

July 28, 1975

**THE FUTURE OF THE ORDER**

Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As discretion is the better part of valor, so brevity must be the better part of tardiness. In order to be both discrete and brief tonight, I will outline my speech.

I want to share with you the screen out of which I operate toward the future. I have been impressed with the new shape of the church to come ever since I read Karl Rahner's book. I hope all of us have read it, and that we will read it again as an Order, using it as a vehicle through which we can concretize our own understanding as it has developed through the last twenty years. If we had time tonight, I would talk through the categories of the shape of the world that has come, then the shape of the church that has come, thirdly, the shape of our Order that has come, and lastly, the shape of our mission that has come.

If I were to speak about the shape of the world, I would make an effort to deal with the deep currents, not the ripples, of our time, and I would spend some time looking through the technological revolution to its most lasting residue, which for me is summed up in the word "methods". From now on, education will be methodology, methodology, methodology. I would like to go back and teach in the arena of the humanities. I would deal with the methodology of "To be or not to be; that is the question." I would deal with poetry as methodology, drama as methodology, painting as methodology, and music as methodology. The world of the future is the world of methods.

In this first point I would also speak of emerging transcultural human being. I would tell of my trip with Vinod Parekh and Kang Byoung Hoon around the world. All three of us experienced something very difficult to describe. None of us will completely escape the communities which birthed us. Yet, it is in the midst of these particularities where we commonly grasp the universal dimension. For the first time in my life I grasped the meaning of "we are one in Jesus Christ". Transparentization took place and we became one. This transcultural happening is taking place among those who care all over the world. I laughed at that silly American soldier in France in World War II who said he belonged to no nation. He was wrong, but he was right. He did not know how he was right. I have temporal patience with provincialisms, nationalisms and other forms of reductionisms, but I have no eternal patience with my little country or your little country, my little bias or your little bias. The time has come when veils have been removed.

The shape of this new world is one in which the community is the economic community. For some years ahead the political communities will not be important; the economic communities will rule the world. This situation is not a negative one, this is the world we live in. In reference to this world of methods, transcultural humanness and the economic community, I believe we have been led by an invisible power which is beyond the efforts of any and all of us. This world I have been describing is the world of local man. I believe it has been a long time since local man had any possibility of making a direct contribution in the determinations of his own existence. The hour is at hand, now, when local man shall rise again. The most impactful thing on the last trip was the awareness that local man is on the fidgety edge all around the world. I hardly need describe the implications for the Town Meetings in which 35 million local men will participate.

If I were to talk about the shape of the church that is come, I would begin by saying that when I am confronted with Community Forum, I see on the other side, in the vaguenesses of the Not Yet, a figure whose face I cannot discern. Before long that face will shock us all, though it cannot be discerned save you do Town Meeting. Not our silly Town Meeting, but Town Meeting. I think the strange thereness is the new form of the church. I am convinced that we have concluded the analysis of the netherly dimension of life. I do not mean we are not going to learn unbelievable things in that realm during the next ten to twenty years. If what I say is true, the new shape of the church has to do with forging the new theological train. The unbelievable theological resurgence of our lifetime has been the consummation of the great Protestant revolt, rather than new thinking about deep consciousness. Some of you are going to participate in forging this new theology. This kind of reflection upon reflection comes only out of life and living and I am convinced you are deeply prepared to do precisely that kind of a job.

If I were to speak on the new sociological frame of the Church, I would speak about Those Who Care. You can understand why I'd love to study Rahner with you. You will not think of the new form of the church in terms of structures and organization, but in terms of those who care. In the new shape of the church there will be the new piety. Go back and read Gogarten again to get firmly in your mind that in the depth revolution, the old piety is the last to go, but the new piety is the first to come. I would like to talk about social demonstration and the shape and form of working in the world.

If I were going to talk on the Order tonight, I would talk first of all about a new sophistication. My mind has been going around and around the fact that many, if not most of us, are products of the 50's. I look upon it as a high honor to the church that in the midst of her sickness and illness she produced the revolutionaries before the revolution. I am extremely proud of the fact that the church produced me as a revolutionary before the 60's. Most of you have the brand of the 50's on you. Others of you have the brand of the 60's. Those of the 50's are all gone. The wheels of time, as you recollect, grind exceedingly fine. Most of you who were stirred in the 50's, by now have dropped away or you are standing. I believe that to be true, also, of the revolutionaries of the 60's.

I remember speaking in the 60's at the University of Wisconsin, where they picketed me. They were not picketing me; I just happened to be caught in it. They came walking in creating a noisy chaos, so I left. I went to the place where they were lined up. I wanted to call them names, but I didn't. I said, "I'm going to reserve judgment on you for ten years, and if you are still standing, then I'll take 'my hat off' to you." They shut up. How many of them are still standing? Out of two hundred, there might be one. The rest of them have run off into the good life. Thank God for the one.

The revolutionaries of the 70's are not going to be people like us, I believe. They will not be the young ones; they have shot their wads, for a generation. I think these revolutionaries will be the people who have made it. I became very angry at a colleague when he agreed with a guardian who said he would be more valuable outside the House than in. Can you imagine that you could forget you were a revolutionary that long? Even for a second? You and I know good and well you have to say "move into the House", not for our sake but for the guardian's sake. You say, "go get that moving van and get all of your furniture out of suburbia in it and drive down into the ghetto. Park it there overnight." That is still the story. Many people simply do not have courage enough to put their life on the line. I remember a man who packed his two bags and came down to the ghetto to become a part of us. He was assigned to go back out and stay in his law firm. Do you understand that? That man's your colleague.

A second point, I would make in regard to the Order has to do with the sophistication of the Houses. I am extremely pleased with the transition you and I have made personally relative to sophistication for the sake of mission. We made it just in time to move into the world and walk with kings. Now we must do the same thing in your Houses. Seven years ago, the Houses went out. Now they are around the globe. I suspect a year from now we are going to be evaluating those houses and reconstructing them from the bottom up. The key is sophistication for the sake of mission. It is going to be rough or, you Pharisees, but don't you libertines get too excited, you won't like it either.

I will not talk about those four power lines of operations and management and development and research. They band the globe, where power comes evenly and constantly. They offer service power, not governing power but functional power, missional power, to whosoever in this world has need relative to the new Social Vehicle. The New Social Vehicle is a vehicle that nobody has, or will ever have, any blueprints about. If you have some blueprints, you have some kind of ideology. The New Social Vehicle will emerge in history itself, indirectly through the efforts of Those Who Care.

Another shift taking place in the Order has to do with the concretion of going areal. I have been extremely pleased with the priors in our Order as they have moved toward going areal. Most of you understood that to go areal was to go global, not "to do my own thing". To go areal is to do the globe from wherever you are. This year will be a test in how to do this financially. What will it mean for you go areally economically where you assume, wherever you are, responsibility for the economics around the globe? This is a serious and sobering step. If you have not learned the principle of Xavierism by now, you are going to wish you had.

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