

### Crowd Culture Stunts Youth

St. Louis Youth and Rochester Children's Court... similar decisions in probing the cause of current delinquency.

WHENSO program, Judge Joseph G. Fritsch said... "feeling of not being wanted" is one of the basic reasons for their misbehavior.

St. Louis University dean of education, Father... "lack of... is the result of the 20th century's 'crowd cul-'

...and more tend to "follow the crowd" in making their own right decisions.

...are "afraid to be alone," he said.

Judge Fritsch pointed to breakdown of family life as... the major factors in delinquency.

Children from broken homes are known to seek com-... and attention in neighborhood "gangs." Recent... of homemade weapons in... of several such teenage gangs.

The St. Louis priest stated that youngsters seem to sub-... with little thought as to their... personal responsibility. They "go along" because the... of the crowd has become the law.

Father Maher said parents and teachers have an urgent... to instill a sense of responsibility in youngsters, to... the "crowd culture" concept of conduct.

The Jesuit priest said guidance programs should "chal-... youth by building in them a high quality of decision... to identify the right values so they can know what they... to do.

Montreal's Cardinal Jeger has established a unique parish... the parish church in an aluminum trailer, and the pastor... a cab driver's cap with a cross.

The 15,000 taxi drivers of Montreal, Canada's largest... now constitute a parish of their own.

Montreal Father Aquino drives his parish church day to day... different taxi stand, offering morning Mass and other... services for men who live "on the go." Coffee and... are available after Mass for these parishioners... to stay close to their cabs.

This "taxi parish" is believed to be the first step in... that might be a new plan of parish organization.

Big cities especially have the problem of impersonal... where up to 10,000 people attend Sunday Mass... contact the church during the week. Living in... such as New York's skyscrapers or tenements... constantly changing tenants, people can drift through... without any personal contact with their parish priest.

It was once proposed that "industrial parishes" be or-... with a chaplain-pastor. The obvious conflict of... church services or hearing confession during... hours has definitely deterred any steps towards such a... as a "General Motors parish."

Montreal's taxi parish, however, is proof positive the... Good Shepherd still seeks His sheep wherever He can find... The church adapts itself to the needs of its members... to assure them their rightful share of the eternal truths... abundant grace Christ won for all men.

If Montreal's experiment is a success, we wonder will... New York City make a parish — or a diocese — for the... cab-drivers there.

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# Did 'Father Of Our Country' Embrace Faith On Deathbed?

By DORAN HURLEY

The Father of Our Country had a proven sympathy for the Catholic Church. So much so, that some even claim he died a Catholic. Some of these traditions about our first president — how he cherished a picture of the Blessed Virgin and how a Jesuit priest was called to his deathbed at Mount Vernon — are recalled by Doran Hurley in this article from INFORMATION, publication of the Paulist Fathers.



GEORGE WASHINGTON  
Prayer at Valley Forge

IT SEEMS acknowledged that the famous sculptured bas-relief of General George Washington kneeling in the snow at Valley Forge was based on fancy rather than fact. Historical de-bunkers insist that our first President was neither inwardly nor outwardly religious.

Thomas Jefferson called him a "deist," that is a believer in a personal God but not in Christian revelation. Bishop William White, head of the Episcopal Church in the United States from 1787 to 1832, testified that never to his knowledge had Washington ever taken Holy Communion in any parish he served; although Martha was a steady communicant.

In Philadelphia, the Reverend James Abercrombie took Washington to task, publicly from the pulpit, for setting a bad example by walking out with others when the Communion service began, leaving Martha behind. It was a church that President Washington never again attended.

Yet, on the other hand, Washington openly showed deep interest and sympathies for the Catholic Faith that were most unusual for a man in his position and in his time.

It was as though, through his Catholic friends and associates and the example of their piety, he found a richer, closer experience of God in the Catholic Faith than in the social and aristocratic Anglican church of his native Virginia, with its fox-hunting rectors and general air of easy devotional sociability.

It would almost seem that George Washington in his maturity especially sought out Catholics, scarce as they were, as his closest friends.

George Washington Parke Custis, his adopted son, has written that Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore was "not only an intimate acquaintance with Washington" but that "he stood very high in his esteem and affection."

In Philadelphia, while he resided there, among his intimates were the author and journalist, Matthew Carey, Thomas FitzSimons, one of the framers of the Constitution, and George Meade, a devout man.

His diary records that he attended St. Mary's Church in Philadelphia with his two friends, Meade and FitzSimons on May 27, 1787. Nor would there appear that in this particular instance there was any special reason except a simple wish to attend Mass.

FOR WASHINGTON was no stranger to Catholic services; he had publicly gone to Mass before. And in his day it was not as politic a thing to do as for later Chief Executives, many of whom indeed kept themselves very aloof from any semblance of Catholic sympathies. More than that, he contributed \$50, a goodly sum then, to St. Augustine's Church in Philadelphia and there are instances of his benefactions to other Catholic causes.

And we know that he forbade strictly the celebration of "Pope's Day," with its burning of an effigy of the Supreme Pontiff, while the Continental Army was at Valley Forge.

It was a very unpopular thing to do when starving and frozen and discouraged men were eager for any excitement to take their minds from their troubles.

Some historians have written this stern prohibition away as a mere gesture of good will to his French allies; but the French were not at Valley Forge in sufficient strength for Washington to favor them and possibly alienate his own countrymen.

It would seem more likely that he had come to share the respect for the Holy Father of his two closest associates.

For it is note-worthy that, successively, for the extremely confidential, closely intimate post of aide and private secretary during the most perilous of the war years he chose two Catholics, Colonel Stephen Moylan and Colonel John Fitzgerald, with the deepest confidence in their integrity and attachment to him.

Colonel Moylan was of a deeply religious family. His brother was then Catholic Bishop of Cork, Ireland, and his sister, prioress of a convent there.

With Colonel Fitzgerald, who had been a lifelong neighbor and companion as a Burgess of the town of Alexandria, Vir-

ginia, George Washington, as his diary records, kept up an intimate social and business friendship throughout the years.

It may have been from either Stephen Moylan or John Fitzgerald that Washington adopted the custom, to which Juba, his Negro body servant, has testified, of making the Sign of the Cross before he ate. A simple act but never a casual one for a man like Washington in a day when the symbolism of blessing oneself would be looked upon with hate and horror as dire papistical mummeries.

Yet one may hardly gainsay the word of an honest and humble slave, close and devoted to his master, to whom such an act in the ordinary round would be deeply alien and who would be hesitant about revealing it. For it was, of course, a private act when the general dined alone — or perhaps with Moylan or Fitzgerald.

IT WOULD BE as equally interesting to know who gave George Washington the painting of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady that he placed over the head of his bed and held as one of his most cherished treasures.

He counted it among his personal effects rather than as an article of furnishing or household decoration; for it travelled with him from Mount Vernon and we hear of it in place above his bed in the house he took temporarily in Philadelphia.

Surely it came from one of his close Irish friends; for as early as 1650 at Loughrea Our Lady in her Immaculate Conception was proclaimed patroness of Ireland as later, in 1847, under the same title the Blessed Virgin was made patroness of the United States.

Could Colonel Moylan's, brother the Bishop or his sister, the Lady Prioress, have sent it to him and he in turn given it to his friend, who perhaps had admired it; and whom he knew had a deep inner reverence for the Mother of God?

What so far has been written has historical attestation; but there was also long current in the Maryland countryside near

Mount Vernon a strange and interesting tradition about the last dying hours of George Washington.

Elder Jesuits in the Maryland Province handed down a story that Father Leonard Neale was called to Mount Vernon from St. Mary's Mission across the Pocomoke River, four hours before Washington's death and that he spent the last four hours at his bedside.

The supposition in the story was that Washington died a Catholic and that Father Neale gave him the last rites of the Church.

In recent years such stories have circulated, of wishful pious Catholic thinking, about the last hours of King George V and King Edward VII; and even, more oddly, about Queen Victoria, with much less cause certainly than in the instance of her son Edward. But the story about Washington is more unusual even though it has no basis in known fact.

It would at once be objected that a zealous priest would have placed upon record his account of such a distinguished conversion, if conversion it was.

It should be remembered, however, with all making it a matter of special pleading, that at the time of Washington's death — the Society of Jesus had been suppressed for twenty-six years.

Little groups of former Jesuits, as in Maryland, continued their work as devoted priests but there was no central authority to which they could refer their special problems.

If Bishop John Carroll, himself a former Jesuit, were consulted it may well have been of momentous concern to him whether in a frail new nation of many latent bigotries it would be the better part of wisdom to reveal a deathbed conversion of a great national hero and idol.

An injudicious announcement might have caused an uproar of blind prejudice that would not only have threatened the

safety of the Church but even the very stability of the country.

TRADITION DOES have it that shortly after Washington's death Father Neale did send a heavily sealed packet to Rome, the supposition being that it was his account of the hours he passed at Mount Vernon on the December night of 1799; and presumably asking for advice and counsel.

Whether it was sent directly to the Vatican or to some former superior of the Society of Jesus is not said.

It to the former it is possible, if not probable, that Father Neale's letter might still turn up in the Vatican archives; if to the latter it would unquestionably be lost in the exigencies of the Jesuits' hidden years.

Martha Washington would have her own social reasons for keeping silence as would Tobias Lear, Washington's secretary, at her distressed instance.

Yet it is odd and may be significant that Lear does report that Washington oddly insisted to him that his body not be placed in the vault "until three days after I am dead," a request more Catholic than Protestant.

And the contents have never been known of the one of two wills, or last testaments, that Martha said her husband told her to burn.

It is odd also that it was long reported that the Negro slaves at Mount Vernon and on the neighboring plantations held to the same tradition as the Jesuits that Washington died a Catholic.

It is accepted that plantation slaves many times had deeper and more unerring knowledge of things below the known surface than their less spiritually-minded masters.

It is to be presumed also that the boat allegedly sent across the Pocomoke for Father Neale was manned by Negro oarsmen; and men often talked freely when slaves were by, confidently ignoring their presence. But slaves also talked freely to their fellows. The most intimate secret happening on one plantation were quickly known on another.

And it should be emphasized that these were not Catholic Negroes; for it is part of the tradition that there was weeping and wailing in the quarters that Massa Washington had been snared by the Scarlet Woman of Rome of whom they had been taught fear and hatred.

The two linking traditions were debated seriously in Catholic historical reviews at the turn of this century.

The verdict at that time among historiographers was the old Scots verdict, "Not Proven" — that is, impossible of proof one way or another without documentation of some kind. And so the matter rests.

It is not important to us as Catholics whether or not George Washington died in the body of the Church.

We may, however, feel a certain religious pride of patriotism that in the moral integrity of his life and in his known sympathy toward the Catholic Faith he died in the soul of the Church.

And since we know he especially honored her, surely Our Blessed Mother, patroness in her Immaculate Conception of these United States that he so greatly helped establish, has been as pleased to honor the Father of Our Country.

### Time's Up

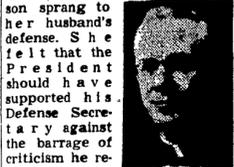
A student telephone operator got her first call from a coin-box customer. Though nervous over being on her own for the first time, she made the connection perfectly.

But when it came time to notify the caller, "Four-three minutes are up; signal when through, please," she froze up, unable to recall the formula. She finally found her voice with a desperate, dithering croak: "Sir, your time has come."

## FATHER SHEERIN 'You Reach A Point'

Wife's Defense For Defense Secretary

When Defense Secretary "Charlie" Wilson abused the National Guard recently, President Eisenhower termed his remarks "unwise." Whereupon Mrs. Wilson sprang to her husband's defense. She felt that the President should have supported his Defense Secretary against the barrage of criticism he received.



"I've stood back and listened to criticism until I'm tired of it," Mrs. Wilson said. "I've been very careful not to make any criticisms of any kind. But you reach a point sometimes — and this was it."

Apparently, the President was not disturbed. He flew South with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson shortly after the incident.

I CONFESS that I sympathize with Mrs. Wilson. She was probably fed up with the sham of Washington bureaucracy. In a New York Times column about Cabinet wives: "The pity is that they don't speak up more often." Certainly it was a relief to read a news item about a wife defending her husband. Usually the papers tell about a wife defaming her husband in a divorce suit.

Some congressmen claimed this outburst was "lese majeste" an insult to our President, a peril to our international policy. Have they lost their sense of proportion and their sense of humor as well? If this were Saudi Arabia and each Cabinet officer had 50 wives, the prospect of so much female fury would be frightening. But this was just one little woman expressing her loyalty to her spouse.

Perhaps her husband was somewhat too picturesque in his language. Perhaps Mrs. Wilson violated the amenities of official Washington. Yet her indignation

protest was like a breath of fresh air in the murky atmosphere of official circles where people are accustomed to talking with tongue in cheek.

In running a government a certain amount of double-talk, subterfuge and gobbledegook is inevitable. Not always can you tell everybody what you are doing. Even Woodrow Wilson didn't entirely accept his doctrine of "open covenants openly arrived at."

When bargains have to be made and compromises arranged, you can't wait till the last hillbilly in Mazzula County has given his approval. There are some people who think that simple honesty will solve all the problems in Washington. These problems are too complex for that. The men in government have to be shrewd in their negotiations.

THERE IS a danger however that the tactful, clever diplomat or congressman will develop a casual attitude to truth. If he continually plays with the facts his conscience gets rusty. Not only is there danger for his own soul's sake but there is real danger for the country. If the official loses a clear sense of what is true and what is untrue, then he can lead the nation down the road of trouble.

Perhaps, as President Eisenhower said, "Charlie" Wilson's remarks about the National Guard were "unwise." Perhaps Mrs. Wilson's defense of her husband was a violation of official proprieties. Yet it is good to know that there are people in Washington who will speak boldly and bluntly what is on their minds.

Besides, our funny bone is touched when we see a woman standing up to the Commander-in-Chief of the mightiest nation in the world and telling what she honestly thinks. As the Book of Proverbs says: "Who shall find a valiant woman? Far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her."

## Joseph Breig

### 'All Doors Are Open'

"In this country, everything is possible because of freedom."

The magnificent statement was made by a Ukranian immigrant, Makar Chlestik.

Seven years ago, he was a slave laborer under Hitler. Today, he is a successful businessman in Portland, Ore.

International News Service asked Chlestik whether he could offer some encouraging advice to Hungarian refugees settling in the U.S. (Or in Canada, for that matter.) He replied:

"In this country, everything is possible because of freedom."

I would like to see his words flung by searchlights into the skies above our Atlantic and Pacific shores. In one unconscious eloquent sentence, they condense something that makes the New World a beacon for all mankind.

NOT LONG before reading the Chlestik interview, I had heard about a Hungarian freedom fighter's first impressions of America.

In Hungary, he had worked in an auto-body repair shop. He thought that in the U.S. he would need a new trade. Why? Because he supposed that those wealthy Americans never repaired their autos if a fender was smashed in an accident, the owner simply threw the machine away and bought a new one.

The Hungarian was amazed to see dozens of auto-body shops in the city where he settled. But he was downright dumbfounded by what he discovered when he took a job in one.

His voice stricken with awe, he gave his mother the astounding tidings that Americans are hard workers. Indeed, in Hungary, under communist pressure, he had scarcely worked harder than Americans do simply because they choose to.

Which brings us back to Chlestik. "If the Hungarian refugees will work hard, use their heads and save, they can get ahead," he told a reporter. "Many former displaced persons own their own stores and other businesses now, and the Hungarians can do the same."

Chlestik himself is living evidence. After his liberation from Nazi slave labor, he came to America penniless. Today,

he owns his own home and an auto, and has bought a roofing firm.

Another former slave laborer, Vasily Fremont (born Vasily Eftremoff in White Russia) confirmed Chlestik's statements.

Whether a person gets ahead or not in America, said Fremont, depends upon the person, not the nationality. He added:

"My advice would be to work hard, learn English and use one's head. Then, after a year or two, a person can look around and decide what he wants to do on a longer-term basis."

Fremont, like Chlestik, was unconsciously eloquent. Consider the simple splendor of his next statement to the reporter:

"The doors are open all around you in America here. In America any person can make it, if he is willing."

"The doors are open all around you in America." Not that Americans or Canadians never suffer reverses; not that they do not have heartaches setbacks and discouragements. But "the doors are open all around you." That is why people in the New World are happy even when things go wrong. That is why nobody runs away from the New World, as millions flee from the communist world.

In the communist world, all doors are closed — and people batter them down to get out. In the New World, all doors are open — and people flow in, in great streams, never to depart.

## Daily Mass Calendar

- Sunday, February 24 — Sexagesima Sunday (purple), Creed, Trinity Preface.
- Monday, February 25 — St. Matthias, apostle (red), Gloria, Creed, Preface of Apostles.
- Tuesday, February 26 — Mass as Sunday except no Creed, Common Preface; VR.
- Wednesday, February 27 — St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, confessor (white) Gloria.
- Thursday, February 28 — Mass as Tuesday; VR.
- First Friday, March 1 — Mass as Tuesday; Votive Mass in honor of our Lord's Sacred Heart permitted; VR.
- First Saturday, March 2 — Saturday Mass of our Lady, Gloria, 2nd prayer for the Pope, Preface of the Blessed Virgin.

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