

Inarticulate: But Why?

By Rev. James M. O'Neil, C.S.P.

Away back in 1876 an anonymous writer in *The Catholic World* declared that thousands of Catholics were graduating from colleges every year, but that the publishers of a magazine addressed primarily to the educated had never to consider where these college graduates could be hiding themselves. Seventy years later, as Editor of that same magazine, I still wonder.

But that shall not be my theme today.

What I have in mind to ask now is not why educated Catholics do not subscribe to a magazine published especially for them, but why educated Catholics do not live in the fulness of their Church when she is attacked in the daily press. When are the educated Catholics? In what sense do they do they conceal themselves? What are they doing with their knowledge of the faith accumulated in Catholic schools, colleges, universities? Why do they remain dumb when ignorant or unskilled persons attack our religion?

"Your Catholic people are inarticulate," said the moderator of a non-partisan forum. True, but why? Is it a hangover from past days when we were not permitted to open our mouths? In certain spots in the United States I have met Catholics who were ashamed or afraid to be known as such in their business circles. "Here in my diocese," said a Bishop, "we are the under-dog and we are never allowed to forget it." But are we the under-dog in New York and Chicago and San Francisco and everywhere?

St. Thomas says that whatever is good has a tendency and a power to diffuse itself. A Catholic education is good. Why doesn't it diffuse itself? In the Gospel the Lord commended the man who had a talent but wrapped it up in a napkin. The "talent" to which He made reference was a piece of money. But isn't knowledge a "talent" more valuable than many pieces of money? Why then wrap up knowledge in a napkin? "Let your light shine before men," said our Saviour. That is to say, tell the world what you know, especially if what you know is something that the world doesn't know and should know.

Now what am I driving at? Or are the practitioners of a more up-to-date slang put it, "What's eating me? What's burning me up?"

Plainly, almost every day I find in the newspapers statements about the church and the Faith that are either stupid or wicked. But editors—almost never—do I find prompt and adequate answers from educated Catholics to misrepresentation and calumny. To be charitable, let us presume that the authors of these wrong statements don't know any better, though to tell the truth authors should make it their business to know better. I could give a thousand examples. One will suffice.

In a Sunday paper that claims over three million circulation there appeared a special article pro-

claiming that the Church is in a state of "inarticulate" silence. The article is full of errors and is a disgrace to the Catholic press.

In that article appears this paragraph: "There has always been agreement over the leadership of the Church—whether it is a collection of bishops elected and written by men of noble intentions and piety; whether it is a place of supernatural unity, whether, as most of the Christian world believes, that Christ himself is the center of the Church. . . . Whether or not these things were inspired can be answered only in the heart of each man."

Obviously there is a challenge to Catholics who believe that the question of inspiration means "human imagination" is not to be answered either by the heart or the mind of the individual. But by what?

Further on comes this paragraph in the face of the Catholic Hierarchy: "When the prince of the Church and the realm learned what the indefatigable priest—John Wycliffe—was doing he was ordered to arrest him. His 'betters' feared that Wycliffe might stir to assert his right to the justice, mercy and dignity which the Book assured him were his by right of God. They didn't like people to learn to read for the same reason."

This is no place to go into the answer to the article. Every educated Catholic knows the answer. It is taught in all our schools and colleges. How many Catholics wrote in the editor to protest the article? I followed the correspondence column in that paper for a week or so after the article appeared. I saw not one protest. On the following Monday I had some faint hope of finding a similar article written from the Catholic viewpoint. There was none. The author of the calumnious article—didn't know how mistaken she was. She could hardly have realized how vicious a statement she had made. But why was there no Catholic opinion or voice to set her right? Perhaps it would be too much to expect that she should have gone to the actual sources of historical knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, but she could have found the elementary truth in the Catholic Encyclopedia, or in any competent book of Catholic history. Fr. Conway's popular but scholarly "Question-Bank" has a brief but excellent summary. But she committed the old, old accusation that the Church didn't want the people to learn the Word of God. And—now here is my grievance—she gets away with it.

The question is not why didn't some priest answer her. Almost every day I find in my mail a newspaper or magazine clipping from some part of the United States, with the peremptory command "know this!" What do these correspondents think a priest does all day, especially if he happens to be an editor? Have they a picture of him sitting twiddling his thumbs and sighing, "I wish some one would send me a challenge that I could answer?" The priest editor is always up to his eyes in work. He wants to know what has happened to all the educated laity. What are they doing with the knowledge acquired in school and college? They are, as the chairman of the forum said "inarticulate." Why? I am anxious to know.

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EDITORIALS

represented through laboring working of a livelihood from the soil, was a life of true Catholic faith. His love for the Church, his interest in all that concerned Catholic doctrine and Catholic parish life, had proper expression in his acceptance for so long a period of the office and responsibility of Lay Trustee.

Bishop and Pastor owe much to the continued help given them by our loyal Catholic laymen. Their plans for the spiritual part of parish life enjoy the needed cooperation of the laity; their plans for the material needs of such parish would have no success without lay assistance. Worthy of special honor from Bishop and parishioners at large, are the two lay Trustees who in each parish share with the Clerical Trustee the office and the obligations of membership in the Parish Corporation. God has called to his eternal reward the soul of a worthy Catholic, a faithful parishioner, a zealous Trustee of St. Leo's Church, John Connor. The *COURIER* extends to his relatives sincere sympathy. May his soul rest in peace!

BASED ON LAW

A juridical order in society is one that is based on law. Social law, natural law. Our investigation appears to divine law, to natural law, before its expression positive principles that shall govern the more perfect union it brings into being. There is a decided contrast here to the new types of alleged government, in which the State or those in control is above all law. No man, no government, can ever change the eternal norms of right and wrong which are never made right; unless that of all order is broken in response will make that same cry.

The intervention of human agency cannot prejudice the positive bedrock rules that govern society. It can violate them, it can amend them, neglect and despise them, but can never overthrow them. "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again." Conditions of life change, principles of right and wrong never change. Old powers, old laws, old constitutions give way to a new order, but the law of God remains to be the law of today in all its essentials. Man has had, and continues to have, shall always have a right to order in society based on law, a juridical order.

God, man, law—all are essential to right order in society. God as the recognized Author and Master of all; man in all the dignity in which God has created him; law as expressed in natural law or as decreed by God to secure obedience to God, respect for man, protection of man in what God has given to him. Note how carefully and thoroughly all three have been traced from the page of immutability philosophy of government. God is not, man is not, law is not. The devil is in, his earthly devil is in, all the nonsense of pagan mythology is in! Things are bad in the world of totalitarianism.

It seems so simple a thing that governments to rule men must be in accord with man's nature, must recognize that he came from God, must return to God; must view man as a creature of earth for a time, but a potential citizen of heaven for eternity. Man must be changed to something inhuman, unnatural, before he can be governed and directed by an inhuman and unnatural government. Yet how many in today's world even admit that the laws of God are the basis of all just legislation, for the simple fact that it is well for the world to listen to the warning words of Pope Pius XII, in such a solemn tone, the whose wisdom and whose experience are in keeping with the high office he holds as Head of God's Church on earth.

It is well for the children of the Church to remember his words, to be ready to teach a world tainted with paganism the saving truths of Christian revelation. Our next editorial will study the three wrongs affecting the juridical order in society today, as expounded and condemned in the Christian Message of the Pope.

WHATEVER IS JUST

God's goodness is our salvation. We are at least unrepentable sinners. No infinite merit of man could ever measure the infinite worth of the life of grace on earth or of glory in heaven. To better satisfaction of ours could ever attain to the infinite satisfaction that the Almighty has for our sins. Christ calls all to repentance, to grace, to life. Some answer the call in only life: "All this have I done from my youth." Some get the call in middle life and answer in grace: "Leaving all things, they followed Him." Some answer fully toward the end of life: "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."—Today Thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

Peter and Dennis and the Rich Young Man come before us today as we think about the Gospel of the Sunday. The Rich Young Man had followed God's way from his earliest childhood; he hoped to possess eternal life, was willing to labor in the ordinary way in the vineyard for it; Jesus loved him for what he had done, for his use of divine grace, and proposed the perfect way for future following: "If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow Me!" He had labored in the vineyard, was asked to labor even more to win the price of a perfect life; but he refused in agency, because he loved his earthly possessions: "What shall my reward for one who abandoned the vineyard, left his work? Perhaps he came back to Christ later, but we do not know; it is never safe to turn away from the work assigned us by the Master of the Vineyard.

Peter and the other Apostle answered the call of Christ toward the middle years of life. They love the burden of the day and the burden of the night; they labored till the end of the day; they received their reward "nothing great," of which the Master or group of the possible saw the labor, the good that would come only the last hour in the vineyard; he had not borne the burden of the day and the Master; but he answered the call of grace, he turned to Christ in sincere love for the dying Redeemer, he prayed; he received the reward of heaven, of paradise, even as did those who labored all through the lifetime hours of the day. "They received, every man, a scintilla."

Christ wants us to work for our salvation, to labor in his vineyard, to add the infinite value of the eternal grace to every effort of grace. He crowns our souls with his sanctifying grace, so that we may win supernatural in origin and in merit: "I live, now not I; but Christ dwells in me!" I labor, I pray.—now not I, but Christ Who labors, Who prays, in me!

Christ is good! Christ desires the salvation of all, to give to all the dominion of his eternal, our reward according to merit. May our eye not be evil, may no trace of envy or jealousy in the mind of Christ; to come hourly, breathe into the parable of Christ's vineyard; that should be ours! We have heard the call, we have seen the sign by the Master of the Vineyard, we have answered to the sacred call that he has made. May our work with the grace of Jesus Christ take him to work for us among the chosen!

Library Signpost

Lenten Plays

By Rev. Benedict Ehmens

Catholic stages are thinking now of their Lenten play. They even more than their Lenten plays, get much from a reversal portrayal of a worthwhile Passion Play. The whole point of Ghena's famous play, *The Comedian*, is an illustration of how a serious actor is influenced by the role he portrays; its leading character is a pagan actor whom the Roman Emperor compels to delineate the role of a Christian martyr; but what started out in the spirit of mockery ended in faith and love, and the actor's own condemnation to death.

Actually, therefore, sacred drama can be a religious boon to those who act in it, especially if they are prepared under good and wise leadership. Not only do they stand to gain from a sympathetic rehearsal of the sacred subject, but they will bring a message of God upon themselves for being dramatic chroniclers of the divine truth and beauty to their audiences.

There is a very good repertory of Lenten and Easter plays. Some of them are listed here for your information.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED . . . 4-act drama by William Mathias Lamers, using a cast of 30 men and 4 women, 3 acts (calculated by use of epigrams), lasting 2 1/2 hours; obtainable from Catholic Dramatic Movement, 1511 West Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. at 50 cents a copy; permission for production granted on purchase of 25 copies (at \$5) and payment of royalty fee (\$10 each performance).

PILATE THE GOVERNOR . . . 4-act drama by Fr. Daniel A. Lord, O.S.A., with a cast of 29 men and 2 women and 3 sets, requiring 2 hours playing time; obtainable from The Queen's Work Press, 212 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, Mo., at \$1 a copy; \$25 royalty for each amateur performance, and written permission must be secured from the author.

BARTER . . . 4-act drama by Fr. Urban Nagle, O.P., with a cast of 5 men, 6 women, and 1 child, using 3 sets, and taking 2 hours playing time; obtainable from Longmans, Green & Co., 114 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C., at 75 cents a copy; \$15 royalty for each performance.

THE BETRAYAL . . . 3-act drama by G. N. Brewster, described as "one of the best Passion Plays written in recent years" (the fact that the subject has a preface by G. K. Chesterton confirms this verdict). Cast of 30 men, 3 women, 1 boy, 2 sets; 2 hours playing time; needs expert direction, skilled acting and ample equipment obtainable from the author at St. Patrick's College, Ottawa, Canada; consult author for terms.

THE DARK HOURS . . . drama in 5 scenes by Don Marquis, which ranks high in power among modern Passion Plays. Cast of 5 men and 2 women, 4 sets; 2 hours playing time; needs competent direction, but simple equipment; obtainable from

Doubleday, Doran & Co., 14 West 5th St., N. Y. C., at \$1 a copy; the publishers are to be consulted for production rights and royalties.

THE LORD OF DEATH . . . 3-act drama by Don Marquis. Cast of 1 man, 12 women; 1 set; 1 1/2 hours playing time; needs expert direction and ample equipment; obtainable from Longmans, Green & Co. (address above) at 50 cents a copy; royalty fee quoted on application.

WELL, ALL THOU HAST . . . drama in 4 scenes by C. J. Barkham; for advanced amateur who want a play dealing with events of the Passion in terms of modern theatre; it bridges the time between St. A. D. and the present by a single Jordan. Synopsis: This is a story of the love of Abel and Veronica, and the love of Jesus, Barabbas, Judas, Levi and Judas. In simple and touching scenes, the author analyzes the effect of Jesus' words "Well all thou hast," both before and after the Crucifixion. This is one of the few dramas which adequately motivate the character of Judas. It never verges on the pathetic. His dignity and beauty command attention. . . . It uses 3 men, 2 women; 1 set; takes full evening's playing time; its direction is simple. It is obtainable from Portsmouth Priory, Portsmouth, Rhode Island. It's Father Prior, who should be consulted about terms.

TRY WILL BE DONE . . . 3-act drama by Robert Murphy and Cecilia Lane. Synopsis: Gallus, a Roman soldier, follows Jesus to the Garden of Olives where, after Judas' betrayal, he seizes Christ and turns Him over to the rabble. Assigned to the bitter task of assisting at the Crucifixion, Gallus, though not a Christian, believes that he is putting to death an innocent man. Moreover his wife, Constantia, is a devoted follower of Christ. With a sense of guilt, and with the blood of Christ upon his arms, Gallus labors to lay waste and crippled child. Trying to excuse himself for the deed he has committed, he points to the fact that if there were a just God, his child Constantia would not be a cripple. He takes the child in his arms, and as he holds him a miracle is performed before his eyes. The child suddenly straightens his crippled limbs, and leaving himself from his father's arms walks across the room. Gallus realizes that his son has been healed with the blood of Christ. He is converted to Christ, together with Elias, son of Caiphas, who is a witness.

The play uses 11 men, 3 women, 1 child; 4 sets; 1 1/2 hours playing time; expert direction, ample equipment, musical accompaniment; obtainable from Samuel French, 25 West 5th St., N. Y. C., at 25 cents a copy; royalty, \$10 each performance.

(It is intended for this information to the National Service Bureau of the former WPA Federal Theatre Project, which was under the direction of Elizabeth Laverly.)

However brilliant an action, it should not be entered great unless the result of a great motive.—La Rochefoucauld, 1688.

God has placed the Heart of Jesus in the hands of Mary, that she may take care to make it level by men.—St. Alphonsus Liguori.