in school but in the home or in the parish'.* Why pay for Catholic schools then? Home and parish each have an important part to play, but school is the only place where the children will get daily, well-structured lessons on doctrine, aimed at their age group and given by trained professionals. Not many Parents would not like their children to be prepared for mathematics examinations by a well-meaning amateur who can teach them only once a week and then in a mixed-age group. Why treat religion as if it were less important?

6. *'It's all different since Vatican II'.* Rubbish. The second Vatican Council was entirely Pastoral. No doctrine was, or could be, altered or contradicted. The Truth remains exactly what it always was and what it always will be. Each Church Council has affirmed the Truths of our Faith.

7. *'It is uncharitable to criticise Religious Schemes that people have worked so hard on'.* On the contrary it is extremely charitable to make sure our children are not deprived of the Truth. But avoid judging those who write or promote these schemes, as they may not have been taught the faith well themselves. Just point out the fact that false schemes undermine the children's faith.

8. *'We can learn from other religions'.* This is not so, though we can learn from the good example of individuals belonging to other religions. Man-made religions or the Church-like Communities which sprang up after the Reformation can, and often do possess part of the Truth, but the whole truth is to be found only in the Catholic Church. Others cannot offer us anything that Almighty God 'forgot' to give His Church. Jesus told us He is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

ROME TO THE RESCUE

Alarmed by the appalling results of the modern catechesis which is so fashionable, the 1985 Synod of Bishops commissioned a new and orthodox Catechism on which all Religious Teaching Schemes should be based. But this Catechism is in danger. Msgr.Wrenn solemnly warns us that the *Catechism for the Universal Church* being prepared in Rome and promised for March 1992 will be sabotaged by these 'dissident Catholics', who, in his opinion, are in 'open revolt against the Church', unless we are very firm, and united its defence. The Catechism will deal traditionally with The Apostles Creed, The Sacraments, The Ten Commandments and The Our Father. It will set down simply and faithfully 'the Catholic Faith that comes to us from the Apostles'. This is what our children are entitled to hear, and this is what we must ensure they are taught. We should insist all unsound books, at present in our schools, are discarded, and replaced by 'Catholic in content' books based on this Vatican approved Catechism. This must be done as soon as possible, by September 1992 if possible, and it must be done by people who have not been involved in compiling false material.

Futhermore, we must ensure our Bishops suspend any new religious scheme until it can be checked against this new Catechism. It would be extremely unwise if Catholic Schools spent their whole religious financial allowance on an expensive scheme which has to be withdrawn almost immediately because it is not true to the teachings of the Church as set out in our new Catechism. Money is limited and it would be very unfortunate for the children if there was none left for a sound scheme which is 'Catholic in content'. Find out what is happening at the school in your parish or where you are a parent, teacher or governor. Take copies of this leaflet round to the school so you can be sure everybody understands how serious the situation is. If you think this is going too far, remember that concerned Catholics have been remonstrating politely about this important issue for over twenty-five years - and during this time the situation has grown steadily worse.

As quietly expressed concern obviously does nothing to protect our children from false catechesis, we must now speak plainly and take more drastic action. Rest assured, if we do nothing then inevitably this Catechism will be put on one side as previous Vatican Documents have been, and a God-given opportunity to rescue the Church in this country will have been lost. Remember - forewarned is forearmed!

ACTION WE MUST ALL TAKE

We cannot leave it to bishops, priests and teachers. This is too important to be left to 'the experts'. Every one who has the privilege of belonging to the true Church has a duty to defend the Truth and ensure it is handed on intact and entire to the next generation. So don't stay quiet. Make appointments with your bishop, parish priest, and teachers. Write to those further afield including Rome, and to the newspapers - Catholic and secular. Ask to see the R.E. schemes that are being used, check them with Pope Paul VI's *'Credo of the People of God'* - and question every divergence from that. Insist that books which don't conform to Catholic teaching are banned from the diocese/parish/school, and make sure this also includes books that omit doctrine. This is our duty and our responsibility. Take a group of friends with you if you can, and don't worry if you make yourselves unpopular. You will be doing the Lord's work - and He never shrank from unpopularity.

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