

The Vital Issue of The Modern World - A Material or a Spiritual Choice

Armistice Day Address of His Excellency, Bishop Kearney, - Appears Here Complete by Popular Demand

Here is the complete text of an address given by His Excellency, the Most Reverend, James P. Kearney, D. D., Bishop of Rochester, at the Armistice Day Luncheon sponsored by Monroe County, American Legion. An increasing number of requests is being received for publication of the full address on this most vital subject.

When the members of the American Legion began the celebration of Armistice Day by sending their way to the House of God, they not only gave an excellent example of American Democracy in action but when they sincerely sought the Divine Assistance so necessary at the present time, they made their most valuable contribution to the celebration of the day.

Every period of history has its own peculiar characteristics. The dominant note of our times is uncertainty, confusion and instability. There are scholars of great authority who express the conviction that we are approaching a crisis in our civilization, if in fact it is not already here. Scarcely by the crisis appears to be political, social and economic. Actually these are only symptoms of a much more profound disintegration. The world is sick in its soul. It is out of joint, spiritually and religiously.

That this judgment is not merely an individual one but represents rather a consensus of world opinion is abundantly clear from the pronouncements of contemporary criticism. Christopher Dawson in England, the most respected of our Christian sociologists, makes this statement: "Today the world is in the movement, and no one can tell where it is going or what will happen next; whether our civilization is going to recover its stability or whether it will collapse in ruins."

In another place he states the cause and also cites the remedy. "The central conviction which has dominated my mind ever since I began to write, and which has increased in intensity during the last twenty years, is the conviction that the society or culture which has lost its spiritual roots is a dying culture, however prosperous it may appear externally. Consequently the problem of social survival is not only a political or economic one, it is above all things religious, since it is in religion that the ultimate spiritual roots both of society and of the individual are to be found."

In America we find a point doubly to our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution in which is set forth the doctrine that there are certain inalienable rights given to man by the Creator, namely, the right of life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness. Since the emergence of the totalitarian state these rights no longer are recognized in a large part of Europe. The state encroaches within itself on the whole of man; it tells him not merely what he can do in public but tells him what he must think in private.

In consequence there is no freedom of conscience, no freedom of worship, no freedom of assembly, nor freedom of the press.

MORAL ORDER IN STATE
If you seek the explanation of this new phenomenon you will find it in the progressive departure from Christian truth which has been taking place in the intellectual life of the world for the past several centuries. It is only now reaching its climax and final fruition. Christianity teaches that the citizen precedes the state. It teaches that man has a value and a dignity all his own, that is only now reaching its climax and final fruition. Christianity teaches that the citizen precedes the state. It teaches that man has a value and a dignity all his own, that is only now reaching its climax and final fruition.

The state therefore must subordinate its plan of human welfare to the prior rights of the plan that God Himself made. The state in other words must work out its way within the moral order that God Himself established. If you accept these principles no matter what you call your government it never becomes an absolute dictatorship or a comprehensive totalitarian state.

What philosophers think in one generation is popularized in the second and then reduced to practice in the third. How different would have been the history of the past two hundred years if the intellectual leadership of the world had remained in God-fearing hands. As a matter of fact, the intellectual leadership passed from our hands to those outside the realm of religion. They had little sympathy with and less understanding of the Christian philosophy of life in politics, in sociology, in science and in economics. The secular viewpoint and the ultra-liberal spirit has predominated in order to illustrate this fact let us cite the names of four men who were in the forefront of the respective fields of thought and activity during the past century and a half.

PRINCIPLE BLASTED
In political science Jean Jacques Rousseau exercised more influence than any other writer of the past two hundred years. By reason of his "Social Contract" he gave direction and impetus to the liberal democratic movement but he did so by repudiating not merely the divine right of kings but also the divine right of the Lord God Himself. The principle of divine authority was shattered. The will of the



Bishop Kearney

majority was made the supreme law of society. Thus minorities were left defenseless in the face of attack on those inalienable rights with which they had been endowed by their Creator.

In social science Auguste Comte, who coined the word Sociology, easily assumed the leadership and gave this so-called science a definitely anti-Christian bias. He denied the validity of any objective standard of morality and substituted in its place the shifting norm of human tradition, custom and fashion. Morality became mere conventionalism. As a result men felt free to tinkler with the sacred institutions of society such as marriage and the family. Experiments in sterilization, birth control and euthanasia supplanted the right to life and personal integrity.

In the field of experimental science no name is more significant than that of Charles Darwin. Even though he did not originate the theory of evolution, yet by his book "Origin of Species" he created an entirely new spiritual mood in the mind in which to pursue the scientific knowledge. If the theory of evolution carried over dispassionately from biology into metaphysics, psychology and religion, it was largely due to the memorandum which he gave by his book "The Descent of Man." Science after Darwin became irreligious, a tool and purpose.

FANNED FLAMES
In social economics Karl Marx became the new evangelist and his book "Das Kapital" became the new gospel from which millions of people were to seek in our generation the inspiration of their economic and political activity. If Red revolution flames fearfully in many countries of the world, let us not forget that he who set the torch to the combustible material was Marx, the author of the "Communist Manifesto."

Here you have the four great secular evangelists of the past

state should just be undermined, policed and closed are the sources of these ancient traditions which, based on faith in God and fidelity to His law, secure the true progress of nations. Peace! Peace? There is no peace.

THE WRONG APPROACH

Prophets rise up at every cross-roads to tell us of the solution of the economic crisis. Schemes and plans are offered to smash away the political ills that human flesh is heir to. Programs are invented which it is promised will work automatically to the perfection of the race. High-sounding theories and study-made formulas are presented which promise the redCOVERY of the vanished Arcadia—Arcadia which its heart torn out with no temple to the living God. It is on whose brows shines the star of genius are only with their invention of a blasted robot—a earthly fairy waving her magic wand to transform this world of ours into fields of asphodels and crystal palaces—creating an Utopia of peace and joy and good will. My friends, be not deceived, be not mesmerized by such plans for peace.

Not this way lies peace. For the crisis today is not merely economic or political it is a totalitarian crisis developing through three centuries. Great changes take place gradually, the course of the last three centuries the civilized nations, with still retaining the framework of a Christian civilization, have been

morally and religious ideas on which their civilization was based. Man must worship something. He must have some God before whom he can bend the knee, to whom he can profess allegiance, and with whom he can seek union. If he loses or rejects the true God he must perforce replace Him by a god of his own invention. Shall we consider at the altars—the worship of the absolute state so common today?

The state controls economics, it controls the state controls ethics, the state controls education, the state carries its muddled boots into the sacred sanctuary of the home, the state on spiritual faith and animated by charity which is the spiritual will. For God, or against God: this is the alternative, that decides the destinies not alone of individuals, but determines the destinies of all mankind in politics, in finance, in morals, in the sciences and the arts, in the state, in civil and domestic life. The lines today are drawn here. Choose the material organization of life and you lose no room for human values. Man becomes a machine, or at best a cog in the big machine. Man is enslaved in this philosophy as an animal and nothing more than an animal with a tiny acre of grass to browse upon, man is analyzed as a bit of carbonic acid and mud an automaton worked by "conditioned reflexes" and the soul is not needed because a script has not been written, a future life cannot be admitted because forsooth it has not been perceived under a microscope.

God has no place in His own universe, for we have no picture of Him. He has not been seen through a telescope. Life thus becomes eating and drinking, not knowledge and love. One by one from such beginnings, led on by an insatiable logic, sacred principles, the guide of all social intercourse, are trampled on, the solid foundations on which the

prolonged applause.

Bishop Kearney said that the spiritual graces of Father Stemmler not only have been felt in St. John's parish, but throughout the city as asserted by Mayor Beers, and throughout the entire diocese.

Continuing, he said that "his contributions to faith, hope and charity have been great and his deep spiritual feelings and humility have done much for Mother Church. In conclusion, Bishop Kearney told the aged jubilarian that the "whole diocese joins in thanking God for your presence and gifts to your fellowmen."

Fr. Stemmler Responds
Speaking in a faint voice, Father Stemmler thanked his "dear friends" for their confidence in him and confessed that "these nice remarks have pleased me. I thank the Bishop and pray that God will aid me in my many years. We are proud of him."

Recalling that he has faced many problems during his 37 years in Elmira, Father Stemmler said they were conquered because of the co-operation and grace of his parishioners and assistants.

"I hope that Father Heisel will always stay with me," he said, looking toward the Bishop.

Referring to the monstrance, he said the gift "has touched me to the bottom of my soul—such beauty I never expected. I will cherish it as long as I live."

"I can't expect to live much longer. I cannot preach for another 20 years but this monstrance will always thrill me. I thank you all for honoring me on my 50th anniversary in the priesthood. That is all. I thank you very much especially the Bishop."

Father Heisel read telegrams from Archbishop Thomas F. Hickey and from Bishop Foley of Syracuse, both of whom expressed their best wishes to Father Stemmler. Hickey presented the Archbishop's attendance.

School Journal Runs Article By Nun Here
MILWAUKEE, Wis.—Sister Agnes Vincent S.S.J., of the Nazareth convent at Pittsford, is one of the contributors to the current issue of the "Catholic School Journal," published here. Sister Agnes pens an article on "Those Horrid Interruptions."

Honor Franciscan
St. Bonaventure.—The Rev. Irmasius Herscher, O.F.M., librarian of St. Bonaventure College, has been proposed for membership in the Board of Governors of the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors of Webster College, Webster Groves, Mo.

Gets Noted Library
New York.—Fordham University has announced the acquisition of one of the finest libraries of New Spain and the French Revolution in existence. It consists of 2,000 volumes. The late Joseph Giver...

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