

was taken off to Marrakech where, despite all possible attention, he died on February 18. 'I came here to make known the charity of Christ through that of his representative', he had written. In dying at his labours, and through them, his highest desire was fulfilled.

Père de Foucauld's method of apostolate is becoming increasingly better known and understood in France. The fraternity at El-Abdioldh has twenty-five postulants waiting to join, and Père Poissonnier's work at Tazert is being continued by Père Abel Fauc O.F.M. Others, too, are seeking the desert. This movement to the Sahara (will it one day rival the exodus to the desert of early Christianity?) takes, naturally, Père de Foucauld for its inspiration. In the Directory that he wrote for the Association of Prayer for the Conversion of the Heathen¹ he lays down so well the aims and method of this apostolate.

'Remembering that our Lord Jesus has said: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich; lest they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense: for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just", we shall then direct our efforts towards the conversion of those who are spiritually the poorest, the most crippled, the most blind, the infidel peoples of missionary countries; those who know not the Good News; who have no tabernacle, nor Sacrifice, nor Priest; the most abandoned souls, those who are most sick, the sheep that are indeed lost'. We can pray too that the author of these words may soon be proposed officially as a model for such work and invoked publicly in the Church. His Cause has been introduced; may its conclusion not long tarry.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

*A translation of part of St Thomas's commentary
on the Gospel of St John*

BY

A. D.

To understand this term 'word' we should note that, as Aristotle teaches, vocal sounds are signs of movements within the soul. In Scripture, of course, it is usual for things signified to be called by the names of the signs, as in 1 *Cor.* 11: 'But the rock was Christ'. But it is necessary that what is within our soul and expressed by our spoken word, should itself be called word. Whether the term 'word' belongs first to what is uttered by the voice, or to the concept within the soul, is not immediately relevant. It is none the

¹ Now the *Association Charles de Foucauld*, 5 rue Monsieur, Paris VIIe.

less clear that what exists within the mind and is expressed by the sound is prior to the word uttered by the voice, since it is its cause. If therefore we wish to know what is the word within the soul, let us see what is meant by what is uttered by the exterior vocal sound.

Now there are three things in our intellect: (1) the intellectual power itself; (2) the species¹ of the thing understood, which is the form of the intellect, related to it as the species of colour is to the pupil of the eye; and (3) the intellect's actual operation, which is understanding. But none of these is signified by the word uttered by the voice. The term 'stone', for instance, does not signify the substance of the intellect, for that is not the speaker's intention; nor does it signify the species, which is that by which the intellect understands, for this also is not intended by the speaker; nor does it signify the act of understanding, for that act does not go outside the subject but remains within. Therefore, what is properly called the interior word is that which is formed by the one who understands, in his act of understanding. But the intellect forms two things, according to its two operations. By the operation which is called the understanding of indivisible things it forms a definition; but by the operation which consists in a process of affirmation and denial it forms a judgment, or something of that sort, and therefore that which is so formed and expressed by the operation of the intellect either defining or judging, is signified by an external sound. That is why the philosopher says that the idea which a term signifies is the definition. What is so expressed, i.e., formed in the mind, is called the interior word, and is related to the intellect not as that by which the intellect understands, but as that in which it understands; because in what is so expressed and formed, the intellect sees the nature of the thing understood. So we have the meaning of the term 'word'.

From what has been said, we are able to see that a word is always something which proceeds from the intellect in the act of understanding, and secondly that a word is always an idea and likeness of a thing understood. Now if the knower and that which is understood happen to be one and the same thing, then the word is the idea and likeness of the intellect from which it proceeds. If, however, the knower and what is understood are not one and the same, then the word is not the likeness and idea of the knower, but of the thing understood; just as the concept one has of stone is the likeness only of stone. But when the intellect understands itself the word is then the likeness and idea of the intellect. And therefore Augustine, *De Trin.* Bk. IV, c. 5, places a likeness of the Trinity in the soul when the mind understands itself, but not

¹ Species is that intelligible form of a thing by which, or in and through which, the thing becomes an object of our knowledge. Scholastics distinguish between the species involved in sensitive and in intellectual knowledge. For fuller discussion see Maritain: *Petite Logique*, p. 28, and *Les Degrés du Savoir*, ch. 3, section iii.

when it understands other things. It is clearly necessary therefore to posit a word in every intellectual nature, because it pertains essentially to understanding that the intellect in the act of understanding should form something; but this thing is called a word. Therefore it is necessary to posit a word in every intelligent being.

Intellectual nature is, however, threefold: human, angelic, and divine. And therefore there is a human word, which is mentioned in *Ps.* 13: 'The fool has said in his heart, there is no God'; also an angelic word, mentioned in *Zacharias*, c. 1:9, and in many other places in Holy Scripture: 'The angel said to me', etc.; and thirdly there is a divine word, mentioned in *Gen.* 1:5: 'God said, Let there be light', etc. When, therefore, the Evangelist says: 'In the beginning was the Word', he is clearly not speaking of a human word, nor of an angelic word, because each of these words is made; for both man and angel have a cause and beginning of their being and operation. But the word of a man or angel cannot exist before they themselves come into being. With what word the Evangelist is concerned he makes clear when he says that this word is not made, since all things are made by it. It is therefore the Word of God of which John is here speaking.

It should be noted, however, that the Word differs from our human words in three respects. The first difference is, as Augustine teaches, that a human word is capable of being formed before it is actually formed: for when I wish to conceive the idea of stone I must do so by a process of reasoning, and so it is with respect to everything else understood by us, except perhaps in the case of first principles which, since they are naturally known, are known instantly without any reasoning process. So long, therefore, as the intellect proceeds discursively, it runs hither and thither; and the formation of the idea is not perfect until the intellect conceives perfectly the nature of the thing; then only does the concept have its perfect nature, then only does it have the nature of a word. Whence it is that in our soul there is thought, by which we mean the process of enquiry, and a word which is then formed in perfect contemplation of a truth. So our human word is first potential, before being actual. But the Word of God is always actual, and therefore the term thought is not properly applied to the Word of God, for as St Augustine says, *De Trin.* Bk. IV, c. 14: 'The word of God is not spoken of as a thought, lest it should be believed that there is something changeable in God'. Therefore, what Anselm says: 'To speak is, in God, nothing else than to consider thoughtfully', is inexact.

The second difference between a human word and the divine Word is that human words are imperfect, but the divine Word is altogether perfect. Because we cannot express all our concepts in a single word we need many imperfect words, by which we give separate expression to everything that is known to us. It is not so in God. Since he understands both himself and whatever else he

understands, in one act through his essence, one divine Word is expressive of everything that is in him; not only what pertains to the Father, but what pertains to creatures also. Otherwise the divine Word would be imperfect. So Augustine says: 'If there was less in the Word than is contained in the knowledge of the speaker, the Word would be imperfect, but it is clear that it is supremely perfect. Therefore it is clear that it is only one'. *Job* III, 14: 'God has spoken once'.

The third difference is that a human word is not of the same nature as ourselves, but the divine Word is of the same nature as God; and is therefore something subsisting in the divine nature. For the concept which our intellect forms of anything has only intelligible being in our soul; but the soul's act of understanding is not the same thing as its natural being, since the soul is not identical with its own operation, and therefore the word which our intellect forms is not part of the soul's essence but is accidental to it. In God, however, to understand and to be are the same; and hence the word of the divine intellect is not an accident but belongs to God's nature. It must therefore be subsistent, because whatever is in God's nature is God. Thus Damascene says that 'God is the substantial word and subsistent being. But other words, that is to say human words, are qualities of the soul'.

It follows then from the above, that word, strictly speaking, is always to be taken personally in God, since all it implies is something expressed by the knower. It follows also that the Word in God is a likeness of him from whom it proceeds; that it is coeternal with him from whom it proceeds, since it was not potentially formable before it was formed, but was always actual; that it is equal to the Father, since it is perfect and expressive of the whole being of the Father; and that it is coessential and consubstantial with the Father since it subsists in his nature. Since, also, in every nature that which proceeds, having likeness in nature to that from which it proceeds, is called son; and since this word proceeds in likeness and identity of nature with that from which it proceeds, it is clear that the Word is fittingly and properly called the Son, and its production is rightly called a generation. Thus it is clear what is meant by the term Word.

Four questions arise, however, from this. Two come from St John Chrysostom, of which the first is: why does John the Evangelist leave aside the Father and begin immediately with the Son, saying 'In the beginning was the Word'? There is a twofold reply to this. One answer is that the Father was known to all through the Old Testament, although not as Father but as God; the Son was unknown and therefore in the New Testament, which is concerned with knowledge of the Word, St John begins with the Word, i.e., with the Son. The other reply is that we are led to knowledge of the Father through the Son. Later (in ch. 17, v. 16) we read: 'Father, I have manifested thy name to them whom

thou hast given me'. The Evangelist therefore wishing to lead the faithful to knowledge of the Father, fittingly began with the Son, referring to the Father immediately afterwards when he says: 'And the Word was with God'.

The second question is also from Chrysostom. Since, as was said above, the Word proceeds as Son, why does John say 'Word' and not 'Son'? There is a twofold reply to this also. First, that 'Son' indicates something generated, and hearing of the generation of the Son one might think that generation to be of the kind known to us from experience, that is to say material generation involving change. So John did not say 'Son' but 'Word', which implies an intelligible procession, so that it might not be thought that divine generation is a material generation involving change. Showing that the Son is begotten from God without change, he anticipated a mistaken opinion by using the term Word. The other reason for the Evangelist's treating of the Word was that the Word came to make known the Father. So, as the idea of making known is implied more in the term 'Word' than in the term 'Son', the former term was preferred.

The third question, which comes from Augustine (83 *Quest.*, q. 63), is as follows. In the Greek *logos* is found where we have 'word'. But since *logos* means both idea and word, why have translators rendered it by word and not by idea, for idea also is something intrinsic just as much as word is. My answer is that, strictly speaking, idea indicates the concept of the mind precisely as in the mind, even although something external may be produced by means of it. Word on the other hand signifies a relationship precisely to the external. Therefore, because the Evangelist intends to signify by *logos* not only relation to the Father and the existence of the Son in the Father, but also the operative power of the Son through which all things have been made, the Fathers have translated *logos* by 'word', which implies a relationship to what is external, rather than by 'idea', which only indicates the concept of the mind.

The fourth question is taken from Origen. It is this. In many places in Scripture where God's word is spoken of, word is mentioned with the addition 'of God'—'word of God': e.g., *Eccles.* 1:5: 'Fount of wisdom is the word of God in the heavens'; and *Apoc.* 12, 13: 'His name is the word of God'. Why then does the Evangelist not say, when he speaks here of the Word of God: 'In the beginning was the Word of God', instead of only 'the Word'? My answer is that although there are many participated truths there is only one absolute truth which by its very essence is truth, namely the divine being itself, the Truth by which all things are true. Similarly there is one absolute wisdom raised above all things, the divine wisdom by participation in which all the wise are wise. There is also one absolute Word, by participating in which all in whom there is a word are said to speak. There is the

divine Word which is of itself the Word raised above all words. In order to convey this divine transcendence of the Word, the Evangelist has placed before us simply 'Word' without any addition. And because the Greeks when they wished to signify something which in its being was apart from and elevated above all other things, were accustomed to add the article to the name which signified that thing, the Evangelist also, wishing to signify the separateness and loftiness of this Word above all things, added the article to the word *logos*; just as the Platonists wishing to signify separated substances, for instance separated good or man, spoke of 'the good in itself' or 'the man in himself'. Thus in Latin we might say 'In Verbum'—the Word.

THE MARIOLOGY OF
POLISH CHRISTMAS CAROLS

BY JULIEN WISNIEWSKY

OUR LADY has a prominent place in the mystery of the Incarnation. The time when the Church celebrates this mystery, that is, Christmastide—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany—is a sort of prolonged feast of Mary. No wonder that her place in Christmas carols and especially in Polish ones is outstanding.

The Blessed Trinity: The significance of our Lady can only be fully understood if it is viewed from the most fundamental truth, namely, the Blessed Trinity 'from whom all things proceed'.

In the Polish carols there is full awareness of this fact:

I believe in one God in heaven
The Father who created this world for himself
And in Jesus his Son,
In all things equal to the Father
Our Lord.
He desiring to save our human race
From the high heaven descended on earth
And was conceived of the Holy Ghost
Is born among beasts
From the maiden Mary . . .

This carol, which seems to be the Creed specially arranged for Christmastide, gives the proper setting for the whole problem. It introduces the right order. But it does not exhaust all the ways in which this truth is presented. There are other carols of rather more descriptive character:

God's Archangel Gabriel
Is sent to maiden Mary
From the Trinity's most blessed Majesty.

Sometimes carols follow very closely the traditional teaching that Mary is the Mother of the Divine Logos, the daughter of God the Father and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost:¹

¹ Pohle-Preuss: *Mariology* p. 19.