Questionnaire
27-10-76

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1. Please describe briefly the present state of philosophy and of philosophical studies in your country or region: tendencies, schools, impact, importance given to philosophical studies, etc.

There are 18 universities in Australia, with about 150 full-time lecturers in the departments of philosophy. There would be about 10 more in departments of History and Philosophy of Science. There would probable be another 50 teaching philosophy to future secondary school teachers in tertiary institutions distinct from the universities. In the seminaries there are about 20 priests lecturing in philosophy, in about 8 centres.

In the six universities in New Zealand there are about 40 lecturers in philosophy. I think there are 4 in the two seminaries.

There is a remarkable degree of communication between the university lecturers. They meet together for a week annually, and much more frequently in each centre. Thus I myself know about 60% of them and have attended lectures by about 45%. The long discussions after each such lecture have enabled some degree of consensus to be built up - at least to the extent that positions are continually, if gradually, being modified to allow for afguments that have been put up against them during the last twenty years or so.

The topics, method and viewpoint would be similar to those in British philosophy and in those American universities that are in close touch with British philosophy, and indeed most of these lecturers have done graduate study, lectured or spent sabbatical leave in one or both of these ccountries. Thus Quine, Austin, Popper, Strawson and Wittgenstein have had a big influence on their thought. Perhaps the most prominent local names would be those of John Passmore, David Armstrong and J.J.C.Smart.

The materialist theory of mind has strong support, though it has a few opponents as well, and this and determinism have made a considerable impact on the students. Atheism is fairly widely accepted, though not advocated as strongly as it was twenty years ago. In two of the universities a few years ago the departments of philosophy rather unexpectedly began to teach and advocate Marxism. During the last ten years a few courses in contemporary European philosophy have been introduced, but it is not yet studied at great depth.

Very few of the seminary lecturers in philosophy have published anything apart from their doctoral work. Many attempted for a few years to make contact with the university philosophers but most were too heavily involved in teaching and other seminary duties to be able to afford the time required for study of the rather specialized issues being discussed. One has transferred to a university lectureship, and another priest is in a fairly senior position in a university department. There are, however, about three ex-priests and as many ex-seminarians now lecturing at universities, though none of these were lecturing in seminaries and only one has a doctorate from a Catholic institution.

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2.1 Against this background, describe the present state of Jesuit philosophical studies in your region, as to extent, content and method.

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The last three-year course in philosophy terminated in 1969, and the last two-year full-time course in philosophy terminated in 1972.

Since the beginning of 1972, those Jesuits who have completed their noviceship have either been going to a university or similar institute for secular studies, to be followed by six years of combined philosophy and theology at Parkville (with a break for regency), or they have been coming to Parkville for a six-year combined course in philosophy and theology, with a break (normally after two years), for secular studies and regency. The courses are adapted to each individual, but they would normally include one or two subjects in philosophy per year until a total of six subjects has been reached, which is taken as equivalent to two full years of study.

The teaching has been done by Fr Cowburn, Fr Begley and Rev. H.Wardlaw, a Presbyterian Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at our United Faculty of Theology. I returned to the teaching of philosophy at the beginning of this year, after three years in pastoral work. Fr Begley has now moved to India, and Fr Cowburn is going to New Zealand at the end of this year.

The content has been made up of the issues relevant to theology concerning knowledge, the nature of man, the existence and nature of God, the meaningfulness of language about God, and the basis of ethics. General Sociology and the Sociology of Religion are also available (taught by Fr Noel Ryan) and are included among the philosophical subjects. The method could be described as a presentation of the main views on these issues and a critical examination of the arguments.

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2.2 In comparison with the situation before CG 31 (1965) do you notice a decline, a simple change, or even an improvement of philosophical studies? What do you think are the reasons for this phenomenon?

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There was a definite improvement in the philosophical studies as a result of a thorough reorganization of the course and methods in November 1965, and this lasted for four years. The vernacular was introduced, the thesis method was followed far less rigidly, new topics were treated and some old ones dropped, lectures were reduced in number, more written work was required of thestudents, including written examinations of a type corresponding to the general usage in our country (although oral examinations were continued), more flexible special courses were introduced for the third-year students, and students were invited to widen their reading, under individual guidance. The three full-time lecturers were retained, with about two others to give part-time help.

There was a decline due to the shortening of the course of philosophy to two years for those who commenced studies in 1968 orlater, and to the decision to spread the philosophical subjects among the theological subjects for those who commenced studies in 1972 or later. Few of these students have yet done much ecclesiastical study, as they have been engaged in secular studies and pastoral work, but the decision made possible a dispersal of our teaching staff, with the result that I will be the only Jesuit lecturing in philosophy during 1977 and 1978, with the prospect of another in 1979 and another in 1983.

The students of philosophy and lecturers were reasonably satisfied with the course as renewed in 1966, but many other members of the province had what I consider the mistaken beliefs that they had gained little themselves from the study of philosophy, that philosophical subjects were not capable of the sort of up-dating that was hoped for in theology, and that the "integration" spoken of in Decree 9 n.21 would be impossible if philosophy preceded theology. A few also held the view strongly that philosophy imposes a system and that systems are harmful.

One hopeful sign is that our incoming students are quite interested in philosophy and are ready to do the amount prescribed.

One great advantage of the combined course is the ease with which the lecturers in philosophy and theology can now associate with each other and enter into discussions, whereas formerly they were in distant institutions.

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3.1 In the light of what you think to be the nature of philosophy (and of theology) can you state clear reasons why philosophical studies should be a necessary part of preparation for the priesthood and/or the training of a Jesuit?

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The study of theology seeks to bring about that deep personal understanding of the Christian revelation which enables us to express it in terms or actions that carry meaning in our own culture, or in the culture to which we have a mission; it must be an understanding as deep as may be reached by an educated man today, relying on the chief expressions of such understanding as has been gained in the past and handed on to us by Scripture, Councils, Church Fathers, theologians, and the living Church.

A priest who preaches from parts of scripture, or a contemporary theological book, or an analysis of the needs of his congregation, without that personal theological understanding, is really still acting as a lector.

Philosophy is the search, at least rudimentary and implicit, for the ultimate explanation of all things, and the preliminary expression of this by metaphysical categories, based on an understanding of one's own conscious activities, as established by searching criticism, and adopted as a personal orientation.

More briefly, it is the subject in which, when you are presented with a question, you postpone the search for an answer until you have formulated a series of more basic questions.

The aim of studying philosophy is to gain a personal appreciation of the most basic questions that can be asked concerning the world, man, and God, and an acquaintance with the range of answers that great thinkers have given to these, along with their strengths and weaknesses; to realize how these answers have influenced more practical contributions to knowledge and action, and to recognize which of these answers is operative in any current thinking, especially in such fields as theology, history, sociology, science, and the common sense of one's local culture.

Without such philosophy a priest's theological understanding will be less deep, less extensive, and less appropriate to contemporary needs.

In a homogeneous Catholic culture where all the institutions had been integrated with Christianity it would probably be possible to produce a good priest with very little philosophy; in a time of change or in a hostile or apathetic intellectual climate the proportion of philosophy to theology would have to be very much greater.

The Jesuit should be ready to exercise an apostolate in a wider range of environments than many other priests, and among people who are making a greater impact (for good or ill) on contemporary life, or who are less open than usual to the message of Christ, and so he has an even greater need for philosophy.

Briefly, a priest needs philosophy for orientation in all his studies, for depth in his theology, and to be able to communicate with secular man.

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3.2 Do you think that philosophical studies for Christians and/or especially for candidates for the priesthood should be different from philosophical studies "tout court", and if so, why?

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Yes, special courses in philosophy are needed as part of the preparation for priesthood.

In any subject taught anywhere the lecturer (or textbook writer) has to make a drastic selection of topics to be treated. This selection colours the whole course in that subject. He makes the selection in the light of some particular viewpoint (whether he is explicitly aware of it or not), or some particular aim.

One such aim could be purely academic - to advance the subject by investigating topics of interest simply to the lecturer himself. This is indispensible, but normally requires more leisure than is available to the majority of students who are being educated for a particular vocation.

Thus there are books today on Physics for Medical Students, Mathematics for Engineers, Commercial Law for Accountants, and German for Scientists. Each of these has to follow the principles of the first-named subject, and will be criticized if it departs from them (e.g. in sacrificing mathematical rigour), but it has also been co-ordinated into a fuller programme in the light of knowledge of the second-named subject.

In the same way the philosopher can well (and quite legitimately, though retaining the autonomy proper to philosophy) select the topics or themes or texts that he sees will be of importance to theology. The theologian, too, can select for fuller treatment the themes that he judges to be of importance for preaching to the modern world.

In secular universities, and probably also in Catholic ones, other principles of selection can rightly be followed. This would make study there far less useful or far too lengthy for the majority of candidates for the priesthood. Of course, contact with these universities should be maintained, especially by the lecturers, and they can be a valuable part of further education when time is available.

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4.1 In view of the answer to question 3.1, what does the study of philosophy involve in relation to content:

4.11 Is there a necessary (minimum) content for the philosophical studies to be done by one who will be a priest and a Jesuit?

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Yes. It could perhaps be summed up as a familiarity with the basic concepts (and the ways of identifying these), as well as the main problems, arguments and points of view, in epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of man and society, and the philosophy of God.

A course which is too short not only fails to achieve the aims set but can have a negative effect, by a sort of immunization against genuine philosophical reflection.

The basic content could be described in many different ways and covered by different types of courses. For instance, it could be centred on Interpretation, with exercises aimed at identifying the main powers required and procedures used in interpreting the physical world, conscious life, human interaction, historical relics, literary and religious texts, moral and religious experience, local culture, and the like.

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4.12 Is a thorough presentation permitting an understanding of Marxism an essential element in the preparation of priests today?

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Yes. Contemporary culture in all countries has already been greatly influenced by Marxist thought, and so could not be properly evaluated in relation to Christianity without an understanding of that thought.

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4.13 What is the place (if any) of the human sciences, and their relationship to the study of philosophy?

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Like the physical sciences, psychology and sociology (and the other social sciences) stand in great need of philosophical reflection, provide much information that is important to the philosopher, and have had a major impact on contemporary culture. All lecturers in philosophy should therefore have a reasonable knowledge of them, and there should be some in each faculty who have studied them thoroughly.

As they are not in themselves philosophical subjects, and do not directly help towards a philosophical orientation, they should not be presented as major subjects in philosophy, but in short courses that introduce students to their main concepts. There would be more room for this if three years were available, as before, for an integrated course in philosophy.

Some Jesuits should, or course, do full secular courses in these subjects, just as some Jesuits study literature, history, economics, and the physical sciences.

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4.14 In case you would prefer different philosophical studies for those who do not have philosophical talent, or whose studies are directed to other fields than professional philosophy and theology, please indicate what should be a minimum content of such studies.

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The basic two-year course outlined above should be required of all students for the priesthood. My experience in nine years of teaching Jesuit scholastics or diocesan seminarians (as well as six years with university students) has been that there are very few students who lack the talent for philosophy.

Failures and dissatisfaction with the subject that have been ascribed in the past to lack of philosophical talent can in many cases be explained through faulty presentation or bad planning of the syllabus, for instance: presentation of "answers" before questions have been appreciated; reliance on quotations from other writers; complicated theses that have evolved gradually to deal with particular objections until they have lost contact with the central issue; definitions, concepts and distinctions that are used in inappropriate contexts;

lack of assimilation of the subject by the lecturer; too much material crammed into each subject; addition of new subjects to the course without equivalent lightening of the study load in other subjects; disputations that have been performed as a mere routine; lack of time for private study or for genuine discussion; the rule that even private discussions among students during study time should be in Latin.

If the lectures are aimed at the great majority of the students, those with greater scholastic ability in general need not be bored, as they can be stimulated to probe more deeply with their questions and to seek greater clarity in expression. They can also be invited to study directly the classical writers in philosophy, not excluding Aristotle or Aquinas. Once an atmosphere of genuine discussion has been created in a class, valuable contributions can come from both weak and strong students.

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4.2 In the light of the answer to question 3.1, what does the study of philosophy involve in relation to method:

4.21 What method (of thinking rather than of teaching) should be used in the philosophical formation of our men?

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The method of thinking should consist in the identification of problems, the formulation of these, the search for deeper questions, or questions on the presuppositions of the initial questions, the limits to such questioning, consideration of some classical answers, analysis of these, individual formulation of conclusions, comparison and discussion of these.

If "method of thinking" here refers to such philosophical methods as "the way of ideas", critical method, eclecticism, so-called "scholastic method" (standard thesis, definitions, proof, objections), transcendental method, phenomenology, linguistic analysis, structuralism, then allowance should be made for the background of the lecturers, the common practice in the country concerned, the interests of thestudents, the degree to which such methods have been applied to theology, and the effectiveness in teaching. Different methods can be used in different subjects, or in different topics within one subject. But no such method should be used in a way that hinders inquiry or participation by the students, or makes the subject remote, abstract, or formalistic for them. The real issues must always be kept in mind.

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4.22 Is there a minimum knowledge of philosophical methods necessary for a priest and a Jesuit?

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As far as I can see this is not of great importance. Provided that the student is trained in the sort of open inquiry I have mentioned above, the methods to which he is explicitly introduced can vary according to the practice of the country he is in. Ability to recognize methods, however, can be a useful means of freeing students from subservience to them.

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4.23 In what sense (if any) should the philosophy taught to ourscholastics be systematic?

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In the sense that aims at consistency (by striving to avoid contradictions) and communicability (by being ready to give definitions and make distinctions where necessary), both within philosophy and between philosophy and theology.

Students should be led to the most basic questions and problems and solutions, so that they have a basis for seeking coherence in other questions. Lecturers should be aware of what is being presented in other classes, should be able to take an active part in philosophical discussions - among Catholics, and in their own secular (and religious) environment - and should strive to integrate their philosophical knowledge with theology.

The students should not be left to flounder by themselves in attempting to integrate what they are taught in different subjects, and there should be frequent opportunities for discussion in the whole philosophical (and theological) community.

The philosophy should not be "systematic" in the sense that is pejorative (and sometimes misapplied). The students should not be taught a system that they have to learn off by heart, or that is presented without its key insights, its sources, its relations to other systems or views. Nor a system that is isolated from other streams of thought (in other subjects studied, in Catholic philosophy, in theology, or in general philosophical life). Nor a system that is so complex that it becomes itself a challenge to the understanding, so that successful students can be led to believe that they understand reality by means of the system, whereas what they understand is merely the formal system itself, with its sets of definitions and theses, detached from the matter it could be applied to.

Perhaps the very strong objections to anything that could be described as a system are generated less by a mistrust of coherence and clarity in themselves than by a more basic mistrust of anyone who knows where he stands or who has a definite view of life, or whose thoughts have been fully thought out. Such a person is admittedly in a position of power, so that if he is wrong his endeavours may do harm to the world (or to theology, or religion, etc.).

Against this objection it may be argued
(1) that if such a person with a coherent view of the world (whether logically formulated or not) is largely right, then he can do a great deal of good,

(2) that constructive work in the world may need such people, so that those who could reach a valid and coherent viewpoint but neglect to do so are sinning by omission,

(3) that no one can possibly avoid having <u>some</u> definite view of the world, and of one's place in it (even if it only be that one must change one's view every week), and

(4) that an unexamined and uncritical viewpoint can be the source of just as much harm as a well-thought-out one.

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4.3 How do we maintain intellectual coherence for philosophical studies without denying freedom to philosophical inquiry and to teachers of philosophy? What pluralism in systems and methods in any one faculty is compatible with this coherence?

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By urging greater freedom and more open inquiry. The Catholic faith can never be contradicted by inquiry, but only by assertions that may seem to stem from that inquiry. It would hardly curb freedom in such cases to assume that the assertions were premature, and keep the matter for further inquiry. Such matters could perhaps be kept for private research or for discussion in a limited group. If a lecturer is unable to find enough suitable matter to provide a useful course, he could perhaps seek more academic work. He could be in a situation similar to that of a pure mathematician who would not be suitable as a lecturer to students of engineering or economics.

All involved in teaching should engage in regular dialogue with as wide a range of their peers as possible.

As regards pluralism in systems and methods, it is good that a range be available to students, but the task of reconciliation and integration should not be left to the students alone, nor should we overestimate the variety that it is possible to bring into a two year course. The student should have at least a reasonable opportunity of forming a coherent philosophical view by the end of his course.

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5. How should future professors of philosophy be prepared?

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They should initially study roughly the same course as the others, but should receive some special direction by their lecturers, in reading and in some writing.

They should aim at excelling in their study of theology.

They should engage seriously in some teaching of philosophy as soon as possible, and should rarely be allowed to commence studying for a doctorate without such experience in teaching.

Some undergraduate studies in a secular university would be valuable, and this could include such subjects as psychology, sociology, science or literature, as well as philosophy.

During doctorate studies they should be in frequent contact with Catholics of similar ability.

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6. What names should be added to the enclosed list of invited participants for the symposium?

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There is a great need for serious study of Asian thought, so that it can be associated with Christian theology. As Mariasusai Dhavamony has worked in this difficult area and has a good background in philosophy his presence may be useful.

I think that Giovanni Sala, of Munich (or Gallarate?) could also make a very useful contribution.