

COMMENTARY

NUCLEAR WARFARE. In response to many requests we print in this issue the text of the Disputation on the Morality of Nuclear Warfare which was given at the invitation of the National Peace Council and was broadcast on the Third Programme of the B.B.C. This is in no sense intended to be a definitive statement on a subject that so gravely affects not merely our own happiness but the very future of the human race. All that is attempted is to indicate some of the principles that must be applied in order to make moral judgment possible about this, as indeed about any other human enterprise. The debate is too often darkened by appeals to political advantage at one extreme or to pity at the other. These are not indeed considerations that can be ignored; but they can distort a moral judgment, can make it partial. The need at the moment is to have a steady sense of what is true about man in society and about the power that is properly his. The debate can scarcely be resolved at a lower level than this, and we would ask that the Disputation be judged by that standard.

HOLY WEEK. The reason for the changes in the Holy Week liturgy, due to take effect from this year, is primarily a pastoral one. The intention of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, as stated in the Instruction which accompanies the Decree *Maxima redemptionis nostrae*, is that the liturgy of this week be attended by the faithful with greater ease, devotion and fruit. The fact that this intention is to be realized by a restoration of the paschal ceremonies to their 'proper' hours (*horis propriis simulque opportunis*) reveals how happily in this instance pastoral care is wedded to the desire for liturgical sincerity.

The official documents speak of the *restored* Order for Holy Week. But what is being restored is not so much a rite as a horary. Opportunity has, it is true, been taken to make certain changes in the texts and ceremonies of Holy Week. Nevertheless—apart, perhaps, from the introduction of Communion on Good Friday—all these are insignificant compared with the restoration of the offices of these days to their traditional times. This is not a return to a rite of antiquity since grown obsolete—indeed, the liturgy

for these three days has been handed down and preserved through the centuries as the Church's most precious treasure, and it remains substantially unaltered in the new *Ordo*. Rather it is a restoration of a lost dimension of meaning to that liturgy as a day-by-day and hour-by-hour sacramental re-enactment of the mysteries of our redemption. For the hours now re-adopted are an integral part of the 'sense' of the *Triduum* as it was gradually evolved in the early age of the Church.

For various reasons this liturgical sense was lost by the later Middle Ages, and the solemnities were torn out of their context to be celebrated in the morning. While the last three days of Holy Week were kept as holy-days no irrevocable pastoral harm was perhaps done. The real damage took place when, with the changed social conditions of modern times, there hardened into an unhappy tradition the sad spectacle of the paschal mysteries being celebrated by clerics in the sanctuary with only a handful of faithful in the nave. It is this comparatively recent tradition which the new *Ordo* overthrows by insisting on these mysteries being celebrated at times when the whole Christian people can attend.

The new decree, then, certainly ensures that the Holy Week liturgy can be attended by the faithful with greater ease. That they will do so with greater devotion and fruit does not follow automatically. Inevitably, for a grown-up Catholic now able to attend for the first time in his life, much will appear strange and unfamiliar. It is for this reason that the Sacred Congregation so strongly insists on the obligation of the clergy to instruct the faithful during Lent on the meaning of the liturgy. Such preparatory instruction carried out this Lent will be of inestimable value. Yet it would be wise perhaps to see it as only a beginning. Even the most zealous parish priest who conscientiously and energetically carries out this duty should not be surprised nor disheartened if the Easter Vigil does not become immediately, in one year, as popular as the Midnight Mass of Christmas with all its traditions of centuries of uninterrupted practice behind it. Such affectionate devotion can only come with time. Meanwhile it is to be hoped that all who have the care of souls will loyally—and gladly—accept the challenge issued by the new *Ordo* to co-operate over the years through that other chief pastoral function of preaching in ripening that devotion to its eagerly desired fruition.