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THE CHALLENGE OF SECULARISM TO RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

Much has been written in the last twenty years about secularisation and its effects on religions and on the Churches. These notes are intended only to offer an introduction to the problem and to provide a basis for comparison of our respective religious experiences.

1. Secularisation is commonly understood as that progressive emancipation of society and culture from the control of institutional religions which has marked western civilisation in recent centuries. The term 'secularism' seems to have appeared for the first time in the programme of the 'London Secular Society' founded by Holyoake in 1846, where it meant a life interpreted and regulated wholly without reference to God and religion. Here is a typically western phenomenon, made up of two forms of historical experience: the Church, the depository of a magisterium and an authority "from above", becomes marginal to life and the coming of the industrial revolution transforms the economic and cultural forms of the old, agrarian society.

But from western Europe the phenomenon has spread almost throughout the planet taking on forms and features which vary more or less according to the religious forms and the types of society it met with.

It is proper then to speak of different 'models' of secularisation existing today. Take for example the notion, fairly common today, of a 'secular state'.<sup>(1)</sup> This is one thing in Italy, another in Great Britain where the queen is crowned by the archbishop of Canterbury, another still in U.S.A, in U.S.S.R, in Turkey, in Israel, in Indonesia, in India, in Mali and Nigeria, these last two being states which, though secular, form part of the Conference of Islamic States.<sup>(2)</sup>

There are then different models of secularization according to the point of departure and of arrival, or if you like according to the types of religious structures which have been done away with in the secular state. Together with this variety of models of secularization there is also a variety of linguistic patterns which express it, patterns and meanings which throw light on this or that particular aspect in the spectrum of secularization: thus we talk of rationalism, of laicism, of scientism, of agnostocism, of atheism, of positivism, of desacralization etc., according to which element stands out in this or that model of secularism. For really secularism signifies many things. It stands in opposition to a sacral world, and invites us to look at things no longer sub specie aeternitatis, or ratione peccati, but to consider them only in their ontological make-up and what they can yield from a temporal standpoint.

According to John E. Smith there are five characteristic marks of the secular attitude - autonomy, technology, voluntarism (and individualism), temporalism and aestheticism<sup>(3)</sup>. We may add pluralism, permissiveness, consumism and other things according to the levels of local cultures, their variety and the choices they offer. It is certain that the secular outlook sets a profane autonomy in opposition to a heteronomy rooted in the sacred, and instead of a subordination of all life and culture to religion it insists on the distinction, the separation, the emancipation of the temporal and the pushing aside, the radical exclusion of religion and of God.

"Dwarf either you or I: Zwerg, Du oder Ich" cries Zarathustra, putting

in the most drastic way the alternatives which will be repeated by all the pundits of secularism.<sup>(4)</sup>

2. Historians have analysed closely the steps which have led progressively to the elimination of the dominant and unifying role of religions in the west. The "naissance de l'esprit laique"<sup>(5)</sup> is assigned to the 13th century as taking shape in the conflict between the state or the commune, both anxious to assert their own 'lay' authority, and the Church which claimed to have 'religious' authority even over political life. It is enough to think of the bull Unam Sanctam (1302) of Boniface VIII: "Oportet temporalem auctoritatem spirituali subici potestati". In succeeding centuries secularization progresses in all fields of thought and life. Secularization of the state and of politics, begun by Marsiglio of Padua who, with the Defensor pacis (1324) lays the foundations of the modern 'lay' state, is continued by Macchiavelli who proclaims the autonomy of politics from all moral law, and by Hobbes who makes the state the source and depositary of all human rights. Secularization of law begins with the renascence of Roman law and continues both with the assertion of Huig de Groot (Grotius) that natural law would be valid "etiamsi daremus non esse Deum" and with the view that the only law that exists is "positive" law of which the state is the origin and guarantee. The secularization of culture and of art of which the first signs are already there in the Roman de la Rose (1260-1280) is completed in the period of humanism and the Renaissance. The secularization of science begins with Nicholas of Cusa, Copernicus and Galileo, who claim autonomy for

scientific knowledge in the face of theology. Finally there is the secularization of philosophy, which detaches itself from theology of which it had been considered the 'handmaid', and makes an independent place for itself, even to the point of setting itself up in opposition to theology.<sup>(6)</sup>

Such a process of secularization did not happen, obviously, without shocks or without opposition from the Church and in general from religious institutions rooted in 'tradition'. But the movement was irreversible and took fire in the great revolutions of the end of the 18th century, when the whole Atlantic area was shaken by a revolutionary fever (America 1770-83, England and Ireland 1780-83, the Low Countries, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, France etc.) If until then euro-atlantic societies were outwardly and officially christian; if institutions, the calendar, feast-days were inspired by christianity; if man, held to be weak and liable to error, lived in the framework of a community, subject to prohibitions, bound to observances which were upheld also by civil legislation (the secular arm) for fear he should fall into heresy, schism, libertinage, sin; if religious differences, for examples those of the Jewish communities were barely tolerated and under social pressures and discrimination; after the revolutions the lay state, pluralistic, secularised, separated from the Church, came to birth. In many societies of former believers the Church even began to be felt as an alien thing and to be attacked. Enlightenment culture recalled man to maturity and to the critical task of sifting every acquisition by subjecting

it to the test of reason, and reason became allergic to everything that savoured of the supra-rational, like divine intervention in history, miracles, revelation, metaphysics and so on. Kant, while he declared reason impotent in metaphysics, called for its mastery over the ethical and the religious; before him, G.E. Lessing reduced revelation to a "pädagogisches Kunstgriff" of reason, which is expressed in 'natural religion'.

In the 19th century the process of secularization passed steadily from the bourgeois élite to the masses, finding a powerful ally in industrialisation primed by technological progress. The same century saw the rise of fiercely anti-religious teachers whose influence is still strong in our generation: Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Freud: expressions like "God is dead", "this old God no longer lives, he is utterly dead", "the god of gaps" (Lückenbüsser) and "I teach you about superman" belong to Nietzsche's "Also Sprach Zarathustra", which for me is the summa of modern secularism and its contradictions. They represent the end of an age-long process, and everything that has been said since, from the "nausea" of J.P. Sartre to the lack of rationality and sense heralded by Foucault finds its roots in this work. According to it man, his reason, his liberty, his activity should not only be freed from the control of religion and from christian or Jewish morality but should proclaim themselves autonomous and free in determining what is good or evil, if indeed it is still possible to speak of evil.

3. What are the social and psychological consequences of this process which has led to the removal of the sacred, of God of the Church from the fabric of society? I will confine myself to a few pointers. Above all the secularisation process, by declaring faith, religion, the Church "irrelevant", i.e. without meaning, has led whole masses to lose taste for and abandon religion, carrying them easily towards indifferentism, agnosticism and practical atheism. In place of absolute Truth and Good to be sought wholeheartedly, mundane and earthly values have been pushed to the fore and absolutized in accordance with capricious scales of value which give privileged status to "consumer goods". At the same time man, freed from a transcendental moral code, wishes more and more to be free and autonomous, rejecting every imposition which could hinder his freedom of choice. Thus is born the ideology of libertarian and anarchical radicalism. At the same time however the secularized world has witnessed the rise and spread of innumerable substitute religions which can be variously identified today in individual and social phenomena which hold the stage such as the cult of stardom, eastern religions, naturism, occultism, astrology, to say nothing of para-religions, utopian or revolutionary ideologies which have captured the imagination of many young people. It seems too that we must put down to the great religious vacuum that creeping disquiet written of by Nietzsche as "grosse Sehnsucht" towards another shore, towards another man.

which, not by accident is one of the main themes of

"Also Sprach Zarathustra"

4. How has the Church reacted to the process of secularization ?

I refer in the first place to the Catholic Church which has taken up a position with condemnations and reproofs which teem in the ecclesiastical documents of the last century, continuing we may say until the middle of the present century. I say so because

on this point too the pontificate of John XXIII marks a turn to a more serene and constructive attitude rooted in profound reasons belonging to the faith itself. Another spontaneous reaction of the Church, at least in some of its parts, was to transform religion, expelled by society, into an inward experience, individual and pietistic, practically dissociating it from any connection with the realities of life and history. A recent work, Parler du salut by Elizabeth Germain, studies the effects in France of the "preaching of salvation" during the period of the Restoration (1815-1830), analysing the sermons preached at missions to the people, the texts of catechisms and the courses of spiritual exercises given to specialised groups. The general impression is one of a decided divorce of religion from the world. A typical hymn entitled "Le Salut" by St Louis Grignon de Montfort (1817) says -

Nous n'avons a faire

Que notre salut.

C'est là notre but.

C'est là notre unique affaire.

We have nothing to work at

But our salvation.

That is our purpose.

That is our only business.

Another celebrated preacher Fr. Croiset asserted in a meditation for the 6th October: "L'esprit de recueillement et de retraite est nécessaire pour faire son salut dans toutes d'états.... tout est piège dans le monde" (7)\* All that, as Fr. Yves Congar observed, resulted in a "religion without the world" to which corresponded a world without religion. You could observe, the distinguished theologian goes on, the absence or inadequacy of the following articles in the enormous ( yet how useful) Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique , 41,338 columns in 15 huge volumes published between 1903-<sup>1950</sup>~~1905~~: under the word Profession there is an article "Professions of faith"; under metier (trade) nothing; under work nothing; under profane(lay) nothing; under family nothing; under woman nothing; under paternity nothing, under maternity nothing; under love, a third of a column divided thus: "love of God cf. charity; love of neighbour cf. charity; self-love, some lines with a cross reference to ambition; pure love cf. charity; but on human love as such, nothing; under the word friendship, nothing. Under happiness, a third of a column with a reference to the article "beatitude"; under the word life and article 'eternal life'; under body an article on glorified bodies; under sex, nothing; under pleasure nothing; under joy , nothing; under suffering, nothing; under illness an article which begins like this "under this word we group various cases of exemption from the law which the sick enjoy because of the bad state of their health".

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\* A spirit of recollection and retreat is necessary in all circumstances to achieve salvation. Everything in the world is a snare.

Under evil there are twenty-five columns; under economy, nothing; under politics, nothing, under power a long article of 103 columns (four times as much as there is on evil) on 'the temporal power of the pope! Under Technology, nothing; under Science another long article divided into four sections: sacred science, the science of God, the science of angels and of souls separated from their bodies, the science of Christ.....but on what we call science, nothing. Under art a long article on primitive Christian art; under beauty, nothing; under value nothing; under person one line; "see hypostasis"; under history, nothing; under earth, nothing; under world, nothing; under layman and laity nothing except an article on laicism stigmatised as a heresy. (8)

5. But that is not the full story of the Church's reaction to secularism. This was much deeper and healthier and began to be expressed in concrete and positive ways from the middle of the 20th century. This was thanks to the biblical, patristic and liturgical studies which were already decisively in train at the end of the 19th century and in the first years of the 20th. Because of these studies the christian faith breathed more freely and not only did not resign itself to secularism but confronted it positively, re-establishing connection with the mainstream of its origins and traditions. In this way it was discovered that the Bible already contains surprising pointers on the theme of secularisation, that is on the intrinsic character of cosmic and human realities, on their relation with the divine and sacred and on the inherent meaning of history which is moving towards an end. According to the Bible, all created reality, from the protological to the eschatological, has a meaning and is in movement towards an end and so is buoyed up by a hope which is not

only individual but social and cosmic.

The first pages of Genesis already demolish the mythological and sacral conceptions of the environment: the struggles, the marriages, the generations, the jealousies, artistic invention, the founding of cities, all these things in the bible are removed from the world of the divine and regarded as part of the human creative patrimony, just as the stars, the animals, the plants, minerals are creatures. They are at man's disposal and form part of his history. There is no need then to recall here the epic struggle of the prophets against the cult of the high places (Bamoth and asherah) bound up with a sacral view of the cosmic forces mythologised under the names of Baal, Astarte, etc., It is the prophets too who protest against the ritualisation of faith and of relationship with God: "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts..... Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;..... Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah I, 11, 14, 16-18)

The reflection of wisdom literature went even farther, with the Psalms, Job, Qohelet (Ecclesiastes), to the point of agreeing on the practical uselessness of worship, of prayer even of pledges to observe God's law.....without however abjuring faith!

Deuteronomy (XII, 15-20) makes no difficulty about allowing the killing of animals for domestic use, departing from the more archaic rules of Leviticus (XVII, 2-6) which made all butchery a sacrificial action requiring the intervention of a priest. In the Gospel the process of secularisation continues: Jesus distinguishes clearly between the things of Caesar and the things of God (Matt. XXII, 21) St Mark notes that Jesus "declared all foods clean (VII, 19)

St Paul exhorts the christians of Rome "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. XII,1) and in St John's Gospel Jesus tells the woman of Samaria that the time is past for discussing which temple to worship in, because "the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John IV, 23). It is known that Christians, like Jews, often paid in blood for their refusal to give divine honours to the deified genius of Rome and of the Empire present in the emperor; similarly Christians and Jews were accused of atheism because they shunned the sacral and mythical emblems with which the society and culture of the time abounded. Both of them claimed, and after much suffering obtained the freedom to act in public and in private in accordance with their own religious conscience.

Today there is agreement in recognising in those pages of Christian-Jewish history the first vindication of the secular conscience in the West; they stand at the foundation of western civilisation.

6. The process of secularisation in this way gave rise to effects which were beneficial to the Church's understanding of herself. She was driven to concentrate on essentials, that is on the proclamation of the religious message, without temporal compromises. At the same time she was helped to recognise the ontological density of cosmic and human realities and to respect their internal laws and their autonomy in their own order. The temptation to find in the bible the answer to everything receded, and the realisation hardened that there were a series of twin principles for the building of culture and of the moral order itself - i.e. faith and reason, revelation and conscience, the religious and the lay sphere. It was thus that Vatican II was able to speak openly of the rightful autonomy of earthly realities

"If by this autonomy we understand that created things and society itself have their own laws and values which man must gradually learn, use and control, it is perfectly right to insist on it. It is not only the concern of our contemporaries - it is in harmony with the Creator's will. It is a feature of creation that all things have their own stability, truth goodness; their inner law and coherence which man should respect, recognizing the methods proper to each of the sciences and arts .....It is right then to regret that habit of mind which has sometimes existed among Christians who failed to appreciate the proper autonomy of science." (Gaudium et Spes 36)

On this point the Church stands apart from Islamic fundamentalism which subjects every expression of life and culture to the binding dictate of the Shariat, whether for the individual or in the social, political and economic order. It is known in fact that the Shariat represents a complete code, of divine origin, and embraces in binding fashion the whole of reality.

Because of all this the distinction has become current in Christian language between secularism and secularity, between laicism and lay status ( or the lay condition) a distinction which suggest that judgement on the vexed process of secularization should not be simply negative. Secularity like lay status " point to the autonomy of earthly realities as against ecclesiastical institutions, and the affirming of their value in themselves apart from any reference to religious or supernatural values.... They have meaning and value in themselves and can be ends worth pursuing for themselves,

even though they must always be subordinate to the final end which is God.... Secularism by contrast ( parallel with laicism) indicates a kind of immanentist and atheist ideology totally closed to transcendence and to religious values....; it indicates the absolutising of worldly and earthly values, the exclusion of God from the world and from life, the rejection of religious values not only as "irrelevant" but as estranging man and the world". (9)

✓ We rule out secularism then and welcome secularity as the serene and positive acceptance of values developed by history and by modern culture, even in controversy with religion, and we do not dream of putting the clock back. Vatican II declared honestly that the Church should listen to the voices of the modern world, from which it can and should draw lessons - even from the voices of those in conflict with it. (Gaudium et Spes No.44)

✓ "In our opinion", we read in a 'Civiltà Cattolica' editorial, "it is necessary to distinguish in modern culture between the values it has gained and its improper absolutising of those values.

There are values in modern culture which constitute a genuine advance for man's freedom, respect for man's dignity and rights, the thirst for equality and justice and hence the rejection of all forms of inequality and discrimination whether political, economic, cultural or religious, the spirit of tolerance, pluralism, the spirit of dialogue, secularity, lay status and the autonomy of earthly realities, the sense of history, the value of historical engagement, the value of the body and earthly realities, the feeling that humanity has a historical

plan to work out to create a more just and peaceful world.

the danger is that these values in modern culture will become absolute and in a certain sense divinised. Man then becomes, as Marx says, the 'supreme being', freedom becomes impatience of every moral principle, reason becomes rationalism, secularity becomes secularism, the historical sense becomes historicism, lay status becomes laicism, respect for the body and for earthly things becomes materialism."<sup>(10)</sup>

7. We thus touch the real point at which secularism is overcome, the tangent of faith and secular realities. There is talk of "just autonomy", or of an autonomy which is not absolute but relative. Relative, not, in the sense of being imaginary or counterfeit or curtailed, but in that it finds its laws written in the fibres of a being which, since it is of the created order, is referable ultimately to God from whom it derives. In this sense we speak of true but 'relative' autonomy, that is recognising an ultimate relation to the Creator and to his purposes for history. Hence it is a matter of finding by the light of faith the ultimate meaning of human and cosmic realities, starting from man and his culture (noosphere) to reach out to the whole ambit of life (biosphere) and, beyond that, to the realm of cosmic matter itself. Nothing that exists in the created universe is of itself sacred and divine, but everything can and should be referred and ordained by man to the Author of creation and redemption. Nothing is sacred, nothing divine in itself, but everything can be 'consecrated'. For man, christian tradition in harmony with biblical data announces the great end of theosis or divinisation which is geared to his transcendental dimension and vocation, manifest in an

unquenchable thirst for the infinite which urges him on and makes him an untiring "searcher after God". For all realities outside and below the human, relationship to God is written into their situation as creatures.

It might be said that secularization, in trying to eliminate religious outreach from things and from history, has really only brought about the collapse of external structures which could be seen to be superstructures or to divide reality into compartments, and has stimulated believers to rediscover the profound and eschatological relation which every being and the whole of history has to God the Beginning and End. This is why for thirty years we have seen a rush of theologies of historical and earthly realities, theologies which someone has drily called "theologies of the genitive". It is enough to cite such enterprises as 'theology' of liberation, of work, of history, of pain, of love, of death, of marriage, of the family, of politics, of economics and so on. These are explorations and essays still partial and sometimes faltering, but there seems no doubt that they are destined to prepare the way for a new and great theological vision - the cogitatio, the expressio fidei in the secularized world.

It is all an effort to give religious belief contemporary expression and to bring it into the spirit of our age which is marked by <sup>the</sup> sciences, by technology, pluralism, ideologies. Believers should find, in faithfulness to their own religious consciousness and to the appeals of contemporary humanity, answers to problems which preceding generations solved by consulting the bible, often in an over-literal

and uncritical fashion; above all, they are called to live, pray and celebrate their own faith in the setting of those realities of life and history in which they find themselves.

8. One other aspect before we finish. Secular society, which no longer numbers faith among its binding demands, has led the Church to examine more closely the existential status of faith, forcing it to point to freedom of choice and complete absence of all external compulsion as the normal and necessary premisses of faith. This was solemnly expressed, though not without much discussion given the many question marks connected with it, in the decree Dignitatis Humanae published by the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965. In secular society the Church asks for nothing more than liberty of religious profession - which is not simply the same as freedom of worship. Indeed it is clear that

"the faith is lived in a religious community, and so requires education in faith. Hence a society which would hinder the Church or religious community, or place obstacles in the way of this its essential task, would be not merely a secular or lay society but secularist and laicist and to that extent a denier of the values of freedom". (11)

But there is more to it than that. It is legitimate to ask the believer who calls for liberty of faith; "liberty for what?" The answer will be; to give social witness to the values implicit in faith itself and to permeate human society and culture with its flavour. Vatican II's decree on religious freedom affirms that

"it comes within the meaning of religious freedom that religious bodies should not be prohibited from freely

undertaking to show the special value of their doctrine in what concerns the organisation of society and the inspiration of the whole of human activity."

But here the question arises: how can this be realised in a secularised and pluralist society without yielding to the temptation to seek to destroy the very foundations of this society and go back to social integralism of a religious mould? The words which count here are dialogue and balance. <sup>Rev. Seek for Non-Believers</sup> As V. Miano wisely puts it:

"In a secularised society it is more difficult for the christian to achieve a just balance between wanting to impose, in the name of faith, solutions which emerge rather from specialised knowledge and analysis(integralism) and sacrificing, through a misconceived respect for the liberty of others, indispensable points of his own vision of man and society, as though the faith had nothing to say in this regard. Secularised society is a pluralistic society, which takes for granted respect for the freedom of others (which has its proper limits in fundamental human rights and in the general welfare) and dialogue between the various elements making up society, but for the christian this dialogue cannot mean losing his own identity; rather it should be a motive for affirming that identity in a spirit of collaboration". (12)

Essential points are touched on here: affirmation of our own identity, respect for the identity of others, dialogue, collaboration, a right balance in coexistence with those who differ from us, search for the common welfare, lucidity about fundamental human rights. But the theme which the Church has put forward with most fervour is dialogue, on which the contribution of M. Buber is undisputed.

Thanks to dialogue the christian and every other religious man can reach agreements and become along with others a promoter of personal and social values for the whole community. I am happy on such an occasion as this to be able to cite as in every way exemplary the offer of collaboration which the Chief Rabbi of Rome, Dr. E. Troff made to Pope John Paul II on February 8th this year: "There are too many things which we have in common in the struggle which we are forced to carry on in the world around us: a struggle to affirm the dignity of man seen as a mirror of the divine image; a struggle for the right to life from the moment when it first manifests itself - recognising as we do that God alone has the right to give it or take it away; a struggle to assert the rights of the family, its cohesion and its morality; a struggle against drugs which kill the weak and the outcasts and for the realisation of a more just society where all can have access to those good things which the Lord has granted to mankind: a struggle finally for human rights and for religious freedom. I am confident that faith in the Lord and in our common ideals will make for an advance in collaboration and understanding between the Jews of Rome and the Church". (13)

Before concluding I would like to allude again to a series of challenges for the expression of the faith in the midst of a secular society: first and foremost it is a question of channelling

- this expression into more flexible and functional structures; of
- renewing the language in which we present the faith and its values;
- of studying ways and contexts for transmitting it in a society less

attached to socially expressed religious signs ( a point on which christians can certainly learn from Jews); of presenting the religious message as an enhancement, a fulfilment of life, liberation and human welfare instead of as opposition, as shackling and alienating; of looking for space for freedom in totalitarian and coercive societies (search for a modus vivendi, for social agreements, for concordats); and last but not least of stimulating a new creativity in celebration and in worship itself so that it may find a true setting ( be "contextualised" in the jargon of the moment) in the life and culture of every society. This creativity should be woven of beauty, truth and goodness, and promote devotion, knowledge and action. Here is a call to manifest the profound vitality of religious faith in the broad setting of the secular city. Alongside worship, often celebrated in the varied forms of association which are dotted about in the secular city, we must bear in mind the phenomenon of voluntary activity for social service, in which young people and whole communities under religious inspiration offer themselves to help those who suffer or who find themselves for any reason in emergencies (the old, the handicapped, drug addicts, victims of natural disaster etc.,). In these innumerable groups of volunteers who offer themselves disinterestedly in the name of their own faith, I would not hesitate to see one of the noblest expressions of religious faith in the framework of the secular city.

P. Rossano.

## NOTES

- 1) Cfr. J.Brown, Men and Gods in a changing World,  
London, SCM Press, 1980, p.11
- 2) The western pattern of the secular state and the condemnations of it can be seen in the recommendations of the 5th meeting of the Human Rights Seminar in Islam (Kuwait, Dec. 9-14, 1980)  
"As there is no such religious establishment (like the Church) in Islam, and as all authority is delegated by God, the Conference draws the attention of Muslim states who have opted for secularism to the fact that in doing so they have misinterpreted Islam and wrongly regarded it as similar to the Churches in the West".
- 3) J.E.Smith, Experience and God, New York, Oxford University Press.  
1968, p.480 ss.
- 4) F. Nietzsche. Also Sprach Zarathustra, III,I, Augsburg  
Goldmann Verlag 1980, p.127
- 5) Cfr. G.de Lagarde, La naissance de l'esprit laïque au déclin du Moyen Age, Louvain-Paris 1956
- 6) G. de Rosa, Indifferenza religiosa e secolarizzazione, in L'Indifferenza religiosa, as edited by the Secretariat for non-believers, Rome, 1978, p.131
- 7) E.Germain, Parler du salut? aux origines d'une mentalité religieuse, Paris, Beauchesne, 1968, p.14-15
- 8) Y.Congar, "Situation Ecclesiologique au moment de "Ecclesiam Suam" Seminaire sull' encyclique "Ecclesiam suam" organized by the Paul VI foundation, Rome 1980
- 9) G.de Rosa, Lc. cit. p.132
- 10) Civiltà Cattolica, Fede cristiana e mondo moderno, 15 marzo 1980, p.529-30
- 11) V.Miano, Missione della Chiesa in un mondo secolarizzato, in Evangelizzazione e cultura. Atti del Congresso Int. scientifico di Missiologia, 1975, Vol. II, Rome Pont. Univ. Urbaniana, 1976, p.490

## NOTES

- 12) V.Miano, *Id.*, cit. p. 491
- 13) *Osservatore Romano*, 9 February 1981

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- 1) p.6 six lines from the end:  
the cult of stardom . This stands for the useful but not easily translatable Italian divismo which designates the kind of quasi-religious adulation accorded (usually popularly) to leading figures in the cinema, television, sport, etc., but also sometimes to political and religious personalities.
- 2) passim  
lay status. This stands for the Italian laicità, which designates not a theory or doctrine so much as the condition of a society in which the laity and lay concerns are given a proper autonomy and independence. It entails no opposition to religion, whereas laicismo laicism, is a doctrinaire attitude which in its extreme form opposes and rejects religion as 'irrelevant', etc.,