

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY OUTLINE ON THE LECTURES

1. THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST AND THE LAYMAN

a. The Mystical Body.

- The Mystical Body is Christ in us: the Church. We live with the very life of our Lord.
- We are, as it were, his body. We are called to co-operate in and to carry on his work of redemption. In us our Lord's incarnation is continued; and he has given us the privilege of being instruments in his offering.
- With him, in him, we suffer and have joy. He is the vine and we are the branches. Without him we are nothing.
- As members of the Mystical Body, our prayer is Christ's prayer and our love is God's.
- Everyone is a potential member of the Mystical Body.
- The human mind yearns for unity and wholeness, but does it dare to seek for it?
- To live the life of the Mystical Body is a prolonged act of daring.
- And yet we are called to this life, gently, precisely, individually.
- Each person has a part to play which no-one else can play for him.
- God's love, which is the living force in the Mystical Body, works its way rhythmically. Thus our life flows from the Liturgy, prayer, to the apostolate, work in the world, and back.
- The central fact, the central act, of the Mystical Body is the Mass.

b. The Layman.

- There are widely differing vocations within the Mystical Body.
- The lay person can, on the whole, be contrasted to the ascetic. The ascetic makes his way to God by renouncing the world and the things of the world. The lay person works in and through the world,
- A layman's asceticism is not renouncing but using things well.
- By means of his joyful and unselfish appreciation and manipulating, and through his sympathy and teaching, he brings his world back to God.
- The layman's is par excellence the work in the world: 'Thou hast sent me into the world on thy errand, and I have sent them into the world on my errand'.
- And today, when so much has to be won for Christ, when Africa has to be won for Christ, the layman is all-important. The changing of the masses, the christianizing of civilizations, this cannot be done by priests alone.
- Yet this work, again, is useless without the priest, without the Mass.

c. Christianity and Culture

- It has often been said that Christianity is a Western religion because it has come to Africa with Western culture.
- Christianity is not a Western religion. Western culture (or what is most valuable in it) is Christian.
- Western culture is, so far, the only culture which has Christianity at its roots, in its very being. Thus there are some Christian attitudes (for example, the respect for women) which we may be in danger of thinking of as merely Western.
- But this is only the beginning of the Christian era. Christianity is not in itself either Western or non-Western. And certainly it has nothing to do with Western shortcomings.



- Nor is Western Culture, potentially, superior to other cultures.
- Christianity may permeate and lift up what is rich and good in any culture. Indeed what we now call Western culture can be said to have begun when Christianity welcomed and transfigured what was valuable in the cultures of the Romans and of the (so-called) Barbarians.
- So to Africa waits to be christianized.
- The work of a whole, holy layman, then, is a miniature of the Church's work in and through a culture.
- Moreover, the culture itself is not merely an instrument of the Church's spiritual work. It is valuable in itself, with its customs, its art, its techniques, its materials.
- All these things, are essential to God's kingdom.

2. THE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AFRICAN STUDENT

Every level of human activity is important.

Every worthwhile human activity represents a striving for value and wholeness. The very conception of wholeness of any kind is a challenge to us.

To be responsible is to respond, to take up a challenge - to act lovingly and creatively in that particular sphere.

'To be a man is to be responsible.'

A student works in society for the good of society.

He also works in the university, which is a training-ground for society.

He also works in the university for the good of the university.

The layman, especially the university layman, and more especially the university-trained layman in Africa, is called to many spheres of action; he lives many lives.

And everywhere he is building, building the earthly kingdom in preparation for the Second Coming.

The spiritual life - participation in the liturgy and the apostolate - rules over and permeates all a man's other lives. But it does not cancel them out; a holy layman's life is whole. (The words 'holy' and 'whole' are connected.)

Thus:

A man lives and acts in a family: here he is needed in many ways.

He has his life and service as a professional man.

He lives in society - a society in which many people are despised or underprivileged or badly treated.

He lives in a state where politics are important. The different parties, mingling as they do truth and corruption, are his close concern. He may even help to start a Christian party.

He lives, perhaps, in a town, with its municipal affairs which may well call for his active participation.

He lives in a world where there are many bitter rivalries and a great deal of corruption. Is there anything he can do about this?

He lives in a world where cheap magazines and mass advertising are beginning to debase men's standards of judgement.

Many of the encyclicals of the recent Popes have dealt with such secular matters as these; for example, there are the encyclicals on the problems of urbanization, on the family, on the future of Africa (Fidei Donum), on films and the press, etc.

As a man, the lay person works for mankind. As a Christian, he brings Christ to all or to several of these spheres of human activity: he works for God and man.

He may even spread his ideas by writing, by the press, by broadcasting. The whole of our society waits to be christianized.

3. THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

'The university is a community of masters and students, dedicated to the things of the mind, and a radiating centre of intellectual life for the benefit of the national community; it works in that atmosphere of freedom which is proper to all culture.'

Consider this definition closely, paying attention to every phrase. (Some of its implications are worked out in the questionnaires which follow.)

University people are the leaders and the future leaders of society.

The christianizing of the university itself and of its members is one of the greatest adventures presented to us.

Moreover, the first universities in Europe were Christian. The atmosphere of almost every university today is unchristian.

The life of the university flows into society, on the whole, through the professions.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

Background material for these subjects

- a. The General Secretary's Report on Africa.
- b. Pax Romana's publication 'The Mission of the University': obtainable from the Secretariat in Fribourg.
- c. The material which Pax Romana sent to its federations, earlier this year, on the question of civism.
- d. Personal observation and experience.- of conditions in your university and in your part of Africa.

Also note:

The following questions are intended simply as guides to the study of some of the problems which will be discussed and worked out at the Seminar. Most of the questions cannot be given simple answers. They should perhaps be considered and pondered deeply by every Catholic student society and above all by the individual students who will be attending the African Seminar.

4. THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AND THE STATE

If the state watches over the lives of its citizens, and if, moreover, the state subsidizes universities, how can a university have, or expect to have, autonomy?



What is meant by 'university autonomy'?

Does the work of a university require complete autonomy - freedom as to the choice of subjects to be taught, of lecturers and of students? If so, why? Would a state be harming itself if it were to impose restrictions on the work of its university or universities?

In what ways is a university essential to a state?

Should a university, as a community of lecturers and students, be concerned with party-politics? Should it be concerned with political questions at all?

Should a university, as such, concern itself with social questions? In what way?

What are the specific problems raised in the relationship between the African university and the government of the country in which it is situated?

What is one to think of nationalism? Should a Catholic layman work vigorously in the cause of nationalism or should he at all costs keep clear of it? What has been the Hierarchy's attitude to this?

The state should be the servant of society. Has there sometimes been a tendency for the state to become an end in itself?

Attempt a definition of 'state' and 'society'.

5. THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

'Clearly the university should be a centre which formulates and discovers and gives out new ideas, which preserves what is good in the old ideas and which produces men and women educated in every branch of learning - all of this to the glory of God and (which is the same thing) for the benefit of society.' Do you agree with this statement? What would the average student at your university think of it?

'The university, in order to function well, must obviously be a little apart from the rest of society (for example, it is generally agreed that a residential university is ideal, and study requires silence and peace); yet, at the same time, the university must never lose sight of society; it must not become an ivory tower.' Do you agree? Has there been any danger of the African university becoming either too close to or too distant from society?

Should students feel responsible to society? Does the average African student feel responsible in this way, or is his eagerness to pass his examinations merely, or largely, selfish?

'A student studies because it is his vocation (and thus he fulfils himself in God's eyes) and, equally, because his learning and skill will be able to help his fellow men fulfil themselves'. Do you agree with this? Do things actually work out in this way? Is it hypocrisy to say, in this case, that what is best for oneself is also best for one's neighbours?

In what ways can a university be said to be of value to the society in which it exists?

Is the African university aware of its responsibilities to society?

Obviously the sciences are of value to society. In what way are the arts subjects useful? For example, is a thesis on a poet useful to society? If so, how?

Do Catholic students in Africa feel that they have a responsibility towards their non-Catholic as well as their Catholic fellow men? Do they see their intellectual responsibility as going hand-in-hand with their spiritual responsibility?

Has your Catholic student society - and have your other student societies - realized the importance of such questions?

If it is the university's task to serve the society in which it is situated, is the present system of having a special relationship with a university in Europe desirable? Does it mean that African university work is too little adapted to the needs of African society? Is the system worthwhile because it ensures high academic standards?

Some parts of Africa are beset with racialism. Is it possible to understand and to sympathize with the mentality of a racially prejudiced person? How can racialism be combated?

6. THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AND RELIGION

The first universities in Europe, it must be remembered, were virtually founded by the Church. Do you find this surprising? Is studying essentially connected with religion?

Has it sometimes seemed to you that the Church in Africa regards studying at a university as something of only minor value?

Can one be a Catholic and a university student - have the truth and be searching for the truth at the same time?

Nowadays most universities are 'neutral' universities - they are not especially connected with any religion.

Can a Catholic student develop fully in a neutral university milieu?

Do you consider there are advantages in having a Catholic University?

What, in practice, is the attitude of most lecturers and students to the Church? And to other churches?

How do most Catholic students regard the Church:

Do they see it as something harsh and over-dogmatic and dictatorial?

Do they see it as something which calls them to a task of love?

Should not religion be a merely private matter at university?

Is Christianity a lively and respected force in African universities?

Do you think it will ever be possible to Christianize the neutral universities in Africa? Also, does 'Christianize' necessarily mean 'convert everyone to Catholicism'?

7. THE APOSTOLATE IN THE UNIVERSITY

To be a Christian is to be an apostle; to love is to wish to include all in the unity of this love.

A Christian student or lecturer brings Christ into the university and offers the university to Christ.

It is not easy to be a Christian and an apostle in a modern university. Thus Catholics form into a community - a society or club.

The Catholic student society aims to be a christianizing and humanizing influence in the university and it aims to deepen the faith and the full formation of its members.

With its chairman and committee, and with its funds, it can do much. The committee works closely as a team. It tries to reach every Catholic in the university. It brings members together (Catholics and anyone else interested) in spiritual, intellectual and social functions: love, knowledge, joy.

Its public meetings - talks, discussions, symposia - bring Catholicism before the whole student body.



Nothing is more valuable to the life of the student body than a vigorous Catholic society. Its members join in university functions of every kind (both because of the value of these things in themselves and because all is to be won for Christ): student societies, student politics, academic matters, sport, social life. Above all, Catholics are to be competent, hard-working students.

The point from which all this radiates is the society - the Christian student community, Unless students live the Mass, the whole work is useless. Also the society is not a clique, not closed; always it turns outwards. Yet its members help one another a lot.

Each society is a cell in its federation. Each federation is a cell in Pax Romana.

The university 'atmosphere' is usually something sluggish, hard, mediocre. It is difficult for individuals to penetrate this by themselves. So more specific apostolic work in the university is done by (one or more) small groups or teams, which work on behalf of the society.

A 'group' must have a specific task: its members will be those who feel the urgency of the task. It may concentrate its attention upon presence and action in a certain faculty or faculties of the university, in a certain student society or in all student societies, or it may be a study-group (merely studying certain facts or problems and leaving the action to individuals).

In a sense, a group is a society in miniature. It is fairly small and therefore its members know each other closely; again, it cannot be turned-in on itself.

The effectiveness of a group depends upon its community life. It has a joyful atmosphere of its own: this is to combat and to penetrate the atmosphere of the university.

The members of the group meet as often as is convenient and they pray, study, work and relax together: they challenge, confirm, form, enrich one another, each person not stifling but developing and contributing his or her individuality.

A group has a chaplain and a leader. The leader keeps the group rooted to its task, and he thinks ahead of the others. The leader does not impress his ideas on the others; he expresses the others. And all must be leaders in their own way within the group and within the sphere in which it is working.

A group exists for the people and the structures it is trying to christia- nize and only incidentally for itself.

Specialized groups of this kind need to be trained. If such groups are to spring up in Africa, leadership training courses must be organized, as they have been organized in other continents.

9. PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

The life of the university flows into society through the professions.

A profession is both a vocation and a service to society.

In order to become valuable professional men, students need a tough and complex formation. Most universities make no attempt to provide this. Therefore the Catholic society and its group or groups do it.

Different types of work in a university constitute the most living form of professional formation. But study, discussion, talks from experienced professional men, are necessary.

A man in the professions must understand the delicate implications of all that he does.

Can students begin to attain to such understanding?