

Sorsum Corda

Bad Psychology? Worse Than That

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.

Editor, The Catholic World

It may be because I am an American or because I am a Christian, or for both reasons but the one kind of cruelty that cuts deepest into my soul is reprisals. I have never been able to see virtue in Caiaphas because of his saying "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people." It was of course the will of Jesus to suffer for His people but that does not exculpate the coward who surrendered Him to torture and death. "The Son of Man indeed goeth, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed."

Caiaphas and Pilate were not only cruel but cruel in a cowardly way. Especially Pilate. He said "I see no cause of death in this just man" but "take Him and crucify Him." There is something revolting in such injustice. And the people too. "Not this man but Barabbas," you shall release. The criminal goes unpunished and the innocent man is killed. There is something abhorrent in any miscarriage of justice, but when the miscarriage is not a mistake but intentional the deep wells of indignation in the soul burst and overflow. When a judge on the bench of the presiding officer at a court martial for reasons of policy or for revenge or simply for the sake of being cruel, punishes a man known to be innocent there is something hellish about the deed.

Now Adolf Hitler aligns himself with Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas and all other historic betrayers of justice and purveyors of the innocent. The current reprisals in which fifty men or a hundred are shot for the crime of some unknown criminals are perhaps the most horrifying thing in a war that has already been cruel beyond the most macabre imagination. Oddly enough, but characteristically, in the mind of many moderns the one idea that comes to the fore, the one exclamation that falls from the lips of most newspaper readers or radio listeners is "Bad Psychology." President Roosevelt and Premier Churchill, emphasized also the idea that reprisals prove that Hitler is desperate and does not expect to win. True perhaps though the alternative view may also be more likely that the Nazis really believe in Sheekelshelkell as an instrument of conquest. It is in line with their philosophy of Nietzscheanism. Nietzsche the madman hated and ridiculed the Christian idea of pity and mercy. Hitler has bor-

Library Signpost

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

Matters of November

The maroons and magentas of November have their counterpart in the rich galaxy of Saints who bring to a close these final days of the Church Year before Advent. There is a kind of autumnal glory about them which seems to make November their own special month.

There is St. Martin (Nov. 11), Bishop of Tours in the 4th century when the Roman Empire was in its Indian Summer. For people of Europe in the olden days recalled Martin, as at the year's last stand before the winter. Read about him in the Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 11.

There is St. Albertus Magnus (Nov. 15), bright light of the shadowy period before the birth of the 13th century. His marvellous science and wisdom were harvest sheaves from which his pupil Thomas Aquinas gleaned copiously. Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 1.

There is St. Gertrude (Nov. 16), Benedictine mystic of the 13th century whose rich young life (she died at 40) was like harvest in springtime. Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 11.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Nov. 19), Queen, Franciscan Tertiary known as the little sister of St. Francis, for her tender devotion to the Franciscan ideal and to her poverty, sure among the most lovable of lovely Saints, hers is an autumn beauty, ardent but chaste. About her, read the charming biography by Elisabeth von Schmidt-Pauli, also Violet Clifton's Sanctity, a drama about Elizabeth written in verse of exquisite and mystical beauty, and Ida Condorevich's The Nature of Sanctity.

St. Cecilia (Nov. 21), most illustrious of the Roman virgin martyrs, beheaded in the first part of the 3rd century. Her name means "the little blind girl" though she was not actually blind, the name being quite likely patronymic. Read about her in the Catholic Encyclopedia under C, also in Herodotus of Holiness; Cardinal Newman's Callista gives us in story form, the setting and the atmosphere of Cecilia's time.

St. Clement Pope and Martyr (Nov. 23), his Epistles are a candid mirror of the early Christian spirit. His martyrdom is a compendium of heavenly intercourse, his church in Rome is an epitome of over 2000 years of history. Catholic Encyclopedia under C.

St. John of the Cross Spanish mystic and Doctor of the Church (Nov. 24), a great lover of God, reformer with St. Teresa of the Carmelites, characterized as one who was "all spirit," his mystical treatises, eloquent and lofty as they are, have been widely read. "The Ascent of Mount Carmel," "The Dark Night of the Soul," "The Spiritual Canticle," etc. Read: The Burning Soul of St. John of the Cross.

Five Years Ago--

-in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER From Nov. 12, 1936, Edition.

A ringing plea for peace was voiced by the church in this diocese and in the nation as America marked the eighteenth anniversary of the Armistice Singing Speaking in St. Patrick's Cathedral the Rev. Charles J. Bruton, American Legion Chaplain, declared that "we the living should fight to end war in memory of the boys who went away for love of country and home. At the Unknown Soldier's Tomb, Msgr. Michael J. Ready recalled those "other heroes and heroines who pursued in the holy company of our American welfare associations, the noble idea of peace even in the midst of war."

rowed from him the idea that the virtues of the Gospel are weaknesses. He has taken over the pseudo-scientific hypothesis of the survival of the fittest understanding by "fittest" the most brutal. So it may be that he actually believes that he will conquer the world with cruelty. On the other hand it may be that the President and the Premier are right when they accuse him of flailing around madly and blindly because he sees he cannot win.

In either case the crime of ordering reprisals is heinous. It is far more bloodthirsty to think of fifty or a hundred innocent men shot down in cold blood to pay for some one else's deed than to think of thousands slain in actual battle.

There is something of defiance of God and of indignity to God in all injustice. God is Justice. Cardinal Newman holds that our just concept of God comes with the idea of Retributive Justice. There is, we feel, there must be Some One above Who metes out to every man his due. "There is no justice in this life," we say (in our excess), "so there must be a Great Judge of the Living and the Dead Who will in the end right all wrongs." And so we come to believe in God. These reprisals murderers these assassins are a thousand times more guilty than some grief crazed fellow who fires a shot at the oppressor of his country. Especially this ruthless, inhuman creature named Hitler who deliberately and with cold cruelty, not in passion not on a battlefield but in some council chamber picks up a telephone and orders the assassination of fifty men in retaliation for the assassination of one will now take his place in history with Herod and Nero and Ivan the Terrible.

Of course the reprisals will not succeed. Truth we say, is great and it will prevail. So too Justice is great and it will prevail. It may take an act of faith to believe that. An act of faith it is indeed because God is Justice. When we say we believe that Justice will prevail it is equivalent to saying that we believe in God.

Also these happenings vindicate the doctrine of hell if it needs vindication. People who live simple, drab uneventful lives, remote from the cruelties and savageries of wicked men are inclined to think that no one could be so bad as to deserve hell. But these occasional outbursts of satanism in high places, these manifestations of abnormal and unnatural cruelty before the eyes of the world make us realize the practical reality of a doctrine that otherwise might seem only a matter of theological speculation. In the Musée Wiertz in Brussels there is a painting of Napoleon in hell. After the war there will be many a painting of Hitler in hell. And short of some hitherto unheard of miracle of conversion such as could have been that of Herod or Nero, the painting of Hitler in hell will be no mere artist's fancy. (Copyright 1941 N. C. W. C.)

Cross, by R. Hoornaert. St. John of the Cross, by Fr. Bruno.

St. Catherine Virgin and Martyr (Nov. 25) married at Alexandria, she was once widely venerated in the Church. Here was one of the Voices that spoke to St. John of the Cross. Catholic Encyclopedia under C.

The Festival of Hungry Ghosts: The Hill of Ten Thousand Years, the Lake of Great Fertilizing Spume and a mellow harvest moon look silently upon a great religious spectacle today the fifteenth day of the seventh moon for in the Land of the Celestials it is the Festival of Hungry Ghosts. Sol emizoid all over the country by the imitations of 900,000 Buddhist monks and sanctified by the prayers of an unnumbered millions of the followers of Gautama Buddha, the Enlightened One.

So do I read in the magazine Fun Jen. But the Christian November is not a Festival of Hungry Ghosts. It is the month of the holy dead who are buried with Christ in God, but in a state of stinging suffering. It is the month of our meditation on death and the "Last Things" of the declining Church Year. St. Silvester (Nov. 30) is presented to us as the hermit who had his own grave dug in advance so that he might spend his hours of meditation beside it.

Morbid you say? Well if you do you haven't passed much beyond the kindergarten of Christian development. To those who are filled with the spirit of Christ's Gospel death is no passing over to a kingdom of hungry ghosts. It is a birth to a full and glorious life in God. Silvester's open tomb simply helped to neutralize the glamour of the world which deceives most of us into forgetting the real glory which is to come. He was no morbid Hamlet poking around among the skulls, but a saint who saw his tomb as a gateway of light and joy, and whom could plead with the Lord. How long O Lord?

I urge all my readers to buy, borrow, or come to the Library to read the Commonweal of Nov. 7 with its article by Father H. A. Reinhold on "Eternal Glory." May I quote one tempting paragraph which may send you running to read the rest? It is seasonal only because we have let ourselves go quite far astray from the true Christian spirit concerning death.

In the face of death with its stark reality empty phrases, emotional effusiveness, esthetic insincerity are of no avail. Things have to be right and true and real, or all has been a vain. All the prayers, rites and mysteries which the Church has woven around death; viaticum, last anointing, the last blessing, the strong and beautiful prayers during the agony, immediately after death, the funeral prayers and the Requiem, breathe triumphant assurance and dispel the secular gloom, and they dwarf the sinister pomp of our present-day Catholic funerals. We cannot leave Christian death in its present setting of gloom, fear and pity. We have to lift it to the level on which it belongs, the participation in Christ's triumph through the sacrament of Union, the signing of the poor sinner in the Holy Spirit, to be king, prophet and martyr in Christ and to enter into His glory because in His last mercy He healed us and restored us and raised us to His throne.

It would be presumptuous to expect that priests read this column when there is so little time to read far better things. But if some two or three happen to have read this far, I heartily recommend them to this article of Father Reinhold for some meaty sermon material on Extreme Unction, which is (unfortunately) the Cinderella of the Seven Sacraments, whereas, as Christ's last mercy to the departing soul it is in a certain sense among the most glorious.

"All books and readings recommended above are obtainable at the Catholic Evidence Library, Columbus Civic Centre 16687, Rochester."

EDITORIAL FEATURES

When A Loved One Passes On

Gently the doctor replaced the wrist of the woman on the white bedspread. Sympathetically, he turned to the kneeling man and said "Your wife Mr. Jones, your wife has left us."

Dead! Impossible! The one person who really meant anything to him gone forever! Nothing more could he do for her, and before him stretched wretched, lonely years.

What a comfort for the Catholic, at such a time, to know that he still can aid that by his prayers to the compassionate Lord Jesus he can help wipe out her tiny sins and the temporal punishment to all her forgiven sins, and that she, by her prayers for him, may help him toward his heavenly goal.

Such is the dogma of Purgatory and it is all so logical. Surely nothing defiled can enter into the purity of Heaven, and by the same token nothing but the grossest life, unrepented, deserves the everlasting punishment of hell fire. Therefore there must be a midway place of punishment and of cleansing

that almost all of us enter to stay until we are fit to re-join with Jesus in Heaven.

This the Apostles preached and practiced. This the early Fathers taught and wrote. This the Bible in many places presupposes to such a way that no man with an open mind can doubt the reality of this the catamount give living testimony today.

If you want these proofs and biblical texts, if you want information on any Catholic subject it will be supplied gratis, if you ask us. Catholic Information Society of Warrenton, P. O. Box 25, Warrenton, Pa.

It is not necessary to hope in order to act, nor to succeed in order to persevere. (George D'Almeida)

Now therefore, with the whole heart and strength praise ye Him and bless His name of the Lord.

Put thyself always in the lowest place.

Fear Not

Come forth O Lord and smite them in Thy wrath. The puny renegades who dare resist. Thy sacred name sweep them from Thy path, And let not innocence be prey to guile.

How long O Lord of Righteousness. How long wilt Thou in patient calm endure. Betrayal base from what Thyself hast made? Shall they in blasphemy still live secure?

Behold Thy faithful ones are sorely pressed. Banished the shepherds and dispersed the flock. Alost who railed at Thee downfallen who bleat. The virtuous mourning while the evil mock.

But Thou art Lord of Justice and of Hosts. The mighty mountains tremble at Thy breath. Oh lift Thy vengeful arm and quell their boasts. Art Thou not Giver of all life and death?

The various now will unmolested lure. Their needy victims to sure death and shame. At last the answer came serene and grave. Be still My kingdom is not of this world.

Forget the vile, and lift thy gaze above. These lesser men, O Lord, of My design. Who purify the faithful souls I love. And teach them still to say Thy Will be done.

Seek not the vengeance, rather with thy hand. Look that their blood be paid, O Lord, thy part. Ere not I am the Lord I will repay. Vengeance is Mine. Purify their hearts.

EDITORIALS

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of the people, who believe in God, who have been trained to know Him and serve Him who are obedient to the law because they stand for what is right. Like areas the least and wretched would seem to be the portion of any great city. Well does the government exempt from taxation churches and schools, for a church is worth a hundred police stations, one religious school is worth several hundred families, in guaranteeing law and order in the community. The good influence of such religious establishments will preserve the great majority from wrong doing, and will be a ever a bulwark against those who have lapsed. The negative function of keeping people locked up in places like the Tombs that they may not get away from killing and drinking and immorality, is no match for the positive function of the churches in preparing men to move freely among them to look as men of character, of sound honesty, righteous citizens.

Till All Was Leavened

Christ came to reform the world, to drive out from it pagan practices, to make all men like to Himself. His redemption was a leaving back of all that man had lost when he sold himself to the service of the devil. He began this work in His life on earth, He continued it in His Church. The Church is the mystical body of which He is the head. It must have all the zeal, all the nerve, all the determination, of its Divine Head. As He came to change the world, so must the Church strive mightily to change the world.

In this sense Christ in Sunday's Gospel speaks of the Church under the title, "The Kingdom of Heaven." He tells the people it is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until all of it was leavened. The mass of leaven was active through its potency upon the flour with which it was mingled. Had any portion of it been inert, inactive it could not have leavened the flour. Christ's Church made up of all who are baptized, must be living as a body, living in all its members. By its doctrine, by its sacraments, it must influence the world, but also by its members and the example they give of the faith that is in them.

Members of the Church must realize what Christ expects of them. They are members of the Church, they are the Church! Definitely, they have a work to do among those with whom they are dealing in business, social, civic, life. Their good example must help change the community for the better, their love of God and love of men must supplant the hatreds and animosities that till some souls, their native honesty must lead me to a higher degree of civic virtue, their purity must help banish pagan practices from society. Their zeal and their prayers must have this for their purpose, to leaven society with the leaven of Christian teaching. The Church is the Kingdom of Heaven must continue its work as the divine leaven, which Christ has buried in the things of this world until the whole shall be leavened.