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Fr. Higgins Says: A Question of Literacy

Twice within the same month we have been told by prominent American publications...



Fr. Higgins

The Reader's Digest and The Chicago Tribune — that Americans are suffering from a bad case of economic illiteracy...

Priest Discusses Court Errors In Defining 'Aid to Religion'

By REV. G. STUART HOGAN



REV. G. STUART HOGAN

The written statements of a court prepare the way and lay the ground work for the actual decision of the court...

The hidden danger in using the "dicta" of one case as the deciding principle for a subsequent case lies in the fact that the dicta in the original case are not always recognized or regarded at the time as fundamental principles...

Example of how the "dicta" of one case can become the accepted, established and decided principle for a subsequent case is forcefully illustrated in three famous cases of recent years...

Yet, the fact acceptance of these unsound "dicta" by the respondents for the cause of religion was the very root of reason for the unfavorable decision in the McCollum case...

Whether there was question here of the establishment of religion was not considered. All that was considered was whether there was aid to religion...

In the latest case on the matter of released time, religion has again won another victory. However, the deadly clause "in aid to religion" which caused us to lose the McCollum case, has become established more firmly than ever in the very winning of this case...

The U. S. Supreme Court, however, in the Everson case broadened this to read: "Neither a state nor the Federal Government can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion to another."

THE SOLUTION to the problem seems to be a direct attack upon the phrase "in aid to religion" either by a return to the actual words and meaning of the Constitution, or by distinguishing between aid which is given primarily for the purpose of propagating religious beliefs and practices to the extent that it would constitute an establishment of religion and aid which is given primarily for the benefit of the individual and the promotion of public morality and the preservation of national traditions...

THESE "DICTA" of the Everson case were allowed to go unchallenged at the time because the court decided that the case did not violate the principles thus laid down in "dicta" and the decision was favorable to the side of religion.

God's World

Our secular press records world happenings as if the only important item about them is the human sources of them. Men of power are looked to rule the world for better or for worse. Their power may be based on the will of the people they rule, or it may be based on might which has overpowered the subject peoples...

Surely, things would be in a bad way for all men were we dependent on the plans and thinking and machinations of men alone. Good men have done good things for the world; bad men have done bad things; ignorant men have done unreasonable things. When will men realize that only God can rule the world in justice and wisdom?

Man's fall brought such ruin to the world as could find a remedy only in the special act of God. All that man could do would never have overcome the effects of Adam's fall. Even if a veritable army of good men rose up in each generation to undo the evil wrought by sin, all the efforts and all the planning and all of the wishful thinking of such good men would have failed of effect. Only God could remake the world which sin had brought to ruin.

So it has been from the beginning. So it is now. So it shall be even to the end of the world. God must rule! The children of God were surely misused when the UN purpose omitted all mention of God, all thought of prayer to God, in planning a world organization for peace and order. The UN will never attain success until it has brought back God into the position He should be accorded in the scheme of things, mundane. The unbelief of an unscrupulous minority, the oppressive methods that have deprived believers from the practice of their faith in God, can not change things. God is still in His world. The pagan nations in vain will rise up against God and against His Christ. It is He who shall remain, God's world!

God's Prophets

The promises of the Almighty of good things for mankind have been with man from the beginning. The earliest prophecy was God's own promise to Adam and Eve that the power of the devil would be overcome, that the woman would be used as God's instrument to crush the head of the serpent. That promise has been the theme of all of God's Prophets from the beginning. Now details have been added to the original promise: the minor and the major Prophets have spoken to each generation. The words of the Prophets are the burden of the Advent liturgy, along with the more proximate message of the Precursor. The miracle of a virgin conceiving the name of the promised Redeemer, Emmanuel — God with us; the passing of the ruling power from Jude, the emergence of the little town of Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Promised One, are among the finishing strokes of the great painting that depicts God's plan of the redemption.

God's Prophets should guide us during Advent. Their thoughts, their teachings, above all their predictions inspired of God, should be the source of our thinking, of our meditation.

Fifty Years at St. Monica's

Happy were the people of St. Monica's Parish and their Pastor in the festive observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the parish. Well might they rejoice at the wonderful effectiveness of fifty years of religious life that started with only a few people, and that now affects many thousands. Three devoted Pastors have managed the affairs of St. Monica's. Monsignor Brophy was the founder, the Pastor over forty-one years. Monsignor Bergan built on the foundation laid by the first Pastor, and in a pastorate all too short brought many blessings to a devout congregation, and the final touch of beauty to a church that is, indeed, a prayer in architecture. The new Pastor, Monsignor Lambert, carries on ably in a tradition that has made and will continue to make St. Monica's Parish an outstanding parish of the diocese.

All Mankind Shall See

Our immediate thoughts concerning Christmas are placed with John the Baptist as he announces the public appearance of Jesus Christ as the Salvation of God. His work was to be for all men, not for a few: there was to be no other name under heaven by which men must be saved. His work was to be a work for the souls of men, it was to bring holiness into men's souls by the wiping out of all sin. It was a work that would call for man's cooperation: man could sin away from God; man could secure pardon of sin only through the presence of God. John was announcing a wonder that would be to all the people: all mankind was to see the Salvation of God!

All mankind shall see the Salvation of God! But John would have men know that they could never be worthy of the grace of redemption unless with God's help they would make ready the way before Him. Sin and the things that make sin were to be eliminated; every man was to do penance. Every man was to turn in sorrow from evil, that he might be ready for the grace of Christ's visitation.

All shall see the Salvation of God! To us of this generation, the words of John come in this Fourth Sunday of Advent. We must prepare ourselves by penance for the vision of God's Salvation. Christmas is more to us if we follow faithfully John's invitation to do penance.

MR. HARD

— taking as his authority a recent poll conducted by Dr. Claude Robinson, president of the Opinion Research Corporation for the American Economic Foundation diagnoses the illness as follows: "The answers showed clearly that these preachers and teachers, as a group, gravely overestimated the income payments going to the 'upper brackets' and gravely underestimated the income payments going to the 'lower brackets'."

Very interesting if true. Americans in general and "preachers" in particular — are said to be economically illiterate or startlingly misinformed, as the Digest puts it) because they happen to believe that wealth is inequitably distributed in the United States and because they happen to conclude that all of us — the Federal Government included — ought to do something about it. If that's economic illiteracy granted that some of Dr. Robinson's preachers are a little off on their statistics — thank God that the number of American illiterates is apparently on the increase.

In fairness to Mr. Hard it ought to be said that he does become reasonably specific in his analysis of the American clergy's alleged misapprehension of the facts of economic life. In welcome contrast, he said, to the Tribune's hysterical generalizations, (Whether or not the Tribune is accurately quoting and accurately interpreting Dean McCarthy, I cannot say. I hope not, of course — for Dr. McCarthy's sake.)

MR. HARD admits

that there are many flaws in our present distribution of income, but laments the fact that our "spiritual leaders" are "startlingly misinformed on important economic facts." Maybe so. But as one Catholic to another, may I suggest to Mr. Hard that he ought to have been more discriminating in his references to the recent writings of Rev. Edward Keller, C.S.C., and the work of Father Keller's Bureau of Economic Research at the University of Notre Dame?

It appears that, in the opinion of Mr. Hard, Father Keller is the welcome exception that proves the rule. Mr. Hard, even as he is lamenting the ignorance of the clergy, appears to Father Keller's writings to bolster up his dictum. What Mr. Hard fails to do — and what he should have done as a seasoned reporter — is to tell us that Father Keller's writings have been severely criticized in recent months by several of his fellow Catholics, clergy and laity alike.

Not all of them are illiterate or startlingly misinformed. Mr. Hard needed only to consult the files of America, for example, to find a learned refutation of Father Keller's central thesis by Dr. Baerwald of the Fordham University School of Economics. A little additional research would have uncovered the fact that many of Father Keller's associates at Notre Dame are also critical of his recent writings.

If subscribers of The Reader's Digest were given an opportunity to decide for themselves, perhaps they would conclude that those Americans who side with Dr. Baerwald and disagree with Father Keller, Dean McCarthy, William Hard and The Chicago Tribune, aren't so illiterate after all. Perhaps. Why not give them the opportunity, Mr. Hard?

An Unsolicited Tribute

Here is an amazing thing. Jack Dempsey has two children — two girls, and though not a Catholic himself, always insists that his children attend Catholic school. Since his business interests are far-flung, he has lived in many cities, but always places his children in some local Catholic school. Jimmy Powers, a New York sports-writer, asked Jack why he did this, and received this answer:

"Here in the U. S. we have the best educational system in the world. We spend a fortune on our buildings, our football setups, our set-piece rooms. . . If you want to be a great doctor, America is the place to study. If you want to be a fine dentist, lawyer, or become a business man, we are the top. . . I am talking about the great public schools."

"Now I wish you to show me in the curriculum of any of these schools where they teach right from wrong. Where do they guarantee you a good set of ethics? I want to see the classrooms, and the teachers who teach you to be decent, kind, gentle, humble, modest, clean, in-side and out. You are going to have a tough time coming up with such a school. I could not find any among them. That's not for me."

"That is why I picked a Catholic school. I want to see some education for the soul as well as the mind."

"I see a fellow with a Phi Beta Kappa key. I know his mind is O. K. But what kind of a guy is he in his heart? Can I trust him? Is he honest? Is he decent? They do not seem to give keys for these things anywhere. It just says when you graduate that you are a lawyer. It does not say that you are an honest lawyer."

Lepers Cured Christmas Leper Fund Contributions Urged

The following article was written for the NCWC News Service by the Most Rev. Thomas J. McDonnell, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.



BISHOP McDONNELL

THROUGH THE auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, it is possible to "keep Christ in Christmas" in the way our Lord Himself intended to be kept in Christmas — by helping our most unfortunate brethren the lepers of the leproasaria of the world.

Each year, during the month of December, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith sponsors the Christmas Leper Fund, and all the lay Catholics of the United States are asked to contribute a small amount that may be used to help cure a leper.

Yes, it is possible to cure a leper. If the right drugs are used on him, and if the treatment is administered consistently, it costs 25 cents to buy one dose of promin for a leper.

leper colony, as the inmates watch a cured leper returning to his home and loved ones. Can you imagine how many tears of happiness are shed, how many patients whisper to themselves: "Perhaps I will be the next one to go." But there is always hope in the breasts of even the most hopeless cases.

From literature and newspaper accounts the average American Catholic knows what it must be like to be condemned to a living death in a leper colony. Until recently, that death sentence could not be reversed, only the holy emblems of Father Damien and the nuns who assisted him, who had consecrated their lives to the service of the lepers, could lighten the burden a little by administering to the spiritual and physical needs of their patients.

NOW WITH the advance of science and medicine the conditions have changed. There have been cured lepers. There are cured lepers.

For a few cents donated by the Catholics of the United States out of their Christmas bounty more of these unfortunate, who are often today, may take their place tomorrow among the ranks of the unafflicted.

Contribute to the Lepers' Christmas Fund this year, and make your own Christmas a more blessed one.

Holy Advent

"Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son. So spoke the prophet and the ages waited. Holy Advent — Symbolic of those ages from the fall of Adam Mankind awaiting the Messiah.

Four weeks of preparation for the coming of The Christ Child. By fasting and alms, what we deny to indulgence becomes the banquet of the poor. Among whom dwelled the Expectant. Most joyful expectation!

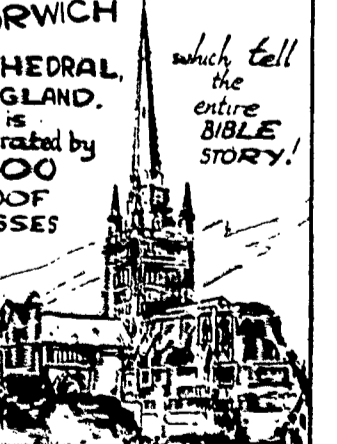
O women with child be glad of your kinship with Mary. Be glad in your womb a member of Christ. God willing. Action and Norbert Schickel

STRANGE BUT TRUE Little-Known Facts for Catholics

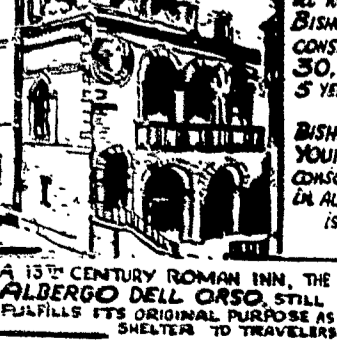
By M. I. MURRAY



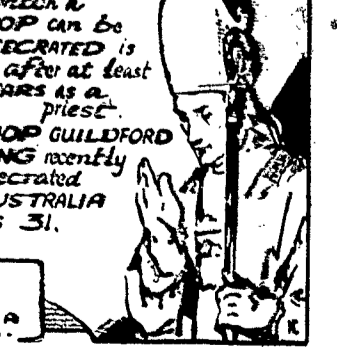
Beatification Cause of HERR FRIEDENHOFEN, who was a STREET-SWEEPER IN GERMANY.



NORWICH CATHEDRAL, ENGLAND, is decorated by 300 ROOFS BOSSIES



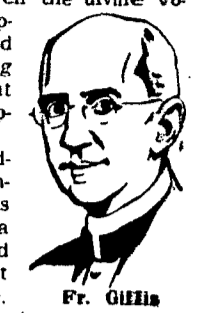
Under Canon Law the earliest age at which a BISHOP can be CONSECRATED is 30, after at least 5 years as a priest. BISHOP GUILDFORD YOUNG recently CONSECRATED IN AUSTRALIA is 31.



which tell the entire BIBLE STORY!

Fr. Gillis Says: Modern War and the Theologians

Beginning where we left off last week, let us first get our bearings. The question was: Is the right, or the duty, or even the divine vocation of America to help oppressed peoples in Europe and Asia, not merely by sending food, clothing and money, but by waging war upon the oppressors?



Fr. Gillis

Let us suppose that the reader feels an inclination to answer "yes." Before he yields to that inclination he has a more difficult matter to attend to. He must consider what kind of war we would wage, and whether that kind of war is permitted by the moralists.

To deal adequately with that subject, we should have to go rather deep into Christian ethics, the law of nations and even the moral theology of the Catholic Church. We should have to go pretty far back for our principles and come all the way up to date for the application of those principles. We should have to consult Suarez and Victoria of the 16th century, St. Thomas Aquinas of the 13th, and St. Augustine of the 5th. In fact we should have to go all the way back to the Gospels, the source of all other sources.

But since all that research is not feasible for most of us, I may mention a few books which authors or compilers have done the heavy work and have presented us with the gist of the traditional teaching in compendious form. There is John Eppstein's "Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations" (Burns and Oates, 1935) with some 500 pages of extracts from the Popes, the Fathers and the Theologians on the subject of war, peace, and the conditions upon which a nation may justly resort to arms.

IF 300 PAGES are too much there is Father Strainmann's "The Church and War" (215 pages, Burns and Oates, 1938) or Father Gignon's "Ethics of Peace and War" (88 pages, Burns and Oates, 1935). Father Gignon thanks Father Strainmann is too much on the pacifist side but even in Gignon the requirements for a just war are stiff enough. There is no disagreement in principle between these two theologians. How could there be? Catholic scholars don't surrender ethics at the demand of politics, nor do the theologians wait upon the decisions of the generals.

But perhaps the most convenient little volume on the subject is Gerald Vann's "Morality and War" (75 pages, Burns and Oates, 1939). The book is so good that this very learned and quite up-to-date Dominican says of just one of the ten conditions of a just war the safeguarding of civilian populations.

It has always been held that the only just objects of attack as far as human beings are concerned, are the combatants, it has always been held that the slaughter of non-combatants could be excused only if it were not deliberate and directly willed but outside the intention of those directing operations. Today the civil population is the object of deliberate and direct willed attack. It is of course possible to point to wars in the past in which the civil population were the object of direct and deliberate attack. The point is that such wars were judged according to traditional theological standards were unjust.

Military men in general pay no attention to ethics. They state a fact, a brute fact, and expect that we shall relax our ethics to fit the fact. Father Vann quotes a letter of the Marshal Petain. Henceforth the object of war appears in a different attitude and all its cruel simplicity has become the destruction of an army, but of a nation. General von Altkoek: "The next war will be much more an extermination of masses of the civil population than a fight between two armies." Major Sherman Miles: "The objective of three dimensional war is the non-combatant."

TO MAKE THE matter more explicit Sir Henry Wilson says: "The policy of the Supreme War Council is to attack the important German towns systematically to concentrate on one town for successive days and then to pass to several other towns continuing to the first town until the target is thoroughly destroyed. Long distance bombing will produce its maximum moral effect only if the visits are constantly repeated at short intervals so as to produce in each area bombed a sustained anxiety."

Father Vann adverts to the plea of reprisals. "It is easy," he says, "to make a popular case for the justice of returning savagery for savagery." But he rejects the plea saying that it is contrary not only to ethics and legal enactments for example those of the Hague and Geneva but in the natural law. But those who abandon ethical principle under provocation are likely also to reject the very idea of natural law. Catholics must not do so. With us natural law is divine law.

The bluntest and most cruel statement is that of Lord Baldwin: "The only defence is offense which means that you have to kill women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves."

Since such is the method of modern war, I for one cannot see how modern war using that method can be accepted as just and permissible unless, like those who have no faith, no ethics, no ethics, no theology, we let loose the principles we have had for 20 centuries indeed for 60 centuries, and take over the two rough and ready maxims of those who defend modern war: first whatever is actually done is permissible; second, we may do up others what others do unto us. Which of course is a contradiction of the Gospel!

Do You Remember?

10 Years Ago—Dec. 15, 1938. A marble and mosaic baptismal font in the sanctuary of St. Thomas Church Irondequoit was dedicated by His Excellency Bishop Kearney with the Rev. John F. Muckle, pastor, assisting.

The Catholic Church opposes and will always oppose dictatorships whether those dictatorships appear under the name of Communism, Nazism, Fascism or Unbridled Capitalism. The Rev. Donald M. Cleary, Catholic chaplain of Cornell University declared at a persecution protest assembly in Willard Straight Hall:

5 Years Ago — Dec. 16, 1943

To establish a basis for security for the workingman, especially following the war, an aid against evils of unemployment such as existed in the depression, Philip Murray, C.I.O. president advocated a minimum wage in basic American industries during a Christian Culture Lecture at Aquinas Institute.