

mediaeval English mystics, but it cannot be said to have greatly extended or deepened our knowledge of this complex and in many respects obscure subject.

A Pattern in the Mass

SISTER MARY JULIAN, O.P.

Not much of a Red Sea, a mere smudge of holy-water dabbed at in the porch, but in the moment that it takes we have left Egypt, the door has closed behind us like the pillar of cloud and we set out on our journey up the aisle into the domain of the holy, to the mountain of God. The Sinaitic fire burns in sanctuary lamp and candle-flame; the limit of approach is fixed. 'Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy'. To say that is to accept the responsibility of being God's holy people. Far from being merely a self-righteous expression of religious apartheid, it is an appeal to God to implement his choice, to give us the grace to fulfil the priestly purpose of the making of the nation. 'Send forth thy light and thy truth . . . And I will go unto the altar of God'. To be 'distinguished' in this way by God's choice of us in baptism is to enter into the creative pattern, the *opus divisionis*; land emerging from the abyss; light separated from darkness; a separation not destructive but creative. Yet it is not enough to be brought out of the land of Egypt, to have left the sphere of the profane for that of the holy; there is still need for decisive separation from the chaos within oneself, the sin which is the denial of creative relationship with God and one's neighbour. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' There must be confession of sin and absolution to mend the broken relationship and restore us to life. 'O God, turn to us and give us life'. Fear of the holy and confidence in God who gives life achieve a balance between 'Take heed you go not up into the mount and that ye touch not the borders thereof. Everyone that toucheth the mount, dying he shall die', and 'Take away from us our iniquities we entreat thee, O Lord, that with pure minds we may be enabled to enter into the holy of holies'. This balance is stabilised, confident in the three-fold prayer for mercy which acts as preface to the *Gloria*, the three-fold thanksgiving for the glory of

God, the contemplation of the life of the Trinity, particularly in the theophany of the incarnation. The emphasis throughout is on the transcendent glory of God, the holy and the source of holiness; and at the same time on the mercy of redemption which puts us, through Christ, in relationship with the holy. 'For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord. Thou only, Jesus Christ, art most high. With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father'.

The catechumens, having journeyed so far to this manifestation of God's glory, are not to be sent empty away. The pattern is one of pilgrimage, encounter with God, communion and return. They are to meet God in the theophany of the scriptures; they are to be fed in the wilderness with the bread of the Word of God broken for them in the epistle and gospel; to be given God in revelation before the acceptance of the covenant in the creed. Like the covenant of Sinai, the creed is the statement of the nature of God, of the purpose and destiny of the holy people, the Church, in the kingdom of promise, and the acceptance in faith of all that is implied in those two statements. 'I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the world to come'.

Then the pattern begins again, not in repetition but in a spiral of movement taking the whole action to a different level, fixing it at:

A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time,

(T. S. Eliot. *The Rock*).

The prefiguring sign is translated into reality. In the offertory the connection with the creation theme is explicit. The creative act by which natural and supernatural life is given to us is made plain in the prayer which accompanies the pouring of water and wine into the chalice. 'O God, who in creating human nature didst wonderfully dignify it and hast still more wonderfully re-fashioned it . . .' Adam re-created by grace can enter into the creative pattern again and stand as mediator between creatures and God, can dress and keep the paradise; so in the bread and wine the material world is offered to God, brought back into relationship with him. Again it has been by a process of separation; this wine, this bread chosen and set apart for consecration. But now it is not a tithe, or a loaf of proposition; not a token acknowledging God as the life-giver, but a mystery of communion: ' . . . grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of his divinity who in our humanity did not disdain to share'. This was the mystery towards which the ancient cults could only grope in darkness as long as man

could do no more than identify himself through magic and ritual with the fertility cycle of the natural earth.

The maypole and the golden bough,
Toys of old time,
Find flowering now.

The encounter of divinity and humanity realised once and for all in the incarnation is the mystery in which our humanity is to be made, in Christ, 'partakers of his divinity'; every man his own Moses in this meeting with God.

And again, like Moses, we approach the sphere of the holy 'In a spirit of humility and with a contrite heart'. Once more the separation of the sacred and the profane is expressed through water. 'I will wash my hands among the innocent . . . take not away my soul with the wicked . . . As for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me and have mercy upon me'. The sense of personal sin and unworthiness on that account returns once more in the *orate fratres*, a reminder of the mutual need of priest and people for forgiveness which was present in the *confiteor*.

From the preface to the consecration is a movement towards the holy mountain, now a Sinai right outside time, where God is found, transcendent and immanent, and we are taken into a new dimension, into the company of the angels and saints. Yet our own present needs are not forgotten but are put in the setting of the needs of the whole Church; prayed for as being the needs of the Church. As the epistle to the Hebrews puts it: 'You are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels. And to the church of the first-born who are written in the heavens, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel'. For this Sinai too is the scene of the making of the covenant which Christ is both the mediator mightier than Moses and the victim in whose blood the covenant is ratified. By this 'new and eternal covenant' which is the re-creative act of our redemption, we are made the priestly people, having been 'baptised in his death'. And the feast which we, as the priestly people, celebrate in every mass is both passover and day of atonement and the messianic banquet at which we already think of the dead as guests in the 'place of refreshment, light and peace'.

Meanwhile we who in this journey towards holiness are still living as 'pilgrims and strangers', set out on our own journey in a third

repetition of the pattern which necessarily remains incomplete, a pattern in which the movement is worked out on our level, in time, underlining rather than repeating the second movement, but seen in relation to it. It is perhaps possible to see the reference to the creative pattern, the blessing which gives a life that can increase and multiply, in the vague allusion to 'all these good things' which we receive through Christ; 'By whom, O Lord, thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless and bestow upon us all these good things'. The separation from sin is seen again as we prepare for the feast through the prayer of the kingdom, the prayer for daily bread and for forgiveness. It is more clearly present in the *Domine non sum dignus*. And at the same time the covenant theme recurs in the recognition of the Lamb as the sacrificial victim and the acceptance of the law by which we must live as a people united to God: 'Make me always cleave to thy commandments and never suffer me to be separated from thee'. There is no barrier now to approaching the holy mountain. Although we rightly express the awe with which we approach the majesty of God, yet fear is swallowed up in confidence. As the epistle to the Hebrews has it: 'For you are not come to a mountain that might not be touched and a burning fire, and a whirlwind, and darkness and storm and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words which they that heard excused themselves that the word might not be spoken to them'. In this tabernacle, this tent of meeting, we can, like Moses, meet the Lord 'as a man is wont to speak to his friend', confident that through this encounter with God we shall live. 'Let not the participation of thy body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgement and condemnation: but through thy goodness may it be to me a safeguard and remedy both of soul and body.'

After the communion the mass hurries to an abrupt conclusion. This is not surprising, for time is not of any particular importance just then when our whole being, body and soul, is directed towards eternity. 'Grant that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind: and of a temporal gift may it become to us an eternal remedy'. We have to be sent away like that—*Ite, missa est*—because we are meant to realise that the consummation of our communion is not to find its complete expression here and now. This theophany has been veiled in the 'mystery of faith'. We must still expect the final theophany, the coming of the final messianic kingdom for which we have prayed in the *Pater noster*. In this perspective of the pattern there is no way back, only a way ahead into the promised land. There is also another reason

for this dismissal, and here the pattern of pilgrimage to the holy place, encounter with God and communion, finds the return, the fulfilment it is meant to have now; the function of the mediator is to bring back to the people the word of God. Moses came down from the mountain, his face bright with the glory of God, and it is with that work of mediation to do that we return to the world we left to set out on this Sinaitic journey. We are to return to our wanderings, but it is a journey in which we are sustained by the viaticum we have just received. We are still the holy people and the sense of separation remains. Christ prayed for the apostles that they should be in the world and not of it; but not that they should be taken out of the world. And our dismissal at the end of mass is our mission. We are sent back to our Egypt as witnesses of the glory we have seen. The charter of our commission to that apostolate is set out in the last gospel in the description of the work of John the Baptist: 'This man came for a witness to give testimony of the light'.

Reviews

NEWMAN THE THEOLOGIAN, by J. H. Walgrave, O.P.; translated by A. V. Littledale; Geoffrey Chapman, 35s.

Books about Newman have a tendency to fall into one of two classes. Either they display an enthusiasm for the Cardinal which does not really advance our understanding of his work, or they are critical in a way which shows very little evidence of an attempt to appreciate the greatness of his thought and his loyalty to the Church. It is, therefore, a pleasure to find a book about Newman which is at once enthusiastic but informed, sympathetic yet theological. There can be few books which would serve as a better introduction to a serious study of Newman's thought.

The book is a translation of *Newman, le développement du Dogme*, but the English title is a better indication of its subject matter, as the question of development is central to, and involves aspects of the whole of his theology. Theology for Newman was not merely an abstract science but a dedication of the whole personality to the study of the saving truth; and while he quoted with approval the words of St Ambrose that it was not by dialectic that God had been pleased to save his people, he did not conclude from this that theology