

ET. 33. Original sin, immortal soul and monasticism.

A. T'Jampens, November 11, 1968.

Introduction: the great trends within the Church.

There are in the Church, among the theologians, the priests, the laity and also among the nuns, different tendencies. We can summarize them as follows. There are about three main tendencies.

First, there is the traditional sister (in the healthy, non-abusive sense of the word). She grows on in the mentality in which she was brought up, namely, with a firm belief of dogmas, with a strict sense of authority and rule, and with a certain, ascetic-strict way of life. This sister does not have the characteristic "problems" and "uncertainties" with which the more modern, younger sister has to contend. Her nervous system is usually much firmer and she has the full energy of her vocation faith. Even though she is usually of the older generation, younger sisters are also of that type and, also, one finds among the older sisters remarkably "modern" and adaptive personalities who seem "young" and who were ahead of her time.

Second, there is the non-traditional, progressive-thinking sister. She usually belongs to the younger generation. She is first of all characterized by the emancipation or emancipation which increasingly characterizes today's humanity. Hence, she wants to process tradition personally with her mind: In contrast to the traditional sister who believed without much personal reflection and discussion, authority- and dogma-sensitive as she was, the progressive sister is keen on exploring the meaning that tradition and dogma have for present-day humanity and for her personal life. She has practically always been influenced, directly or indirectly, by modern science and technology. Within the second, so-called progressive group, we find two very different shades.

The first hue places special emphasis on adaptation to the world; indeed, it advocates a certain secularization. For example, she wants to be dressed like the other, non-monastic woman because she believes that a person's religious character lies first and foremost in inner solidity and authenticity, in the testimony of life. Any apartheid she wants to avoid in order to engage as far as possible in the present world.

The second shade insists on a certain apartness towards the world. It does not emphasize man in the present world but a deeper, very personal religious experience, a new contact with God. More times than not, the two shades go hand in hand, at least in part. There are also many nuances in between.

From now on, the Church and monasteries must be able to prove that they can be an open, genuine community by tolerating the fact that one and the same great and rich tradition is interpreted, understood and lived in multiple ways.

This without one tendency labeling the other as heretical or unfaithful. When one sister learns to accept the other as an equal interpretation of the one heritage, the basis of a varied community life is laid.

The "Creed of the People of God" (30.06.68), formulated by the Pope, is basically very traditional with a veneer of renewal (here and there expressions and phrases borrowed from the new theology). For a pope, who must incarnate the unity of the Church, amidst a multitude of strains, this is probably the only way of speaking. He can only do this by holding up classical doctrine and leaving a certain leeway for its interpretation.

Before turning to the subject in hand, we must briefly mention a particular tendency within the traditional group, the so-called integrist tendency. This urges in particular the role of mediators between God and the great mass of mankind. All truth, all authority, all interpretation comes from God and only through mediators; these are not so much founders of religion, prophets or mystics, as the official mediators (Pope, bishops, priests).

The rest of mankind, the followers, in a certain sense have no direct contact with God: they must obey the mediators, yes, they must be forced to obey if necessary, and this by all means, religious and secular. Hence the centuries-long appeal to the so-called "secular arm" to bring large masses of people to obedience. Tradition, authority, dogma, asceticism are taken up particularly strictly by the integrist sister. And a well-known hardness characterizes the integrist, whom, by the way, one finds in all churches and religions, with whom many outsiders confuse religion and Catholicism.

Part I: The traditional doctrine of original sin and its interpretations.

The outline of the main tenets formulated above was necessary in order to discuss our topic, namely, original sin, its relationship to the immortal soul, and both of these in their relationship to monastic life. The one dogma of original sin, of the immortal soul, is open to various interpretations. Let us begin with the papal text on original sin.

The core of the traditional doctrine, formulated especially by the Council of Trent, reads as follows: "We believe that in Adam all have sinned". So on the one hand there is original sin (- the first sin of Adam) and on the other hand there is original sin (- the sin transmitted to each of us with our origin). And the relation between the two is such that we have sinned "in Adam," i.e., not with a personal sin, i.e., a sinful act committed in this earthly life with our present earthly consciousness, but in "Adam," in the first man or humanity. It is thus spoken of as if there were identity of the offender: Adam's first sin makes us "born" sinners and sinners. After all, the traditional explanation says:

(1) there is in each of us, from birth, real sin;

(2) each person, individually and personally, has willed them (not with present earthly consciousness, but "in Adam," yet such that he himself has willed them) .The relation to Adam is twofold:

(1) the will to sin Adam's own is the cause of it: the culprit is Adam in conflict with God's order and plans;

(2) the biological descent from Adam through our ancestors designates the domain within which that original sin becomes original sin; i.e., anyone not biologically born of Adam's offspring is outside the domain of original and first sin. In summary, therefore, the doctrine reads as follows:

1 we, i. e. each of us, that was Adam who sinned. This identification of Adam and each of us is the artery of the dogma:

2 we, i. e. each of us, insofar as offspring, biological, of Adam. Once these two basic sentences are taken as a starting point, one can logically derive the entire traditional doctrine of first and original sin. Thus, one can now see why we are discussing, together with original sin, not only biological descent (this indicates the area, the territory, in which original sin is situated) but also and first of all the immortal soul: for, sinful will, sin debt, sin in one word is obviously the spiritual person, d. i. the immortal soul; and in such a way that this original sinfulness is not so much, if at all, present in the earthly, ordinary consciousness (through so-called "personal" sin), but in the subconscious immortal soul.

Before describing the consequences of original and first sin within us in more detail, on the basis of the papal text, we note that this text directly links two main elements of traditional doctrine to original and first sin respectively:

(1)"We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed us by his sacrifice on the Cross from original sin and from all the personal sins committed by each of us. Personal sins are an extension of original sin, although they represent their own separate and new responsibility and guilt. The incarnation with the death of the cross and redemption does not only refer to personal sins, but first and foremost to original sin.

(2)"We believe in one baptism instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins. This baptism must also be administered to children who have not been able to commit any personal sin. Indeed, at birth they are deprived of supernatural grace and must therefore be reborn to, divine life in Christ through water and Holy Spirit."

In summary, (1) redemption (at least in part) and (2) baptism, the basic sacrament are in immediate relation to the inherited debt and thus to the first debt or sin. These three to four elements (first sin, original sin, redemption, baptism) form an inner coherence, a so-called "structure".

The consequences of original sin.

Let us now specify the consequences of original sin within us:"Indeed, through Adam's original sin, the human condition common to all mortals has sunk into a state of decay with all its consequences: a condition quite different from the primal condition (=first, original, initial state) of our ancestors, their state of holiness and righteousness

in which man knew neither evil nor death". Thus the papal text. There is thus a direct relationship between primal and original sin on the one hand and

(1) evil (viz:

(a) personal sins and

(b) suffering or disappointment physically and spiritually) and

(2) death. This relationship, too, belongs to the coherence (or "structure") we have indicated above. Thus one sees the great structural significance of the doctrine of primordial and original sin: the entire Church's dogmatics is directly or indirectly related to it.

The Pope further describes the consequences: "What we all receive is precisely this humanity:

1) utterly degraded, deprived of the grace that was once his portion;

2) wounded in his natural faculties;

3) subject to the dominion of death. In this very sense, each of us is born in sin."

Then the Pope summarized again, "With the Council of Trent we confess, in short, that original sin is passed on at the same time as man - being, 'not by imitation. but by procreation', and that it is therefore 'inherent in everyone'." The word 'original sin' is used to describe the soul of each one of us, not in its ordinary conscious life, but in its subconscious side. The conscious life of the soul proceeds under the influence of this state of original sin in the depths of the soul, and the biological life reflects the consequences. The "reproduction" thus designates:

1) designates the domain within which original sin is to be found and

2) contrasts it with "imitation" which would reduce original sin to a personal sin, whatever it may be, instead of situating it in Adam.

In other words, in our subconscious depths we encounter a guilt which, in essence, coincides with that of Adam, the man at the beginning of sacred history.

The different interpretations.

Let us return for a moment to the description of the consequences: "totally ruined, deprived of grace (...), wounded in his natural faculties, subject to the dominion of death". This description sounds gloomy and pessimistic. Specifically, it means that during childbirth, for example in a mother's home, the human being who is born is a sinner or a sinneress. From the moment of conception in the mother's womb, at the time of the parents' love game, there is the sinner or sinneress. This formulation sounds harsh. Two remarks can be added.

The first ties in with the integrist interpretation of original sin and its consequences. It urges this gloomy, pessimistic side: the great masses of mankind, "utterly decayed", "wounded in their natural faculties", must therefore, the integrist reasons, be forced into strong ecclesiastical and social bonds by those in authority. Above all, one's own personal initiative (independent thought and action, emancipation), further matter, the body and sexuality must be thoroughly restrained by a strict and harsh system in which

religion and "worldly arm" go together. Invariably, primal, inherited and personal sinfulness is hammered into the predication and turned into deep guilt. Paul, Augustine, Luther do not go unchallenged here. From there the strict asceticism of the integrist tradition can be explained.

How should this be judged? First of all, integrism is not to be identified with the religious and Catholic tradition: the "good" message of Scripture, even the Old Testament, a whole series of Church Fathers, a whole theological tradition (for example, the worship of the Holy Heart) have emphasized the positive in man (in personal, physical and erotic life). And further: if the gloomy severity goes so far that it overshadows the joy of the glad tidings of Christianity, then there is absolute certainty that one will leave the pure Catholic doctrine in order to end up in its integrist interpretation.

The second remark links up with the protest against the whole coherence (or structure)"

- 1) original, hereditary, personal sin;
- 2) death by redemption;
- 3) infant baptism;
- 4) the corruption and woundedness of human nature".

Among the progressive tendencies we find the so-called progressive theology which, thinking very humanistically and evolutionary, advocates a strongly emphasized optimism, if necessary in such a way that with primal and original sin the whole coherence described above is liquidated and rejected, perhaps not always theoretically but at least practically. This progressist theology "interprets" so freely that one may question what remains of traditional Christianity after the liquidation of primal and original sin dogma. Nevertheless, the progressist protest, which by the way is rather reminiscent of Teilhard de Chardin and also Marx and the like, is understandable: the integrist explanation of primal and original sin is indeed so gloomy and severe that a protest from the optimistic side was to be expected.

With that, we are already in the midst of the different interpretations of the one dogma. One sees clearly that the great tendencies briefly sketched in the introduction are definitely at work here. That is why this sketch was so necessary.

Let us mention in passing the Protestant interpretation which places original sin in "evil desire". Those who limit original sin to all the sinful tendencies and expectations, whether conscious or subconscious, present in man are only speaking of the consequences of original sin, not of original sin itself ("we all sinned individually 'in Adam'"). This profound error of thought is committed by practically all interpretations, even today here in the West. The old theology, very tradition- and authority-sensitive, says:

Thus the dogma formulated by the Council reads: "Faith in reverent obedience". But this very easily turns the dogma into a mystery alien to life, which we accept with rational assent, but which is fundamentally outside our personal life of thought and action.

The new theology does not know, fundamentally, what to do with the actual dogma; it therefore limits itself to the consequences of primal and original sin or to related or neighboring points. It does, however, have the great advantage of wanting to understand and practically experience the tradition in a topical and personal way: the personal - detached thinking that consciously addresses the life value of the dogma, is its great strength. Let us see how, in broad outlines, one now understands primal and original sin.

The first explanation of original sin which we are discussing has come over the last few decades from India and its religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Dzhanism) and has a growing number of adherents in Europe. Many primitive religions also harbor this interpretation in one way or another. It takes place within the general framework of the belief in the animality of the universe. In particular, the immortal soul of man is at the center. This soul is subject to a lengthy history of formation which cannot be completed in the span of one earthly life. Hence the reincarnation (or re-embodiment), if necessary several times, of one and the same spiritual soul until it has been sufficiently intellectually and morally formed.

The initial stage of that long-breathed learning process is primitive humanity ("Adam" understood as the collection of the "first" humanity) which was inexperienced and sinful. Hence the new births for the purpose of atonement: by undergoing the consequences of its own defective and sinful existence in the afterlife and in the following earthly lives, man's immortal soul comes to realize its condition and develops into a higher being. Thus, the reincarnists are able to give an interpretation that directly touches the core of the primal and original sin dogma and its entire coherence: we.

Now, in the past, we lived in the primeval age of mankind ("in Adam"); we, now, according to the essence of the immortal soul, are identical with the people of that primeval age, although we have a different body and a different civilization; thus we, with the unconscious essence of the immortal soul, are guilty: We committed the original sin ourselves at that time and are therefore sinners and fornicators now, from the moment of our conception and birth; repressed, upon reincarnation into the subconscious depths of our immortal soul, this original sin works itself out in evil lust, ignorance and all kinds of unholy consequences which indicate that we must be redeemed by an ascetic and mystical life in contact with the deities or the godhead.

However, this reincarnist explanation has been repeatedly rejected by the Church so that in another direction must be sought.

There is also a whole group of Western explanations.

Two we will pick out briefly.

The first is the evolutionary explanation. Both biologically and culturally, present-day humanity has evolved from the earlier and the primitive and prehistoric. Be that as it may; present-day humanity has evolved from the animal kingdom (along the monkey or beside the monkey itself), from lower, animal to higher, human levels. Heredity, first of all biological, makes that a child goes back to its parents and ancestors to a very high degree: character traits, natural desires, physiological and anatomical characteristics prove it. Evil traits are also inherited. Also culturally our civilization has evolved from the previous civilizations from lower to higher: thus a cultural tradition has been created which, in addition to its "good", has also left its evil legacy: wars, sensuality, etc. characterize the "decayed" humanity which is so solidary with contemporaries (synchronically) and with the ancestors and descendants (diachronically).

This biological and cultural solidarity can be interpreted as original sin. This presentation, taken in isolation and as a pure description, is not incorrect; but it does not explain the core of the original sin dogma, namely the very close connection (of guilt identity) with the original sin ("we, individually, sinned in Adam"). So much for the evolutionary explanation.

The second explanation is the existential explanation: at the beginning of human history there has been a man or a woman, or preferably a couple, who were the first real human beings (or human beings). In this sense, the existential explanation builds on the theory of evolution (i.e., regarding hominization). They took a stand against the revealed word of God in full freedom and responsibility: they did not keep the divine commandments. Thus they have sinned the first and have set an example and created a tradition for the following generations, which is reproduced with the biological and cultural inheritance.

Again the same remark: taken in isolation and as a pure description not incorrect, but not an explanation of original sin in its strict relation to original sin ("we, each of us, sinned in Adam, not by personal sin, within the biological lineage of Adam").

Up to there greatly abridged two modes of explanation from several others.

Result: mystery more than ever. We now leave the concise presentation of the dogma (its elements and its coherence) as well as the explanations.

Part II: The disappointment and its processing.

a. The disappointment: a general human experience.

We now turn to a general human experience, namely, disappointment (or frustration), and its processing. In order to meet in the background, however vaguely, the dogma of original sin.

In this way we are engaged in a new theology, for we directly relate to our own experience and illuminate it from the standpoint of the dogma, which thus becomes more

than a pure mystery simply believed in obedience: the dogma becomes an element of our life.

The human sciences (conflictology).

Yet the profoundly human experience of miscalculation and its processing proceed when described in a scientific way. The present human sciences, especially psychology or spiritual science, are a new illumination of our existence next to the Bible, next to dogma and ascetics; they are of a high accuracy and as such very valuable. The branch which deals with disappointment and its reaction is called conflictology (or situational psychology): it describes the nature of the conflict (i.e. contradiction) between the ideal (our unconscious and conscious expectations with which we enter into life) and the harsh reality which disappoints and causes us to miscalculate. We see that the problem of suffering is at the heart of it: man suffers physically, mentally. This is for him a conflict, a problem which he has to deal with. There he experiences that this earth and this life is not a paradise: this disappointment takes many forms. different from person to person; but the suffering, the disappointment and learning to deal with suffering and disappointment is the general core of conflictology.

Yale: the "frustration - reaction" - coherence.

We note first of all that, according to the school of Yale, an American university, man undergoes miscalculation as a particularly strong stimulus to which he is usually not indifferent. The main types of reaction to frustration are :

(1) the dull resignation (as pipes a number of primitive peoples who still live too little personal and ambitious to feel the miscalculation sharply): it is basically inertia or inertia ;

(2) the aggression, i.e. the anger or displeasure, which acts in an offensive manner towards the cause of the disappointment (we get angry when we miscalculate grossly, e.g.)

(3) the neurotic reaction; i.e. we repress our displeasure into the background of our soul life, however without having really and actually processed and overcome it, we "forget" it for the time being, but it works, through the hurt it left in our sensitivity, unconsciously on and colors, yes, poisons our behavior: basically we have not forgotten or forgiven;

(4) the sacrifice, i.e. the acceptance of the disappointment for the sake of higher religious motives and motives, carried out in inner peace.

These four possible reactions presuppose, of course, that the disappointment is not circumvented in such a way that our expectations become reality after all. One sees that ultimately only sacrifice is the right, appropriate response to a disappointment; yet the processing of the disappointment is often first aggression and / or repression / or slowness, before it becomes pure sacrifice. The sacrifice is a "difficult" response to the frustration, the other responses are "easier".

Harvard: the double type of frustration processing.

Let us now briefly study frustration and the crisis it brings about, as Harvard University has done, and in the light of the foregoing. Immediately it will become clear to us in what way man is formed by God and brought to maturity.

At Harvard University a study was begun of the reactions of women whose child was born prematurely. Two completely different types of reaction were observed :

- (1) the reaction of responsible women who wanted to overcome the miscalculation.
- (2) the reaction of "fleeing" women who sought to escape from this harsh experience.

The first type was very sad. They were very much aware of the danger that was looming ... They felt anxious, worried, uncertain. They had no appetite for food, slept badly, felt tired if need be. They were tense, even irritable, or melancholy or even moody. In short: all the traits of someone going through a "crisis" (i.e. tough time). They spoke at length with her husband and family about her concerns. They wanted to be thoroughly and accurately informed and pestered doctors and nurses with questions. They wanted to see her child, even when told that this might be an unpleasant experience.

In a second phase, when the danger to the child had passed and they themselves returned home, they immediately set to work preparing everything for the baby. In the meantime, they visited her child regularly and took in information as well, in order to learn how best to care for it. To other women (mother, aunt, burin) they asked for help.

The second type reacted very differently. They were much calmer: they asked no better than to be told by relatives, friends, doctors, nurses that "everything was fine". The only thing

that sometimes tickled these women was the question of blame, of the cause: How could such a thing have happened? Whose fault was it anyway? Nor did they express her fear.

In the second phase, when the child was out of danger, they saw in it the confirmation of the little phrase which had always dominated their inner being: "It's not so bad!" or "In fact, there is nothing bad at all. Inquiring about his special needs they found unnecessary.

Note now the result six to ten weeks after the child had come home:

The first type, who had wanted to face reality, the facts, and then also reacted anxiously, but actively did something to cope with them, had come through well. They gave the impression of having become inwardly stronger: after all, they had learned how to tackle miscalculations. They themselves, the whole family seemed prepared for any new difficulties. Often the family relationships were better than before the birth of the baby.

The second type, who had experienced the same reality, the same hard facts, but who tried to cover them up, by dealing with them as little as possible, and pretended that the miscalculation was of no importance, was at this stage the cause of inappropriate attitudes towards the baby whose care they had not prepared: they either neglected him or spoiled him by excessive care, resulting in developmental disorders in that baby. They had not developed the adaptability and the will and courage to cope with the difficulties of life, but avoided the daily problems. Family relationships had deteriorated: family members bickered a lot with each other and constantly sent reproaches to each other. These women used their energy either to blame certain people or groups (e.g., the nurses) for the difficulties without facing up to their own responsibility; or they developed neurotic symptoms (excessive need for sleep, headaches¹, muscle aches, stomach complaints) and devoted their energy to that rather than to solving the difficulties.

The conclusion of a series of studies on reactions to difficulties, miscalculations (the death of a child, the loss of a job, a heavy operation, an incapacity to work, an illness, the first months of marriage, etc.) has shown that the above described double type of reaction was observed in all other cases with small differences: Identically the same frustrations and crises evoke in certain people the most astonishing and unsuspected energies and have a formative effect (a rebellious teenager turns into a responsible young man; a childlike young woman grows into an ideal young mother); in others they evoke only helplessness, flight, neurosis, invective (a cheerful stay-at-home mother collapses; a skilled clerk succumbs to the burden of his career). So much for scientific research: the results of today's human sciences are of great interest to all of us, including the sisters, because they are so factual.

b. The disappointment in the existence of the convent woman.

Let us be concrete: how do the sisters who miscalculate react? They can be divided into two major classes. This is scientifically established. They can check with themselves, with others, how they handle the difficulties of the convent, which type they belong to. The day when the conscious and even more the unconscious ideals of the novitiate period do not become reality, they can react in two ways:

(1) they may want to face the victory of this frustration, dare to do so, or be able to cope with it out of a strong sense of responsibility, or

(2) letting themselves go, becoming sad and bitter, looking for culprits outside themselves, withdrawing from the real problem in their cursing or also repressing the matter and becoming neurotic. This scientific study provides an excellent guide for the examination of conscience: it is a true "confessional mirror".

c. Work incapacity as frustration.

Let us be even more concrete and dissect a model of crisis of a monastic nature through a few letters of a sister struggling with work incapacity. We quote :

"Why is it that for some time now it has been so difficult for me to hear or see the misery and needs of the patients? In the past, before I became incapacitated and overworked, I was able to cope well. But now it's completely different: I even got sick recently while treating an injury. It's not that I don't like going into nursing, nor that I don't understand people: I've suffered a lot myself. But I can't take it anymore." These words describe the degree of overwork and exhaustion of the nurse.

But let us now listen to a second, much more profound disappointment: "I have lost courage: I am always wondering why it is that I can no longer cope with my work. After all, we are still human beings: I often think about the fact that I will no longer be able to do a certain job. What then? At the moment I cannot imagine doing another job. I am not going to worry about it. I don't want to break my head with it, for that matter. But ... it's so hard when one can no longer keep up with the whole group in the monastery. I suffer greatly from this. One feels the strangling problem of incapacity to work, of attachment to the one work done for years and with which the sister is entwined.

After it was pointed out that she had to learn to overcome this disappointment by accepting it as a sacrifice instead of dwelling on it and looking for the people to blame and seeing herself as the victim, it appeared that the hurt was even deeper than described above.

d. The human relation as frustration.

To the work incapacity were added namely the negative, disappointing human relations. These were twofold:

(1) the physician with whom the sister had worked for more than twenty years, had not even come to greet her during all that time : this human ingratitude was very hard for her;

(2) Even more disappointing was the attitude of a few fellow sisters who insinuated that her incapacity was not real. And she added the very bitter remark that this suspicion of unreality and comedy is the first reaction in the convent when a sister is ill or incapacitated. This unlovingness, perhaps not always calculated and conscious, has, as it were, dealt the final blow to her already battered spirit.

This sisterly hardness had caused her an injury deeper than the work incapacity itself.

e. Simplification and frustration.

The result of 1) the incapacity to work and 2) the disappointing human relations, i.e. the miscalculation, was a profound isolation. This is perhaps the very core of frustration. Someone who is profoundly affected feels alone. This is all the more serious because the person affected almost always unconsciously or consciously protests against God's policy and struggles with the question of how this frustration can be reconciled with the so-called goodness of God. The person affected feels abandoned, betrayed, forsaken by God. Hence the loneliness. It is reminiscent of Jesus' words on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The man of God also thoroughly experienced disappointment, despite the fact that the sacrificial nature weighed over clearly with Him. These negative human relationships pose the problem

(1) of true love which does not think first of the moral requirements in approaching a fellow human being, but of the processing (the so-called "integration") and the soul-searching dissection;

(2) the monastic community which, beneath the thin surface of a common

This problem of isolation is not a problem of the monastic community.

This problem of isolation is all the more strangling in the case of the sister because she is and remains a woman. This feminine nature is attuned to intimate contact with the other in three degrees: she is:

(1) appreciation needy (a word of praise from doctor, inspector, authority figure acts as a strong stimulus on the courage of life);

(2) need of affection (even seemingly cool sisters, who identify themselves with rules and regulations and asceticism, betray this need for affection again and again somewhere in a hidden area);

(3) a need for erotic supplementation (sensitivity to a man and intimacy with him and with a child reveal not a need for sex, but for deeper communication with the other, and this is particularly successful with the opposite sex: this is, in my opinion, one of the great gaps in monastic virginity, especially now that contact with the so-called "world" has become more direct),

Well, never is this threefold need for contact so strong as when frustration strikes. and loneliness sets in:

1) real love that wants to understand instead of judge and condemn, and

2) a more elaborate community life which creates space for appreciation, affection and deeper contact with the other (in the non-private friendship for example), are among the desiderata of the frustration victory: from aggression (i.e. embittered rebellion and annoyance) and neurosis (i.e. seemingly forgetting and forgiving by repressing without really processing in deep inner peace) the reaction evolves towards the real sacrifice, not

so much on the basis of heroic asceticism and energy but in a climate of love and deeper contact.

f. And here it is necessary to point out the articulation of problems.

Real community does not keep silent: it is such that it expresses them, discusses them. In this way the so unholy isolation and inner pressure is lifted. And thought processing is fostered. Many women, many sisters, do not express enough of what worries and depresses them: this concealment aggravates the problems because it covers up helplessness and flight. One avoids the difficulties, postpones facing them and, with these unresolved problems, goes to meet the new ones. This explains why, one day, instead of speaking, discussing, a sister "explodes": the accumulation beforehand prepared this explosion. And impatience, too, i.e. the explosion so typical of the unresolved nature of problems, springs from the unresolvedness and the accumulation. Real community faces the real facts: that is why it expresses them.

Now we understand the words of the above-mentioned sister in a subsequent letter, "I try to talk a lot with God. I confide my problems to Him as much as possible; but there must also be a man in your life to whom one can tell everything; with whom one can be oneself." A little further: "I have a great need of someone who understands me. We used to be under too much pressure; we were not allowed to love people. And who can live without love?"

The "inner phrases" of frustration (language dissection).

The dissection of the inner life of the sister about whom we are talking also revealed the great importance of the so-called "inner phrases", (i.e. those (usually small) sentences or exclamations and expressions which spontaneously arise in our inner being. For example, when seeing a fellow sister who was very unsympathetic to her, her inner self would sound "That ugly one!" Thus e.g. the well-known brooding phrases: "They don't understand me here..."; or: "This is how it goes in the convent" etc.

The examination of the business conscience as well as the analysis of the spiritual life attaches great importance to those inner sentences which betray our most intimate thoughts and feelings: we get to know ourselves in them. Especially there we expose what we tell ourselves ("I only have that" or "I have nothing" or "I have no one") or where we let ourselves go ("There is nothing left for me to do..." or "What is the use of me now?"). The pastoral care and formation of sisters in this field should certainly take much more account of so-called language analysis, i.e. the analysis of the syntax, meaning and intention (often secret and unconscious) of these inner words and sentences. This is yet another valuable element of modern thought and scientific research which can be made available to the pastoral care of the Sisters, in addition to the human sciences already mentioned.

The disheartening effect 1) of the disappointment and 2) in particular of the small sentences is started by the sister by discussing them. She wrote a little later "I will certainly not be allowed to take on so much work anymore. I feel that. And I want to grow above my disappointment. This will not be easy: I realize that clearly. I will have to give up most of my work: that's where I am still stuck. I hope that God will not abandon me. I will make it my great sacrifice as far as I can".

g. Judgment of God and processing disappointments.

Let us now compare processing a disappointment with the double result noted by Harvard with what Scripture tells us about the judgment of God.

St. Paul (Gal. 6:7-10) briefly describes the way God judges people, while responding to the reproach - that God sometimes sends to good people much suffering, while evil people often have what they desire. From this one can conclude that God is mocked by the fact that the course of this world is not arranged according to justice. The text reads :

"God does not allow himself to be mocked. Whatever man sows, he will also reap. He who sows in the flesh will reap destruction from the flesh; but he who sows in the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit." 'Flesh' means poor humanity; 'spirit' means the divine inspirational principle of our inwardness. St. Paul is formulating a law here: the "sowing-harvesting" law, which governs life. What man sows while living, through his behavior, he will also reap, namely, in his immortal soul, which, while acting in this way or that, is formed.

This learning process or history of formation is thus situated rather in the invisible. After all, the spiritual soul is formed by the thoughts, feelings and choices that are fixed in it in the form of habits and memories. This formation already has an effect during this earthly life: whoever sets his sights on deceit or impurity, grows to love it and deceives or is impure, in the long run, in a compulsive way. However, this formation works itself out much more clearly after death: together with the immortal soul, man carries this formation or deformation with him into the afterlife. The suitability for living in intimate friendship and cooperation with God depends on this formation. In this way man creates his own judgment, namely by suffering the consequences of the learning process which he acquires himself. He who lives a poorly human life, grows into it and "reaps" before and especially after death what he has sown in poor humanity.

He, however, who overcomes this poor humanity through the spirit, i.e., by responding to the divine inspirational power in his soul, "will reap eternal life" in all silence already before death, much more clearly afterwards. From the teaching on the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9; 2:17; 3:16) on the first page of Scripture, tradition constantly teaches this basic doctrine: the judgment of God (i.e., the way in which He passes His value judgment on their behavior and shifts them) proceeds according to the structure of a learning process or formation history whose core is a testing of human freedom. (Deut. 30:15/18; 1 Kings 3:9 14, cf. Wisdom 9:1 18; Isaias 5: 20/24, Amos 5: 14/15; especially Ecclesiasticus 15: 11/17).

Ecclesiasticus says thus: "Since God created man in the beginning, He has left him to his own understanding (...) Before man lies the choice between life and death: whatever he desires is given him" Ecc. 15: 14,17). This basic teaching, on the one hand, fully recognizes man's unprecedented freedom; but, on the other hand, it emphasizes the seed-harvesting law to which this freedom is subject: the two meet in the fact that God has conceived his judgment in such a way that man himself builds up his own judgment ("whatever he desires, it will be given to him") by experiencing in his immortal soul the consequences of his own actions.

In this way God is incredibly just: everyone builds up his own future, his eternity, and undergoes the result of his own freedom. And this is not only spiritual, i.e.: according to the immortal soul, but also physical:

"For the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice; those who have done good will go out to resurrection to life, but those who have done evil to resurrection to judgment" (John 5:28). The traditional doctrine of the extremes (heaven, resurrection in glory; hell, resurrection without glorification; purgatory, represented by people who have not been sufficiently formed for the time being: God calmly gives time to revise and update the history of formation and its consequences) is based on the firmly established relationship of freedom and of the inner retribution of acts. It is a direct consequence of the basic doctrine set forth above.

Now it is clear that 1) the double result of disappointment in the formation of the human personality and human relations and 2) the double result of God's judgment point to the fundamentally identical learning process in which all human beings are involved. So that modern human science and ancient biblical revelation meet here. For the contemporary sister this is a light for the orientation of her life: whether she stands in the clinic or in the care for the elderly; whether she stands in teaching or in pastoral care; whether she carries out tasks which constitute the infrastructure of these activities, - each sister always stands in that great event of formation and is the silent witness and accompanier of her fellow men and women who are also situated in it.

Here is to be found the great unity in the great diversity of the monastic women's activities. Among other things, and very especially, the whole of asceticism, that is, the building up of the qualities necessary for intimacy and cooperation with God in so far as it includes a revision of the natural, unformed human being, is built on this: for example, he who repeatedly gives in to moodiness without controlling the fluctuations of the all too natural mind, becomes fixed in this moodiness; it becomes fused with his soul life and so it brings with it an inability to cooperate intimately with God.

Part III: The relation between original sin and disappointment.

Now what does all this have to do with original sin?

Original sin and the judgment of God.

The processing of frustration is a decisive key element in the judgment of God. That is now clear. Original sin, however, with its consequences, is itself an application of God's judgment: namely, "in the flesh" God's judgment: namely, by sinning "in Adam", mankind has failed God's plan for shaping him in full freedom; therefore, original sinful man suffers the consequences of his actions (after all, so the dogma goes, we sinned in Adam). What mankind sowed "in Adam" it reaps in the so-called original sin and its consequences described above. In this way, the eyes of this original sinful humanity that was guilty of original sin "in Adam" are "opened", just like the eyes of Adam and Eve at the beginning of salvation history. The so-called opening of the eyes, i.e. the realization of one's true situation, is for today's humanity the positive sense of the original sinful existence. In that -painful- insight, in that enlightenment on the basis of suffering and disappointment, there lies a new impetus for the revision of the first and original sin. We describe this in more detail.

Frustration. resp. original sin and judgment of God.

The fact that a man miscalculates and is frustrated with regard to his expectations - he longs for physical well-being, for joy; that is what he - unconsciously - expects from life: happiness! - is, according to tradition, a consequence of original sin. The fact that he himself has not succeeded, as he imagined; that others disappoint him; that this world and this life are not what they should or could be, has always been linked to original sin. At the decide de moment when we have to deal with these disappointments, we immediately grope for the consequences of (primal) original sin. That is one.

There is more: the fact that we all cannot process these miscalculations unless with great effort is itself another consequence of original sin: not only the frustration, but also the inability to process them is aftermath, result of original sin. The original sinful man tends to inertia, to aggression or to neurotic behavior; sacrifice and inner peace, if any, rest on the victory of original sinfulness in him. Asceticism lies precisely at the transition from inertia (inertia), aggression (annoyance and protest), neurosis (repressed, unconquered hurt) to sacrifice.

Apart from the consequences, do we experience the inheritance debt itself? Perhaps we do. The text of the sister quoted above attributes to the convent at some point the fact that "not being able to keep up with the group" is so hard. There is, of course, an element of truth in that statement. But which monastic woman does not know that "not being able to keep up" with the group is also hard outside the monastery? In marriage and in the family, for example? Or at any work? We all have a naïve tendency to attribute frustrations to immediately obvious causes or culprits, and this tendency is partly based on fact; but ultimately there is a more deeply situated cause or fault. This is attested to

by the spontaneous question that repeatedly arises in someone who experiences disappointment in all its bitterness. It echoes within us in the form of the following sentence: "Where did I get that from? A brief language analysis makes two elements clear to us :

(1) we all have the impression that we deserved our frustration "somewhere"; guilt, however, accompanies the pain and the isolation of frustration;

(2) but nowhere in our lives can we pinpoint the full cause and culpability: that we deserved it somewhere, yes but where?

This runs very much in parallel with the distinction between personal sins and original sin: our personal sins are partly included, but "somewhere" there is another guilt. The imbalance between frustration and conscious guilt is so obvious that we ask ourselves, "Where" did I earn "that"? This imbalance appears especially strong where those capable of no personal sin are affected: one thinks of a child who falls ill, for example; but it is fundamentally present everywhere. Hence the natural protest against the apparent iniquity that dominates this earth and this life. The ancient doctrine which, in addition to personal guilt, exposes "somewhere" in the unconscious depths of the soul another, "inherited" guilt, seems to be the only way out here. It means a kind of relief for us, for our fellow man, whom we no longer accuse so hastily if the doctrine about his inheritance guilt - which is also present in us - is sharply in our minds.

A graciousness in judging and condemning is the result of the awareness of the solidarity of all in regard to original sin.

The awareness that every human being, even the new-born, has sown "in Adam" through original sin what he is now harvesting in original sin and its consequences, is the awareness of God's judgment, which is ready for us from the distant past, and is a model of that same judgment of God concerning the present and the future - we sow, even now, what we will reap later. The whole history of salvation shows here central logic, its basic coherence. The Council of Trent, consciously or unconsciously, formulated the judgment of God as it affects us from the deep past, by formulating the doctrine of original sin as it did this: "we have all sinned in Adam."

Whoever interprets this conciliar teaching, whoever protests against it, whoever liquidates it, interprets, protests against, liquidates the very structure of the judgment of God, which in turn constitutes the structure of consecrated or salvific history. In other words, whoever touches an element or a partial structure touches the entire coherence, and this dominates our entire dogmatics.