

Library Signpost

Cry Out Of The Depths

By Rev. Benedict Ekmann

The article Christianity Now and After by Michael de la Bedoyere in the April Atlantic Monthly, deserves such a wide reading that I wish to devote this week's column to presenting the gist of it for readers who will not be able to come across the original. The author is an English Count, a Catholic editor of the Catholic Herald, clear-sighted and fearless observer of world events, author of The Christian Crisis, which has just been published in America.

His article in The Atlantic Monthly is too long for adequate compression in a column as short as this. Only its highlights can be given here.

His main concern is with the role of Christianity in the War and in the years after the War. He asks what hopeful signs are there of Christian influence beginning to penetrate the mass of the war world.

"Today, there survives in England and America a genuine conviction about the desirability and indeed the necessity of maintaining what we call the decencies of civilized life... but already we have long passed the stage when there exists an equal conviction that our democratic institutions, as they stand, can be counted on to defend these freedoms... The mere negative ideal of destroying a barbaric enemy and of maintaining the decencies of our civilization may suffice to keep resistance going until the Nazis are defeated, but we cannot count on our present spiritual convictions to see us through in the great work of rebuilding once the war is over. Somehow or other we must see new visions and kindle new aspirations."

"Even if this defense proves wholly successful, the real struggle will be just beginning, not only because the war will have destroyed the old world, but also because new and living convictions must replace the temporary and negative convictions of war if a new world is to be built."

Mr de la Bedoyere feels that Christianity poses several awkward questions in relation to the present struggle:

1. Are Christianity and modern war compatible? "Even if the arguments of the pacifist can be answered, they may well leave a taste in the mouth. They may serve to weaken somewhat the strong foundation of spiritual conviction upon which a popular struggle must be based."

2. Can Christianity's universal claims harmonize with a nation's partisan claims? "There is no getting away from the truth that a faithful Christian community must always see the seeds of division within an empire, and the division will grow in importance precisely in those times of spiritual and moral strain which a long war evokes."

3. Can the Christian code keep step with the code of a nation in total war? "Even though a nation may sincerely start out with the intention of fight-

ing openly, the methods of the enemy may force it to retaliate in kind. Yet for Christianity two wrongs can never make a right. Moreover, this Christian moderation tends to clash more and more with the instincts of a people at war, for those inevitably degenerate into hatred, cruelty, deceit—and even at home the nervous excitement caused by war lets loose passions which are certainly incompatible with the profession of crusader."

This tension between Christian ideals and national war efforts will considerably handicap the present influence of Christianity on the war world. This may mean an effective barrier to the carrying over of Christian inspiration in the building up of the post-war world. The only other inspiration of even remotely similar power, as Mr. de la Bedoyere sees it (and I am convinced he is right), is that of Communism, which has gained enormous prestige through the Russian stand against Hitler.

"The political and economic problems which the war must leave in its train are such that only virtually totalitarian methods can hope to solve them."

Will this changed order "translate itself into free institutions, suited to the new needs, or will it translate itself into a despotic order backed by materialist-minded masses trained to support a super Machine State which claims to create for all a pagan paradise on earth according to the latest prescriptions of scientists, technicians, and popular publicists? That is the sort of Communist or Left totalitarian danger one can reasonably foresee."

This is the direction being taken by many who have the ear of the public. "Not only in their increasingly fervent admiration of Soviet Russia (whose despotism and past policies, internal and external, they wholly overlook), but also in their advocacy of efficiency, ease, comfort and leisure for all, and ever-greater responsibility resting on the State, they, in fact pursue a definite totalitarian path."

The alternative? A reframing of our own democratic institutions, "reframing them far more directly to these Christian principles of the responsibility and freedom of the person in a technical age... safeguarding the spiritual and material conditions under which alone full human responsibility can be exercised... shaping a positive democracy truly 'for the people,' not, as in the past, a negative democracy for the benefit of those who are slick enough to take selfish advantage of democratic institutions."

The hope? Personal regeneration and prayer. "In the long run Christianity produces its effects on the world, not through study and talk and good resolutions, but through reborn souls. It is this individual person and that individual person who must be converted to a higher and deeper way of life, not Man in the abstract, nor even the Nation. Christ Himself changed the current of history, and a single St. Francis profoundly affected the ways of men. No one can foretell the possible effects on the post-war world of what may be going on, unseen and unheard, in the hearts of many who perceive—and surely never with greater evidence—the vanity of the structures which contemporary man has tried to erect in worship of himself." (Courtesy of The Atlantic Monthly)

'Quiz' Corner

May a Catholic serve as a pall-bearer at a non-Catholic funeral? To act in such a capacity is considered a mark of respect and not an active participation in non-

Catholic religious ceremonies, and is, therefore, permitted.

Is it not proper to follow the Sorrowful Mysteries when you say your Rosary for the dead?

There is no rule governing the mysteries on which we meditate when the Rosary is said for a deceased person. Such Rosary is governed by the same rules as one said for a living person. While there might be some appropriateness in saying the Sorrowful Mysteries, we would rather be inclined to believe that it would be better to follow the ordinary practice and say the mysteries of the day.

If you can't do more than suffer in silence, be willing not to do more. If you know some one who acts in this way, you know some one who is very pleasing to God.

Feast Days

Monday, Apr. 24.—SS. CLETUS AND MARCELLINUS.

Monday, Apr. 27.—ST. PETER CANISIUS.

Tuesday, Apr. 28.—ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS.

Wednesday, Apr. 30.—ST. PETER.

Thursday, Apr. 30.—ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

Friday, May 1.—SS. PHILIP AND JAMES.

Saturday, May 2.—ST. ATHANASIUS.

EDITORIALS

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soldiers and our sailors, that the blessings of a peace based on the tranquility of order may once more rest on America and upon the world.

Patriotic work and patriotic prayer and patriotic devotion is the program for every true American in this, our country's hour of trial!

NOT A CATHOLIC PAPER

The Chancery of the Archdiocese of Detroit has given official testimony to the fact that "Social Justice" is not a Catholic paper. The testimony makes clear that a Catholic paper is one that has the approval of the diocesan authorities, looks to these authorities for that supervision that will assure its readers that its contents are in accord with the teaching and policy of the Church. "Social Justice" has had no such approval, no such recognition as a Catholic paper; any doubt as to its status was completely removed on May 27, 1940, when Father Coughlin in a letter to Archbishop Mooney stated that he would not be responsible for the publication after that date.

It is important at this time to keep these facts in mind, that we may understand fully that the action of the Government in refusing "Social Justice" the use of the mails, has not been taken against a Catholic paper.

There can be no doubt on the attitude of any patriotic American toward our country in the attack that has been made on her by predatory nations: that attitude will always be one of complete cooperation, unquestioned loyalty, earnest desire for victory. American Catholics are patriotic Americans. The American Catholic Press reflects their patriotism. "Social Justice" is not a Catholic paper, has no connection with the American Catholic Press.

AN APPROACHING ANNIVERSARY

The Tenth Anniversary of the Diocesan Holy Name Union will be celebrated on the first Sunday in May with a Convention to be held in Rochester. Father Stauffer has been Diocesan Director of the Union since its inception, and will preside at the Tenth Anniversary observance.

Here we have an organization that appeals to every man in our parishes. Other societies have their particular appeal, none have so general an appeal as the Holy Name Society. Yet the parish unit of the Holy Name Society remains as a relatively powerless organization when left to itself: the Diocesan Union of Holy Name Societies enables Catholic men from all parts of the Diocese to meet together, to discuss questions that call for Catholic interpretation, to give their united support to worth while activities in the State and in the Nation, to speak the mind of Catholic men in protest against abuses arising in our communities.

The COURIER will give special attention on the first Sunday in May to the Observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the Holy Name Diocesan Union. The news section will carry appropriate articles; the editorial page will give further attention to the accomplishments of the Union.

YOU SHALL SEE ME

Easter joy in its fullness consists in the sight of the Risen Saviour. It is a joy that remains, that is permanent, in that its cause shall never pass away. The Risen Saviour shall never more bow before His enemies: sin and death have striven to destroy Him; have hidden Him for a short time in death, from the eyes of His Apostles. Now in His Resurrection He stands as Victor over death, as Victor over sin.

Your joy no man shall take from you! These were words of promise spoken by Jesus before His death, foretelling the permanence of the joy that Easter should bring to them.

Easter joy is ours today even as it was joy for the Apostles 1900 years ago. The sight of the Risen Saviour is ours by faith, is ours by virtue of the experience of the Apostles, of the Holy Women, of the hundreds who saw Him after His death walking the ways of Galilee, walking the streets of Jerusalem, climbing the Mount of Ascension. The greatest fact of all time has been recorded for us in a way that admits no reasonable doubt.

The Risen Saviour is our own possession to remain with us always, unless we choose to banish him from our sight by any mortal sin, but especially by the sin of unfaith, by the sin of refusing to see Him risen in the flesh. All that is asked of us that we may have lasting joy in His risen presence, is cooperation with His grace. What a loss came upon those who saw the Risen Saviour, but refused to follow Him! What a loss is in store for us if we follow their sad example.

Better by far to see Jesus in the glory of His Resurrection, to know Him in His undying newness of life, to see Him living with us, laboring for us, loving us, day after day. Joy is ours in the triumph over evil He has won for Himself and for us. It is a joy that no man shall take from us.

Sursum Corda

Don't Tell Me: Show Me

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

It is odd how an idea keeps recurring once it has come into the mind and how many times a subject of discussion comes up again once it has been introduced. Here it is a phenomenon in psychology. Sometimes it happens that your eye just hits upon let us say—an advertising sign in the street. You never noticed it before but once you have paid attention to it you never can miss it again. Or you hear of some friend suffering from what is to you a new disease. "Never heard of it before," you say. But immediately other cases are brought to your attention, and soon it seems that every tenth man is afflicted with the sickness you never knew to exist. Or a word you never heard before comes up in conversation. Then for a period of time that same word comes up automatically every day. You never heard it before but now you hear nothing else.

So it is with a subject of disputation. In this column a few weeks ago I brought in from Bishop Prohaska the matter of argumentation as opposed to joyous manifestation of one's faith, as a means of converting to the fold those who have been outside. I had no sooner written the first article than I had to write a second.

Now close upon the heels of that second appears a book which might be considered an amplification of the theme; Helen Iswolsky's Light Before Dawn, in which a keen-eyed correspondent has found for me this sentence about Jacques Maritain: "One felt his power immediately. It was a sort of radiation... he could overturn a man's soul in a few seconds, not with arguments but with the white flame of charity." I might have searched long and in vain in an attempt to find one sentence in which to express the idea of the two previous contributions to "Sursum Corda" on that subject.

M. Maritain is a philosopher, perhaps the most profound and original thinker of the day. Being a Thomist he is not afraid of logic. He can reason on even terms with the most resolute practitioner of what the Scholastics call "ratiocination." But it is not his manner to do so. Like his great exemplar St. Thomas Aquinas, he is a mystic as well as a philosopher, and in his writing the two seemingly contradictory methods of arriving at truth, rationalism and mysticism, coalesce. His philosophy appeals to the heart and the head at once.

All who have met him and have had the privilege of intimate personal conversation—perhaps also those who have only sat under him at a lecture—will admit the correctness of Miss Iswolsky's analysis of Maritain's power.

subject of conveying the Catholic faith to the American people.

In some old manual of the art of preaching it was recorded that an auditor said of a preacher "what he is makes such a noise that I cannot hear what he says." In that instance the comment was uncomplimentary. But it could be, on the other hand, the greatest tribute a preacher or any public speaker could receive "his manner, his character, his demeanor his whole being speak so powerfully that they make upon the hearer an impression stronger than his words, no matter how eloquent they may be."

St. Philip Neri had that effect upon those who heard him. It was his custom to preach almost every day and there can be no doubt that what he said was logical and theologically accurate. But even in his portrait we can catch the radiance that must have been irresistible in his actual person and that was far more persuasive than his arguments.

So too St. Francis de Sales. So too St. Augustine and as St. Augustine himself testifies, so was it of St. Ambrose. Indeed St. Augustine says that he was influenced by St. Ambrose not so much because that great Bishop was eloquent but because his personality was attractive. In a familiar passage of the Confessions, St. Augustine describes the charm that emanated from St. Ambrose.

All these men were intellectuals, some of them of heroic mental stature. All of them were occupied in apostolic work. It was their vocation to bring men to God. But in every case the obvious fact that religion had beautified and ennobled their character made for the success of their efforts even more than the words they spoke or the arguments they employed.

The apostle Philip said to Jesus "Lord show us the Father." In the pulpit I have often called attention to that phrase "show us, not tell us," or "explain to us," or "convince us," but "show us." If we Catholics expect to convert the world, we shall do so only if we demonstrate in person the beauty of our religion. It is not sufficient to argue about it, or even to prove it. We must show it.

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FIVE and TEN Years Ago--

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From Apr. 22, 1932, Edition
With more than 4000 attending, the Most Rev. John Francis O'Hern solemnly blessed the complete new school, parish building and auditorium of Holy Family Parish, Rochester. The Rev. Joseph H. Gefell, pastor, assisted.

From Apr. 27, 1937, Edition
Inauguration of a plan to promote an Eucharistic Day in the diocese, approval of passage in the State Legislature of a bill to curb child labor, approval of a Novena in honor of St. Thomas. More to be conducted by each society and advance of Junior Holy Name societies were among actions taken by the Rochester Diocesan Holy Name Union convening at St. Joseph's parish, Wayland.

First Parish Credit Union to be established in the diocese was launched in Holy Family Parish, Rochester, with \$131.75 paid in on charges of 26 members.