



Editorial

The Task of the Future

Why does every publication, society, organization and what-not raise such a hullabuloo whenever they reach a 25th, 50th or 100th anniversary year? These magic, mathematical markers are rather arbitrary figures, yet the mere mention of their occurrence arouses reverent awe in the minds of all concerned parties. Obviously convention dictates the "whens" of these commemorations, but their observance is not solely a passive placation of custom. It is, rather, an opportunity for an appreciation of the past, the vehicle which transports us to the present, as well as a free and honest criticism, all of which should be directed towards a consistently realistic improvement in the future.

Dominicana now stands at one of these special historical points—the beginning of its fiftieth year of publication. Although we shall call special attention to this year's issues by featuring significant articles and outstanding authors, a self-appraisal must take place for this magazine does not and cannot function in a vacuum. In February of every year the American Church ob-

serves Catholic Press Month. Normally one is awakened to this fact by seeing in almost every piece of Catholic publishing a page that urges good Catholic reading and the avoidance of dangerous secular material. But this year brought a wave of critical introspection by leading members of the press, both clerical and lay.

A key feature of discussion within Christianity today is that of diversity—a dialectic that generates positions on both the right and left banks. In the Catholic press the dichotomy lies between those seeking an atmosphere free of hierarchical control and those who feel that the problems being discussed at the Council have created an acid-pen journalism which exceeds the purpose of the Fourth Estate. The extremes that these two camps are revolting against are a mediocre, sterile press on the one hand and an overly critical, sometimes discourteous press on the other. A reconciliation of the contending parties will not be attempted on this page; that forbidding feat remains for the Catholic press to achieve itself. The significant point in all this discussion is the realization of a *need*—the need for theological exchange and theological *depth*. The postwar efforts of Catholic journalism lifted the house-organ status of publication to a professionally revitalized mode of communication. However, the Catholic press is now resting at a standstill to a great degree waiting for a new course to be charted for the future.

By now the question has probably arisen: What does this diatribe on the Catholic press situation have to do with *Dominicana's* golden anniversary? In an age of "new-breedism" it might be startling to realize that this modest publication began and has continued as a journalistic enterprise under the editorship and management of Dominican theological students. Originally founded as a channel for communicating the Christian message in all its aspects, *Dominicana* has flowered into one of the largest theological quarterlies in America. It was this basic structure of a magazine devoted to popular theology that provided *Dominicana* with a framework flexible enough to discuss the needs of every age, movement and development within Christianity. Its editors

have constantly striven to provide a lively and authentic commentary on scripture, theology and philosophy.

The most rapid strides in *Dominicana's* development have occurred within the last decade especially under the impetus of Vatican II. Beginning with John's convocation of the Council up to the present issue we have more than doubled our efforts in seeking theological relevance in a contemporary setting. Renewal in the Church brought a renewal of *Dominicana's* purpose and an implementation of change wherever and whenever possible. It is in this spirit of renewal that our articles are geared towards keeping pace with the Church and our often-quoted book reviews are focused upon the latest thinking in Christianity. The combination of a timely content and an artistically attractive format has been responsible for *Dominicana's* doubling of readership within the past five years. Our audience now covers every state in the Union and over thirty foreign countries. The same professional standards of high quality material and graphic design have brought the best in Catholic publishing and Church art to our advertising pages as well as the praise extended to *Dominicana* in last year's C.P.A. Awards Competition.

The crisis in Catholic publication has spotlighted the need of popular theology, for the renewal of the Church can never be effected even in the areas of liturgy, scripture and ecumenism unless the theological Tradition and development of the living Church be brought to the *people*. It is in light of this "not-yet" accomplished hope that we dedicate this anniversary year to our readers and patrons, our advertisers and business associates but especially to our past contributors and staff members who have laid the foundation for the advances that have recently taken place. Now it is the task of the future to continue the work of the Lord—the proclamation of the Living Word.

Celestine Ryan, O.P.