Dog In The Manger

Editorials

With Solemnity Befitting the Occasion May the Holy Spirit Descend Upon You Children of God, Soldiers of Christ

By Msgr. William M. Hart

Adult Confirmation

With solemnity fitting the occasion, several hundred adults will receive on the current Sunday the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sacred Heart Pro-Cathedral and Corpus Christi Church will have capacity congregations for the function. The special confirmation for adults serves to remind us of the growth of the Church through conversions to the faith.

It is a healthy sign when the annual records of the parishes list a goodly number of newly-baptized Catholics who have been blessed with the gift of faith and after fitting instruction have been admitted to membership in the Church of Christ. Christ gave this mission to the Church, to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is a mission exercised in the ordinary work of the parish church, in the missionary fields, and in winning from paganism or non-Catholic bodies new members of the Church.

Confirmation is a most important Sacrament. It is intended to make us strong and perfect Christians, soldiers of Jesus Christ. Just as Baptism is given to make us Christians, children of God, heirs of heaven. The soldier of Christ can wage a more successful battle against the devil, can meet more effectively the dangers to faith and morals that surround him on every side.

The Bishop Gives Confirmation

The Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. In special cases priests are empowered to confer this Sacrament, using the Holy Chrism consecrated by the Bishop.

Note well the solemnity with which the Bishop, clad in his episcopal robes, in cope and mitre, with pectoral cross and bearing the crozier as the sign of his episcopal power, proceeds to confirm. Standing on the predella of the altar, close to the tabernacle, he extends his hands over the kneeling candidates for Confirmation: solemnly in the words of the ritual he prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost with the seven gifts of Wisdom and Understanding, Counsel and Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord. "May the Holy Spirit descend upon you, and may the power of the Most High guard you from sins."

Anointing With Chrism

See the Bishop as he descends to the altar railing and anoints the forehead of each candidate with Holy Chrism, as he gives each one a light blow on the cheek. Hear him as he says "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Peace be to thee."

Oil is symbolic of strength; chrism adds balsam to the olive oil to be a sign of the sweet odor of virtue that is to mark the life of the person anointed with it. With the words spoken by the Bishop, it constitutes the sign of the sacrament: the sign visible to the eye, audible to the ear, which not only signifies strength, but conveys that strength of soul through the descent of the Holy Spirit into the soul of the one confirmed.

The Mark Of Confirmation

So important is the effect of Confirmation, so lasting in its influence on the soul on earth and after death, that it imprints a spiritual mark on the soul.

New dignity accrues to the soul confirmed, new consecration to the life of grace, new solemn dedication to duty as a soldier of Christ. The mark of the Holy Spirit is on the soul for all the numbered days of mortal life, for the unnumbered ages of eternity. New honor, new glory, will be the portion of the soul so marked that remains true to God, added punishment lies in store for a soul so marked that proves a traitor to God.

The Name Of A Saint

Baptism secured for us a patron and a source of effective good example in the saint for whom we were named; a second saint is called to guard and protect us when we are confirmed.

Children of God, soldiers of Christ — all who are confirmed should realize they are close to the saints. They should be mindful of the nearness of the saints to them in life; they should be constantly conscious of how close the saints will be to them in the life to come. Strong Christians, perfect Christians, they should rejoice in the special protection their new patron assures them.

Zeal For Souls

Confirmation should arouse in us constant zeal for souls, for perfection in the lives of those baptized as infants, for the gift of conversion to the Church of our brethren of other faiths. Some soul's salvation may be in your keeping. Be serious, be mindful of your obligation in this matter.

The current Catholic Information Series by Father Richard Tormey affords a precious chance for you to send or accompany an interested non-Catholic to these instructions at the Seneca Hotel each Tuesday evening. May the Adult Confirmation stir up your interest in this work for souls!

Jerusalem's Fall

Christ's words on this last Sunday of the Church year are a prophetic portent of things to come: the destruction of Jerusalem, in a very short time; the end of the world before the passing of the new generation of men who receive the faith of Christ.

Christ's first prophecy quotes Daniel on the fall of Jerusalem. This fall was to be in punishment for the rejection of Christ. The chosen people were to reject the promised Messiah, were to put Him to death. Into their holy city as a punishment for their denial was to come the abomination of desolation. Temple and altar and sacrifice and priesthood were to be laid low: into the very place of the temple was to be brought the abomination of a pagan idol. Desolation was to be made more complete by the addition of spiritual evil to the material evil of destructive desolation. Christ's warning of the fate impending over Jerusalem was intended to win back to virtue and faith those who were inviting proximate punishment by their evil ways.

Christ's second prophecy told of the inevitable end of the world. Earth with all its parts, with all its people, was to be brought to nothing. Signs of the catastrophe in the stars and sun and moon, in tempestuous portents on the earth itself, would be unmistakable. Fear and trembling would assail the souls of men.

But for the elect, for those true to their God and true to the lessons taught by Christ, even those days of sorrow and ruin were to be days of rejoicing. Their joy was to be centered on the coming of Christ to bring to them assurance of the eternal reward of their faith in Him. May the closing Sunday of the Church year remind us to contemn earthly things that must pass away, and seek the things of God which last forever.

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

Too Bad the UN Doesn't Extend an Invitation to God

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.

Fr. Gillis

Barbara Ward, editor of The Economist of London, said in the course of a lecture in New York that there can be no cure for the evils of the world unless we realize the primacy of the spiritual. That phrase has been made familiar by Jacques Maritain who repeats it incessantly.

But since Maritain is a philosopher and something of a mystic his insistence upon the spiritual as first in the hierarchy of values is not unexpected. But Miss Ward is known to the world and to the audience she was addressing as primarily an expert in finance, statistics and other matters having to do with the material welfare of nations.

In fact she is regarded as a top authority in her line. But we Catholics know her also as a devout member of the Church. So we are not surprised when she places morality above politics, diplomacy, financial security and social welfare as a remedy for the ills that afflict us.

• • •

ON THE SAME day that Miss Ward emphasized the spiritual element as the first requisite in the reconstruction of this badly battered world there appeared also a newspaper report that Father Lombardi, the Italian Jesuit who has spoken at Rome to as many as half a million hearers in one gathering, said in a speech at Chicago that we must "supernaturalize the Marshall Plan" if it is to have the desired effect in Western Europe and in the rest of the world.

I can imagine those "hard-headed realists" at Lake Success (sic!) having a quiet little chuckle over the phrase 'supernaturalize the Marshall Plan.' To their way of thinking you might as well talk of purging politics of corruption, sanctifying diplomacy, applying the Eight Beatitudes to the solution of the world problem, or even considering afflicted peoples as the Mystical Body of Christ.

As for the Soviet element in that assembly, they would not chuckle, they would rant and rave in the best Vishinsky manner and indeed blaspheme if the possibility of breathing a spirit, a soul into an economic problem were mentioned to them.

• • •

RIGHT HERE comes in the principle of the lowest common denominator. The Assembly of the United Nations and perhaps all other political bodies must conduct their deliberations on the plane of thought of the most unspiritual and irreligious of their members.

We see something like that principle at work in the public schools. There may be in a classroom Christian and Jewish children who would willingly hear about God; but if there is one child of agnostic or atheist parents in that room, the teacher must not speak of God.

All that happens in the classroom must be adapted to the religious condition as well as the intellectual power of the least and last of the children.

As in the grade school so in pretentious assemblies of Very Important People. There is no prayer at Lake Success because prayer is considered a superstition by some of the members. There is no mention of God because His very Name would be an insult in their ears.

There can be no emphasis on religion because the atheists consider religion an opiate and a deterrent to progress. So in that assembly which is supposed to have in its keeping the welfare of the world, any such phrase as primacy of the spiritual is taboo, and the suggestion that we "supernaturalize" an economic plan or anything else is rank nonsense.

• • •

SO THAT'S WHY the assembly of the United Nations has two strikes on it, I say rather "three strikes and out" before it comes to bat.

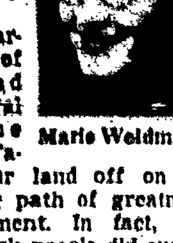
The question remains: can we not form an assembly to which we may invite God and Jesus Christ; an organization in which the moral and spiritual principles of our religion can be utilized in the service of mankind? If we can, then what are we waiting for? If we cannot, then why continue to fool ourselves with the sacrilegious notion that we can recreate the world without the help of the Creator? Why don't we call off the attempt at re-creation and sink back into the original chaos from which the world was made?

Leave out God and you leave out all. Leave out God and confess complete and final defeat. But if we bring in God Who is The Supernatural and with Him the principle of the primacy of the spiritual we can do the job which the U.N. can otherwise never do.

WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

Progress and the Pilgrims No Similarity to Humility

By Marie Weidman


Marie Weidman

The season is now at hand for extolling that stern and rock-bound crowd, that group of Puritans, intrepid and vinegar-visaged, whose penchant for roast fowl we shall shortly celebrate.

With fearsome fixity of purpose and highest moral rectitude, the Founding Fathers set our land off on its ever-widening path of greatness and achievement. In fact, the Plymouth Rock people did everything the best history books and the fifth-grade Thanksgiving play attest they did.

And — brave and noble as they were, they should be shorn of all that hoary humor concerning the rights of their descendants to claim the Mayflower passengers as their source of origin.

• • •

HOWEVER, regardless of the fact that they would have pilloried Bob Hope, the Puritans, with their spirit of daring, grimly set forth the seedlings which were later to bring forth the great oak of rugged individualism.

As the much later generations hacked their way across our wild rich continent, as our wealth amassed and our power grew, we became possessed by an insufferable self-confidence and pride in the individual's apparent ability to do just about anything to which he set his very frequently narrow mind.

While our nation pushed back its frontiers and forthright call-a-spade-a-spade, Americans pushed into every rewarding acre of our vastness, big and bigger business evolved the unhappy theory that any man, with the wits God gave him could achieve any goal he set up for himself.

Hence the terms "land of opportunity" and "free enterprise" became overworked cliches which brought thousands to our shore in search of the gold bricks supposedly lying about the streets principally in the cities of New York and Boston. So, then, America has always been the land of promise and plenty where each man may go the full length of his stride, where each may win in strict accord with his wits. All of which is fine and inspiring, strike up the band, boys, hooray for our purple mountained majesty.

Who, then, with all this whizzing of the wheels of progress, could possibly care that the soft, dove-grey virtue of Humility seems all but extinct?

• • •

TRULY THE decade after decade of self-assertion, self-will, pride in the material and self-indulgence, has made Humility a little-practiced virtue. Well, yes, it may exist in some spiritual Smithsonian of a convent or monastery, but modern man on our allegedly goldbricked streets, does not feel the need of it.

In most modern minds Humility may seem vaguely connected with St. Francis Assisi, poverty and the Medieval, all concepts, which, since they have nothing to do with election, erecting N.Y. buildings or John L. Lewis, are therefore in the same class with the late edition of yesterday's noisy tabloid.

Humility demands a recognition of one's shortcomings, a facing of reality which may be almost more than we, in this year of our Lord, can rightly bear. The humble soul suffers in silence, bears affliction quietly and desires only to be recognized for that which we actually know ourselves to be.

• • •

THIS NATURALLY cannot go over too enthusiastically now since our tendency is so much to overrate, oversell, overstate, overtalk, overact, overdo generally in order to gain a point, a dollar, a promotion.

Truly the clever and the humble bear little connection to each other, they can only be two parallel lines running thru the warp of man's characteristics.

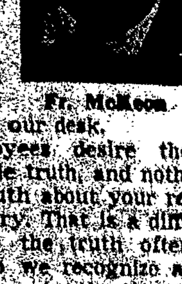
In a land where we have never really known the stinging of acute suffering, the void of physical hunger, the desperation of desertion, pursuit or death, perhaps we cannot be expected to fully realize how much humans need God, or how infinitesimal each of us is on his own. Humility requires practice, meditation; we must have less comfortable self, more hard-working Soul.

TOWARD INDUSTRIAL PEACE

Your Employes Desire— And Deserve—the Truth

By Richard M. McKeon, S. J.

Director, Le Moyne College School of Industrial Relations


Fr. McKeon

Sometime ago we addressed a group of industrial editors. They asked us to develop the subject, "What Do Your Employees Desire?", from the viewpoint of our experience and contact with the employees. In other words they wanted a fair criticism of the various house organs which come to our desk.

Your employees desire the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about your respective industry. That is a difficult job. For the truth often hurts. And so we recognize at times discretion is the better part of editorial valor. But let us point to a case where the whole truth is not printed.

• • •

IN MANY industrial house organs there is often depicted what may be called the economic pie. The pie is divided into parts showing the percent of the dollar income going to labor, materials, depreciation, taxes, profit and so on. The part marked profit may show five to six cents.

This looks very low. But here is our point. **We maintain in a discussion on profits it is evident that "the total profit on the total volume of sales, rather than the rate of profit per sales dollar, is the critical information in discussing the level of profits." No doubt higher management did not care to release these figures.**

We believe your employees do desire more knowledge about the financial state of your industry. This seems like another big order. But progressive firms are doing it.

That is why Fred G. Clark chairman of the American Economic Foundation, has said, "Business executives who do not report company operations to their workers, or who issue reports workers cannot understand, are helping to dig a grave for the American economic system they so loudly praise."

• • •

A RECENT study issued by the Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, advises that "house organs should be edited by personnel-trained journalists who are an integral part of the personnel and industrial relations department."

It also adds that "there is little or no evidence that top management has adopted a policy of 'aggressively sharing information with employees' or of 'earnestly seeking ways and means of including rank-and-file employees in the thinking and planning of the business as a joint enterprise.'"

• • •

INDUSTRIAL EDITORS should avoid paternalism. By this we mean an effort to influence workers in things beyond the economic sphere. The American workingman desires to feel and to exercise desires to feel and to exercise the liberty which is his heritage. He resents being told too much about his affairs.

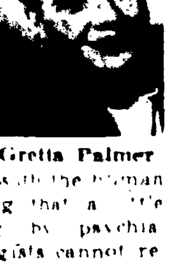
This is very true in the matter of politics and union activity. We have seen anti-union articles in a corporation paper answered in better style and with stronger argument in the union paper.

"What do your employees desire?" At the present moment they crave the truth about the clashing philosophies of life—Communism and Americanism. Too few of our citizens realize the danger of Communism and, sad to say, too few seem to appreciate the blessings of true Americanism.

THE TOP OF MY MIND

A Consoling Doctrine for Normal, Sinful Americans

By Gretta Palmer


Gretta Palmer

How many American children are brought up to a firm belief in original sin? One quarter? One fifth?

Few enough so that it is worth considering what ignorance of this doctrine does to the spirit. Any underprivileged child who is taught to believe that there is nothing really wrong with the human race — nothing that a little skillful tinkering by psychiatrists and sociologists cannot repair.

This child — and remember there are millions of him — gets up every morning in the fond expectation that he will behave himself quite perfectly throughout the day.

Never mind what his conception of perfection may be, nor how wide it is of the theologian's mark: he has his own little code worked out within the recesses of his soul. And nobody has ever let him in on the astonishing secret that, because of his humanity, he is going to break some article of that code before he goes to bed.

The non-Catholic child has probably laid out for himself a broad program involving generosity and obedience, perfection at his school work, kindness to animals and eminence at athletics, which add up for him to the Good Life. And being human, he will not fulfill perfectly a single one of the standards he has set for himself. This will perplex him very much.

NOW, THIS failure if he were a Catholic child and properly instructed would not surprise him in the least. He would be sorry, of course, but he would know that human nature comes into the world with the word 'seconds' stamped upon its face like so many factory products rejected for a flaw. His sins would not astonish him at all.

For the little Catholic child has the most comforting of facts to bear him company: the knowledge that human nature itself is not to be trusted. When he falls, he falls along with a billion other members of the human race. He knows that the trouble he finds in being good is a very widespread trouble, indeed, and that even such an august person as the parish priest admits to imperfections in his own life whenever he recites the Confiteor at Mass. The little Catholic child sins, but he sins in the very best company.

No such companionship in his failure is offered to the child who grows up nowadays, in an "advanced" atmosphere. He is taught that his fallen human nature is a first rate article which will not let him down. When he fails (as he must) to live up to a single tenet of his creed he is shocked and amazed.

IT IS A paradox that the modernists who scoffed the "gloomy" concept of original sin out of education have thereby ushered in the gloomiest period in recorded history. For the denial of original sin does not, of course, alter its effects. It merely makes a legion of frightened children believe that nobody else is bad, that they cannot escape their own badness.

We do not, thank God, see everybody else's sin: we only see our own. And so it is possible for the uninstructed to look on the human race as a morally triumphant crowd of people, all of whom do exactly what they wish to do at every moment of their days.

He does not guess that all these seemingly secure people have let themselves down, all he knows is that he has let himself down. He knows that he is weak. The weakness of the crowd is a carefully guarded secret.

THE DOGMA OF original sin may not seem to the young Catholic to be a very cheering piece of information to possess, but actually, in view of the way he is bound to behave, it is the most consoling truth a man can know.

It saves him from the agony of thinking himself a freak in the moral order. It saves him from seeing his sins as "sickness" which a doctor ought to cure, and from the later shattering discovery (when the doctor has failed) that he is "incurable."

The sense of inferiority to others and of unworthiness of life which is torturing any number of quite normal, sinful Americans today can be traced back to this single error in their education, the fact that they were allowed to grow up in the belief that man is normal and has never suffered the effects of any Fall. For a single false belief, persistently held, can blot the sun from the sky and turn the whole world into a reproachful voice that says, "You, and only you, are a weak and worthless moral invalid."

Courier Journal

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Vol. 21 - No. 46

Friday, Nov. 18, 1949

MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President.

This newspaper is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations and the Catholic Press Association. It subscribes to the full reports of National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service, Religious News Service.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. W. M. Hart, V.G., P.A., Editor-in-Chief; Very Rev. Msgr. John S. Randall, Managing Editor; Rev. Patrick J. Flynn, Editor; Rev. Richard T. Tormey, Associate Editor; Thomas H. O'Connor, News Editor; Harold H. Conner, Advertising Manager; Elmer G. Grapensteter, Circulation Manager; Martin Q. Moll, Public Relations Director.

Published every Friday by the Catholic Courier and Journal, Inc.

MAIN OFFICE 35 Scio — BAker 6210 Rochester 4, N. Y.

AUBURN OFFICE — 126 Genesee St. Ph. 2-4542

ELMIRA OFFICE — 311 Realty Bldg. Ph. 2-5655 or 2-3423

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y., as required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

Single copy 10c. 1 year subscription in U. S., $3.00. Canada $3.50. Foreign Countries, $4.50.