

# Foreword

Having decided to mark Herbert McCabe's seventieth birthday, the editor had to think of some way of excluding the many friends and colleagues who would have been delighted to contribute to this festal number, but for whose tribute such a small magazine as this could not make room.

A baker's dozen were gathered in *Language, Meaning and God*, edited by Brian Davies OP (Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), to celebrate Herbert's sixtieth anniversary, a year late. We could appear in time for the occasion, but we could not accommodate so many. With the freedom enjoyed by the editor of a small magazine, then, we have, somewhat arbitrarily and riskily, limited this issue to work by current and former editors, including poetry and book reviews editors (and not even all of these), leaving it up to them to decide what to write. We thus have a criterion of a kind for this choice of gifts. To our not unprejudiced eye, the resulting collection touches in a modest way on at least a handful of matters that have concerned Herbert over the years.

Herbert edited the journal from 1964 until 1979, with a three-year interruption of considerable theological interest. Allan White traces the history of the journal from its foundation, with its ups and downs, including the 'McCabe affair'. John Orme Mills looks forward, speculating about the likely role of small magazines in the changing world of communications technology.

Brian Davies, Richard Finn, and Fergus Kerr offer essays on theological topics that have fascinated Herbert for many years: the unknowableness of God, virtue ethics, and resistance to Cartesianism, respectively, each connected with his dedication to understanding and expounding central themes in the theology of Thomas Aquinas.

James McGonigal contributes a Dominican Triptych, prompted by the lives of three Dominican saints: Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and Hyacinth. Terry Eagleton remembers Herbert as 'the first semiotic theologian in this country', among other things. And Jacinta O'Driscoll gives us a photograph that she took very recently of the septuagenarian, looking a good deal less than his years.

*Ad multos annos!*

F.K.