



## **Preaching the Kerygma**

***The Practical Treatment of Sacred Scripture to  
Bring About Conversion***

***by Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J.***

Paul in his pleasant exordium to the not always pleasant letter that we know as the First Epistle to the Corinthians contrasts the wisdom of this world with Christian wisdom. He says, "It pleased God by the foolishness [*i.e.*, freed from popular rhetorical artifices] of the preaching to save them that believe." The Greek word that is here translated by "preaching" is *kerygma*. It denotes not the action of addressing a congregation but the "message," the "content" of what the preacher has to say. It is this "content" with which I am concerned in this paper.

Therefore I plan to examine first the preaching of the *kerygma* in

the primitive church. This will enable me to establish the essential elements of apostolic preaching. Then I will examine the preaching of the *kerygma* to primary school children (grades 1-6) and to college students because these two categories are the ones I know best. Lastly, I will examine three possible elements in the Sundays from Trinity Sunday to the Third Sunday after Pentecost. These are not sermon outlines but suggestions: (1) general ideas related to the Sunday Mass, (2) some exegetical points about the epistle, (3) some exegetical points about the gospel. For each of these thirty points in my bibliography I have recommended a book devoted to the suggested handling of the topic.

In the New Testament the authors of gospels, acts, epistles and apocalypse make a clear distinction between preaching and teaching. To them preaching (*keryssein*) meant "the public proclamation of Christianity" to the non-Christian world. Teaching (*didaskein*) usually meant ethical instruction. These definitions suggest that much of our preaching would not be recognized by the early Christians as *kerygma*. Today we hear in our churches what might be called informal discussion of parts of the Christian life (*homilia*). Yet the topic assigned me has been well chosen: "Preaching the *Kerygma*."

The use of the word *kerygma* is clear from the subtitle, "The practical treatment of sacred scripture to bring about conversion." St. Paul wanted his *kerygma* to have this effect. In the earliest letter that we have preserved of his corpus—1 Thessalonians—an epistle that is so valuable because in it we find seminal ideas that he will later develop, he writes: "You *turned* from idols to the living God." This is the preacher's goal, the confrontation of the man who listens with the God who lives.

The earliest extant New Testament writings are, of course, the Pauline epistles. In these we can discover the content of Paul's *kerygma*. Paul recalls that at Corinth he had preached "Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2-6). In fact he states explicitly the terms of the Gospel that he had preached there:

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Cor 15:1-4).

It would be an attractive prospect to examine the Pauline *kerygma* in greater detail but I have only one point that I want to make here—the Christocentric nature of Paul's preaching.

The Pauline *kerygma* may be recovered from his epistles. In no one place does he give a complete statement of the essential truths of his preaching but they may be summarized under these headings:

- (1) Christ has fulfilled the prophecies.
- (2) Christ has inaugurated the new age.
- (3) Christ is a descendant of David.
- (4) Christ died, was buried, rose on the third day according to the Scriptures, for man's salvation.
- (5) Christ, as Son of God, is exalted at God's right hand.
- (6) Christ will return to judge all men.

May we ask to what extent this kerygmatic form is distinctively Pauline? The answer, of course, is that Paul himself believed that what he preached was the *kerygma* of the primitive apostles (Gal 1:11-18; cf. 2:2), that it was what he had received as tradition. If we contrast the elements of the Pauline *kerygma* in the epistles with the Petrine *kerygma* in Acts we shall see that they complement one another. The speeches attributed to Peter in Acts were probably based on data provided by the Aramaic-speaking church in Jerusalem.

There are three points of the Pauline *kerygma* that do not directly appear in the Jerusalem *kerygma* in Acts. (1) The emphasis in the Jerusalem *kerygma* is on Jesus' titles taken from the Second-Isaiah, the holy and just Servant of God. The allusions are messianic rather than theological. (2) In the Jerusalem *kerygma* the result of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the forgiveness of sins but it is not asserted specifically that he died for our sins. (3) The Jerusalem *kerygma* does not insist that the exalted Jesus is interceding for us.

An examination of the Pauline discourses in Acts shows that they closely resemble the Petrine discourses. Contrary to a generally held opinion, there is little mention of the Lord's second coming (Acts 3:20-21 and Acts 10:42 but in none of the speeches in Acts 2, 4, 5 and 13).

These are the salient elements of the *kerygma*. It is interesting to note how the evangelists develop them in characteristic ways. Mark gives an expanded form of the historical sections of the primitive *kerygma*. Both Matthew and Luke preserve the original perspective, but Matthew stresses the theme of fulfillment, and Luke introduces

a more subtle change, focusing on Jesus as our friend, our model, our companion. He affords "a necessary and valuable supplement to the Marcan picture of the strong Son of God and the Matthean picture of the royal Law-giver." In John we find affirmed once again the main lines of the primitive *kerygma* that is given in *Acts* enriched with his own insights about the Lord of Light, Life and Love.

How then should this *kerygma* be preached in the twentieth century so as to bring about the conversion which was needed in the primitive church and which is still needed today?

### **Preaching The Kerygma to Children**

It is a privilege and a challenge to present the *kerygma* to children at this moment in the history of the church. To appreciate our privilege we should first try to understand the development of the movements that began some thirty or forty years ago and that are now converging before our eyes. It is only when we consider the life of the church during the twentieth century that we realize that we are not only at the beginning of a new movement but, rather, we find ourselves at the culminating point of a series of changes that began several decades ago. To understand the riches of this present moment we should turn to trace the movements of renewal that have made the twentieth century for the Church the most momentous century—dare I say it—since the first century. The three movements that have converged and have made the teaching of religion so meaningful are the liturgical movement, the biblical movement, the catechetical. Let us trace each one.

The first of these is the liturgical movement which seeks to make worship the encounter of the soul with Christ. This is a movement with its roots in four countries: France, Belgium, Germany, and the United States. It began in France where the names of Dom Gueranger and Solesmes deserve to be venerated. It moved to Belgium where Cardinal Mercier and the Benedictines of the monastery of St. Andrew gave it an impetus that is still felt whenever a St. Andrew's missal or the Bible Missal is used. It shifted to Germany and Austria where Dom Casel and Pius Parsch revealed new depths in liturgical prayer. It crossed the Atlantic and came to the United States where it has taken deep roots in many places. The monks of St. John's Abbey at Collegeville made Father Godfrey Diekmann, *Worship*, and the Liturgical Press household words, and the Pius X School of Liturgical

Music has made its own contribution. The thousands of Catholics who take part in the annual Liturgical Conferences show the vitality of this movement in the United States.

Closely related to the advances made in liturgy with its many biblical texts and its many readings in the Old and New Testament is the new look in Scripture studies. Let us clarify this advance by considering 5 epoch-making dates: 1928, 1943, 1947, 1948, 1964.

In 1928 a peasant was plowing the lush green fields that border the blue Mediterranean where the snow-white limestone cliffs of Ras Shamra rise in a wonderful display of color that changes the white limestone rocks to light green and to violet. Thrusting his wooden plow a little deeper into the soil than usual he discovered a long underground passage. Initial investigations showed that it led to a tomb wherein lay buried men who had lived 3000 years ago in the royal Phoenician town of Ugarit. When Abraham came to Canaan, and later when Josue came into the promised land, they found a flourishing civilization—that of the Canaanites. The Israelites borrowed the language of that civilization (for Hebrew is just a Canaanite dialect) and many of its customs. But until the Ras Shamra discoveries we knew of no literary records left by the Canaanites. The discovery of the sea-side tomb led to the discovery of many of the buildings of the once rich and busy port. In the library of the high priest, inscribed tablets made possible the deciphering of the language of these men—ancient Ugaritic—and made available to students of the Old Testament a literature contemporaneous with and similar to many of the books of the Bible. A whole new era of biblical studies began.

The second date, 1943, gave the Catholic scholar full encouragement to incorporate the results of all the newest archaeological discoveries in his teaching of Sacred Scripture. Pius XII in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* praised the use of these discoveries and encouraged such related topics as (1) the study of the original languages in which the Bible was written, (2) the recognition of literary forms, and (3) above all he urged a deepening study of the theology of the Bible. Its words apply to all who teach the Bible. To you and to me Pope Pius XII said:

Let all who teach the Bible pray that they may understand. Let them labor to penetrate ever more deeply into the secrets of the sacred pages. Let them unlock the treasures of God's word to others. Let them follow as closely as possible the example of the great Catholic interpreters of the past. Their reward will be great in heaven.

The third significant date in the development of biblical studies in the last decades is 1947. In the early spring of that year a wandering teen-age Bedouin boy, searching for a straying goat (a possibility), seeking to carry contraband (a probability), found some scrolls in a cave eight miles south of Jericho, on the north shore of the Dead Sea. This was the beginning of a hunt for manuscripts in which Bedouin and archaeologist competed and which quickly spread to the whole desert of Judha. In eleven caves more than 600 fragments have been found. These discoveries are unquestionably a culminating point in the history of biblical archaeology and make possible a more thorough understanding of the text of the Old Testament, a better grasp of Jewish life in the time of Christ, and a more historical interpretation of many passages in the New Testament in the light of ideas with which they were contemporary.

The fifth and sixth dates (1948 and 1964) are closely related in purpose, although they are separated by fourteen years and one deals with the Old Testament and the other with the New. In 1948 the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Suhard, received a letter from the Pontifical Biblical Commission encouraging Catholic exegetes to discard the fear that had too long paralyzed their exegesis of the Pentateuch, especially the historical nature of the contents of Genesis 1-11. This meant that the first five books of the Bible should be studied in a scientific way in the light of archaeology, ancient languages and literature, literary forms of the Near East. A too literal interpretation was not possible as a result of our greater knowledge of the past. This was the end of a crippling fundamentalism and a soul-thrilling attainment of the riches of God's inspired word.

As a result of these events it is now possible to present the *kerygma* to children in such a way that they will never have to unlearn what they hear. If preaching the *kerygma* is always faithful to these advances the next generation will be spared the experience that so many have had to face during recent years when they had to adjust, modify and sometimes correct what they had heard in church and classroom.

The progress made in the liturgical movement and the biblical movement encouraged another *aggiornamento*, the catechetical revival.

Marcel van Caster gives us an insight into the development of the catechetical movement when he says that there are three periods in the maturation of the catechesis since 1900, namely *instruction*, *formation* and *encounter*. He observes that these steps follow the same chronological order in various countries although they may proceed

at a different pace. We submit that the present-day emphasis in the American catechetical movement on leading students to personal faith is part of the developing stream begun by religious educators during the past sixty years.

It was during this period also that advances were made in the development of various teaching techniques: story-telling, the art of questioning, the use of blackboard, pictures, charts and audio-visual aids, group work and discussion. The catechetical movement was influenced by the activities of the "learn by doing" school with its idea that children are formed not only by words but by life itself.

The first phase of the catechetical movement in America had been concerned with better *instruction* by using the best methods and techniques to help children understand the summary of Catholic doctrine as expressed in the catechism.

The second phase emphasized Christian *formation* whereby students perceive the value of Christian truths for their lives. Application of religion to everyday life was stressed. New religion texts were written, notably the Christ Life Series by Virgil Michael, O.S.B., and the *Spiritual Way* by Mother Bolton. The School Year Religion Course was prepared by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. It aimed at integrating bible and liturgy with the catechism and correlating doctrine and precept with life and conduct. It, along with the developed lesson plans prepared by the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart, became the official course of study for CCD classes in scores of dioceses. Another attempt to combine formation with instruction was made in the high school religion series produced by the Confraternity of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

These were only a few of the many influences paving the way for the third step in the maturation of the modern-day catechetical renewal in the United States, particularly as it affects the lay catechist. This is the insistence on *encounter*. Now we are beginning to hear statements like the following: "The foremost purpose of catechetics is not to teach about God but rather to lead students to God" . . . "No teacher truly catechizes children unless they recognize through his teaching an actual personal call from God." As in other countries development of the first two phases has led instruction and formation to a catechesis in which personal faith and encounter enhance the elements of instruction and formation.

In fact, the renewal of school catechesis is one of the major religious phenomena of this century. Its benefits, as we have seen, have been

slow in reaching the United States. Its aim is both kerygmatic and dogmatic. This whole new re-orientation of the teaching of religion needs to be understood in the home and supplemented in the pulpit. It proposes a new sense of life and a new image of man. This catechetical renewal varies from section to section and a just appraisal of the local situation is a prerequisite for the preaching of the *kerygma* to children. But there are certain principles that, I think, are universally valid.

Let us begin with a question. When we speak to children of God, whom do we really mean? The three divine Persons or one of them? And what does the child understand? This is not a mere matter of semantics. The confusion is compounded because the word God suggests a Person to most young children. Yet many text books use the word God mostly for the divine nature. The New Testament nearly always uses the word God to denote the Father. The sad thing is that many children can correctly answer two questions, yet not know what they are saying: How many Gods are there? How many Persons are there in God? A suggestion borrowed from *Viens vers le Père*" (*Lumen Vitae*, XX, 2) recommends that a vague use of the word God be avoided. Children will understand more accurately if reference is made to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. It is wise to show each divine Person in living relation with the others. For example: it is good to remind the children that Jesus tells us the words of the Father, and the Holy Spirit helps us to understand them. If we listen to the Holy Spirit in our hearts, He will teach us how to understand what Jesus said, and how we can grow like Jesus and love all those whom He loves.

Such an approach, will gradually lead to the practice of Trinitarian prayer. We praise and thank the Father for creating the world, for sending the Son, for giving us the Holy Spirit. We praise and thank the Son for bringing the Father's words to us, for dying for us on the cross. We praise and thank the Holy Spirit for teaching us the meaning of the words of Jesus and showing us how to please the Father.

Where this idea has been followed we find results like this. To the question: "Can we understand God's words by ourselves?" The child at first replied: "No, the Father makes us understand them." Then she corrected herself and said: "No, it is our Lord who tells us the Father's words and the Holy Spirit makes us understand them in our hearts." Another example: "If you met a little boy who had

never heard of God, what is the best thing you could tell him about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?" Answer: "I would tell him that God the Father is all-powerful; that God the Son rose from the dead; that God the Holy Spirit helps us to know Jesus, the Son of God."

Another kind of ambiguity attaches itself to our use of the word "church." Paul Minear of the Yale School of Divinity reproached the bishops and *periti* assembled last March at Notre Dame because they moved so swiftly from the idea of a building, to that of an organization, to that of a community. He urged Roman Catholics to follow the example of many conciliar documents and use scriptural images. In the New Testament there are at least 110 figures of the Church. Kerygmatic preaching should show how God realizes his plan of salvation by means of a continuing developing community. In the Old Testament Israel is called to believe; Israel is oriented to Christ; among this chosen people Jesus was born; they were the first believers; they transmitted their message to the whole world.

Our presentation of the Church should be flexible. We should make the Church "neither too perfect nor too imperfect," but we should develop a Christian sense of community, aware that in children there is a rhythm of three successive stages: confusion, differentiation and integration. The child understands community in a confused sense; only later does he differentiate. Only still later does he learn how to combine the personal and the social elements.

The structure of the liturgical year should determine the presentation of the *kerygma*. God is manifested in the liturgy in word and in action; both can provide an occasion for an encounter with the Lord. Jesus comes to the child in the word and action. Only when he is recognized in both can the dynamic unity of the paschal mystery be lived.

There is a controversial book, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, that deserves consideration here. There is among religious communities a profound reluctance to believe that Christianity had anything to do with the development of anti-Jewish attitudes. How could a religion of love lead to hate? The authors evaluated 3000 questionnaires from Protestants and Catholics. The results are startling. Let me quote one conclusion:

These finds would suggest that at least *one-fourth* of America's anti-Semites have a religious basis for their prejudice, while another *fifth* have this religious basis in considerable part. Indeed *only 5 percent* of Americans with anti-Semitic views lack *all* rudiments of a religious basis for their prejudice.

Whether the conclusion be valid or not, let us draw one important lesson from these findings. Let us be careful in using the word Jew when speaking to young children who might be tempted to generalize or who might fail to make the necessary distinctions.

A theology of childhood should also be recalled in this connection. This is a topic that was suggested by Karl Rahner, and it may be applied to every age group. The German theologian suggests that because our concept of time is linear we think that each stage of life is a preparation for the next. Of course this is true; it is also inadequate. Each moment contains all of the past and each moment has a unique value of its own. There is a special gift that the child, the adolescent, the young man, the older man can give. This gift has a modality all its own and should be respected.

In speaking to children we should be aware of this. Value the present with its never-to-be repeated possibilities.

The gulf between generations is increasingly difficult to bridge. Words with one meaning to us may mean something very different to the child. A young woman admitted that for days after she had been told the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac she kept watching her father and asking herself: "If God told him to kill me, would he do it?"

An interesting test was carried out in France. Some little boys and little girls were told the same story of Abraham and Isaac. Afterwards they were asked to draw pictures illustrating the incident. None of the little boys placed Isaac anywhere near the pile of faggots. None of them set the faggots on fire or gave Abraham a knife. The little girls were not so careful—especially those with naughty little brothers!

These examples could easily be multiplied. They serve as a reminder that the preaching of the *kerygma* to primary school children deserves careful attention and demands thoughtful understanding of the best contemporary insights.

### **Preaching the Kerygma to College Students**

It might perhaps seem arbitrary for me to discuss the problems of this segment of our population were it not for the fact that this is a constantly increasing segment and will represent the majority in our church congregations of tomorrow. For many reasons you may find it a difficult segment to address. Let me list some statistics and give you some reasons. In 1965, 46 out of every 100 citizens in the United States were under 25, 71 out of every 100 were under 45. The majority

of those under 45 are in college or have been in college or intend to go to college. The increase in college enrollments is staggering. This means that an increasing number of those in the pews will have had some college training. All agree that college students are an intelligent, articulate, demanding and difficult group.

The reasons for the challenge of today's group of college graduates goes back to the fact that they are post-depression and post-war children and lack the realism that such searing experiences can bring. Not only have they been born into an affluent society but into—what was harder for them to surmount—into a child-centered society. Education has been held before their eyes as the *summum bonum*, and as college students they have succeeded in acquiring coveted status in the academic world. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, every college educator will admit ruefully that the colleges have not succeeded in solving the difficulties of their young men and women. In fact these difficulties seem somehow to have been increased during undergraduate years. It is these students of today who will be the parishioners of tomorrow. What will they want and need?

You no doubt read the letter addressed to Father Hesburgh by a recent graduate of Notre Dame. This young man declared that a pastoral vacuum exists at the University; the Sacred Heart Church is no longer the center of the campus; during his undergraduate days his Catholicism dissolved; many of the best students cease to practice their religion.

. . . A small number of Notre Dame faculty make a serious try at relating their academic discipline to Christianity. They cannot and do not confront their students with Jesus Christ in the way in which they must if those students are to accept them or reject them. These men are doing a noble and courageous work; but because of the *pastoral vacuum* at Notre Dame, their effect on the students often is a distorting one—and the impression is conveyed that being equipped with a set of Christian categories is Christianity—that being concerned with the theme of salvation is being saved—that thinking about Christianity is doing it.

Thoughts of the inability of the college educators to cope with these young people must have occurred to you. Remember that these young people will be filling your pews—or turning away from your churches tomorrow. Will you be more successful?

Notice the charges that young man makes: *pastoral care* was lacking; really committed men were few; religion was not always taught in a way that captured student interest.

How can the *kerygma* be preached to them in a way that will capture their interest? Certainly they will demand that the doctrine presented will be contemporary and in contemporary vocabulary. They will not listen to doctrine, however sound, if it seem to them preconciliar or in any way out-of-date.

In the homily they will expect the speaker to show that he is aware of recent scriptural developments. For example, it is essential to base gospel exegesis in the 1963 *Instruction* of the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

The *Instruction* reminds us that there are three stages of tradition. These are the three channels through which the life and teaching of Jesus have been handed down to us: Christ himself, the apostles and the sacred authors. These three levels are roughly parallel to what current scholarship has designated as *Sitz im Leben Jesu, Ecclesiae, Evangelii*—that is, the historical setting given to his words and deeds by Jesus Himself, by the Church through the preaching of the apostles, and by the evangelists in composing their Gospels.

1. Jesus, it is said, followed the “manner of reasoning and teaching current in His time,” and He accommodated Himself to the mentality of His audience. (If this point had been truly appreciated in earlier generations there would have been fewer or no decrees on Mosaic and Davidic authorship for the Pentateuch and the Psalms; Jesus did not address Himself to such literary questions.) His choice of the disciples enabled them to be the witnesses of His life and teaching.

2. The role of the apostles was to proclaim and witness to His death and resurrection and to inform about His person and teaching. It was only after the Resurrection that His divinity was “clearly (*clare*) perceived,” and the apostles came to a “fuller understanding” of what He had said and done. Hence, they “interpreted” His words and deeds according to the needs of their audience, and one should be alert to the various literary forms (catechesis, testimonies, hymns, etc.) used in the New Testament.

The reader will doubtless catch here the echo of the questions of the *ipsissima verba* (the “exact words”) of Jesus, the role of the community in the elaboration of the Christian message, and also the problem of the recognition of Christ’s divinity. To take the last point first: Catholic scholars have long urged the *gradual* revelation of Jesus’ divinity—as against a rationalistic, if well-meant, apologetics that would attach faith immediately to the perception of miracles conceived

after the fashion of Thomistic philosophy. The realization of the divinity of Christ was a tremendous insight, and it came slowly; after all, Jesus sent the Spirit for a reason. If the "creative role" of the community is an exaggeration, as pointed out above, there is no denying that the apostles "interpreted His words and deeds according to the needs of their hearers."

3. The third level is that of the sacred authors themselves (it seems significant that these are not named individually in the *Instruction*). Recent scholarship has stressed their role under the rubric of *Redaktionsgeschichte*: What is the particular point of view of each evangelist? What explains his selection and positioning of certain words and actions in a context different from that of the other evangelists? They did not express Christ's teaching "literally, even though they retained His meaning, but in various ways" (*non ad litteram, sensu tamen retento, diversimode exprimere*). Precisely here the *Instruction* calls attention to the duty (*munus*) of exegetes to make use of the tested conclusions of "recent studies" which can help in determining what the sacred author meant. This "new research" shows that the life and doctrine were handed down not merely to be remembered, but they were "preached," so as to provide the Church its basic faith and morals. The reference here is to the *kerygma* and *didache* that form the substance of the sermons of Peter and Paul in *Acts* 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 13:16-41.

For similar reasons in April, 1964, the Biblical Commission issued an *Instruction* on the nature of historicity in the Bible. It is the New Testament with which the *Instruction* is primarily concerned, and here the exegete is told to seek out and utilize the "sound elements" of the method of form-criticism which has dominated technical analysis of the gospels for forty years. Nothing is taken back by the admonition that this method is to be employed "with circumspection." The *Instruction* points to the unhappy association of form-criticism with false philosophies and theologies, with a defective appreciation of history and of faith, and with an exaggerated understanding of the "creative power" of the first Christian community in the composition of the New Testament. Many of these hazards have been recognized not only by Catholic but also non-Catholic scholars, and the admonition is, of course, well taken.

Assuming that the scriptural exegesis is in accordance with the best in modern study, what else will the college graduate hope to find in the

preaching of the *kerygma*? He will insist that it be both relevant and thought provoking. The relevance is not too difficult. More of a problem is the question of awakening interest and holding it. Several solutions have been proposed. To put them briefly, let us recall that college students have wide areas of interest.

Psychology affords valuable suggestions for winning their attention. An analysis of a Pauline doctrine might begin with the query: "Would modern psychologists label Paul a mature or an immature man? Do we find in Paul these signs of maturity: effective perception of reality and comfortable relations with it; limitless horizons; empathy; ethical certainty; creativeness, etc.?"

Novels like *Franny and Zooey* lead easily into the theme of personal authenticity; *Point of No Return* suggests the perennial problem of goals worthy of a life-time search; *The Brothers Karamazov* confronts the problem of evil in the world. Dramas like *The Death of a Salesman* and *Waiting for Godot* uncover the deep places of the heart of twentieth-century man. Poets like Eliot provide arresting lines such as "The hint half-guessed, the gift half-understood, the Incarnation," or "Words, after speech, reach into the silence," or "Preserve me from the enemy who has something to gain or the friend who has something to lose." From philosophers like Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, from authors like Dag Hammarskjold, Teilhard de Chardin come ideas that the college student will recognize. They speak his language. It is this language that will meet their needs and will induce them to listen to the *kerygma* for which they are hungering whether they know this or not.

This brings us to the end of my paper. Three great events are at the origin of our age and condition the world we know: the discoveries of men like Galileo and Darwin who prepared the way for modern science; the dissolution of the old European monarchies and the seeds of revolt against the traditional order that yield strange fruit in every land; the sudden awakening to the full extent of man's social obligations which began in the last century and has gained momentum in this one. To these three events the Church reacted slowly and reluctantly. To preach the *kerygma* successfully means to be aware of the significant forces in the world, to shape the content of our message so as to be heard. In the past the Church has sometimes failed to make its message relevant so men refused to listen. Let us do what we can to let our *kerygma* ring out strong and clear.