

# Response

## The Psychologisation of the Church (contd.)

This is a comment on a comment on a comment (shades of Gertrude Stein). Brian Davies says in his response to Jack Dominion (January, p. 39) 'Mrs Mopp, who can say only that she believes what the Church says, can receive all for which the Eucharist was established'. Under those circumstances, Mrs Mopp will certainly be given the Eucharist. As for receiving 'all for which the Eucharist was established', even Mrs Mopp's non-Catholic neighbours may, since that is—to put it naïvely—a matter for God, not merely for his Church. But is faith really to be defined by the formal grounds for allowing someone to go to communion? In any case, Mrs Mopp's statement of faith seems rather puzzling. If she does believe 'what the Church says', surely she would be able to say that she believes in God and that she believes in Jesus Christ? If she can't say that, then presumably she doesn't know 'what the Church says', in spite of being able to say that she believes in it.

Now if Mrs Mopp does believe what the Church says about Jesus Christ, she does believe at any rate in the possibility of some identification with him. Presumably that is why she wishes to receive 'all for which the Eucharist was established'. To do this with knowledge and understanding and some kind of personal commitment is surely important—which is probably what Jack Dominion was thinking of. After all, a group of people who can say only that they believe what the Church says, without being able to specify in the least what this is or what it implies for them, is hardly the ideal Christian community. And it has little to do with faith in the biblical sense. If we define the Church as the people of God, then Mrs Mopp is part of his Church. And if she believes what it says, it seems desirable that she should be able to say *some* of it. At least it seems desirable that as many people as possible should. Otherwise, who is to transmit this faith? Whether 'psychology' is necessary for this, and in what sense, is another question. For the transmission of faith, and also for trying to live one's own life, it is probably necessary to know something about the way people's minds function.

The statement 'To have Christian faith you need to believe in the creeds' is undoubtedly true—since the creeds are expressions of Christian faith. But is it possible to believe in the creeds—with religious faith—without at least some degree of personal relationship with God, even if this relationship only consists in a *desire for* a personal relationship? Belief in the creeds does not stop at the creeds, its ultimate aim is God. Otherwise, what on earth would be the point—for the Church or for Mrs Mopp or for the authors of the creeds?

**Sr. Margareta Lindblad OP**  
**Schloßbergg. 17, 1130 Vienna**

307