

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Inside My Father's House* by George A. Kelly

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Most carers care because they love the persons they care for and because they feel responsible for them. As Adrian Webb comments in the preface to this book, identifying the positive aspects of caring is politically sensitive; there is a fear that State help for carers may be thus undermined. But job satisfaction is important for everyone and, as Clifford successfully argues, carers make sacrifices and need and deserve better financial and expressive support. Those who work with carers have an important part to play in recognizing their needs and the importance of the contribution they make. Part of our responsibility as concerned members of society (it seems to me) should be to make life easier for those who choose to care and to continue to care but also to make it possible and easier to give up for those who feel they cannot go on.

This book is a welcome, timely and useful contribution to the literature on caring in that it looks at the common experience of carers for different types of dependent people and gives equal prominence to the positive and negative aspects of that commitment. The next area for research may be to look at those who choose not to care in the first place. How are they different from those who care?

Clifford's book will be criticized by feminists because he is a Catholic bishop. Christianity has been characterized as being patriarchal and exploitative of women by reinforcing their supportive rather than active role and by placing a high value on self-sacrifice and thus promoting a false consciousness which traps women in a subservient role. This role is epitomized by that of the carer. It will be suggested that responses were influenced by the religious context of the study; that carers said what they thought would be acceptable; that the researcher found what he wanted to find. It should be noted that only 26 of 208 interviews were done by the clergy, all others by lay women. It is notable that whilst most respondents were Catholic, religion and religious duty were infrequently mentioned as reasons or rewards. The researcher has achieved as much objectivity as any other social scientist.

As a woman, a non-Christian and a social scientist, I am grateful to Dermot Clifford for redressing the jaundiced balance in the caring literature by presenting the positive as well as the negative sides of caring. His book goes some way to answering the question of why so many people continue to become carers and go on caring for so long. Love is a word which has been devalued by usage; a topic avoided by social science; but an essential ingredient of a humane society. As Clifford puts it (p. 163): 'You need another language "the language of the heart" to understand . . .'

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Inside My Father's House. George A. Kelly. New York: Doubleday. Pp. xii + 386. Price US\$19.95.

Mgr George Kelly is a well-known figure in the American Church. He is outspoken and controversial, holding strongly conservative views

which he expresses with energy and enthusiasm. This book is a memoir of the years of his life since his ordination in 1942 for the archdiocese of New York. It is a story of priestly experience, discussing the major issues the Church faced, in the context of his personal experience.

As you might expect, Kelly is of Irish extraction, both his parents coming from Birr. He went to Dunwoodie Seminary, and after ordination to Washington where he did a doctorate in social science at the Catholic University of America. One of the most interesting episodes in the book concerns Kelly's part in organizing a diocesan census of Florida's Catholics, upon which he based his research. After this study, Kelly worked for many years in a parish. He later became Family Life Director of the archdiocese and then its Secretary for Education. Kelly had great regard for Cardinal Spellman and seeks throughout the book to refute the late cardinal's critics. A lot of the book is concerned with the inner workings and politics of the archdiocese, and of its relationship with politicians and government. This makes it interesting reading. Because of his role as education secretary, Kelly gives a lot of space to the battle for public aid for Catholic schools, a battle which was fought under both Spellman and Cooke but which was never successful. Kelly feels that anti-Catholic bias hasn't completely disappeared from American public life; it is now more subtle, even if it is not as strong, especially in the intellectual establishment. He is strong on the Church's role in political life, believing that American churchmen and laity need to be vocal and unafraid to use their political clout, especially in moral issues such as pornography.

Kelly's views on the Church are easy to comprehend: less dissent and more obedience are the answers to most of the Church's problems, in his view. As if it were that simple! He looks at the pre-Vatican II Church with rose-tinted glasses. It was all one big happy family, which has been spoiled by the grouchers of the last twenty years. The Priests' Senate comes in for special attack, as do many religious communities whom he claims have rejected religious life without saying so in clear language. In the schools, religious educators have taken the content out of the curriculum, leading to confusion among the young, according to Kelly. He is out of sympathy with many developments in diocesan life. For example, he doesn't like the new methods in New York for assigning clergy. He thinks that parish priests should have permanent tenure, with no compulsory retirement, whereas the missionary nature of the Church demands that curates be able to move wherever the diocese requires them. Clearly, in Kelly's view, the missionary character of the priesthood applies only to curates, not to parish priests! It is amusing to read Kelly argue against compulsory retirement at seventy-five. If he is conservative on practical issues, he is even more so on theological ones. He is now a professor at St John's University in New York, from where he wages war on those whom he regards as diluting the Catholic faith. One sad feature of this book is the vitriolic intolerance of the author towards scholars such as Raymond Browne. There are also swipes at various bishops in the US. Kelly is much happier with the direction of the Church in the 1980s than he was in the 1970s. No prizes for knowing why!

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This is a very readable book. Kelly's prose is easy to follow; his anecdotes enliven the issues he discusses. It is a warm and engaging portrait of a priestly life, but dominated by a dogmatic conservatism which borders on fundamentalism. Perhaps this book's chief value is in giving us an insight into that particular mind-set.

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The Laughter and the Weeping. *An Old China Hand Remembers.* Luke O'Reilly. Dublin: The Columba Press. 1991. Pp. 203. Price £6.95.

It is customary to speak now of the Church before and after Vatican II. Corresponding more or less to that, we can also describe a certain aspect of the Church in Ireland, its missionary effort, as before and after Nanki Poo and Pudsy Ryan. The former was the pen-name of a Kiplingesque balladeer calling boys to mission in China in the pages of the *Far East*. Pudsy Ryan was a semi-theological Peanuts whose diary, misspellings and all, in the same magazine was a sociological catechism of the homely affections of the Irish Catholicism of the time. It was the age of the Maynooth Mission to China, raised to more universal nomenclature as the Columban Fathers.

No other Irish missionary movement, and there were splendid ones, quite captured the imagination of Ireland in the same way. It began within the emotional octave of the idealism of 1916; the cradle was Maynooth and all its diocesan pride and loyalties: it was founded by, and attracted, some remarkable priests. Nor did it have long to wait for martyrs. In 1931, Fr Con Tierney died as a prisoner of the communists in China. His body was carried forty miles on boards in 'a wild mountainous place', and then on a river raft from Kiansa to Kien Chang. His last letters survive; some in the Latin of a schoolboy on the way to Paradise: '*Si esset opportunitas mittendi mihi a pair of socks and an overcoat valde grata erunt.*'

In 1946, Fr Luke O'Reilly went to China as one of those pairs of *beati pedes* on Maynooth's Long March. He was expelled in 1953. His book is a moving account of a journey from boyhood in St Jarlath's College, Tuam, to the needle's eye in Red China of one of the greatest revolutions in world history. It is the work of a dedicated man, humorous and intelligent to boot, and, as in all Columban writings on China, the affection for the people is unconcealed.

It is a story of faith, war, and poverty. An archbishop is forced to sweep streets, a bishop brushes floors, trial succeeds trial. As Fr O'Reilly was being paraded to his trial through the streets of Nancheng, he could see hoardings with cartoons displaying his 'crimes', and these included 'the text of a telegram from two Irish communists wishing their Red brethren good luck in their efforts to bring us Irish imperialists to justice in Nancheng' (p. 143).

Some pages go very deep; the description, for instance, by Fr Séamus O'Reilly of the ordination in 1952 of Joseph Peng by Bishop Cleary, sometime professor in Maynooth: the altar was an office desk. Prostrate