

Courier Journal

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Dr. Higgins Says:

An Obligation in Social Justice
It happens almost every time.

Almost every time a visitor from Europe or Latin America drops into the office, sooner or later the conversation gets around to the attitude of Catholics in the United States toward the American labor movement. And almost every time the visitor is surprised (pleasantly so, as a rule) to be told that Catholics have always been extremely active in the labor movement here and that, numerically at least, they exercise perhaps more than their proportionate share of trade union leadership.

THE VISITOR is further surprised to be told that the unions, with few exceptions, have never evidenced the slightest bias against revealed religion and that, for the most part, they have always enjoyed the explicit endorsement of the church. He is surprised for the simple reason that too often, in his own country, the unions have been characterized by a suspicion of organized religion and have sometimes pursued a policy which was out of line with Christian teaching.

WHY IT SHOULD have happened that Catholics and other practicing Christians in the United States have been more active in their unions than their fellow-Catholics and fellow-Christians generally in some of the other countries of the world, is a big question which only the trained historian is qualified to answer adequately. Whatever the explanation, the fact remains a fact for which Americans of all classes and all creeds ought to be very grateful—that, with all its faults, the United States has given to the rest of the world a wholesome lesson in friendly cooperation between religion and labor.

AS FURTHER evidence, of a negative sort, that the United States is at the head of the parade in this regard, attention is called to a news release from London, under date of September 26, to the effect that "there were only 25 Catholics among the delegates attending the recent conference of the Trade Union Congress—the most important and biggest ever held—whereas the proportion of Catholics in British industries that there should have been about 80 or 70." "It also appears," the report continues, "that, in general, the Catholic voice was silent during the convention."

THE REPORTER is not suggesting at all that Catholics should have been present in greater numbers in a sectarian bloc, nor that their voice should have been raised to support a sectarian "party line." Quite the contrary. He is merely suggesting that Catholics, as members of British trade unions—and presumably almost all of the British Catholic workers belong to a union—should be taking a greater interest in union affairs for the welfare of the unions themselves and for the welfare of the entire British community.

WE DO NOT suggest, it is true, that the silence of the handful of Catholic delegates made it easier for the "Marxists and Communists to sway the delegates with their emotional appeals." True. But even if there were no Marxists or Communists in England, there would be, as there are today, a multitude of other problems demanding the careful attention of every member of the British labor movement.

THE PRESENT writer isn't implying that the British Catholic unionists are at fault; presumably, there are a variety of cultural and social factors which explain and at least partially justify their failure to exercise their proportionate influence in the affairs of the Trade Union Congress.

THE POINT is simply this, that the Catholic unionist, in whatever country he happens to reside and particularly in the United States with its happier tradition in this regard, has an obligation in social justice to interest himself in season and out of season in the affairs of his own union and in the affairs of the trade union movement as a whole.

THAT NOT all of our Catholic trade unionists in the United States are living up to all of the responsibilities which attach to union membership was again evidenced in recent conventions of a couple of important unions which, to say the least, are not in the control of the general membership.

But more about these particular unions at a later date.

Calendar of Saints

SUNDAY, Oct. 13—St. Peter of Alcantara, confessor. Early in life he entered the monastery of the Discalced Franciscans. He rose to high posts in the order, but inspired by a desire for penance, in 1539, when he was 40 years old, he founded the first community of the "Strict Observance." He died while kneeling in prayer.

MONDAY, Oct. 14—St. John Cantius, confessor. He was born in Kenty, Poland, in 1403 and studied at Cracow. For a short time he was in charge of a parish but returned to Cracow as a professor. There for many years he lived a life of unobtrusive virtue, self-denial and charity.

TUESDAY, Oct. 15—St. Hilario, abbot. One of the best known Palestinian Solitaries, he was born near Gaza of pagan parents about 292. But while very young was baptized and visited St. Antony in Egypt.

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 16—St. Mary Salome, widow. One of "the three Marys" who was the wife of Zebedee and the mother of the Apostles St. James the Greater and St. John the Evangelist. She was one of the holy women who followed and ministered to Our Lord at His Crucifixion and burial, and who witnessed His Resurrection.

THURSDAY, Oct. 17—St. Theobald, martyr. He was executed before being slain because he assembled the Christians at Antioch after the church had been closed by Julian, an uncle of the emperor of that name and like him an apostate.

FRIDAY, Oct. 18—St. Raphael, archangel. One of the three angels named by name in the Bible. St. Raphael, according to the Book of Tobit, is "one of the seven who stood before the Lord."

SATURDAY, Oct. 19—St. Chrysanthus and Daria, martyrs. St. Chrysanthus, an Egyptian, with his wife, Daria, a Greek, were distinguished in Rome for their zealous profession and practice of Christianity, which led to their martyrdom.

It's the soul in the end, that

So Much With So Little



MISSION SUNDAY-OCT. 19

As We See It By Dan Patrick Are We Our Brother's Keeper?

It doesn't take too much foresight at the present moment to conclude that food is a much more potent weapon than guns in the battle of Europe.

Europe is hungry and when you're hungry you need bread not guns. However, if that hunger is not satisfied in due time, you may pick up a gun to get the bread you need.

It is difficult to express the proposition more simply. At the present time we are engaged in a race with the Communists. Our job is to get food to Europe before the people of that unhappy continent seize guns, overthrow their present regimes and install a Communist setup.

Some Americans, deliberately or otherwise, are blinding themselves to these basic facts. They are railing against the government's decision to keep the bottom of Europe's bread basket from falling out. They feel that we should withdraw into isolation with our great stores of food while the rest of the world starves.

Such a theory is not only non-Christian. It is non-democratic and adds up to mighty poor politics. Should we follow such a view we would be playing right into the hands of the Communists who are banking on our traditional isolation to let the structure of western civilization collapse completely on the European continent.

AT THIS VERY MOMENT our own economy is not stable. It is plagued by the specter of inflation and commodity prices, especially in the food line, have skyrocketed out of sight.

Some economists tell us that, food prices would go down if we shut off or cut down on shipments to Europe and thereby had a sufficient reserve to more than meet demands and thus bring about a price reduction.

While that course may appeal to some shortsighted people, in the long run it is nothing more or less than a short cut to chaos. It is far better to expend our bread and dollars now than blood and tears later. That seems to be the choice and our decision should be obvious.

We can take a rather graphic lesson from the last war which resulted from the ostrich-like attitude of the American people who felt they could go merrily along on their own way and let the rest of the world stumble down the road to a war in which this country never would become involved.

WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGED need for food to feed the European, the immediate problem facing the American people boils down to the procurement of 100,000,000 bushels of grain—the approximate difference between the available supply for Europe and the minimum food needs of that continent.

Food experts have agreed that the only possible way to obtain the added supply is through a system of conservation on the part of all Americans. Such a system can either be voluntary or compulsory. For the moment, the administration has elected to try voluntary methods.

We have been called upon to take a number of steps such as meatless Tuesdays, poultry-less and eggless Thursdays, cutting down bread consumption and the like. Most liquor manufacturers have agreed to a sixty-day holiday and breweries are cutting back their production to a considerable degree.

WHAT EFFECT THESE measures will have on overall grain conservation is a debatable question. The American people wonder how they can save grain by not eating meat and poultry.

They are told that cattle and poultry eat grain and hence the less cattle and poultry raised for consumption on the market the less grain will be used for feeding purposes.

Against this voluntary program is the prospect of a return to rationing. It seems to some people that the people of Europe might well starve before effective machinery is set up to activate such a program.

WHILE IT IS TRUE that the methods used in grain conservation may be debatable, the general objective of such a program must certainly be not.

We have a moral responsibility in this land of comparative plenty to share our goods with fellow human beings all over the world. We cannot in conscience glut our garbage pails with waste which might keep not one but several starving children alive.

The statement of Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati in behalf of the American Hierarchy warrants our full and sympathetic study.

There is no getting around the fact that we are our brother's keeper.

Dr. Gillis Says:

Bishops or Christ Himself?

Still they come: attacks on the Catholic Church. A short while ago there was one from Bishop O'Connell. Then (somewhat disguised) another from the seven ministers who went to Yugoslavia, took a quick look around, saw lots of people in church, passed in on Archbishop Stepinac, found him "in the pink" (so they say) and returned to report, "All's well in Tito-land."

The stir raised by these Ambassadors of Good Will had hardly subsided when out comes Reinhold Niebuhr, "one of Protestantism's top intellectual spokesmen," who says "the acrimonious relations between Catholics and Protestants in this country are scandalous." Perhaps they are. Let us go further and say no doubt they are. But who originates these "acrimonious relations?"

I FEEL IN this matter much as I feel when Pat Scanlan of the Brooklyn Tablet is under discussion. Many non-Catholics and some Catholics complain of him as too belligerent, truculent, combative, argumentative. When they say such things to me I ask them to point out a controversy started by Pat. He picks up the gauntlet when someone else throws it down. But I cannot remember any instance (I stand to be corrected) when without provocation he commenced a quarrel. Furthermore, I never knew the redoubtable Pat to take up the cudgels in defense of himself. There is always a point of honor or truth or justice in question. The attacks he answers are attacks not upon him but upon the Church or the Faith.

WHILE I AM on that particular phase of the subject, I may as well add that the same observation applies to Archbishop Cushing. If there is a Christlike man in America, it is he. But when he answered the seven reverend tourists who accepted Tito's invitation to come over and testify that all was lovely, he got quite a scolding in a letter to The New York Times. The writer of that letter said some weeks ago what Dr. Niebuhr is saying now. It is scandalous for Protestants and Catholics to fight. But neither Dr. Niebuhr nor the letter writer (I have mislaid his name) seems to have noticed the important fact that the Archbishop of Boston didn't rush in to defend himself, but to champion the cause of a man unjustly jailed. If it be un-Christian to demand justice not for oneself but for one who suffers without cause, I think we shall have to revise the list of the works of corporal mercy.

DR. NIEBUHR GIVES a new twist to the argument. He says: "Catholic bishops have the practice of rushing to the public and to print, every time Protestants call attention to some form of official Catholic intolerance, with the assertion that it is Christ Himself who is under attack."

ONCE AGAIN it may be that memory fails me, but I cannot recall when one of our bishops replied to an attack on "official Catholic intolerance" by asserting that such an attack was upon our Lord Himself. If Dr. Niebuhr has in mind a Catholic protest against divorce and remarriage after divorce, any Catholic would say that such practices are flatly contrary to the command of Christ. If the subject under discussion is birth control (as usually understood) we declare that it is against nature and hence against God. But when did a bishop say that those who protest against Catholic intolerance are attacking Christ?

THE NEXT sentence in Dr. Niebuhr's article "Christianity and Crisis" (quoted in Time, Sept. 29) brings up a more important question. He says: "From the Protestant standpoint it is precisely this unqualified identification of Christ with the historic church which is the root of all Catholic heresies and the cause of Catholic intolerance."

SO: THE unqualified identification of the "historic church" with Christ is the root of heresies and of intolerance. If the "historic church" can claim no such identification, is there any other that can make the claim? There is no other.

THERE USED to be such a church. "He that heareth you heareth Me," said Jesus. "He that despiseth you despiseth Me." That would seem to amount to identification. Where is that Church now? What happened to it? Has it disappeared? If so, what of our Saviour's statement that He would be with it "all days?"

THERE SEEMS to be a hiatus in the good doctor's explanation. He rules us out, but he puts no other church in our place. In the circumstances we would claim to be the Church of Christ by default. If by no other title.

There we come to something fundamental. It is not a matter merely of Protestant-Catholic controversy. If the theory that the Church which is one with Christ no longer exists, it puts not us alone but all the world in a bad predicament.

Do You Remember?

25 Years Ago—Oct. 13, 1922

Leading Protestants converted him to Catholicism. G. K. Chesterton said in interview given to Henry Somerville, noted English newsmen.

Eugene J. Dwyer, attorney, addressed members of Rochester Knights of Columbus at the annual Columbus Day dinner in Power Hotel.

10 Years Ago—Oct. 14, 1937

Parishioners of St. Bridget's Church were called to renewed zeal and effort for their parish by Most Rev. Walter A. Foery, Bishop of Syracuse, in the transformed edifice reopened after a disastrous fire.

Publication of the "Open Letter" of 150 Protestants not only misrepresented the facts and the issues of Spain but also tended to create a species of religious war in the United States. 175 Catholic clergy and laymen declared in a joint statement.

5 Years Ago—Oct. 15, 1942

Rev. John S. Randall, diocesan director, Society for the Propagation of the Faith appointed as managing editor of the Catholic Courier-Journal by His Excellency, Bishop Kearney to succeed Rev. Leo C. Mooney, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Rochester.

Beneficiaries of Columbus' Discovery were called upon to keep it "God's Country" by His Excellency Bishop Kearney at a Chamber of Commerce dinner marking the 450th anniversary of the discovery.

Just Between Us

Hold Tight to Your Soul!

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By Father Ginder

Not that anyone can take it away from you—thank God for that! Our soul is our own. "to have and to hold until death do us part," and forever a fact.

But we are faced, all of us, with what amounts to a conspiracy, a supercilious sort of plot, aimed at persuading us that we have no soul, that we're made up of protons and electrons—nothing more—just as this paper is composed, basically, of protons and electrons.

Now if there's anything we pursue, or should prize, it's our soul. It's the one thing distinguishing us from sheep and horses. It's what makes us their master. We know that our soul will never die and, safe in that conviction, we can face our destiny without fear. We can live above tyranny and lead the proper elements of our animal nature.

It's the soul in the end, that

makes us masters of the universe. No horse ever threw a saddle over a man and tried to mount him. The relationship between man and beast is controlled by possession of a soul. It's the one with the soul who strides the saddle.

IF WE HAVE NO soul, then we're animals—nothing more—and subject to the same rule of tooth and claw. If we have no soul, then there is nothing wrong with kidnapping, nothing wrong with slavery, nothing wrong with murdering, and every other sort of violence. For who could conceivably be worried over what is done to a bag of electrons and protons?

Is there anything more irritating, then, than the patronizing air of the fakir who wants to relieve us of our soul? "Come, come," he says. "Let me rid you of this degrading idea. Tsk, tsk—such medieval nonsense. Who ever heard of a soul in this twentieth century? How crude!"

CRUDE, INDEED! It is he that is crude. It is he that would tie us to earth, that would degrade us to the level of the beasts and things that crawl on their faces. Without souls we would be craven blobs of matter bereft of all rights, with no past worth recalling and no future worth living for. Hold on to your soul. It's your noblest part. It gives meaning to life and holds a promise of everlasting survival.



Fr. Ginder