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Life and Meaning: An Offering of Uncles

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Book Reviews

LIFE AND MEANING

AN OFFERING OF UNCLES: THE PRIESTHOOD OF ADAM AND THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD. By Robert Farrar Capon. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967. 182 pp.

Father Capon, an Episcopal parish priest, takes early morning walks, loves to cook, plays the recorder, and sports a beard. He also teaches Dogmatic Theology and Greek at the George Mercer School of Theology. And for each of these he has a very valid reason (seventeen reasons for growing a beard).

The main message of this book is an appeal to all men to put meaning into their lives. An appeal for place, time and history (not just names, dates and chronology). Perhaps it matters little that you saw a gull at 8:53 A.M.; but it does matter that the sight brought about the lifting of a decade of despair. It is meaning that transforms each incident of our life into a wonderful event and makes of marriage a truly personal enrichment, rather than mere drab cohabitation.

Father Capon talks of marsh reeds and tennis rules, of uncles and cabinet-makers, but his message is that of *kairos* and *chronos*, of God's action and man's responsibility, of respect for reality and deep reverence for persons. His style is truly intriguing, so that the words of wisdom are administered with a taste of honey. My only plaint is that by the time one reaches the epilogue, the honey begins to cloy—the style is *that* singular. And one feels relieved that the preface (appended at the end, where it belongs) reads a little more like serious theological popularization.

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