

FAITHFUL AND LAITY IN THE CHURCH: The Bases of their Legal Status, by Alvaro del Portillo. *Ecclesia Press*, Shannon, Ireland, 1973. 200 pp. £1.50.

For a variety of reasons the existing canon law (based on the *Codex* of 1917) gives inadequate expression to the central affirmation that all the baptized faithful together constitute the visible Church and it distorts the nature of the apostolate of the laity, an apostolate exercised alongside that of religious and clerics. The present study is an attempt to remedy these defects. The proposals are important but much can be learned from the very method employed; we are offered the rare convergence of a sound legal technique and an informing theology alive to both Scripture and tradition. Canon law can thus appear for what it is—applied ecclesiology.

The present inadequacies seem to be due partly to historical circumstances and partly to the cramping effects of etymology on the expressions *laici*, the laity, and *christifideles*, the faithful, (dictionary addicts are, however, likely to be less startled than most to read the commonplace '*idiotam autem dicit laicum*'). The Church tended to gravitate towards becoming a clerical preserve and, worse still, the pursuit of Christian perfection ceased to be the norm for all the faithful and risked becoming the exclusive domain of a few. Vatican II dramatically changed all this and its documents provide the main impetus for the ongoing reforms; the extent of the changes required can be seen simply by comparing, say, Canon 682 with *Lumen Gentium*, 37.

A new start can be made from the fact that baptism gives to the faithful a common, basic status as members of the Church and assigns to all of them without exception the task of personal sanctification and an apostolate. It is this fundamental equality and solidarity that makes possible a functional diversity and a hierarchy. In Augustinian terms there is one *nomen gratiae* common to all the baptized and another *nomen officii*, with its traditional tripartite division of lay, religious and clerical. The canonist's work is to implement the doctrine that baptism is not a private, individualistic event but the entry into brotherhood and the undertaking of a mission.

There are excellent proposals to safeguard the subjective rights each Christian possesses; personal dignity, freedom, equality and so on. Abuses do occur and to argue against taking protective measures on the ground that canon law has 'peculiar characteristics' is spurious and harmful. Throughout, the relation of person to community (ecclesial and otherwise) is handled with a sensitivity one does not often credit lawyers with, and the merits of Chapter III stand out even in this generally good book. It is there that the rights a fundamental legal constitution might embody are examined and the exposition deserves serious consideration whether or not one accepts the need for a constitution as such. The sections on 'Education' are the ones least likely to connect with British experience (itself a warning against legislating too rigidly) but the remarks on the administration of dioceses and parishes do have an immediate relevance to local conditions; a parish 'is not a territory, but a community and a community which is part of the People of God. That is to say, a parish is not a community of lay people over which and above which a parish priest exercises the function of caring for souls, but a community made up of members of the faithful—lay and clerical—each of whom has his own particular mission within it' (p. 129).

The chapter on the non-baptized and canon law has the widest perspective and also a certain urgency as Vatican II has decreed that the legal status of catechumens must be clearly defined. In any case some explicit sense should be given to the belief that the Church is the *universal* sacrament of salvation. Not only has she to preach the Good News to all men but she must also safeguard as far as possible the right of non-Christians to hear that message and to associate themselves with the Church to the extent that they want.

A last thought. If any one book is going to redeem canon law in the eyes of the faithful, this is it.

ROBERT OMBRES, O.P.

'ACTIVE AND PASSIVE POTENCY' IN THOMISTIC ANGELOLOGY, by Howard P. Kalnz. *Martinus Nijhoff*, The Hague, 1972. vii and 104 pp. Guilders, 16.50.

It is not immediately clear where the author's interest in Thomistic Angelology lies. There is plenty of material in this book, that could form the basis for interesting discussion, but it is

presented in a manner that makes it hard to appreciate for anyone not already well-acquainted with the angels. This weakness could be connected with what seems to be the

genesis of the work, which apparently began as a study of the Thomistic doctrine of Potency. This first appeared as a separate article and now forms the second chapter of the book. Potency can be either passive (inasmuch as things are brought into being) or active (inasmuch as things are sources of action). The distinction leads to others, because only matter-as-such can be said to be receptive in a purely passive manner. When, therefore, we attribute potency to things (or even more to people), this receptivity is always some form of propensity. They are not only the obedient recipients of God's creative act (*potentia obedientialis*), but they also, so to speak, put themselves already on the way, through their own act of being what they are (*potentia positiva*). Things are therefore a synthesis of active and passive potency, and this relationship serves to establish this or that individual being within the whole hierarchy of creation. At the bottom are the material things, and then the living creatures according to the degree of self-movement. God is, of course, not a *primus inter pares*, because he is never the recipient, but always the giver.

Now, we cannot help noticing that in these matters Aquinas is rather interested in the angels, or in Aristotelian terminology, the Separate Substances. The problem here is that these spirits lack matter, and since matter is the principle of passive potentiality, it becomes difficult to rank them among creatures: which is precisely what Aristotle refuses to do, regarding angels as so many Unmoved Movers. Kainz believes that this, perhaps rather academic, problem is bound to throw some interesting light on Aquinas' understanding of Potentiality. Here we have a theological opinion of Thomas conflicting with the Aristotelian world-view; the principles of such a problem are discussed in the Preface. There, again making use of a previous article, the author also wonders whether it is really worth his

while: are we, moderns, even prepared to take angels seriously? He answers that, although we may be unable to see them as real entities, it is nevertheless quite possible to discover in them a real dimension of the human condition (Kainz refers, for example, to Jung).

Now, this is all very interesting and helpful, but does it take us to the central point of the Thomistic Angelology? Angels, so Thomas maintains, are involved in *everything* that happens in this world, which means that man, inasmuch as he is predetermined, is hedged in by the angelic perfection, which may be said to be frightening on account of both its nature and its all-pervasiveness. Angels turn out to be more than peculiarities; they are constitutive elements in the hierarchical structure of the universe. In other words, the whole Thomistic scheme is not Aristotelian, but Neo-Platonic, where the universe is seen as one great interwovenness of passive and active potentiality, going out from and returning to God. The 'proofs' of the existence of the angels are therefore not meant to convince the Sceptic (as Kainz implies); rather they determine the exact place of the angels on the hierarchical scale. It thus becomes more than an incidental problem to demonstrate that angels are themselves created, receptive in their potentiality. It means arguing against both Aristotle and Pseudo-Denis that there is no ceiling to creation, no splendid but impenetrable cloud that screens God off from man. That is the reason why the angels have to be dragged into the redemption, as receivers, and why they cannot be entrusted with the creation of the human soul (as Pseudo-Denis taught). Kainz should have included such considerations in his analysis, and he should certainly have remembered that Thomas lived in the time of the Lateran Council that felt compelled to speak out against a current gnosticism where angels were regarded as uncreated deities.

ROB VAN DER HART

IRVING COPI: THE THEORY OF LOGICAL TYPES. Monographs in Modern Logic Series. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, London, 1971. x + 129 pp. £1.80.

The primary aim of the series to which this little (and, for its size, outrageously expensive) book belongs appears to be to provide for students at a fairly early stage in logic a succinct survey of some restricted topic. The general project is an excellent one, and the idea of including a volume of the theory of types, a subject often scappily treated in the

textbooks, equally laudable. Unfortunately, what Professor Copi has produced is a tired little book, which fails to give the student that clear view of the subject which it should be the main point of such a volume to provide.

There are two fundamental errors of approach. First, the theory of types is presented as exclusively the property of Russell: other