Sursum Corda

'Why Does Pope Remain Silent?'

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

I beg the reader to note well the quotation marks at both ends of that sentence. They indicate that the question is not mine. It is taken from the mouths of others. But wherever I go, especially if I take part in a Forum Discussion in which the audience is invited to speak back to the lecturer, the question is almost invariably asked from the floor or the gallery—"Why doesn't the Pope declare the Nazis, the Fascists and the Japs to be the enemies of civilization and of Christianity?"

It may be that sometimes the question is put to embarrass the speaker, or even to cast reflection upon the Holy Father, but after many experiences I have come to the conclusion that those who ask it, do so in all good faith. They are sincerely puzzled. Some such persons are perhaps among those who read this column. So, without claiming to have any information beyond what is available to all newspaper readers, and more especially all readers of Catholic papers, I venture to attempt a reply.

Let us have a couple of general observations before we come to more specific facts.

First. The combatant nations—even the "United Nations"—have not asked the Holy Father to intervene, or to pronounce judgment on the merits and the demerits of the war. A Papal pronouncement unasked for might easily do more harm than good. If the nations would halt for a moment now, or more feasible, if when on the verge of war they had asked the Pope either to arbitrate or to declare the moral principle governing the case, the Holy Father would have seized the chance with delight. But they didn't ask him when war was imminent and they haven't asked him since.

Secondly: when Pope Pius XII issued his first Encyclical Summi Pontificatus two months after war broke out, it contained "admonitions applying directly to both sides in the war" together with a "diagnosis of moral anarchy general in its application." So says A. C. F. Beales in his extremely valuable volume, "The Catholic Church and International Order." He goes on to say wisely, "like so much in Catholic pronouncements, the Encyclical has to be read as a whole. There can be no picking and choosing; nevertheless the nations do pick and choose." The Holy Father himself had to confess later that whatever he said would be misapplied by both sides to their own advantage.

It is a matter of history that such was the case in World War No. 1. Pope Benedict's repeated utterances before and during that war are seen now to be great pronouncements in statecraft and in ethics. Read them as rather amply quoted in John Eppstein's "The Catholic Tradition in the Law of Nations" and you must admit that they are magnificent statements. But when they first appeared the belligerent on both sides sometimes repudiated them, sometimes ignored them and sometimes claimed them as condemnation of their enemies.

I have mentioned Beales' book. You will find in it, amidst a great deal of matter of philosophical and moral importance in regard to this war, a running chronological catalogue of what the Pope did to prevent this war, and when he could not prevent it, to stop it. When the full history of the Holy Father's efforts is written, it will become evident that he worked at high speed, incessantly, indefatigably for peace. The following instances are only a sample of what he did and tried to do. The full story would require a thousand pages.

On Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, more than four months before the war broke out, he spoke of the "ardently desired material and moral disarmament."

On April 20 he called for a crusade of prayer during the month of May for peace throughout the world.

On May 9 rumors appeared in the press that the Vatican had suggested a Five Power Conference among Germany, Poland, Italy, France and Great Britain. The Vatican denied the accuracy of that rumor, but on May 12, the London Tablet (Catholic) declared the real fact to be that the Pope had taken the initiative in sounding out certain governments and letting it be known that he would welcome a conference.

On May 19, there was a meeting in the Pope's library between the French and the Italian Ambassadors, who, later the same day, held a meeting with the Papal Secretary of State.

From that day forward negotiations continued incessantly at the invitation and under the guidance of the Holy Father. It was felt that these negotiations would succeed better if they were not made public.

On July 7, the Catholic Herald of London said that the Pope's efforts would continue, that they would be purely spiritual and not political, but that it was impossible to get more details.

On Aug. 19 the Holy Father summarized his efforts in another appeal for World Peace. He said:

"We ourselves, from the first day of Our Pontificate have attempted and done everything in Our power to remove the danger of war, and to cooperate in the attainment of a solid peace, based on justice, such as should safeguard the freedom and honour of the peoples. Indeed, We have, within the limits of what was possible, and as far as the duties of Our Apostolic Ministry allowed, placed in the background other tasks and anxieties which We had on Our mind. We have imposed upon Ourselves a prudent reserve, so that Our efforts on behalf of peace would not, by anyone, be rendered more difficult or impossible, conscious of all that in this sphere We owed, and owe, to the children of the Catholic Church and to the whole of humanity."

I have said that the history of these efforts of the Holy Father to prevent and to stop the war, when published with the text of the documents, fill a huge volume. It would be impossible in this column, or on this page, to give even a catalogue of the Papal pronouncements that were published, not to say those that were never reported. I feel that I must continue the list next week. But I hope the reader has already obtained a partial answer to the question—"Why Doesn't the Pope Speak?"

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"The English slang use of the word 'yellow' to indicate cowardice has its counterpart in the Chinese use of a white heart as the character for the [illegible]

'Quiz' Corner

May a priest refuse to baptize a child born of a Protestant father and Catholic mother who does not practice her religion?

Not only may he refuse but he must refuse to baptize a child when there is no hope of its being brought up a Catholic. If there should happen to be a danger of death such a child should be baptized.

A non-Catholic asked me what Catholics believe happens to those who die without Baptism if they live good lives. What is the proper answer to this question?

It is of faith that all children and adults who leave this world without the Baptism of water, blood or desire and therefore in original sin are excluded from the Vision of God in heaven. To this they have no natural right; it is a supernatural destiny to which man has been called under the condition of Baptism and, at least for adults, faith. Since this condition is not fulfilled they do not attain to their supernatural end. The great [illegible] [illegible] children and unbaptized adults [illegible] state of [illegible] natural happiness, knowing and loving God by the use of their natural powers. This place and state is commonly called Limbo of Children to distinguish it from the Limbo of the Fathers.

Are we obliged on all occasions to give public profession of our faith?

We are not obliged to profess our faith under all circumstances but we are never permitted to publicly deny it. Should we be asked by some one who has not the right to ask we may evade the question but we must profess our religion when we are asked [illegible] [illegible]

FIVE and TEN Years Ago

From Nov. 4, 1932 Edition

Catholics of the diocese were urged by the Rev. Walter A. Foery, Charities director, to vote "Yes" on Proposition No. 1 authorizing [illegible] bond issue to provide funds [illegible] in the state suffering caused by unemployment.

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From Nov. [illegible] Edition

As plans progressed for welcoming the Most Rev. James E. Kearney to Rochester, it was predicted that thousands would greet the new Ordinary of the diocese at the station on Nov. [illegible], 1937, and that the largest gathering of the American Hierarchy ever to assemble in Rochester would witness his enthronement as Fifth Bishop of Rochester on Nov. 11, 1937.

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The Most Rev. Duane G. Hunt was solemnly consecrated Fifth Bishop of Salt Lake City at the Cathedral of the Madeleine succeeding the Most Rev. James E. Kearney who delivered the consecration sermon.

EDITORIALS

(Continued from Page [illegible])

Name Society is the best guarantee he can have of the sturdy, active, constant, type of Catholicity that means so much in the individual and so much more in the community. The Bishop is asking the hearty support of all his priests in furthering this drive for members. His Pastors are just as eager as he is to have their men listed in this ancient and powerful Catholic society for men.

Remember, the appeal this Sunday is to YOU! To you the invitation goes out to sign up now. Do not pass it by. Do not be heedless of its purpose. Rather, as you love your Church, as you revere your Bishop and respect your Pastor, as you regard the fine religious spirit of your fellow-men, obey now that impulse to join the Holy Name Society.

Your power to do good is multiplied many times if your name is on the Holy Name Society roster. Your own Catholicity is given new strength and vitality by your membership. Your personal devotion is given timely aid by the meetings and the corporate Communions of the Society. Your own good example helps your brethren while theirs helps you. Join today!

Members of the Campaign Committee will be active in your parish church this Sunday. A card will be given you—write your name, address, on it: hand it in today!

Make your own all the advantages that this Society has been giving to the men of the Church for the past seven centuries. Join today, maintain an active membership, attend the meetings, join in the Society Communions. Your parish branch is waiting for you this Sunday! Answer the call—join the Holy Name Society!

UNTIL THE HARVEST

God's ways are not men's ways. There are among us those who find fault with things as they are. They object to much that they see about them. Good earnest souls themselves, they are unready to make any allowance for those who travel other paths. Especially do they wonder that evil is allowed to exist in the world, that wicked men are suffered to live. Such faultfinders are not native to any one age, they have always been in the world, always shall be.

God blesses the way of faith, condemns all that is not of faith. But He permits the existence of unfaith, of error. God blesses the way of virtue, condemns all wickedness and vice. But He permits the existence of vice and vicious people in the world.

God is not the author of unfaith, of vice, of evil. "An enemy hath done this." Only good seed has He sown. But He permits the cockle to grow along with the wheat until the harvest. At the Last Judgment God will separate the cockle from the wheat. All that is good shall be preserved, all that is evil shall be destroyed.

"Until the Harvest!" In the light of Judgment Day, all things [illegible] lose their sheen. Christians should labor bravely day after day, suffering all things for Christ, preparing worthwhile merits, bearing with adversity and the hatred of evil men in a spirit of patience. Until the harvest! This thought will enable them to rejoice that they form part of the Kingdom of God on earth, waiting patiently till the harvest, till the day of final reckoning, when they shall [illegible]

Library Supplement

Library's November Calendar

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

This is anniversary month at the Catholic Evidence Library. We are nine years old. That ought to put us under the special patronage of the nine choirs of angels. Surely it is no idle whim to link those royal intelligences with the work of spreading the knowledge which the Library is dedicated to carry on.

Are we successful? Well, it is God's business to answer that. He alone knows what light and help have come to hundreds of people from the books which the Library has placed in their hands. And even one person brought closer to God by something he found in the Library would be enough to compensate all the nine year's work.

But, judging from externals, we have not been [illegible]. We have hardly scratched the surface of our potential value to the Rochester community. [illegible] [illegible] are [illegible] giving light, courage, [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] and people, hundreds of them, pass by the busy thoroughfare.

I wonder what it is that brings in the people who [illegible]. I have a great curiosity about that, and if it were not impertinent, I would like to make an inquiry as to why we click with them when we don't click with a thousand others. Of course, a great deal of the reason of our failure is to be found in that common indifference to spiritual matters which is such a disease in any comfortable way of life. Another [illegible] is [illegible] lack of opportunity to promote the Library. All those in charge have other work, and can devote only spare time to the Library. Actually the Library's potential of promotion could occupy the fulltime attention and labor of a director.

So, things being what and as they are, we will continue [illegible] hoping [illegible] [illegible] in God's wise Providence which asks that His co-workers should not ask to see success, but only to work in His behalf. To Him belong the ends; to us are given the means.

This surely is the time to make public acknowledgment of the work being done so generously by the Library aides. Were it not for their devotion to what sometimes looks like a lost cause, the Library could not have lasted a week, [illegible] nine years. And to judge from their spirit, it may continue for nine more years, even though the patronage may be only a trickle instead of the steady stream it ought to be.

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The following soldier's letter, which a kind friend sent to the correspondence section of the current issue of AMERICA, is worth wide attention as indicative of how Catholic training can stand up under the appalling temptations of camp life. It was written to his pastor.

"Dear Father: If you only knew some of the temptations that are constantly thrust upon me. I sometimes shiver from fright. I am glad that I have my religion to help me form a defense against the evils that are always about. I think of the Good Lord constantly, and sometimes when on guard duty through the long dark night, I talk with God and thank Him graciously for the wonderful things He has done to me.

"When my shooting is good and I am duly praised by my officers, I immediately thank God Who, I am sure, helps me in everything I have done. Sometimes when my power of resistance against evil is cracked, I humbly ask the good God for forgiveness.

"May all of us gain spiritual happiness and realize that God is always merciful and forgiving when one humbly prays for help and aid. I am not ashamed to say that I owe all my good fortune to our wonderful God, as I know I do not deserve some of the blessings He bestows upon me.

"I may have lost the happiness of home but I have found my God, and I am sure, with humble prayer and the help of God, I shall not have any worries."

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BOOKS FOR NOVEMBER FEASTS

Nov. 1: All Saints—"Christ the Life of the Soul" by Abbot Marmion; chapter 11, Coheirs with Christ . . . "Christ in His Mysteries" by Abbot Marmion, chapter 20, Christ the Crown of All the Saints . . . "The People of God" by Abbot Vonier.

Nov. 2: All Souls: "The Blessed Fewer of Death" by Rev. A. Wibbelt.

Nov. 4: St. Charles Borromeo: Biography by Margaret Yeo . . . The great work of St. Charles is featured in the climax of Manzoni's novel "The Betrothed" (I Promessi Sposi).

Nov. 5: Blessed Martin de Porres: "From Byways and Hedges" by Father Martindale, S.J.

Nov. 9: Dedication of the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, Mother Church of the Christian World: Dorothy Sayers' Miracle Play "The Zeal of Thy House" gives a wonderful exposition of the Church's mind concerning the house of worship and its symbolic relationship with the Mystical Body of Christ.

Nov. 19: St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary: Violet Clifton's Miracle Play "Sanctity" has this winsome Saint as its heroine . . . Ida Coudenhove centers her study of "The Nature of Sanctity" around Elizabeth; and there is a biography of her by Elizabeth Schmidt-Pauli, and, of course, the monumental work by Montalembert.

Nov. 22: St. Cecilia: Simple, biographical chapter in "Heroines of Christ," edited by Fr. Jos. Husslein, S.J.

Nov. 24: St. John of the Cross: Biography by Father Bruno, and also a colorful study of Father Martindale, S.J., in his series called "On God's Holy Hills."

"Within the historic walls of the Vatican one finds, as in no other place among the war-torn nations, an atmosphere of tranquility of thoughtful [illegible]