

Courier Journal

Fr. Higgins Says: 'Mercy Killing' Termed Crime Against Individual, Society

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Fr. Gillis Says: One Welcome Ally

VOL. 31—No. 1 THURSDAY, FEB. 3, 1949

MOST REVEREND JAMES EDWARD KEARNEY, D.D., President

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Alternative To Two Extremes

If you want to know why the Communists are opposed to the Industry Council program...

According to the Communist Party of New England...

My concern is shared by the several hundred Catholic men's organizations...

That's what the Communists think about private enterprise...

THE PHILOSOPHY of the Industry Council program is the Christian philosophy...

THE DANGER is that American industrialists, by refusing to cooperate with the non-Communist sponsors...

THIS DIRECTOR KNOWS the textile industry inside out. He knows the leaders of the Union and sincerely respects their integrity...

WHILE IT IS true that under certain well known circumstances the natural law and Christian ethics permit the sacrifice of life for higher good ends...

IN OPPOSING their proposal to legalize voluntary euthanasia, we profess our belief that God is the author of life and death...

THE COUNCIL starts from the premise -- familiar to students of Catholic social teaching -- that "the forces of competition are never wholly adequate" to bring about the adjustments required for the healthy functioning of our economy...

THE SAME GENERAL proposal is expressed in fullness in the recent report of the Council of Economic Advisers...

For the immediate purposes of the present discussion, the important thing to remember is that the Council of Economic Advisers is asking for something more tangible than good intentions...

Is there any other way of doing this than by establishing a system of industry councils? We doubt it. So do the American Catholics.

I Teach School

I write no poem men's hearts to thrill, No song I sing to lift men's souls; To battle front, no soldiers lead; In hills of state I boast no skill; I just teach school.

I just teach school. But poets thrill, And stranger's joy, and soldier's fire, And statesman's power -- all -- all are mine; For in this little group where still I just teach school.

Are poets, soldiers, statesmen -- all: I see them in the speaking eye, In face aglow with purpose strong, In straightened bodies, tense and tall, When I teach school.

And they, uplifted, gaze intent On cherished heights they soon shall reach, And mine the hands that led them on! And I inspired -- therefore content, I still teach school.

Anonymous

JANUARY 13, 1949

RON THOMAS E. DEWEY ALBANY, NEW YORK YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I am writing you with a mind filled with grave concern over the recent announcement by the Euthanasia Society of America...

My concern is shared by the several hundred Catholic men's organizations whom I am privileged to represent as the President of the National Council of Catholic Men...

Nevertheless, I feel impelled to convey to you the strong reaction of our organization against this proposal...

THE PROGRESS of medical science in this last half century has been phenomenal. Even in this decade there have been amazing new developments in the art of healing and alleviating pain...

Yesterday men and women were dying of illnesses that were thought incurable. Today they are living because of the result of the work of the men and women who have dedicated their lives to medical research...

Euthanasia in this case is justified for the "good of society" and the state presumes to tell each individual when he may live and when he may die...

Were this not enough to turn the minds of men against this latest proposal of the Euthanasia Society of America, it might be well to point out that it stands opposed to the spirit and letter of the common law on which American jurisprudence is based...

LET US SUPPOSE, inconceivable though it be, that through some strange perversion of truth the New York State Legislature declares voluntary euthanasia legal in the case of persons incurably or painfully ill...

Who will determine when "mercy killing" is legal? When illegal? Where are the lines to be drawn? Will the representatives of the people of the state of New York assume the responsibility of telling mothers and fathers, sons and daughters when they may take their own life or share in the killing of another?

If this responsibility is shifted to the already heavily burdened shoulders of our physicians, what then becomes of the ancient and honorable Oath of Hippocrates which declares in part: "...I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel..."

THE ART of the physician is that of healing of saving life. I can think of nothing that would so tend to undermine the confidence which people universally place in the medical profession as the granting to them, or rather the forcing upon them, of the discretionary power of life and death...

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Once again the Euthanasia Society of America is attempting to have the New York State Legislature legalize "mercy killing" on a so-called "voluntary" basis...

The position of Catholics on this question is admirably presented in a letter to Governor Dewey by Emmet A. Blaes, Washington, president of the National Council of Catholic Men...

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In this space a week ago I expressed the fear that some of our "statesmen" are not fastidious enough to see deep sighted -- enough to detect what Communist governmentments are really up to when they arrest, try to condemn and perhaps execute members of the Catholic hierarchy.

Congressmen, Senators, Secretaries and under Secretaries of State, even the President; heads of Lords and Commons, Prime Ministers, Cabinet members (and of course the King, though he seems hardly to come into the political picture) all seem to consider the persecution of Churchmen in Communist countries as a matter of no world-shaking importance.

I tried to make the point in last week's contribution that the United States of America, Great Britain and all other legitimate governments are as much endangered as the Catholic Church by the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty, Archbishop Stepinac and others. Those prelates do of course represent the Church in an special way, but equally they represent God. The attack is primarily upon churchmen, but the ultimate objective of the enemy is God.

There have been few indications that the event in Hungary has been properly evaluated. There has come no indication from our political leaders that they have seen what the Communists are ultimately aiming at. There is the usual expression of displeasure and an occasional non-to-vigorous condemnation of the act as intolerant or tyrannical. But no government official has shown any philosophical understanding of what it meant when the Cardinal was arrested.

But there is here in New York at least one clergyman (not a member of our Church) who has caught the deeper significance of the Mindszenty episode. Rev. William C. Kernan, assistant rector of an Episcopal Church, wrote to the New York Herald Tribune a rather longish letter in which there was something more than the usual cry of "intolerance" and "tyranny."

He said, for example: "By every standard of what constitutes religious freedom, Cardinal Mindszenty was acting well within his rights. They are rights, as very American must know now, which Communists deny. There is no place for them in the Communist system. As a matter of fact it is time we recognize that there is in reality no place at all for religion in the Communist system."

It must be the reverend gentleman to feel obliged to rehearse that elementary fact for the readers of a great metropolitan newspaper. It is precisely what the Catholic clergy have been saying for at least two or three generations. We sometimes wonder if what we say is brushed aside as "professional" or "partisan."

So we welcome an ally from another religious body than our own.

Dr. Kernan quotes a couple of authoritative Communist declarations, one from Engels and Lenin the other from Vladimir Bakartink, Premier of the "Free Question People's Republic" to the effect that "All faiths and all contemporary churches as all religious organizations, whatever they may be, are nothing but creations of the bourgeois reaction which aid the exploitation of the working class..."

READERS of the Catholic press have been familiar with that Marxist principle, not only since 1917, the year of Russian Revolution, but for 80 years since the publication of Das Kapital; and indeed since the appearance of the Communist Manifesto in 1848. It amazes us that any Americans should now be learning that fact for the first time in 1949.

But the principal point in Dr. Kernan's letter is his conclusion. He says in the light of the fact that atheism is essential to Communism, "The real reason for Cardinal Mindszenty's arrest becomes all too clear. Certainly, all Americans who believe in an fight for human rights will want to protest this. All faiths and all contemporary churches and stand shoulder to shoulder with Catholics against Communism, which is the enemy of all religion."

"All Americans," says Dr. Kernan, "will want to protest this outrage." But few Americans have done so thus far. We wonder what has happened to any and all of the multitudinous humanitarian organizations that cry to high heaven when some non-Catholic racial or religious group is persecuted.

In the present instance they are surprisingly silent. And so are the politicians. And -- if any statesmen. But thanks, at least, to Dr. Kernan. He understands and what's more he speaks out. But he must feel pretty lonesome out there all by himself.

Do You Remember? 25 Years Ago--Feb. 1, 1924 Fathers and mothers of babies born within the year were entertained at a dinner by the Rev. Thomas F. Connors, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church, Rochester.

10 Years Ago--Feb. 2, 1930 Simplicity marked the funeral services for Reverend Mother Beatrix of the Holy Spirit, oldest Carmelite in the world, held in the Carmelite Monastery, 1530 East Ave., Rochester. His Excellency Bishop Kearney offered the requiem Mass and conducted the services.

5 Years Ago--Feb. 3, 1944 Keeping closer ties with parishioners in the armed forces and planning Society activity in the post-war era were urged upon Holy Name Societies in Rochester Diocese by the Rev. F. William Stauder, diocesan director, speaking at Corpus Christi Hall.

Monroe County League for Planned Parenthood planned extensive publicity for Rochester's Sunday newspaper circulation 135,000, but a dispute between pressmen and management resulted in but 22,000 being printed.

Unsung Heroes Among Parish Pillars --The Church Usher

The ordinary church goer who is crowded into Sunday Mass each week the man who discharges his most comfortably remote position near the altar in the interest of order and safety and who with gentle emphasis extends his hand earned contribution for the benefit of religion is not likely to be measured in heroic stature.

Nevertheless, the parish usher is a hero, albeit unsung and not widely appreciated.

USHERING in church is a volunteer office. The best that a parish usher can expect is an occasional word of thanks or some small gift at Christmas from a grateful pastor and perhaps some bit of timely tribute in an announcement on a major feast.

But for all that, the parish usher is a man devoted to duty. Oftentimes he must rearrange his family schedule, curtail his social obligations, and suffer many minor inconveniences in order to be on hand to give that service which spells the good order to be on hand to give that the thousands who assist at Mass and other parish devotions.

A REAL SENSE of humor is a necessary requisite for the parish usher. Catholics are a cross section of the American populace. We have our share of people who are temperamental, difficult to manage, and insist on their rights as freemen. Some do not leave selfishness at home even when they come to worship God.

It requires kindness and humor to move the determined end-of-the-pew sifter without commotion and to answer all the questions for those who will be deaf during the reading of the announcements. It demands holy tolerance to watch fuddled arms raised to drop pennies and nickels in the basket.

A CALM presence and a cheerful word must come easily to the lips of the usher in many minor emergencies which will arise wherever there are crowds.

Though it would be extremely unusual for any parish usher to meet a single situation where outstanding heroism would be required, we are of the opinion that the fidelity, the loyalty, the disinterested and unselfish service of the solid, substantial pillars of the church who serve in the capacity of usher amount to real heroisms in the aggregate.

It is too bad that this heroism must remain unsung on earth although we suspect it is noted in Heaven. -- The Tablet Brooklyn.

STRANGE BUT TRUE Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY Copyright, 1949, N. C. W. C. News Service.

Advertisement for 'DON'T THROW RICE' featuring a cartoon of a man with a rifle and a woman with a rifle, with text about the Golden Key and the Franco-Spanish War.

An Enemy Has Done This

Sign in the world and in the hearts of sinners, is diabolic in origin. Virtue in the world and in the hearts of good men, is of God. God arranged His world to be the habitation of man, and arranged all things so that man could live in obedience to Him and to His law. Likened to the gardener, He planted good seed in His field. Then the enemy of God and of man, the devil, came and sowed weeds among the wheat. The world of old and the world of today gives us a perfect picture of much that is good and of much that is evil. And men today as of old may ask the Lord: "Will Thou have us go and gather up the weeds?" This lovers of God resent all the evil they see about them, think even of asking for the destruction of sin and of sinners.

God has a different plan. Many that are now sinners shall one day be saints; many that now disobey God, will be made obedient; lovers of God will grow in sanctity as they are patient with the sinners about them. We are of the Kingdom of God on earth, God has planted us in the wheat of His garden. He looks to us to be like the wheat. He looks to us to be prepared for the harvest. We prepare ourselves for it by living the good life, we prepare even those whose sins have made weeds of God's field, by winning them away to the good life, by our charity, our good example, our prayers, and by growing till the harvest.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'A B might write', 'The dent respect school cannot', 'THE even times the in ment menta quell delibe', 'Tak propo natures ions, such denied Cathol Yet out of denial.', 'Wh have mean thein Acti has a to us beings', 'The i to all color o less of whom not lose because ment of college workers as natu bricklay', 'THE apart fr matter tion on have the', 'Pa Si', 'Arms a part months edy and year-old oph Da Greek C beh, P town of Fathn in Taye of the town's shorts; ginsts been ma dained in son who Rite Pa lem.', 'Ou', '39 Stat', 'Roch', 'FR 58 to 61', 'IN BOTTL'.