

Mistakes At Weddings

June is the traditional month of brides so that makes May the best time to say a few words about weddings.

It is an undeniable fact that wedding arrangements too often get out of hand and end in altercations between bride party and parish pastor.

Catholics should bear in mind that marriage is a sacrament and must be treated with all the reverence due this sacred rite.

When the church is likely to become little else than a picturesque setting for a gala social event, then obviously a pastor must defend the dignity of the house of God.

Here are some of the common mistakes which can mar the solemn sacred tone of a Catholic wedding ceremony.

Dresses — This is usually where the first fatal step is taken. The bride-to-be and her bridesmaids get together and after much consultation and discussion come up with a creation that would be banned at most high school proms. It is a good idea to remember that the wedding will take place in a sanctuary and not a gymnasium.

Hats — Yes! All the pretty maids will have the latest hairstyles but that still is no reason for the girls to be hatless in church. Let them display their coifs at the reception.

Flowers — "We'll have just a few flowers, Father, really quite simple," is the repeated statement to the pastor during the preliminary instruction sessions, but comes the morning of the wedding and an altar boy needs a machete to hew a path to the altar. The best artists agree beauty is found in simplicity, seldom in a jungle.

Pictures — Professional photographers ordinarily have the common sense and courtesy to know when and where to take pictures and usually check with the priest for any local ground rules, but it's Uncle Fred or cousin Frank who leave everybody blinking and distracted from flashing bulbs at moments meant for prayer. The uncle and cousin also usually leave their flash bulbs under pews and in aisles so people can scrunch them into bits to make added work for a sexton's Saturday afternoon.

Music — It is safe to say that all music in church is not necessarily church music, and weddings make it so. After guest soloists perform at some weddings, a pastor with any ear for respectable music is tempted to lock the choir loft forever. Selections range from the tawdry to the sentimental.

One of these days somebody is sure to ask for "Padre" at the Pater noster.

How inappropriate can you get seems to be the goal of some wedding music programs.

Vestments — An odd item to include here? There have been instances where a particular color was requested because it would blend better with the bridesmaids' dresses. Could you imagine a priest in a tangerine chasuble?

THERE ARE OTHER TOPICS any pastor could add to this list which need to be settled seriously, including the behavior problem of people who ignore our Lord in the tabernacle and spend their time in idle chit-chat before the wedding rite begins.

St. Paul called marriage a "great sacrament." And everything from hats to carmenas, from dresses to flowers must serve to emphasize that two young Christians who are very much in love are also very much in love with God who will bless their wedding day and sustain them by His grace in the days to come.

That is why the parish priest has to take a stern stand sometimes when he sees that a couple has forgotten where true marriage joy is to be found—in a truly sacred wedding rite.

Rocks Were Red

The rocks hurled at Vice President Richard M. Nixon on his turbulent tour of South American capitals are graphic evidence that the Kremlin has its agents strategically placed around the globe.

The supposedly sleepy republics south of the border erupted in a pattern of frightening consistency to meet the good will emissary with insults, jeers, and jagged rocks.

Communists have obviously been long at work infiltrating key positions throughout Latin America—especially the intellectual centers where future leaders are now in training. If the Reds can warp young minds today, they reason, then they will have willing agents to do their bidding in years to come.

EVEN MORE DISTURBING than the campus riots in Quito or Caracas is the revelation in this week's installment of J. Edgar Hoover's book "Masters of Deceit" that the Communists are penetrating United States universities also. Students and liberal thinking professors in increasing numbers gulp down the Communist propaganda pills. Read the FBI director's article printed on page five of this issue of your Courier Journal. This week's headlines in your daily newspapers indicate that Mr. Hoover is writing fact, not fiction.

While all this intrigue and infiltration goes on in the western hemisphere, the Moscow leaders are penetrating even into the Church's sanctuary in China. There they have placed their agents as "bishops" over two Chinese Catholic dioceses. "Masters of Deceit" is truly a terrifying but accurate description of the Communist agents who scheme to destroy the world's freedom.

If we retaliate against the people of Latin America—or against Algeria and Lebanon where anti-U.S. riots also took place this week—then we play into the Red net and expose ourselves as proud and powerful, an ideal target for propaganda in the poor countries of the world.

If, however, we seize this opportunity to expose the Communist plot for what it is—a world wide threat against the bulwark of freedom, then Mr. Nixon's trip was far from being in vain.

The Vice President's trip will be profitable for the world if it awakens us to the need to bolster our defenses. In addition to our military arsenal we can well imitate the action of Hong Kong's Bishop Lawrence Bianchi who has called all loyal Catholics to make this Sunday, May 18, a day of reparation for the crimes Communists have committed against the Church and the God-given rights of men.

As Americans we are now very definitely on the spot. The world awaits our reaction to this latest Communist inspired insult to our country's dignity and honor.

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JOSEPH
BREIG

Angel in
Moscow



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Columnist Bob Considine, not long ago, told the story of Mrs. Marie Aubuchon, who is praying for Nikita Khrushchev. Mrs. Aubuchon is on the staff of the magazine Hospital Progress, published in St. Louis. Each day, she includes in her prayers a petition to Khrushchev's Guardian Angel.

She hopes that the celestial spirit will find some way of enlightening the mind and softening the spirit of the Soviet Communist boss.

Faithful that Mrs. Aubuchon is not squeamish. She says she won't object if the angel finds it necessary to use strong-arm tactics.

Who is she, she inquires with all reasonableness, to quibble about an angel's method of operation?

Christ was emphatic about a lot of things. But never did he hear down harder than when talking about the power of prayer. At times, he seemed almost exasperated over the slowness of His followers to understand.

Bluntly, he told them that if their faith were as much as a grain of mustard, they could say to a mountain, move, and move it would.

ONE OF THE last things he said to them was that if they asked the Father in Heaven for anything in His name, the Father would grant it.

Christ did not stop with words. He healed the centurion's servant because the centurion had the faith to ask Him to do so. He gave sight to the blind man because the man sat shouting for help at the side of the road, and would not shut his mouth.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole," said Christ twice after time to those for whom he worked miracles. And yet the faith of many remained disgracefully weak.

THE PROPHETS who preceded Christ had much the same experience with people. The Jews were as wont to doubt and to stray as... well, as you and I.

Admittedly, Nikita Khrushchev is a tough case. He is ill-fitted and bullheaded. He had the brutal bad manners to go into Hungary and lecture the people his tanks had crushed.

But the Pharaoh of Egypt was a tough baby, too.

Moses, by the power of God, proved his mastery of the pagan priests, who seemed to have evil spirits at their beck. Still, the pharaoh stood his tyrannical ground.

"LET MY PEOPLE GO," said God to the pharaoh through Moses. But the pharaoh hardened his heart and said no.

He refused to yield until an angel had slain all the first-born sons of the Egyptians. Then he told Moses and the Israelites to begone.

But his pride reassured itself afterward. He sent his troops afterword to the Jews, with the result that the Red Sea, which opened for Moses, closed and swallowed Egypt's army.

If Khrushchev is a sincere man, he can be converted. He can hardly be any blinder than was Saul, who was changed in to St. Paul.

Nobody has ever suggested that Stalin cared about anybody. But Khrushchev is reported to have been smashed when his son was killed in World War II.

OF COURSE, there are such things as crocodile tears, but maybe we can give Nikita the benefit of the doubt.

In any case, both history and theology tell us that Mrs. Aubuchon is not being naive. Prayer, really, can work miracles. It can change rascals into saints, and if necessary it can rip things wide open.

Come to think of it, what did the Virgin Mary prescribe for the conversion of Russia when she appeared at Fatima in Portugal? Honest prayer—but of honest hearts.

Mrs. Aubuchon, after all, is a hardheaded realist. More power-of prayer-to her.

'Religion In Free Society'

Catholics Face Critics In Debate On Church

By ROBERT G. HOYT
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

New York — (NC) — This is the judgment of one semi-detached observer at the seminar on "Religion and the Free Society," conducted here under the auspices of the Fund for the Republic.

The seminar, held in the World Affairs Center opposite the United Nations buildings, brought together some 100 representatives of Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and secularist viewpoints to discuss the delicate issues on which their differing ultimate commitments cause conflict.

Though the gathering lasted four days, the participants kept discussion going constantly — at meal times, during coffee breaks, and late into the night.

IT WAS A success in that:

• It afforded an opportunity for statements of potentially major significance on the meaning of the First Amendment, the status of parochial schools, the rights and wrongs of censorship, the relationship between religion and secular culture.

• It brought about a direct encounter between Catholic spokesmen and long-time critics of the Church — such as Dr. John A. Mackay of Princeton Theological Seminary and Prof. James Luther Adams, of Harvard Divinity School. The critics had a chance to voice their "concern" over the possible future impact of Catholicism on American Democracy.

These criticisms gave Catholics a double opportunity. They were able both to voice resentment at what they considered the injustice of being "placed on trial" and to try to allay the fears and suspicions of non-Catholics.

Concentration on "The Catholic Issue" was made inevitable by the fact that two principal addresses — neither delivered by a Catholic — presented arguments justifying the granting of tax funds to parochial and private schools.

PROF. WILBER G. Katz of the University of Chicago law school moved to the conclusion that non-profit private and parochial schools deserve tax support through an analysis of the First Amendment's provision that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The emphasis in interpreting this clause, he said, should be on its second section. He argued that the purpose of the clause is not to separate Church and State for the sake of separation, but rather to promote the exercise of religious liberty.

"Separation ordinarily promotes religious liberty; it is defensible so long as it does so, and only so long," the Chicago professor asserted.

Recalling the U.S. Supreme Court decision that "parents are unconstitutionally deprived of liberty by a statute which attempts to outlaw private

Catholic justifications on the Supreme Court who seem to share many of my views on the separation of church and state, while I can think of a good many Protestant legislators who apparently do not. We should recall also that it was not a Catholic president, Harry S. Truman, a Baptist, who proposed to send an ambassador to the Vatican.

"In my opinion, Catholics have every bit as much at stake in the separation of church and state as anyone else. I find it hard to believe that any Catholic could rise in American politics to the place where he could be a serious contender for the presidency without having realized that.

As a matter of fact, Catholics first committed the separation of church and state in the new world when Lord Baltimore voluntarily established religious freedom in his personal colony. I would expect a



Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders this past week debated the role of religion in American life. There was a sharp difference of opinion on tax aid to Catholic schools and current Catholic "pressure" to censor movies and magazines. Picture shows Capitol dome, symbol of democratic U.S. where men are free to disagree.

schools." Professor Katz said he could find no constitutional grounds for asserting that parents must pay a price—through denial of tax aid to private schools—for exercising their liberty of choice.

DR. WILL Herberg, professor of Jewish studies at Drew University, reached a similar conclusion from a comparison of the Anglo-American philosophy of public education with the Continental tradition.

In Europe, he said, the concept of the "teaching state" led naturally to the establishment of a semi-monopolistic state school system. In England and America, governments accepted responsibility for education only to meet the needs of a growing population — needs which could no longer be adequately served by private agencies.

But the American Government "has not pre-empted the field, and was never intended to pre-empt it. On the contrary, the parents for whatever agency they choose to represent them) retain their original prior right."

Both the history of the parallel American school systems and the Constitutional rulings by the courts, Dr. Herberg said, demonstrate that the religious

school is not "an illegitimate rival of the public school," but rather an "essentially public institution," and hence deserving of public support.

THE TEMPERATURE, it was noted, of discussion rose rapidly about midway through a paper presented by Dr. James Hastings Nichols of the University of Chicago. Dr. Nichols included a strong attack on parochial schools in his address. These were among the terms used:

Catholic education is "censored education," a means of "intellectual segregation," fundamentally "irresponsible" to public control and "cripples" its graduates for participation in community life; its expansion constitutes a "threat to the free society." It represents a basically "authoritarian" tradition.

Dr. Nichols drew "an unsurprising second vote from Paul Blanshard, special counsel of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, who participants, against which Dr. Nichols — not a vigorous debater — presented little defense.

William Lee Miller of Princeton suggested that the argument assumed "a Protestant right to set up 'an absolute to which the Roman Catholic community must conform, or by which it should be tested.' Such a test, he said, had no validity.

Msgr. George Higgins, director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, after welcoming the open statement of charges believed by many Protestants, asked Dr. Nichols how much he had studied the parochial schools. Dr. Nichols said he had little acquaintance with them.

Dr. Mackay rose to express concern over "what would happen if the 'classical' Roman Catholic view of religious freedom" were to prevail in society. This view, he said, "would seem to assume or produce the supremacy of the Church over the State."

Responding Father Raymond Bosler of Indianapolis, editor of the Indiana Catholic and Record, said that no "single, solid position" on Church-State relations had been developed. He pointed out the effect of the Church's presence in many different cultures on the development of theory in the field.

This exchange led to the holding of a special "rump session" — not under Fund auspices — for the consideration of the allegations against Catholicism. The meeting, which drew about 40 persons, was lively, undisciplined, and inconclusive, but many participants said it had "cleared the air."

DR. STRINGFELLOW Barr of Rutgers University discussed the problems of censorship. He suggested that agreement might be found possible among differing viewpoints on the question if state censorship should be directed solely to the protection of minors.

The Legion of Decency and the National Office for Decent Literature were attacked and defended on standard lines in the subsequent discussion. The right of "pressure groups" to operate within a democratic society was widely acknowledged, however.

The final day of the conference brought three impressive and memorable statements on the general theme, "Religion and the Free Society." Two speakers, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., developed a similar theme: That religion is not at the service of society, that it must rather judge society, call it to austerity, teach it reverence, make it God-conscious.

SAID RABBI Heschel: "Little does religion ask of contemporary man. It is ready to offer comfort; it has no courage to challenge; it is ready to offer edification; it has no courage to break the idols, to shatter the callousness; its acceptance involves neither risk nor strain. Religion has achieved respectability by the grace of society."

Father Weigel warned against the temptation of religion to forget its prophetic function and "make a deal" with secular society by accepting its goals and becoming involved in its programs.

"The churches are being asked for unswerving loyalty, enthusiastic allegiance. Yet the Church can give such allegiance only conditionally, never absolutely; she must seek first the Kingdom of God and its justice."

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Standing Room Only

By MSGR. IRVING A. DEBLANE
(Director, N. C. Family Bureau)

North America with nine per cent of the world population enjoys 45.6 per cent of the world's revenue.

Asia with 53 per cent of the population has only 10.5 per cent of the world's revenue.

This is a matter of life and death.

It is generally taught that we need 2,500 calories a day for a normal, healthy existence. The people of Vietnam have only 1,550. The New Zealanders only 3,250 a day.

Of the estimated 60,000,000 people who die annually, it is believed that 30 or 40 million die of malnutrition. This is about the number of victims associated with the second World War.

With possibly two-thirds of the world undernourished and the percentage growing instead of diminishing, something drastic will soon have to be done, for the poor nations get poorer and the rich ones get richer. The number of people in the world with less than 2,200 calories jumped from 49 per cent to 60 per cent during the period before the last World War to the present time. It is hard to imagine that America and the well-to-do nations can remain a peaceful island of prosperity in a sea of poverty.

In another four years the world population may grow another 15,000,000, which would be equivalent to placing population-wise another United States into the world. Some nations have completely doubled their population in 23 years.

The whole world population will possibly double in 42 years. Many statisticians fear that there will be "standing room only." They say that this is mathematically possible in the foreseeable future.

But many have failed to realize that though the death rate is getting lower, it will soon rise again. Once the population reaches maturity, that is, once the average life expectancy has attained the peak of 70 or 80 years, the death rate will have more of a balance with the birth rate.

Population growth will then take a down swing. The race will be between population and economics. Economics must outdistance population. A parity must be established. By no means does that exist today.

To allow a minimum diet for the people of the world, the world will have to increase its cereal production by 50 per cent, its meat output by 70 per cent, its milk by 78 per cent, and its fish by 90 per cent.

But how large the world's level of living? In the United States we have a generous ratio of economics and population. The population has been going up about 1.5 per cent, the economic increase by three per cent. But in Latin America, the population goes up three per cent and the economic increase about 1.5 per cent.

THE PROBLEM is a real one. We cannot ignore it. The solutions, however, as proposed by some are completely untenable to a Christian people.

William Vogt, for instance, an American economist, sees only one answer: birth control. He goes so far as to say that the U.S.A. should refuse all economic aid to any country which does not officially promote birth control.

True solutions will require the use of large amounts of money. But the United States and Europe found money for war, for national defense. Population problems are also important. We must again find money to feed a hungry people. We must develop a greater sense of human solidarity.

We must remind ourselves frequently that there is a moral obligation for the rich to aid the destitute. Theologians agree that the destitute of the world have a right to participate in the surplus goods of the world.

It would be criminal hypocrisy for us while opposing "birth control" to refuse to be generous, to sacrifice, to demand international justice and charity.