

Fides quaerens intellectum practico-socialem
in the Writings of Adalbert-G. Hamman (1910-2000):
Some footnotes to the pro-existential attitude
***of the Fathers*[†]**

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1. *Introduction. Hamman and his Contribution to Patristic Studies*

One of the familiar faces at the International Oxford Patristic Conferences from the 1950s down to the 80s was that of Adalbert-Gautier Hamman (1910-2000). He was indeed a very regular participant and contributed solidly to patristic studies by his well-researched papers¹. Hamman was born in 1910 in Lorraine on the Franco-German border. A Franciscan friar, he lectured in various formation schools of his religious order, and later at the Universities of Montréal and Québec, and finally at the Patristic Institute of Rome. He was also a guest lecturer at the Protestant theological faculty of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, and travelled very widely to deliver

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1. Adalbert Hamman writes about his experiences at the Oxford International Patristic Conferences in an article in *Le Monde* (27.9.1963) 8, and in his autobiography, *La vie est un long jour de fête*, Paris 1995, 130, 176, 287, 299-302, 377. Throughout a period of three decades, Hamman presented these papers during the following Oxford Patristic Conferences:

II (1955) *Genèse et signification de la prière aux origines chrétiennes*;

III (1959) *La signification de sphragis dans le Pasteur d'Hermas*;

IV (1963) *Sitz im Leben des actes apocryphes du Nouveau Testament*;

V (1967) *Pour un aggiornamento des manuels de patrologie et de patristique; Quelle est l'origine de l'agape?*;

VI (1971) *Valeur et signification des renseignements de Justin*;

VII (1975) *Jacques-Paul Migne et la renaissance patristique. Leçon d'un centenaire*;

IX (1983) *L'utilisation des Psaumes dans les deux premiers siècles chrétiens*;

X (1987) *La formation du clergé latin, dans les quatre premiers siècles*.

talks and give specialised courses. His name is identified with the mammoth task entailed in publishing the *Supplementum* to the *Patrologia Latina* of Migne. These five volumes appeared in instalments between 1958 and 1974; they constitute the *magnum opus* of Hamman who was assisted by several collaborators in what turned out to be a herculean task.

In the late 1960s, Hamman was appointed consultor of the *Consilium ad exequendam liturgiam* established after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to implement liturgical reform. He was instrumental in the inauguration of various patristic collections, *Ichtyos. Lettres chrétiennes* in 1957 and *Les Pères dans la foi* in 1977, and also in the foundation of the *Association J.-P. Migne* in 1976. He was internationally recognised as one of the leading scholars on Christian antiquity. Hamman died on 20 July 2000,² and so it is highly appropriate to give a worthy mention of the scholar at the first Patristic Conference to be held following his death.

In my communication, I have chosen to speak about one particular aspect which vividly characterises the works of Hamman. This is the concept of what, in French, he calls *quotidienneté*, or what Italian translates as *quotidianità*. It is difficult to render this into a single word in English: it refers to the ordinariness of the daily doings of life. I elaborate further. A bird's eye-view of the many articles and books by Adalbert Hamman reveals an anthropological-sociological-existential concern which permeates his thought. Indeed, "basing himself on the teachings and prayers of the Fathers, Hamman has contributed widely in associating the sacraments with the common aspects of life, what he calls '*la quotidienneté de nos vies*', hence exploring the area of convergence of liturgy and social action."³ Indeed, his works can be seen as a solid contribution to a *fides quaerens intellectum practico-socialem*. Rather than dwelling upon the more speculative themes of theology, he opts for the

2. Cfr "In memoriam", *La Maison-Dieu* 223 (2000) 8. A long appreciation, with details of his funeral service, was published in the Bulletin of the *Province Franco-Belge des Trois Compagnons*, Metz 2000, 231-233.
3. H. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria: Interrelated Themes in Patristic Sacramental Theology as expounded by Adalbert-G. Hamman O.F.M.*, Melita Theologica Supplementary Series 4, Malta 1999, 103. Cfr A.-G. Hamman, *La vie*, 99; Id., "Comment les Pères de l'Église ont-ils prêché l'eucharistie?", *Parole et Pain* 2 (1965) 419; Id., "La Messe et sa catéchèse chez les Pères de l'Église", *La Ciudad de Dios* 181 (1968) 458; Id., *Abrégé de la prière chrétienne*, Paris 1987, 197.

more existential ones.⁴ Thus, the *quotidienneté* one encounters in his works reveals his specific contribution to patristic studies, namely his tireless effort at the contextualisation of the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. This endeavour on his part is also evident in various works on Christian prayer appearing from the 1950s right down to the 90s.⁵ The existential dimension is again highlighted in these publications: “in this regard, he states that prayer is both the expression, as well as the nourishment, of an existence lived out in faith and service.”⁶

2. *La quotidienneté de nos vies*

In this short communication, I intend to demonstrate Hamman’s analysis and patristic presentation of the lives of early Christians. This is evident from the familiarity he shows with the social ambience in which the Fathers lived. There are two works by Hamman which more than others provide contemporary scholars and readers with an impressive body of data to ponder upon and an encouraging ideal to follow. These are the book on the daily life of the first Christians, *La vie quotidienne des premiers chrétiens (95-197)*, published in 1971,⁷ and that on North

4. On several occasions, Hamman affirms that in the first centuries of the Church the existential dimension of the Eucharist was highlighted. He avers that “l’eucharistie est un mystère plus vécu que discuté” (“L’eucharistie à l’âge d’or des Pères de l’Église”, *Parole et Pain* 9 [1972] 285). Cfr A.-G. Hamman, ed., *The Mass. Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts*, Staten Island (New York) 1967, 24.
5. For example, A.-G. Hamman, *Prières des premiers chrétiens*, Paris 1952; Id., *La prière*, I. *Le Nouveau Testament*. II. *Les trois premiers siècles*, Tournai 1959, 1963; *Prières eucharistiques des premiers siècles*, Tournai 1957; Id., “Le Notre Père dans la catéchèse des Pères de l’Église”; *La Maison-Dieu* 85 (1966) 41-68; Id., *La prière dans l’Église ancienne*, *Traditio Christiana* 7, Berne 1989; Id., “La prière dans l’antiquité chrétienne. Un bilan des études sur la prière au XX^e siècle”, in *La preghiera nel tardo antico. Dalle origini ad Agostino*. XXVII Incontro di studiosi dell’antichità cristiana, Roma, 7-9 maggio 1998 [= *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 66], Roma 1999, 7-23. With regard to the first of these mentioned works, Annibale Bugnini had written: “Pagine dense, nelle quali c’è un soffio di vita nuova, tutta permeata di soprannaturale, come la vita delle prime generazioni cristiane”, “Review of *Prières des premiers chrétiens*”, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 67 (1953) 86.
6. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 306.
7. An unsigned note on *La vie quotidienne des premiers chrétiens (95-197)*, Paris 1971, sheds light on its academic and cultural value: “Le P. Hamman a le don de la synthèse et de la vulgarisation. Il connaît bien les textes des premiers siècles et il sait extraire des ouvrages savants les témoignages vivants qui disent souvent beaucoup plus que de longs discours ... la vie quotidienne de l’individu (*Le rythme des jours; les étapes de la vie*) en passant par l’examen des relations entre le chrétien et son entourage social et politique ... et celui de la vie des communautés chrétiennes ...”, “Review of *La vie quotidienne des premiers chrétiens (95-197)*”, *Esprit et vie* 82/40 (1972) 554.

African society at the time of Augustine of Hippo, *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord au temps de saint Augustin*, which appeared in 1979.⁸ Several editions and translations of these two works have appeared, thus attesting to the positive reception they enjoyed. Hamman explains that “these are not historical works but well-researched guides to help the reader savour the rhythm of the life of the early Christians.”⁹ He also wrote a number of articles which cluster around the principal themes of the two books just mentioned.¹⁰

The value of these *vies quotidiennes* — indeed models of a historiography of daily life — lies in their detailed descriptions in which Hamman

expounds the sufferings and joys of the early Christians as they struggled to remain faithful to their baptismal promises in the daily routine of their lives. The eyes of Hamman are alert and wide open to the details which may pass unnoticed to others. In these works, he presents a whole spectrum of illustrations regarding the way Christians expressed their faith amid the ordinary happenings of life.¹¹

8. In a review of *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord au temps de saint Augustin*, Paris 1979, the renowned liturgist Pierre Jounel affirmed that this work by Hamman is “de grande qualité” and makes the reader familiar with the environment where Augustine lived. The bishop of Hippo is not the subject of the study, but the many references Hamman makes to his works greatly help to clarify what the daily life was like in 5th century North Africa (“Review of *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord au temps de saint Augustin*”, *La Maison-Dieu* 138 [1979] 156). In another review, the volume is described as “scintillante nella forma e limpido nell’esposizione ... offre un quadro delle condizioni di vita in cui sant’Agostino operò come vescovo ... L’Africa in quell’epoca era un crogiolo di razze agitate da grandi passioni e, in ambiente cristiano, ne era già apparsa l’anima nella tempestosa vicenda di Tertulliano” (G. Cremascoli, “Review of *La vita quotidiana nell’Africa di sant’Agostino*”, *La Civiltà Cattolica* 141/3 [1990] 310).
9. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 107.
10. These are some noteworthy examples: A.-G. Hamman, “La nouveauté de vie chez les chrétiens des premiers siècles”, *Seminarium* 33 (1981) 656-669; Id., “De la célébration eucharistique à la vie quotidienne dans l’antiquité chrétienne”, *Parole et Pain* 8 (1971) 296-301; Id., “La vie quotidienne des premiers chrétiens à Rome”, in O. de Brosse – al., *Visages de Rome*, Rome 1975, 25-35; Id., “La comunità cristiana e i poveri nei primi secoli della Chiesa”, in J. Dupont – al., *Seguire Gesù povero*, Comunità di Bose (Mignano) 1984, 89-117.
11. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 304. Cfr V. Roisel, “Review of *Études patristiques*”, *Nouvelle revue théologique* 114 (1992) 765. The works in question were described by Ottorino Pasquato as “particolarmente espressive della sua sensibilità culturale, attenta al quotidiano e al popolo cristiano [... e come] modelli di storiografia della vita quotidiana” (“Review of *La preghiera nella Chiesa antica*”, *Salesianum* 58 [1996] 792).

Charles Martin, in a review of *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord*, comments on the attractive and instructive style used by Hamman in his presentation. The reader encounters various aspects of daily life: the Christian's relationship to his pagan neighbours, the city, the dwellings, daily activities, nutritional habits, clothing, schooling, the streets, the port area, professions and occupations, recreation and social classes. In another section of the book, one finds the congregation waiting impatiently to listen to Augustine, and the Christians celebrating the Eucharist. One encounters the needy crying out for help. These colourful aspects which Hamman manages to glean through his familiarity and knowledge of Augustine and other Fathers reveal the many striking dimensions of daily life in North Africa in the first decades of the fifth century.¹²

Like the Fathers whom he studies, Hamman applies the ethical implications of the sacraments to daily life. The captivating texts of *les vies quotidiennes* are also very instructive because in them one encounters a detailed background which assists the reader in contextualising the social thought of the Fathers, while bearing in mind "*el semblante humano de cada autor*".¹³ Hamman's own wide-ranging research stimulated him to consider "the philosophical, economical and political problems which confronted the Fathers, most of whom were pastors of local Churches, and ... the solutions they proposed in the light of faith."¹⁴

12. Cfr C. Martin, "Review of *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord au temps de saint Augustin*", *Nouvelle revue théologique* 102 (1980) 575; E. Moeller, "Review of *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord au temps de saint Augustin*", *Questions Liturgiques* 62 (1981) 167-168. Hamman remarks that before his composition of the two *vies quotidiennes*, books and articles on pagan and Christian antiquity hardly ever contained details on the dietary habits and other ordinary aspects of people's daily life. Indeed, he recalls a humorous quip by Fernand Braudel that several history books seem to assume that people never took time to eat! Cfr A.-G. Hamman, *Études patristiques*, *Théologie historique* 85, Paris 1991, 8; Id., *La vie*, 199.
13. A. Osuna, "Review of *Guía práctica de los Padres de la Iglesia*", *Ciencia Tomista* 98 (1971) 449.
14. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 304. What is being emphasised is the awareness asked of the reader with regard to "le milieu politique, philosophique, social dans lequel ces hommes ont vécu". When reading their works "il est indispensable de connaître le cadre dans lequel ils ont été composés, avec tous ses éléments, mais, autant que pas l'exemple de leurs vies, c'est par la manière dont ces hommes ont réagi devant les problèmes de leur temps ..." (Y.-M.D., "Review of *Guide pratique des Pères de l'Église*", *Esprit et vie* 78/19 [1968] 314). A. Osuna affirms: "En la pintura de los personajes predomina el realismo y lo vivo, hasta el punto de hacer subyugante la personalidad de esos hombres y actuar el pensamiento de quienes han vivido en un mundo tan distinto del nuestro", "Review of *Guía práctica de los Padres de la Iglesia*", 449.

One should be aware that it is against the backdrop of the French historical and socio-theological situation in the 1930s, 40s and 50s that one can identify the academic formation and the early intellectual activities of Hamman.¹⁵ That epoch was marked by several important influences: *la nouvelle théologie*, the “theology of earthly realities”, and the priest-worker movement. It is at the confluence of these various streams that Hamman started his prolific contribution of divulging the works of the Fathers to the general public, especially in the collections *Ichtyes* and *Les Pères dans la foi*. A careful reading of his works highlights the central role of the sacraments in the daily life of individual believers, namely, in the “*quotidienneté des nos vies*”. Consequently, Hamman was instrumental in uncovering the hidden implications contained in patristic literature regarding the ordinary social activities of the early Christians. An authority on pagan and Christian antiquity, Hamman leads his readers to become more aware of the historical and social contextualisation of the liturgical and patristic texts of the early Church. He explores the social dimension of the sacraments, an objective he admirably achieves in many articles, but especially in one of his more important works, *Vie liturgique et vie sociale*¹⁶ which was published in 1968, and which had been preceded by his *Vie liturgique et apostolat* in 1964.

3. *The Application of the Findings of Hamman to Sacramental Theology*

Thus, an attentive study of the research accomplished by Hamman reveals his wide-ranging grasp of patristic thought on the sacraments and on their orthopractical dimension. In other words, the *quotidienneté* we are talking about reveals a number of patristic insights concerning the sacraments as (a) graced sources of social cohesion within the Christian community; (b) moral actions urging the individual members of the community to gratuitous service; (c) pastoral stimuli driving them to bear witness in society to the person and to the values of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ For

15. Cfr Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 51-76, 87-92.

16. “Sobre la liturgia de los primeros siglos podrían citarse cantidad de trabajos, muchos de ellos fundamentales. Sin embargo, no conocemos ninguno de ellos que se haya propuesto una encuesta sistemática en relación con el aspecto social. Este es el mérito de patrólogo Hamman, al intentar demostrar la solidaridad entre la vida litúrgica y la vida social en la iglesia primitiva”, A. Manrique, “Review of *Vie liturgique et vie sociale*”, *La Ciudad de Dios* 183 (1970) 609.

17. Cfr H. Scerri, “Dall’*actuosa participatio* ad un’ortoprassi eucaristica autentica”, in A. Montan – M. Sodi, ed., *Actuosa participatio. Conoscere, comprendere e vivere la Liturgia. Studi in onore del Prof. Domenico Sartore, csj*, Città del Vaticano 2002, 519-520; Id., *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 102-106, 297-300.

instance, Hamman delves deeply into the study of table-fellowship in his presentation of *koinonia* in the early Christian assembly.¹⁸ He rightly concludes that a life based on a commitment to justice, service and love becomes an extension of the participation of individual believers in the liturgy. Indeed, Hamman's interest in *quotidienneté* leads him to take great pains in studying the *agape* meal as an expression of *koinonia*, and as a practice closely related to the Eucharist.¹⁹

The ethical concern shown by Hamman in the light of his interest in *quotidienneté* led him to investigate the relationship between *leitourgia* and *diakonia*. Having, for example, received the sacramental Body of Christ in the Eucharist, individual Christians have the obligation to take notice of the social form of his presence in their neighbours. The framework of the liturgy is to encompass their daily life in its various aspects. The inextricable relationship between the Eucharist and social justice is distinctly highlighted by Hamman through several key texts by Augustine (354-430) and John Chrysostom (c.345-407).²⁰ Opening one's whole being to the all-transforming effect of the sacraments means opting for daily practical solicitude vis-à-vis others. Since assisting the poor is considered by the Fathers as an extension of the celebration of the liturgy, Hamman demonstrates how this daily favourable disposition towards the suffering is also an integral part of it. John Chrysostom consistently exhorts his flock to recall that the celebration of the Eucharist entails a lifelong process of doing away with egoism, in order to embrace altruism. This is an endeavour which Hamman has appropriately described in his autobiography as "*comment concilier la foi et la tâche temporelle, faire non seulement cohabiter mais coopérer culte et souci social*".²¹

This theme was investigated by Hamman as far back as 1953 when he published an article called "Liturgie et action sociale" in the liturgical review *La Maison-Dieu*. Fifteen years later, he published *Vie liturgique et vie sociale*, the fruit of his more mature reflection. Hamman later affirms that the merit of the latter

18. Cfr *ibid.*, 121-122.

19. Cfr A.-G. Hamman, "Quelle est l'origine de l'agape?", in *Studia Patristica X/1. Papers presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford, 1967*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 107, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1970, 351-354; Id., *Vie liturgique et vie sociale*, Paris 1968, 223-227; Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 122-129.

20. Cfr Scerri, "Dall'*actuosa participatio*", 514-515.

21. Hamman, *La vie*, 242. Cfr Id., *Vie liturgique*, 5, 19.

lies in its invitation to engage in what de Lubac, some decades earlier, had called '*la théologie nouvelle*'; this, in actual fact, consists in a return to the understanding of the integration of nature and grace as expressed in the early Christian sources... The approach de Lubac had applied to ecclesiology, Hamman employed with regard to the liturgy, and so retrieved the dynamic connection between sacramental grace and everyday existence in the early centuries".²²

In this latter work, and in several articles which appeared later, the notion of *quotidienneté* is very conspicuous. One observes the profound relationship between the celebration of the sacraments and the responsibility of daily life, "*entre la charité célébrée et la charité vécue et réalisée*".²³ One encounters several interesting expressions coined by Hamman with the intention of stressing this connection. He writes about the mystery of the Eucharist in daily life ("*faire passer le mystère eucharistique dans le quotidien*"),²⁴ and about living one's Baptism in daily circumstances ("*vivre le baptême dans le quotidien*").²⁵ In fact, a careful reading of the extensive writings of Hamman shows that he "strives to dissolve the apparent opposition between the liturgy and the apostolate, prayer and action".²⁶ For instance, "for him, the Eucharistic anaphora... becomes an integral part of the daily life of the early Christians, especially those who were prepared to shed their blood as martyrs".²⁷

In his many articles on the theme of *martyria*, Hamman studies the connection between the sacraments and Christian witness. He demonstrates how sacramental grace empowers individual members of the Church to bear witness to Christ in their everyday life. He examines, for instance, the relationship between martyrdom, Baptism and Eucharist. The confession of faith uttered by the candidates for the first time at their Baptism, and then repeated at each Eucharistic celebration, urges them to bear witness to Christ, and to love their neighbour. Hamman perceives a strict continuity between the commitment made at the baptismal profession of faith and the public confession made in the context of martyrdom. He had investigated

22. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 104.

23. Hamman, *Études patristiques*, 7.

24. Hamman, "Comment les Pères de l'Église ont-ils prêché l'eucharistie?", 415.

25. A.-G. Hamman, *Le baptême et la confirmation*, Paris 1969, 93.

26. L.E., "Review of *Liturgia y Apostolado*", *Lumen Vitae* 23 (1968) 373.

27. Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 291. Cfr *ibid.*, 260-269; 271-279.

this connection while studying the notion of *sphragis* in an important contribution at the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Oxford in 1959.²⁸ In various works, Hamman also investigates the implications of the word “*Amen*” at both Baptism and Eucharist, and finds that this profession accentuates the dedication of individual Christians to God.²⁹ This solemn pledge finds its genesis in baptismal consecration, and is strengthened by participation in the Eucharist. Sacramental grace strengthens Christians when they are faced with the struggles of life. The readiness for *martyria*, whether the shedding of their blood or the carrying out of their daily responsibilities,³⁰ confirms the truth of the adage by Prosper of Aquitaine (390-463) “*lex orandi, lex credendi*”, which Hamman extends to encompass the *lex vivendi*. Hamman explains that this is what makes Christians “*leitourgoi*” and “*eucharistoi*”. Daily life, in a spirit of witness, is transformed into a *liturgy* which is expressed in a diaconal attitude of service to those who know little justice or love.

In his extensive contribution to patristic studies as an internationally recognised scholar, Adalbert Hamman shows that throughout their pastoral ministry, the Fathers of the Church indefatigably strove to highlight the inextricable link between the Christian cult and daily life. In their catechesis, they strongly affirmed the interdependence of the proclamation of the *kerygma*, the celebration of the sacraments in *leitourgia*, the bonds of *koinonia* in the *ekklesia*, the practice of *diakonia*, and the readiness for *martyria*. Ever since the early 1950s, Hamman devoted himself attentively to the thought of the Fathers on the sacraments. He has consistently endeavoured to present a synthesis of their doctrinal reflections and moral teaching. He holds that orthodoxy and orthopraxis are complementary to

28. Cfr A.-G. Hamman, “La signification de *sphragis* dans le Pasteur d’Hermas”, in *Studia Patristica* IV/2. *Papers presented to the Third International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1959*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 79, ed. F.L. Cross, Berlin 1961, 286-290.

29. Cfr Hamman, *La prière*, I, 429; Id., “La Messe et sa catéchèse chez les Pères de l’Église”, 464; Id., “De la célébration eucharistique à la vie quotidienne”, 297, 300; Id., *La vie quotidienne en Afrique du Nord*, 242; Id., *Les racines de la foi. La catéchèse des Pères de l’Église*, Paris 1983, 181.

30. Cfr A.-G. Hamman, “L’Esprit Saint dans la vie de l’Église, au cours des trois premiers siècles”, in *Corona Gratiarum*, Festschrift E. Dekkers, I, Instrumenta Patristica 10, Brugge – ’s Gravenhage 1975, 31, 34; Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 25,5, as quoted in A.-G. Hamman, “Signification doctrinale des Actes des martyrs”, *Nouvelle revue théologique* 75 (1953) 744. With regard to *martyria* as an extension of *eucharistia*, cfr A.-G. Hamman, “Mystère eucharistique”, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, IV/2, ed. M. Viller – al., Paris 1961, 1582; Id., *La vie*, 132; Id., *La prière*, II, 141; Id., “De la célébration eucharistique à la vie quotidienne”, 301.

each other. In so doing, he proves that patristics is not merely a collection of dogmatic pronouncements, but is a vital reflection on pastoral responsibility. Hamman thus underlines the permanent validity of the enlightened attitude of the Fathers to the socio-economic and political milieu in society. While contextualising the teachings of the Fathers, Hamman shows that their sermons, epistles and commentaries possess a striking applicability to contemporary society. The content of Hamman's works is never dry, but ever appealing in its *quotidienneté*. Like the Fathers he studies, he applies the ethical implications of the sacraments to daily life. This leads him to exhort Christians to be truly Christ-like – people *for others* and *with others*.

4. *The Influence of Franciscan Spirituality on Hamman*

The praiseworthy rediscoveries by Hamman are the direct result of the confluence of the social concern he imbibed from the Fathers, and the Franciscan charism he assimilated from the *Poverello* of Assisi (1182-1226).³¹ This coalescence found a favourable catalyst in the varied experiences of the Church in France before the Second Vatican Council. Although a scholar devoted to long hours of painstaking research, Hamman remained a man of the people. Far from seeking the trappings of academic pedestals, Hamman, throughout his career, opted instead for radical simplicity and selfless availability. The practice of disinterested solidarity and human promotion, ubiquitous in his writings, can be implicitly traced to his experience as a Franciscan religious inflamed with love for the incarnate Son. For Hamman, Franciscan spirituality is not defined by an activity, but by a way of being, a fraternal lifestyle which seeks to put into practice the Gospel message in the daily situations of life.³² Following the poor and crucified Christ led Hamman to recapture the mystical experiences of Francis, especially his encounter with the leper and his mandate coming from the crucifix at San Damiano. The needy are “sacraments of Christ” because in such outcasts the *Poverello* finds the Suffering Servant of humanity.

Showing a genuine solicitude for what men and women experience in the routine of daily life, Hamman has borne witness to this commitment of the Church as expressed in the opening words of *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor

31. Cfr Scerri, *Koinonia, Diakonia and Martyria*, 84-86.

32. Cfr Hamman, *La vie*, 370.

or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts" (para. 1). This explains why Hamman has laboured to highlight the daily relevance of orthopraxis to sacramental theology, an aspect which he closely aligns to the pneumatological and the ecclesiological ones.

In the Canticle of St Francis, believers pray to be *instruments of the peace of God*. The presentation of the Fathers as expounded by Adalbert Hamman seeks to concentrate upon the transformation accomplished by sacramental grace in the lives of the baptised: it unites them together, illumines their intellect and fortifies their will when faced with the daily realities encountered in contemporary society.³³ Thus, an analysis of the complete works of Hamman reveals that this contemporary scholar underlines the concept of *quotidienneté* in the ethical, socio-practical concern, that is, the orthopraxis shown by the Fathers: *leitourgia* and *koinonia* challenge Christians to foster an ecclesial spirit marked by *diakonia* and *martyria*, hence inviting them to be *instruments of grace* for their brothers and sisters. This is what makes the contribution of Adalbert Hamman to theology so enriching and so relevant. The bridge between theology and daily life mirrors Hamman's firm conviction that "*la foi devienne expérience de vie, à l'école des Pères*".³⁴ This is what makes his precious theological endeavour a *fides quaerens intellectum practico-socialem*.

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33. G. Dumeige talks of "une irradiation de la liturgie dans l'existence chrétienne de tous les jours ..., ... les relations entre la prière et la foi, la liturgie et l'existence chrétienne" ("Review of *La prière*, II: *Les trois premiers siècles*", *Gregorianum* 45 [1964] 866).

34. Hamman, *La vie*, 62.