

The White Horse Of the Apocalypse

By Rev. Benedict Brennan

(Note: This editorial from the March 1, 1943 issue of The Commonwealth describes a situation of such magnitude and urgency that it ought to be avoided from the headlines and broadcasted through every bookshop in the country. I know there are only a few who think it worthwhile to read this column; but even those few will be just as many more whom the message will hit between the eyes if I reproduce it here.)

The situation is so simple you have to shock yourself to believe it is true. Canada and the United States are bursting with surplus wheat. The Argentine and Brazil are bursting with surplus wheat, and would be delighted to find a market for their milk. Swedish merchant ships are tied up at the wharves, without cargo, with nowhere to go. Credit balances are sitting idle in the accounts of various governments in cash. And all over Europe children (we won't talk about adults) are starving.

What does a starving child need? Eventually, of course, it can produce death. But undeniably it very often does not produce death. It produces human beings who are of some later date than their physical strength by adequate food, but whose nervous systems are forever scarred and beyond the reach of anything but a blind administration for force and a desire for vengeance against mankind. The experience of the last twenty-five years has proved this, not only in the case of one generation of German youth, which suffered as such severity of starvation as it now being forced to such severity of starvation as is now being suffered this instant, today, this hour, by youth in France, in Belgium, in Holland, in Norway, and (Russian Relief please note!) in occupied Russia. These are the children who will have to live with these children. They will like to destroy, they will love strength and brute strength. They will have airplanes that will span the Atlantic, and the Chicago children will have airplanes that can span the Pacific. And they will remember who had the fall grammar, and who kept these grammars inviolate. They will remember, but they will be incapable of reason; and since they will remember badly, they will remember even worse things than we have let happen.

Unless we allow (for we need do nothing more than allow) the surplus wheat we own, the surplus meat and milk South Americans own, to be bought for good money, to be shipped in safe vessels, to go under unimpeachable supervision into the hungry mouths which now look up and are not fed.

What is quite beyond belief is that no one is openly opposed to our taking the only steps which can possibly spare our children from a calamity and a threat infinitely greater than the present threat. No one has lately said a word in argument against this use of what surpluses there are as insurance against a dire future for those most dear to us. To Christians no one has spoken against this clear-cut obligation in charity.

Why then are the Swedish ships not getting up steam? Why then are the grain merchants of Chicago and the proprietors of Argentine haciendas not depositing checks from the Belgians and the Dutch and the Norwegian and the Polish governments? Why is the International Red Cross able only to bewail how little it can do? Why does the French "Secours Quaker" say that it has not enough milk and vitamins to last till spring, even for the most desperate cases?

Many men and women who have seen the horror at first hand are asking themselves these questions. And there appear to be only three possible answers. A few obstinate and obtuse highly-placed British officials, who seem to think that to change your mind is a sign of weakness, stand out against the noblest and most enlightened of their compatriots. A few selfish Americans get panicky because they cannot have as many cans of tomatoes or pounds of coffee as they would like, and come to the conclusion that all surpluses are mythical. And the Russian inner circle must believe that a starved population, with its mass psychology, will always prefer to accept Communist leadership, will never prefer a leadership so vastly less human than either Communism or Fascism that we can scarcely conceive it, a leadership purely anarchical, savage, brutal, a leadership which the depths of our own being tell us can exist, though we have not seen it.

Against this small, hard core of blind folly, there is only one effective remedy. It must be dissolved by the acid of popular indignation and resolution that our children shall not have to suffer worse than the worst any of today's men and women have suffered, that charity shall not quit the world.

I find some particular devil, maybe old Scrooge tape himself, nudging me with a counsel of frustration, at this point. If I can make out his sniffling syllables, he seems to be asking me: "Now what good is that editorial going to do? Who's going to do anything about it? Doesn't it admit that the whole world is being held up by a few key-men? What do you expect your readers to do about it? And are you forgetting that we have a pretty assortment of infernal agents working on them, too? Better relax and admit that this week's column is a disaster even before it's printed."

But one thing old Scrooge, or whatever he is, does not seem willing to admit, is this: There are some readers who will not only read that editorial, but will also stop to reflect. They will say, "Of course, it isn't up to me to sign the orders that will release food for Europe's starving children. But it isn't a complication of arrangement which is holding things up; it is a complication of spirit, a lack of vital charity. And that is something I can go to work on. For I have a power of telepathy of prayer. For going to get to work right now... today, and every day... praying as intensely as I can, focused like a burning glass: 'Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.'"

EDITORIALS

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people of the world to join in this one crusade. His five principles are the five milestones on this pilgrimage to the Holy Land of the Spirit. They provide for a nation's national tranquility, even to the Five Points made possible for international peace.

The five principles must serve to eliminate from the post-war world all barriers created by prejudice, creed, indifference, and by a long tradition of secularization of thought, feeling, and action. Our next editorial will consider the five points of social reconstruction which Pope Pius XII emphasizes as essential to five national peace as a foundation for international peace.

THAT THESE MAY EAT!

All America is on food-shortage now. War conditions have disrupted production and distribution of food in all its varieties. One hundred thirty million people face from eating, have had their fill, out of the generous and bountiful of American Scarcity and the loss of security have led many to worry, to hoard food. That all way out and continue to eat, the government has been compelled to take over the administration of food distribution. War conditions have brought starvation and near starvation to many nations of the world. "There are no children in famine," declares one who knows. Perhaps present food conditions may lead many men to realize how utterly dependent we are on God for our daily bread.

There was an acute food shortage among the five thousand men and their families who had assembled on the mountain side to hear some of Christ's words and to see more of His healing power. There would be a constant food shortage throughout the world every year but for the ordinary providence of God which makes the soil to bear, the field to produce, the flock to graze. Christ knew the way of the crowd, knew the impossibility of bearing bread for them through ordinary channels. Philip stated the case in his question, Andrew told Jesus of the boy with the loaves and fishes, both agreeing on the impossibility of feeding the crowd with such meager resources.

Then the Great Food Administrator bade them to have the men sit down, and taking the loaves He gave thanks and distributed them to those reclining; likewise the fishes, as much as they wished. All were filled, and twelve baskets were needed to collect what remained.

"This is, indeed, the Prophet who is to come into the world." — these were the words of those who witnessed this sign which Christ had wrought. They were what we would expect of them. A few loaves, many thousands of people, hunger that threatened to make men fain; then many loaves, many fishes, satisfactory of hunger, twelve baskets of leftovers. Here indeed was a sign all could appreciate! God feeds all men; hunger would be our portion were it not for His Providence! By natural means He makes the earth bring forth its fruit, He gives men food in season. Ordinary and common is the work of sowing and reaping; yet it calls for the almighty power of God. No man can doubt the existence of God, the goodness of God, without hiding the touch of God's hand that gives him his loaves and fishes, his nourished food. The reasonable man, the thinking man, will see in all the food God gives him a constant reminder of the goodness of God, and of his complete dependence upon him for food and drink.

'Quiz' Corner

What are the indulgences attached to the Stations of the Cross? — If a person going to Holy Communion should accidentally touch the vessel containing the Sacred Hosts would he be guilty of sin? — The sacred vessels may be handled only by a clergyman or by a person authorized to do so, such as a sacristan. However, if a person at the altar falling accidentally touches the eucharist, no sin is committed.

Is it necessary to give one's name in an infant baptism? — No. We have to give one's name for a saint to a child-blessing that saint to guide and help the newly-born Christian and hoping that the child may in future years imitate the virtue of his or her saint. If one desires to give one's name and for some reasonable two Christian names this is allowed but not necessary.

FIVE and TEN Years Ago

From Mar. 24, 1938, Edition: Well organized opposition against obnoxious legislation taking the form of a protest lodged before the Assembly Taxation Committee in Albany resulted in a proposed bill to repeal State censorship of motion pictures being killed in committee by unanimous vote.

From Mar. 21, 1936, Edition: An overflow throng was present for the blessing and dedication of a new organ in St. Patrick's Church, Cortland, by His Excellency, Bishop Keenan.

Due to urgent protests of citizens including priests and laity of Catholic parishes in Cortland, the motion picture "Crucade Against Radio," and accompanying features were withdrawn at a local theater.

Feast Days

- Sunday, Apr. 4.—ST. NICHOLAS.
- Monday, Apr. 5.—ST. VINCENT FERRELL.
- Tuesday, Apr. 6.—ST. CELESTINE.
- Wednesday, Apr. 7.—BLESSED BERNARD JON-KER.
- Thursday, Apr. 8.—ST. MARY FERRELL.
- Friday, Apr. 9.—ST. PAPA OF EGYPT.
- Saturday, Apr. 10.—ST. APOLLONIA.

Inarticulate. More Replies

By Rev. James M. O'Leary, C.S.A.

At the close of last week's article I said reluctantly that this week's issue in the last of the subject "Inarticulate: The Why?" issue that the replies have amounted to come to. There seems to be an end of them. With the volume who were good enough to put their thoughts on paper kindly we got my thanks over through their contributions. Some, however, of lack of space, unpublished.

So, just a few more replies answer to the question why the old Catholics must themselves make often what seems effective to our folk speak in the public place.

Chicago: I received a letter to the Herald Tribune objecting to inarticulate parson. On this occasion we received a standard "radio" acknowledgment of my letter but no explanation, reply or even publication of the objection.

New York City: My last article in "The New York Tribune" by means of Bruce Church's editorial in the "New York Tribune" was a standard "radio" acknowledgment of my letter but no explanation, reply or even publication of the objection.

Chicago: I received a letter to the Herald Tribune objecting to inarticulate parson. On this occasion we received a standard "radio" acknowledgment of my letter but no explanation, reply or even publication of the objection.

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