



Obedience
and
Authority

Spec
Copies

IMPRIMI POTEST: John J. McGinty, S.J., Provincial of the New York Province. NIHIL OBSTAT: Daniel V. Flynn, J.C.D., Censor Librorum. IMPRIMATUR: Terence J. Cooke, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New York.

April 27, 1966

Loyal Opposition in the Church	1	John G. Milhaven
The Problem of Obedience	10	Sylvester F. MacNutt
The Other Side of Obedience	17	James J. Gallagher
The Use of Authority	22	John Meany
Authority and Fellowship	30	Robert O. Johann

The nihil obstat and imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the nihil obstat and imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions or statements expressed.

Copyright 1966 by the America Press, 106 West 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10019



Loyal Opposition in the Church

by John G. Milhaven

We seem to be in one of those periods in the history of the Church when the rhythm of its development gathers speed like a galloping horse. At such a time, the Christian is exhilarated by the new prospects to which the Spirit is leading the Church. But the rapid pace of change also exacerbates tensions.

One form of aggravated tension arises in the matter of the Christian's obedience. The direction of changes already made may seem to an individual Christian to indicate where a further change should take place. Or perhaps a change made may appear hasty and misdirected and call for a change back to the old way. In either case, however, those who hold authority in the Church may see things differently. The authorities may not only oppose the desired change for the moment; they may explicitly reject it once and for all. Tension mounts. And thus in a time like our own, when changes multiply around us, so do the tensions.

A classic example is the birth control question. As everyone knows, a growing number of Catholics today—including theologians, philosophers, psychologists and doctors—cannot, despite honest effort on their part, understand the position taken by ecclesiastical authorities on birth control. They have grown increasingly convinced that the official stand is neither infallible nor irrevocable, but capable of and badly in need of revision.

We are not inquiring whether this and similar dissident opinions are well grounded or not. We are simply taking as given the case, widespread today, of the Catholic who

has arrived at convictions contrary to those of authority. Whatever worth his convictions may possess, he now holds them and finds he cannot change them. He asks himself: "What can I do? What should I do?"

Some respond by simply disobeying. If the point in question is birth control, they buy contraceptives and employ them. They encourage others to do the same. They justify themselves simply by their belief that the official Church position is wrong, inhuman and un-Christian. Conscientious disobedience, they say, is the only responsible practice. Such a response by the individual Christian not only is actual disobedience; it reveals as well a remarkable ignorance of what Christian obedience is.

On the other hand, one can find the opposite extreme among Christians who, like those just mentioned, cannot alter their interior conviction that the official stand could and should be revised. Such persons completely collapse. In the question of birth control, they do not merely refrain from any use of contraception and any encouragement to its use. True to their concept of obedience, they also abandon all effort to bring it about that the Church—the whole Church "teaching" and "taught"—should come to the view they hold to be more true, human and Christian. In particular, they do not feel free to work toward changing the mind of the ecclesiastical authorities. Such a response by the individual Christian not only is not true obedience; it too reveals a remarkable ignorance of what Christian obedience is.

In brief, both reactions are too simplistic and childlike to be the mature, sophisticated, demanding thing that Christian obedience really is. More precisely, neither of these reactions recognizes that, for a Christian, obedience and

responsibility go hand in hand. The first reaction proceeds as if responsibility dispensed a man from obedience. The second as if obedience dispensed him from responsibility.

Unfortunately, many Christians consider these two reactions the only possible ones. There remains, however, a third possibility, the middle road of obedient responsibility. In the case we are considering, where the Christian cannot help favoring changes that the authorities oppose, obedient responsibility leads to loyal opposition. What is the role of the loyal opposition in the Church?

Few of the changes that eventually took place in the Church during its 19 centuries sprang full-grown from some bishop's head. Many of the changes, when first proposed, met official disapproval and rejection. But often, at these times, leaders arose in the Church, men and women of tenacity and purpose, who, while obeying carefully and completely, still maintained their conviction that the authorities were wrong, and they labored persistently and ingeniously—but never disobediently—to bring about the changes. One thinks of Catherine of Siena or Ignatius Loyola or John Henry Newman.

But we need not look so far back into the past. In our own time, we have been privileged to know those whom AMERICA recently called the "giants of the *aggiornamento*." Now that their work is bearing fruit, we should not forget their spirit and conduct as they endured decades of waiting. No authoritative declaration of policy could weaken their convictions that certain things must be brought up to date—e.g., the liturgy and biblical studies. They complied with each order, whether it was a general decree or a direct restriction of their personal activity. But to the extent to which obedience still left them free to discuss and write and ex-

periment, these men of the Church worked to prepare the way for an eventual change in mind both of those in authority and of the whole Church. Fortunate were those who came to know these "giants," to converse with them at table or consult them in private. One could discern the marks of interior suffering and self-discipline. But much more, one admired and rejoiced in their loyalty to the Church, their integrity, their serene confidence in the Spirit leading the Church.

Having known these men, a Catholic could be proud of the Church. What they were doing in loyal opposition, the Church was doing. For what the Church does is by no means restricted to what the authorities do. The Church is the People of God—all of them. It is the Lord's whole congregation. The human beings in authority are no more and no less the Church than their subjects are. If it is correct to say that the Church sent Fr. Daniel Berrigan to Mexico, it is equally correct to say that the Church bought an ad in the *New York Times* to protest the sending. This is quite independent of whether the religious superior who sent Fr. Berrigan was right in so doing, or those who signed the ad were right—or both, or neither. It also in no way denies the fact that the Christians in authority have the right to receive obedience just as the Christians who are subject have the right to receive respect and concern from their superiors. The point is that neither superiors nor subjects are the Church in the sense of either being alone the whole Church. And both are the Church in the sense that together they make up the Church and that each have their individual responsibility.

There is thus no reason to deny the perennial tension in the Church between those who on a given point would re-

place the old with the new and those who would retain the old. Nor to deny that authority may for a time take the side that eventually shows itself to be wrong or less preferable. It is a tension, and therefore neither comfortable nor relaxing. But it is a healthy tension, a tension that goes with life.

Incidentally, there is no reason, either, to insinuate that one pole of the tension is *a priori* better than the other. Is it more genuinely Christian to be bringing forth the new? Or upholding the old? Jansenism was something new, advanced by sincere Christians. The best biblical scholarship looks for something old, the original meaning of the sacred text. The point is rather that the tension between new and old is simply part of the ongoing life of the whole Church. And it gives rise to an equally organic tension between obedience and responsibility, where obedient responsibility can at times mean only loyal and obedient opposition. This, too, is a vital role within the Church.

It may be of use to list some key aspects of this role:

1. Take our Christian at the present time who claims to be obedient, yet interiorly disagrees with a position taken by authority. He can be called obedient only if he has tried hard to agree. Only if every effort to see the point of the official position has failed and the opposing evidence stands up under critical examination, can the loyalty to truth of the obedient man command interior disagreement. This is not as difficult as it may sound. The ordinary experience of an educator today, reinforced by the growing consensus of other Catholic educators, could easily convince him that the Church law on prohibited books needs revision. Few would criticize as disobedient or intellectually presumptuous this interior opposition.

2. The Christian of the loyal opposition obeys. He rec-

ognizes those of the People of God whose role is to command, and he respects their role. Even when he disagrees, he obeys, and obeys with the peaceful interior recognition that it is good for him to do so.

3. May the Christian who obeys, but disagrees with the policy and views of authority, express his disagreement publicly in the Church? May he try to win other Christians to his dissident views? Here there seems to be no single, simple answer. In certain circumstances he unquestionably may. One cannot blame for disobedience those who ten years ago began to criticize publicly the existent liturgy and in the face of various pro-Latin declarations of authority still urged the vernacular. Nor those today who protest that the new liturgical changes are doing more harm than good. One may disagree strongly with one or the other group, but he can recognize that both are exercising their Christian responsibility in a way completely consonant with obedience. If such public criticism of Church law and official pronouncements be expressed appropriately (perhaps, for example, not from the pulpit, but in a journal of opinion), it is a form of Church life that can be of great use to those in authority and to the Church as a whole.

But on certain questions, Church authorities may directly forbid any public expression of dissident views. It seems clear that the Holy Father has, at least for a time, forbidden any Catholic to defend publicly the opposite of the official position on birth control. An American bishop might forbid his priests to protest the war in Vietnam. A European bishop might forbid them to defend it. One bishop may silence any espousal of racial integration; another, of segregation.

Once more, the loyal opposition obeys, though obedience

is more costly here. It is silent to the extent—though no further—that authority has commanded it to be silent. We may ask whether, in exceptional cases, a Christian might be free, even obliged, to say publicly what authority has forbidden? Church lawyers traditionally hold that the force of positive law can be outweighed by other values, such as justice and charity. We are fond of reminding German Catholics who lived under the Nazis that no prescription of human authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil, dispenses a man from intrinsic moral obligations. Nevertheless, the case where a Christian would be justified in directly violating a command of silence seems so rare and exceptional, a last resort of desperation, that it forms no part of that activity of the loyal opposition which is essential to the life of the Church. The loyal opposition is ready, when commanded, to be silent.

“To set oneself up as misunderstood seems ridiculous and conceited. And yet, in truth (without, I think, the least touch of conceit), I do believe that I can see something, and I would like that something to be seen. You can’t imagine what intensity of desire I sometimes feel in this connection, and what impotence. What keeps me calm is my complete confidence that if there is a ray of light in ‘my gospel,’ somehow or other that ray will shine forth. At the worst—of this I’m sure—it will reappear in another heart—all the richer, I hope, for having been faithfully guarded in me. The only wise and Christian attitude is obviously to wait in all loyalty for God’s own hour—if it is to come. I am counting more than ever on the influence of your prayers that I may never fail the light.”

Thus Teilhard de Chardin wrote in a letter from the battlefield, at the end of World War I (*The Making of a Mind*. Harper.) Did he dimly suspect the forty years of vir-

tually uninterrupted public silence that would be imposed upon him? In any case, he was ready.

4. But the loyal opposition—obedient even, if need be, to the point of silence—can still do great things for its cause in the Church. It can, for example, turn to history. It can write a historical study of the Church's position on birth control or on the relationship between Church and State, of the liturgical practices in the early Church or of the theological views of certain Fathers of the Church, of the political evolution of Vietnam. History often inspires a re-questioning of contemporary attitudes. "If these are the arguments that originally motivated the prohibition of contraceptives, are there any better ones today?" Whether the re-questioning leads to a revision of the present official position or to its confirmation, the loyal opposition serves by bringing new light and perspective.

Similarly, a journalist might conduct and publish a survey indicating some negative effects of the new liturgical changes. A psychiatrist might criticize the argument of certain theologians that the marital act loses force as an expression of love when contraceptives are used. A sociologist could advance statistics on harmful consequences of integrated schools.

Such studies are invaluable. At times, they eventually win authority over to their view. More often they do not. In any case, they are likely to stimulate the whole Church to a more critical, balanced, nuanced attitude. They should not be resented or feared. They play a part in the growth in truth of the People of God.

The above examples illustrate rather what a *specialist* of the loyal opposition can do. But the ordinary layman also wields power. For instance, without generalizing he can re-

port facts. Without commentary, he can tell his pastor how individual Negroes have reacted to their reception, or rather, nonreception, in the parish. He can tell his old professor how meaningless his philosophy course now seems to this alumnus. Especially in the day of the thoughtful, articulate layman, such testimony has been having great influence on specialists. The growing number of theologians and philosophers who oppose the official position on birth control is due less to speculative objections than to the simple testimony of men and women to the harm wrought in their married life by the practice of rhythm or complete continence. The present revision of religious education in the Catholic schools was inspired in part by the comments of discontented students. The students were right in their criticisms, and their children will profit from the obedient opposition their parents once gave to authority.

Down the 19 centuries of its history, the Church has been a wonderful thing. It has been built of nothing but living stones—the People of God, both superiors and subjects. History shows their life to have been tumultuous, confused, sinful and generally fallible. History also shows it to have been a life of faith in Christ, docile to the Spirit, always moving forward to grow in the truth and charity of God. The forward movement has grown naturally and fruitfully out of the interaction of position and opposition. Let those take heart whom responsibility compels on a given question to stand fully obedient, but in the opposition. They are serving the Church. They are the Church.

[FR. MILHAVEN, S. J., teaches philosophy at Fordham University.] ■

The Problem of Obedience

by Sylvester S. MacNutt

An electric tension filled the room at a religious section meeting of the Liturgical Convention in St. Louis last August. A young priest from Los Angeles and a Jesuit scholastic had stood up to question the traditional way obedience is being taught in the seminary. As they spoke, the entire audience—priests and sisters—leaned forward, and when each speaker finished with his question from the floor (the questions were really statements), there was vigorous applause.

Everywhere we see the same reaction: a ground swell of questioning, of criticism of authority. And usually, as at the Liturgical Convention, the question seems to revolve around an antithesis that is set up between freedom and obedience. As the chairman of the section meeting pointed out, the questioner sets up an either-or opposition between freedom and obedience—and then, naturally, he chooses freedom.

The intense emotion underlying these discussions shows that many of the younger generation of priests, seminarians and sisters feel that something is wrong, even though they cannot articulate it clearly. When they speak, the sound comes out more like a muffled cry (or sometimes an angry shout) than like coherent speech.

Such unrest baffles those of us who were brought up in traditional ways. We hear the groan without being able to see the logic of the speech. But they are trying to say something, and for this very reason it is vitally important to see what they really mean, to understand the thought behind the incoherent cry.

It seems to me that the freedom part of the debate may not be the most basic obedience problem after all. They talk freedom because it is the first idea that comes to mind to explain how they feel. But perhaps there is another factor that really lies at the bottom of the apparent rebelliousness. To explore this basic factor, I should like to try to articulate clearly what is on the minds of many young priests, brothers, and sisters—as they see it.

So here is what a young religious might say if asked for his (or her) frank opinion about the real cause of the seemingly critical spirit that is charged to the New Breed priest or sister.

“I know you wonder why we younger ones seem so restive, and I suppose our questions make it look as if we are intellectually proud (and you are probably right: some of us are proud and obstinate).

“Still, I don’t think that *all* our questioning comes from a spirit of pride; and we would be grateful if you would try to understand us as we think we really are—with all our ideals, as well as our weaknesses that you know so well.

“First, let me say that I think most of us understand the theory of obedience. I for one accept it. But that’s not the real problem. I realize that obedience means freely giving up my will to follow God through faith. And even when I don’t see the reasons for the commands given me, still I accept them in the obscurity of faith. And I realize, too, that the only exception allowed (which really isn’t an exception) is when a superior asks me to do something that I am sure is morally evil. Yet there is no problem there, either, because no superior I know would ever dream of giving me such a wrong-headed command.

“I know, too, that obedience is going to ask me to do

some hard things, that I am going to be assigned painful missions, that my heart may sink when I read my assignment; yet all this I willingly accept as my part of the cross. It is the substitute for martyrdom that I freely embraced in taking vows; every day I renew that gift of myself in union with Christ's offering of Himself in joyful surrender to the Father.

“So why, you wonder, do we seem so restless? Why do we question authority?”

“The simplest answer is to blame our attitude on the way we have been brought up: ‘I know it isn't your fault, but the permissive atmosphere of your home training has spoiled you and left you an undisciplined person.’ I'm sure there's a lot of truth in that judgment: we certainly are the products of our age. But please don't let it go at that. There is so much more to the story; and we desperately want you to see it. For I'm afraid that after you have kindly excused us as the unruly products of progressive education, you might miss the real point, the insight we think we have to offer. Maybe we are overly critical—and psychologically unstable, as well—but we would willingly admit these charges if we could only get you to understand what we are really trying to say. To your ears it must sound suspiciously like a rebel yell, but we *are* trying to say something.

“It is simply this: we are not disturbed by what obedience asks us to do; it's what obedience sometimes asks us *not to do*. That worries us.

“In other words, we sometimes feel we are asked to sin *through omission*.

“To us it seems like the parable of the Good Samaritan all over again. A wounded man is lying in the ditch: I see him lying there and naturally I want to help him.

“Now, what should I do if I am told to pass by, to follow along with the Priest and the Levite and leave the poor man to his misery? What happens if nobody else is helping and the man needs help desperately? Suppose the Priest or Levite tells me: ‘Stay on the road and keep your eyes straight ahead, as the rule says; that man is none of your business.’ What do I do then?

“You wonder: when does that ever happen? Yet in the eyes of my generation we are sometimes asked to walk by that wounded man—modern man. You may feel we exaggerate, I know; nevertheless, we think the parable fits. Take Fr. DuBay out in Los Angeles. He believed something must be done to help the Negro, the wounded man; he felt it was wrong for Catholics to remain inactive. No one was asking Catholics in the Los Angeles area to *do* anything wrong; but they were being prevented from carrying out their moral obligation to help the Negro in his fight for justice. Fr. DuBay felt, therefore, that Catholics were in danger of sinning by omission. Even if the Priest and Levite tell him not to stop, does that justify him in not helping the wounded man? That is our question.

“I think the reaction to the Fr. DuBay incident is a test of our attitude. The New Breed religious will feel that Fr. DuBay had to take an outspoken stand (although wrong, perhaps, in his way of going about calling a press conference); he had to do this or sin through silence and omission. On the other hand, conservative religious are likely to judge that Fr. DuBay was seriously imprudent and disobedient to his bishop.

“Fr. DuBay’s story is unusual, to be sure—an extreme example. But in many smaller matters we feel that the same principle is at stake: we are walking along a road, see a man

hurt, and may not help—because of some rule or command.

“Just take a few examples.

“A teaching sister is approached after class by a distraught girl who wants to talk to her after school lets out. The girl asks to talk in private because she has a problem she doesn’t dare discuss with her parents or pastor. Suppose Sister has a superior who forbids staying after school or talking to students in private; yet Sister judges that the girl is in real trouble and is not likely to talk about it to anyone else. What is she supposed to do? If she obeys, will her conscience let her rest that night after refusing to talk to the girl? Suppose two weeks later she hears that the girl has dropped out of school. Will she be able to sleep easily or believe in her heart that her obedience excused her from her obligation of charity to help the wounded girl lying by the side of the road?

“Or suppose a superior (or pastor) objects to carrying out the changes in the liturgy. Should the subjects (or assistants in a parish) calmly accept his decision, knowing that the mind of the Church demands implementation of the liturgical renewal? Should the assistants say nothing to a man who does not himself comply with the mind of the Church? And the laity, too: should they suffer in silence?

“Often the answer given to the restless subject goes something like this: ‘It’s all very well for you to be interested in the problems of modern society, but we all have our own small place in the Mystical Body. Your part is to do the job you have been assigned and let others worry about the overall problems. We can’t all be running around attending to all the needs we see; we would simply exhaust ourselves and end up not even doing our own job well. There must be order; it is not up to each individual to decide what he

will or will not do. Leave the responsibility for those decisions on the superior's shoulders, where it belongs. If he fails, that is his responsibility before God—not yours. So stop worrying about other people's business; above all, stop trying to make decisions that belong to the superior.'

"We know that's mostly true; we can't be rushing around worrying about all the problems of the world. But what disturbs me is the wounded man lying at my feet—the one who *is* my responsibility. All I have to do to help him is reach out my hand; yet suppose I am forbidden to do it. What then?

"That is the problem.

"The objection naturally comes up: 'But we had all these problems before the New Breed arrived. Why the sudden outcry?' I think the reason we are so much more disturbed is because we have been trained to be aware of social problems. Just as our country has become aware of the poverty of the world, we as young Catholics are sensitive to poverty and wretchedness—spiritual as well as material. Not that an older generation didn't worry and suffer through the depression. But very few Catholics were up in arms about the injustices worked on Negroes, until a few years ago; very few were so disturbed about poverty in South America that they wanted to pack up and go there. We are the kids who were moved to tears and laughter when Dr. Tom Dooley spoke to us about the needs of Medico—and we wanted to follow him to Asia. We are the young people who might have signed up for the Peace Corps if we hadn't entered the seminary or convent. We have accepted the idea that all Catholics have an obligation to the direct social apostolate: we were engaged in settlement work, in YCS, and in Extension projects. We heard the cries of our fellow man

before we entered the seminary or convent, and we cannot now close our ears to those cries.

“In those monasteries and convents where the rules are seen as a help and a safeguard to enable us to pursue an assigned apostolate, you see a great spirit of vitality and enthusiasm. It is where we young subjects feel there is unawareness on the part of authority regarding modern problems, where the rules seem to prevent the community from meeting the real apostolate, that we feel disturbed.

“We hear modern man’s cry for help: we hear the Negro crying for freedom, and we feel we must march with him; we hear young people crying alone at night with their problems, and we feel we must talk to them. Their voices, floating loud and clear right through the walls of our rooms, reach our ears as we lie in our comfortable beds. Those voices haunt us.

“All we ask is that you see the problem as we see it. That in itself would be a great comfort.

“Then, perhaps, we could work at solving it together.”

[FR. MACNUTT, O.P., is president of the Catholic Homiletic Society and chairman of the Department of Communications at the Aquinas Institute, Dubuque, Iowa.] ■

The Other Side of Obedience

by James J. Gallagher

If the lay apostolate is ever to fulfill its partnership with the hierarchy in the divine mission of the Church, it needs a clear understanding of the principle of authority. Yet how many lay leaders actually know in what respects the layman stands under obligation to his pastor or his bishop? Perhaps more important, how many can clearly determine the layman's obligation to the leaders of his own Catholic Action organizations?

No one, of course, denies that the group must be united if it is to achieve its specific apostolic goals. The necessity for clear-cut lines of authority is as readily admitted as is the need for obedience. But, unfortunately, whenever the subject of obedience or authority is discussed, the emphasis is almost always placed upon only two aspects—one negative, the other only half-true.

The negative aspect is easily recognized in the constant repetition of questions concerning the limitations of authority: Under what conditions may the bishop ask for my compliance in campaigns on aid-to-education laws? What are the limits of my obligation to support parish building funds? By what right does the prefect of my Sodality ask me to participate in anti-smut campaigns (and perhaps expose myself to public ridicule for so doing)?

Answers to such questions frequently turn into half-true harangues that "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." The inspiring principle of obedience in the Church of Christ is too often explained only in terms of its obligations upon those who obey. Seldom, if ever, is the other side of the

question considered: namely, the responsibilities of those in authority who issue the orders that others must follow. What will be discussed here, then, is a more responsible attitude on the part of leaders in Catholic Action projects.

In a discussion of this sort it is important, first of all, to recognize that a leader imposes upon himself a weighty obligation when he assumes the function of leadership. Besides knowing when his followers must obey, the leader must also be sure he is giving the kind of orders that can be obeyed. And above all, he must realize that it is his responsibility to develop his followers in such a way that they become both able and willing to render him their obedience.

Experience shows that good leaders give good orders. Good orders are the kind that can—and will—be obeyed. Followers revolt, dissent and become uncooperative when the person ranking over them misuses his authority.

Take as a basic premise the fact, obvious in our current society, that old standards of respect for authority are weakening. We read articles about hoodlums beating policemen, about labor unions usurping the historical functions of management, about corruption in high places in public life and industry. These conditions cannot but show us how anti-authoritarian is today's social climate.

Now it would be wishful thinking to suppose that the social climate of our civilization has no effect on the members of the Church living in it. And therefore, today more than ever before, Catholic Action leaders must understand the necessity of conscious and conscientious application of the responsibilities of leadership in the work of the Church.

Today's social conditions underscore the point (it has always been true) that one of the most important functions of a leader is to develop those under his command. The

leader must develop his followers to the point where they are physically and psychologically capable of accepting and following his orders. He must motivate them so that they respond enthusiastically when an order is issued—and even achieve heights of accomplishment that were not required in the original order. Leaders of men, inside the Church and out, have demonstrated these abilities from the time of Moses to the years of Churchill.

When such constructive leadership is lacking, are failures of the group to be blamed only on the followers? Whose fault is it, for example, when a whole class of students rebels against an unjust teacher; when a whole nation rises against an oppressive ruler; or when an appeal for apostolic action in a Catholic Action group is met with total apathy?

The task of the leader, then, is to be responsible for his followers; responsible for their obedience and responsible for their enthusiasm. It might be expressed in the simple slogan: A leader makes sure that he never gives an order that won't be carried out.

This principle is not the property of any ruling class. It is sheer common sense. It has its place, for example, in the basic training of soldiers. The cadre sergeant does not march his trainees on ten-mile hikes during the first week of training. He builds them up physically. They do push-ups, run around parade fields, rise at early hours and learn to respond instantaneously to simple commands. Such things condition the recruits for battle, so that by the time they are sent out to fight, they have been made into soldiers capable of following orders.

A parent, more benignly and almost instinctively, appreciates this principle in training his children. It would be futile for a father to order his one-year-old child to repeat

the Hail Mary before going to bed. But lovingly he teaches the child first to speak, then to pray, and then to appreciate the daily obligation of homage to God.

Faced with precisely the same challenge of our modern social climate—the breakdown in respect for authority—thoughtful business executives have recognized their obligation to do more than simply supply the tools for a man's work, his quotas for production and his paycheck at the end of the week. Business leaders have re-examined their own proficiency at leadership and developed some sound principles for the operation of modern enterprises. Here, for example, are the tests of a capable manager as proposed by Frederick R. Kappel, president of the American Telephone & Telegraph Co.:

He is able to state a goal and reach it. . . . He reaches these goals by organizing and inspiring the efforts of other people. He is able to lead others in such a way that they find their pursuit of the goals a satisfying experience. Demonstrating his own industry and devotion helps a lot, naturally; people want not only a boss but a man they can admire. . . . His judgment is respected by those whose co-operation is needed. The structure of business is a chain of command, but most people outside of business do not realize how little command is used.

Such is the attitude of a business leader evaluating his own performance with a view to developing loyalty and performance in his workers. Contrast it with the attitude of a man who has not grown into his authority: "Give me results. Never mind how you get the job done!" Yet just such an attitude, we sadly submit, is too often expressed in Church organizations. Whether spoken or implied, it says in effect: "Do it because I represent the authority of Christ—and be-

cause I am telling you to do it.” One questions whether such representation is worthy of such authority.

Look for a moment at the manner in which Christ first structured the organization that endures some twenty centuries later, still carrying out the objectives of its Founder. Obviously, the Church was well organized. How was it done?

Christ, first of all, spent thirty years preparing His own human nature to undertake the task. Then He took three years and more to develop His own managers, the apostles who were to carry on His mission. Patient and persuasive training it was, as we know from scriptural accounts of His indoctrination sessions. The Sermon on the Mount was repeated in a hundred different ways.

Christ explained to His disciples the job to be done. He prepared them to do it, and then showed them by His own example how it could best be done. By word and work. He preached the spirit of love—a love that reached out for sinners, stood fast before kings, dealt kindly and firmly with the repentant.

But after Christ had inspired them with His own unquenchable spirit, He left His followers at last to their own resources. He remained Himself a constant source of strength and courage, but always in the background. Never did He step forward to take direct command from a faltering follower who had yet to test his own self-responsibility.

Such was the leader Christ proved Himself to be. There is no doubt that He showed in His own life and teachings the responsibility that must accompany all authority.

[MR. GALLAGHER is executive director of the John LaFarge Institute, in New York.] ■

The Use of Authority

by John Meany

Christians have a unique view of authority. It is one that Christ Himself discussed:

“In the world, kings lord it over their subjects; and those in authority are called their country’s ‘Benefactors.’ Not so with you: on the contrary, the highest among you must bear himself like the youngest, the chief of you like a servant. For who is greater—the one who sits at table or the servant who waits on him? Surely, the one who sits at table. Yet here am I among you like a servant.” (Luke 22: 25-27)

What might this mean for the Church today?

Yves Simon, in his book *A General Theory of Authority*, has defined authority as “the power in charge of unifying common actions through rules binding for all.” For example, he says, some authority has to decide whether we drive on the right or the left side of the road. Perhaps you may prefer to drive on the left side, but some authority has to determine rules, binding on everyone, for the common good.

To unify the actions of a large group of people so that they may act together as one person is, at least in part, a psychological problem. This is the problem to be considered here, especially as authority relates to the individual’s religious life.

If you are a person with authority, you may have experienced that uneasy feeling of not quite knowing what your subordinates are doing. You may realize that if those who work under you want to sabotage your efforts, one good way is to withhold the information you need to make in-

telligent decisions. To act intelligently, you must be as well-informed as possible about the consequences of various alternative courses of action available to you. You have to depend on your subordinates for both adequate information and adequate implementation of your programs. This is where good interpersonal relationships are important.

Along with your authority comes responsibility to determine *when*, *how* and *how long* you should intervene in the affairs of those for whom you are responsible. As a person with authority you can, for example, 1) choose to intervene almost continuously in the lives of your subordinates, monitoring their every moment like a domineering or possessive mother; or 2) choose to withdraw from close relationships even to the point of abandoning your subordinates, like a father who deserts his family. Or you can avoid these extremes by intervening to assist your subordinates only in such a way as to help them become more autonomous and independent, and so prevent any infantile emotional dependence on you. But what persons in authority choose to do depends on their own very personal values, on what they want and need from interpersonal relationships. Some, for example, stress distance and perfunctory obedience, while others value emotionally warm and intellectually deep relationships.

Are there any rules or guides that a person in authority may use to help him use his authority prudently? One rule or principle whose reasonableness is self-evident has been called the "principle of subsidiarity." It was thus stated by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*:

"Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice

and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought, of its very nature, to furnish help to the members of the body social and never destroy or absorb them.”

A good example of subsidiarity can be seen in the collegiality of bishops, fostered by Pope John XXIII during Vatican Council II. Pope John, respecting the freedom and intelligence of his bishops, built up their autonomy, initiative and responsibility through his acceptance and encouragement of collegiality. His personal philosophy can be seen in his *Journal of a Soul*:

“In order the better to succeed in developing the work and my whole program, I will always remember and practice St. Gregory’s rule, which is to make others work and not keep everything in my own hands. Less important matters are to be assigned to subordinates, more important things are to be dealt with by the superiors, so that the preoccupation with trifles may not, as it were, blind the eyes which should be concerned with the general plan (*Liber Regulae Pastoralis*, II, C. 7). Fortunately, this does not go against the grain with me, and moreover the Lord has given me excellent collaborators.”

Pope John’s profound respect for the person distinguishes the spirit of authority in the Church from the totalitarian spirit of authority found in nazism or communism. In the *Critic* for April-May, 1964, Bishop John J. Wright quoted Pope Pius XII to show the difference: unlike totalitarian regimes, the Church respects “the clear and incontrovertible dictates of conscience” and “the freedom and improvements of the human person.”

The principle of subsidiarity demands that persons in authority should *serve by supplementing, not supplanting*, the freedom, intellectual integrity and personal dignity of those under their authority. Christ washed the feet of those He served. The Pope is called the "Servant of the Servants of God."

Persons in authority should seek the good of those they serve. This good of the person is best achieved by following the principle of subsidiarity, which develops or restores the efficiency, liberty, responsibility, autonomy and reasonableness of those subordinates who are to be served. For example, you show a child more respect by reasoning with him than by demanding blind obedience. Respecting a subordinate's freedom and ability to think is an act of service that tends to promote the co-operation necessary for unifying the common action of a group. It should be obvious that persons with authority should intervene in the lives and work of their subordinate individuals (or groups) only if, *and only so long as*, those subordinates cannot adequately handle their own proper functions. Anything further indicates a lack of respect for their freedom, their essential dignity as persons.

Subsidiarity does not destroy authority, but seeks to liberate it by decentralizing excessive administrative burdens; in this way, a leader is freer to foster the unity necessary for the common action of persons and groups. If a mother, instead of constantly intervening in the lives of her children, gives them more autonomy, she herself is less exhausted physically and remains freer to accomplish other things; and the children do not feel as if their mother is trying to "do their breathing for them."

On the other hand, authorities often wonder if they

should interfere when their subordinates have problems. One cannot always wait until subordinates request help; so an authority must be free to intervene when he thinks it necessary. If the decision for intervention, when subordinate persons or groups are not meeting their responsibilities, were left to the subordinates, only chaos would result. There would be no unity of common actions.

While authorities should intervene for the good of all whenever necessary, they should always aim to restore all possible autonomy to the subordinate persons or groups, in order to free both themselves and their subordinates. Thomas Jefferson once said that if we were to wait for word from Washington as to when we should sow and reap our crops, we would all lack bread. An obvious example of over-intervention by authorities is seen in the highly centralized governments of Communist countries.

From a psychological point of view, if a person in authority tends to take over those functions that more properly belong to his subordinates, he is then, perhaps subconsciously, promoting the very apathy or hostility he would probably like to avoid. When apathy or hostility already exists among subordinates, a person in authority should ask himself if this is in some way the result of his own personal, perhaps unconscious, psychological needs. He should ask himself if he is an "authoritarian personality."

A person in authority can measure his own competence as an authority (and his respect for the principle of subsidiarity) by the extent to which subordinates are able to open their minds and hearts to him. An authority cannot respect the principle of subsidiarity, which implies the sharing of authority and the giving of responsibility, unless he is nondefensive and open to the needs communicated

by his subordinates. Perhaps this is why there is so much current interest among religious in nondirective (or client-centered) counseling as a means of improving communication. If the person in authority is formal, rigid and fearful, subordinates will tend to act toward him in the same way. If he is free and really human, his subordinates will tend also to feel free and reasonable with him and thus to become mature and responsible.

A good superior, like a good parent, keeps channels of communication open without fear, so that in times of crisis the subordinate has someone he knows will really listen to him and care about him. This listening and caring helps the subordinate to see his own uniqueness and freedom. The more a person perceives his own uniqueness and freedom, the more he is forced to unite with others in the spontaneity of love and giving. If this situation doesn't exist, as Erich Fromm says in *Escape From Freedom*, the person "seeks a kind of security by such ties with the world as destroy his freedom and the integrity of his individual self."

One's own personal commitment as a Christian presupposes his freedom. "Freedom," says John Courtney Murray, S.J., "is the capacity of a man to find within himself the reasons and motives of his own right decisions and actions, apart from external coercion." To be free is to be able to love others. A person is free when, unlike the rebel, he can rationally accept authority; this presupposes that he can also accept the emotional feelings—such as anger or dependency—that he may feel toward those who have authority over him. But only in knowing the truth (about ourselves) are we really free.

Apathy or hostility may exist in both laymen and clerics when authorities fail to understand the real needs of their

subordinates; or, on the other side of the coin, when subordinates fail to express their feelings and ideas clearly to their superiors. Psychological slavery results if subordinates slavishly accept the judgments and decisions of their superiors without also making known their own views and feelings. In fact, a psychologically disturbed person is characteristically determined by the judgments of others. Fr. Agustín Ramirez, O.F.M., a psychologist from Mexico, says that a neurotic is like a nation or association that has lost its freedom and is ruled by a clique or a faction imposed on it by a foreign power. For example, scrupulous or obsessive-compulsive persons are overly dependent on the judgments of others. And confessors who continually make judgments that more properly should be made by the penitents really perpetuate or deepen their neurosis.

Similarly in parishes, the apathy or hostility associated with anticlericalism results when pastors do not adequately foster lay participation in parish life and liturgy. Are pastors afraid, for example, to make their views on the new liturgy known to their bishop? Are laymen afraid to make their views known to their pastors? Fear can prevent that act of charity which is to make one's views known; for a bishop or pastor cannot act wisely without knowing the views of those affected by his decisions.

If subordinates in the Church do not make their views known to the authorities in a reasonable way, the Church will foster the development of passive-dependent Christians, who are anything but apostolic. It takes deep courage and a profound charity to offer a different point of view to a superior, especially when one personally feels the superior's authority. This expression of oneself may be difficult; as one priest bluntly put it, the only way he could get through his

seminary was to “put his head down and follow the jackass in front of him.”

A wise authority does not act like the parent who dominates every move and decision of his child, because this will gradually earn the subordinate’s apathy or hatred. Rather, he acts like the parent who provides limitations to his child’s inexperienced freedom. During periods of growth and change, such as we are experiencing in the Church today, the wise authority gives no more alternatives than the subordinate can understand and choose; otherwise panic and fear may result. Like the wise parent, he gives the subordinate all the freedom and responsibility he can adequately handle—but no more.

Yet authorities, like parents, must keep it in mind that a subordinate’s capabilities can constantly increase, just as the authorities’ own personalities can continue to grow by serving their subordinates. Fr. Hans Küng has said (as reported in the *Los Angeles Times* for Oct. 10, 1965): “Pope John was notably less concerned with the vestments of authority than with that inner authority over the hearts of men which he so completely characterized. His own personality was his authority.” Each of us can learn from Pope John’s love for an inner spiritual authority and his desire to serve those under his care.

For authority is service and its psychology is love.

[JOHN MEANY, PH.D., formerly chairman of the Department of Psychology, Mt. St. Mary’s College, is a psychotherapist in private practice in Los Angeles and a staff psychologist of Metropolitan State Hospital, Los Angeles, Calif.] ■

Authority and Fellowship

by Robert O. Johann

If the debate in religious circles about the conflicting claims of freedom and authority has not always been fruitful, the reason lies, I think, in the limited and univocal concept of authority too often adopted by both sides. It has been assumed without question that authority can be defined in abstraction from the sort of community in which it operates. Thus, for example, the preceding article, on the use of authority *in the Church*, quotes a definition of authority that is supposed, apparently, to apply universally and regardless of context. Authority is simply "the power in charge of unifying common actions through rules binding for all" (Yves Simon). This is inadequate.

Authority and community do, of course, go together. Community is something intentional. Persons form a community only in the measure they freely respond to a unifying intention, i.e., to an act intending each of them, not in isolation, but as related to the others. This actual intention of unity, institutionally embodied and acknowledged by the plurality of persons as having a claim on them, is the power that forms community. Such power, in general, is authority.

But a community of persons can be conceived in radically different ways that profoundly affect both the role of authority and the type of response it calls for. For example, community may be conceived either as an end in itself or as a means to something else. In the latter case, we have what may be called *organic* community. This, I think, is the kind of community correlative to Simon's notion of authority. It is not formally a unity of persons, but of actions or

functions. It arises from a co-ordination of all the various functions performed by members of the group to achieve some further good that each one has an interest in but that can be attained only by their concerted efforts. In such community, persons are not united as persons but as workers or functionaries.

In contrast to this, we have *personal* community, where the unity of persons is viewed as an end in itself. Here persons are united, not in terms of their functional relationships to a further goal, but in terms of their very reality as persons. The ultimate good they seek is their loving interrelation as persons, the good of communion and fellowship. To this end, everything else is subordinated. Whatever functional relations are *also* required, e.g., to insure the ongoing life of the fellowship and make possible a common work (N.B., the work here will not be the *raison d'être* of unity but an overflow toward others of the love uniting the members), these relations will be governed in their workings by the exigencies of communion. Thus, while organic community aims at the maximum functional efficiency consistent with the fact that its functionaries are also persons, personal community aims at maximum personal reciprocity and diversifies itself in functions only as needed for such reciprocity.

In communities so different, the formative power of community (authority) is also bound to be different. In one case, authority is indeed the power in charge of unifying actions through rules. In the other, however, it is the power dedicated to unifying persons through love. Instead of seeking primarily to impose order, authority in personal community looks to promote consensus—a genuine thinking, feeling and willing together of all the members. Whereas,

in organic community, the main task of authority is to control and direct the common enterprise through binding decisions, here it is, first of all, to embody and show forth a love that encompasses all the members, and secondly, to offer itself wholeheartedly in the service of their union as a continuing catalyst of concord, a kind of focusing agent for the converging desires of the individual members to be each one for all the others as fruitfully and inclusively as possible.

Moreover, just as authority differs in the two communities, so also does the response it calls for. Since persons are involved in organic community only in terms of an aspect of themselves, namely, their function as workers, their commitment to such community and its head can never be absolute or total. It is quite properly limited to what the achievement of the goal requires. On the other hand, the universal love that animates personal community calls for a total response in kind. Any self-seeking is incompatible with the intention to be wholly for others.

This last needs emphasis today. If, in the light of our distinction, religious authorities are inconsistent when they operate "organically" and still expect total obedience, religious subjects are no less so when they think partial commitment suffices for personal community. In short, the current demand for less legalism and more love cannot be taken one-sidedly. It cuts both ways.

[FR. JOHANN, S. J., teaches at Loyola Seminary, Shrub Oak, N. Y. This essay will be incorporated into a forthcoming book of Fr. Johann's writings, tentatively to be entitled *Building the Truth* (New American Library).] ■

This Thing Called AMERICA

Q What is AMERICA?

EDITOR: *America* is a weekly journal of opinion founded in 1909. From its inception it has been the work of a team of Jesuit priests.

Q What norms guide AMERICA in making its policy?

EDITOR: We take our stand, first of all, on the dogmas of our Catholic faith. We also rely heavily on that part of the Judeo-Christian tradition which is known as the heritage of the natural law. Other points of reference are the insistent social teaching of the modern Popes, the pronouncements of the American hierarchy, and those of other countries.

Q Are you liberal or conservative?

EDITOR: Depending on the points of view of our correspondents, we are blamed for being both, and often in criticisms of the very same article or editorial.

Our purpose is to try unflinchingly to be Catholic — both upper and lower case. Thus, we lay claim to the best in both traditions, that of liberalism and that of conservatism, and explicitly reject extremists in either of the two camps.

Where does this leave *America*? In the extreme center, I suppose.

Q For whom is AMERICA intended?

EDITOR: For men and women who want serious, consistent opinion on the news of the day. *America* is contemporary and specific in content and presents thoughtful commentary weighed in the balance of Christian morality.

The subscription rate is low
\$8.00 for one year
Introductory offer: 22 weeks at \$2.89

Pamphlets on Allied Topics

**RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE
IN CATHOLIC TRADITION**

by Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro

A timely topic discussed in the context of Catholic tradition. (A-14) 15¢

THE MAKING OF MEN

by Arthur V. Shea, S. J., and Eugene Kinkead

The role of a father in the formation of a young man's character. (A-41) 15¢

ONE FOLD, ONE SHEPHERD

This symposium, by leading contributors to the dialogue, evaluates the prospects for Christian unity in the coming decades. (B-64) 25¢

THE NEW BREED

A discussion of what has become a nationally recognized phrase to identify an important segment of the younger generation. (B-83) 25¢

ETHICS OF THE BUSINESSMAN

by Raymond Baumhart, S. J., William J. Byron, S. J.
and John E. McMillin

A discussion of the application of ethics in business, with study aids. (C-75) 50¢
