

Where Do We Find Truth?

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL

Jesuit Father Edwin Haungs, in Rochester this past weekend for a retreat at the Cenacle Convent, showed me the current issue of the American Mercury magazine, given him by a friend puzzled at its contents. This once "avant garde" monthly is now a thoroughly reactionary, anti-Communist publication. Its editor, a sincere, dedicated fellow correctly views the Red menace as the most serious threat to world peace and freedom. But this month at least he is so carried away by his anti-Communist fervor that he publishes one article that is anti-Semitic, another that is anti-Castro, even one that sees Communists behind both Protestant and Catholic revisions of translations of the Bible. The magazine also suspects the United Nations (especially its UNESCO agency) is Red infiltrated and climaxes its despair by predicting the world is soon to end because it got dark in Washington last Good Friday at 3 p.m. To blame the Jews for current problems is an old habit—developed to its most brutal degree by Hitler—as portrayed in the movie Diary of Anne Frank—and a handy way for any tyrant to blame others for his own inability to solve these problems. An N.C.W.C. news analysis report on Castro's regime in Cuba (on page 5 of this week's Courier Journal) indicates the land reform program there is in line with papal teachings on social justice rather than a step to Communism. Catholics can well look to Pope John for the Church's attitude on the United Nations. Prior to his election to the papacy, while he served as apostolic delegate to Paris, the Holy Father was the Vatican's official representative to UNESCO, to which the Vatican still contributes annually and names top prelates to attend the agency's meetings. Surely even the Communists must laugh to think they are held responsible for modernizing translations of the Bible—work which Pope Pius XII said he hoped would "everywhere more and more increase for the good of souls." These and a thousand other facts—some straight, some slanted—flood across an editor's desk each week, and as Father Haungs asked—in words reminiscent of a question-posed centuries ago, "How do you know what is the truth?" And that is a problem which faces everyone who wants to evaluate these our times intelligently. Religious truth, of course, can be found, Catholics believe, in the divinely taught doctrine of the Church, but what of all the other aspects of life where truth is vital to our individual and corporate well-being? . . . why is divorce so prevalent and so accepted despite its obvious Biblical ban and ensuing emotional and social hazards? . . . where does truth lie in the steel strike? . . . in the teamsters' troubles? . . . which is the way of wisdom in dealing with the Kremlin—trust and friendship, or isolate the Reds and gird for the inevitable war? . . . These and a myriad of other questions clamor for a truthful answer. In the welter of words all we can do is read and think and pray. Read those we hope we can trust, even read some of those we don't trust, try to use the common sense God has given us, pray for His gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel. . . and then with courage and fortitude speak in defense of the right as we see it. Others will disagree with us. Through this conflict of ideas and in the battle of words we can have confidence that truth will ultimately be found—and, as our Lord Himself promised, this "truth will make you free."

Latin America Smog of Religious Ignorance

(This is the third in a series of six articles on problems of the Church in Latin America, written by the editor of Noticias Catolicas, Spanish and Portuguese edition of the N.C.W.C. News Service.)

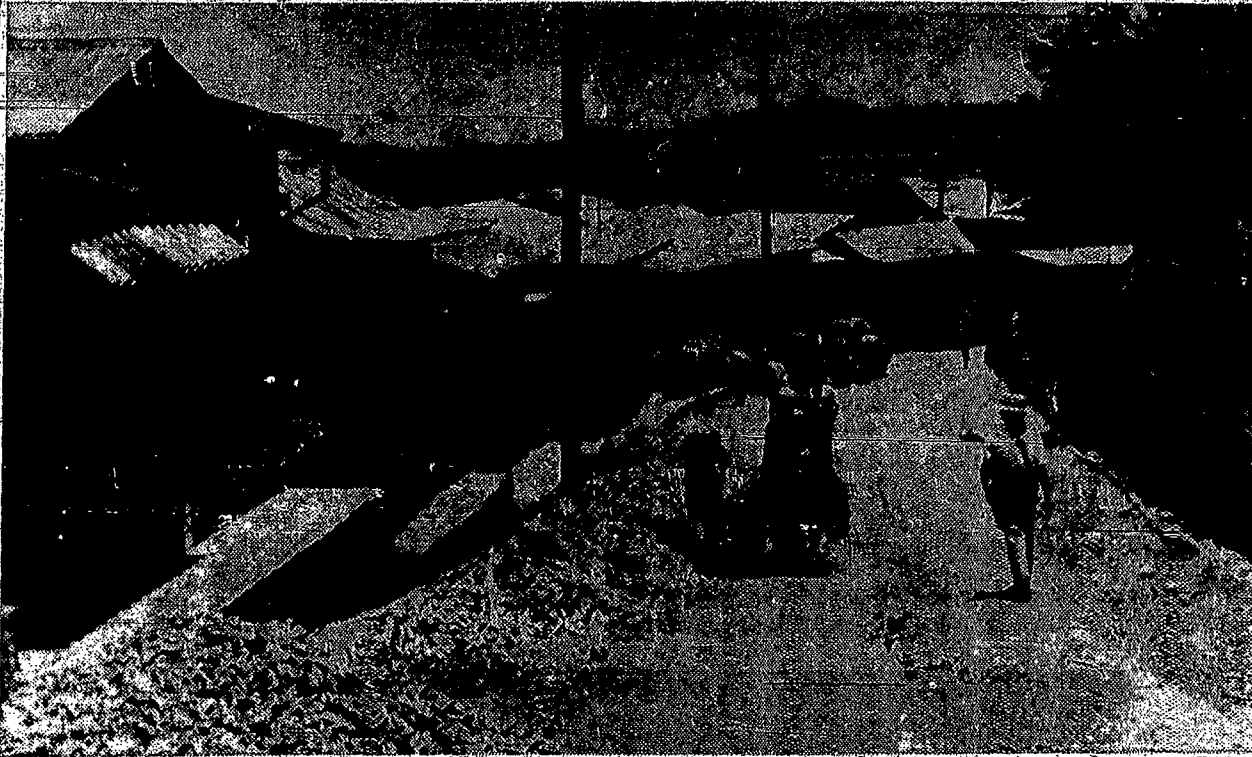
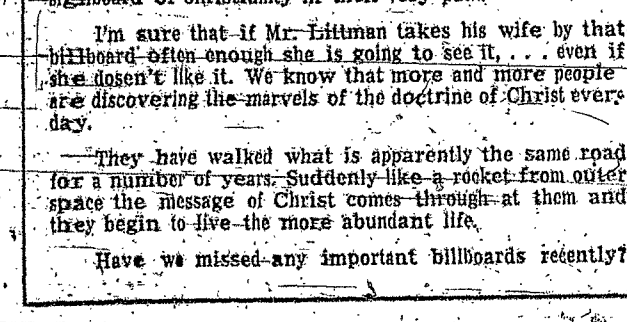
By JAIME FONSECA (N.C.W.C. News Service)

Religious ignorance is the major cause of the alarming spiritual crisis in Latin America today, but the languid spiritual life of the people is actually rooted in 150 years of rabid secularism. The crisis has left many flanks vulnerable to the onslaughts of communism and Protestant missionaries. An added hampering factor is that many modern Latin American states have tried to use the ancient Spanish system of royal patronage, under which the state presents the names of candidates for a vacant bishopric, and sometimes interferes with the administration of the sacraments and the teaching of Catholic doctrine. These conditions—along with social and economic evils, are responsible for the scarcity of priests. It is not surprising then that about 90 per cent of Latin America's Catholics do not know the fundamentals of their religion. They have a traditional sort of religiosity, consisting of a general idea of God and some popular saints. But the true concept of the Church—as a living institution of salvation—is not recognized by most of the people. Many regard some sacraments, such as marriage, as merely a prelude to social festivities. This religious ignorance prevails not only among the illiterate, but also among the educated, who are largely ignorant of the lack of proper religious education. Of the 20.5 million youngsters receiving some sort of schooling, only 2.5 million receive regular religious instruction in Catholic institutions. Perhaps about five million are given occasional instruction during Sunday schools or in catechism centers. Most of the government systems of education are highly secularized, and militant agnostics teach the masses and waste for them. In some regions of Latin America only six per cent or less of the men go to church and receive the sacraments, and only 10 or 12 of every 100 women. In other areas about 14 per cent of the people fulfill their Easter duties, more than half die without having received the last rites, and concubinage and abortion are common. Although nearly 95 per cent of Latin Americans are baptized Catholics, only about one-third have made their first Communions. Catholic education and the Catholic press, which could in some degree make up for the shortage of priests, have not achieved their objective. There are nearly 15,000 Catholic educational institutions, but no strong parochial school system. Catholic education has mainly served the higher classes—and with dubious results—though some middle income groups have benefited from it. But the masses of the people have not been reached, except for some missionary educational efforts in remote areas. This happened because the primary levels of education in all countries was monopolized by the state. Most Catholics were financially unable to support a complete school system of their own and only the rich could afford a private education. Furthermore, there were many who believed that in a country with a majority of Catholics the state should provide for religious instruction in public schools, while safeguarding the rights of non-Catholic denominations. This objective has been achieved in Costa Rica. In other nations, such as Guatemala, although such a system is legally possible, not enough competent catechists

SERMONETTE

How Much Do We Really See? By REV. JAMES MARIARTY

It happened in Houston. Unlike many of his forgetful brothers of the marriage fraternity Earl Littman, an executive of an advertising firm, not only remembered his wedding anniversary but he had a tremendous idea. A huddle with the experts in the billboard at an intersection near his home where his wife just could not help seeing it. "Happy Tent to Natalie from Earl," the sign read in huge letters. Then he maneuvered her out of the house for a walk right down the street and past the tremendous sign in gay colors. He waited, and waited. Nothing happened. She didn't even see the sign. Mr. Littman still thinks it was a good idea. And we agree with him 100%. But there are a lot of good ideas which are overlooked simply because we are too busy with our own preoccupations. Or we're just not interested. Jesus Christ came with his way of life almost 2000 years ago. Others had tried to explain to man the "why" of his existence. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and a number of top eschelon thinkers made their contributions. But they didn't have the goods. Only Christ had the durable doctrine, . . . the one that would stand the test. Yet a great number of peoples and individuals have walked down the ages of mankind and failed to see the signboard of Christianity in their very path. I'm sure that if Mr. Littman takes his wife by that billboard often enough she is going to see it. . . . even if she doesn't like it. We know that more and more people are discovering the marvels of the doctrine of Christ every day. They have walked what is apparently the same road for a number of years. Suddenly like a rocket from outer space the message of Christ comes through at them and they begin to live—the more abundant life. Have we missed any important billboards recently?



Poverty in faith stalks Latin Americans.

Latin America

Smog of Religious Ignorance

sons to hundreds of thousands of people. Although such countries as Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica have low illiteracy percentages, 50 per cent of Latin Americans never have attended school. . . . Reactions for this are the uneven distribution of population, the lack of communications, the indifference of class-conscious regimes, the variety of dialects spoken by primitive groups, and the large increase in population, up 42 per cent in the past 15 years. Another reason is the thousands of poor families whose offspring are needed at home to increase the family's meager income. Religious ignorance, along with poverty, have left Latin Americans open to radical-type Protestant proselytism, and to spiritism. The Latin American Bishops Council has warned that Protestant propaganda works on the religious ignorance and poverty of the masses by concentrating on extensive preaching and large scale material assistance. The preaching of Protestant sects often fills the spiritual vacuum of uneducated Catholics who long for a Christian community spirit.

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Advice To Love,orn, Wasted Wind

St. Paul (NY)—"Advice to the lovelorn is nearly always just so much wasted effort," Archbishop William O. Brady of St. Paul, commented in a discussion of the retarding multiplication of child marriages. . . . The Archbishop said "It is the duty of our parish priests and youth directors to speak bluntly to old and young about this matter, and at a time when both must listen." . . . In his column, "The Archbishop's Observations" which appears in the Catholic Bulletin, newspaper of the St. Paul archdiocese, the Archbishop said that when the "difficulties of the lovelorn are revealed to the priest, often enough they have to be passed on to the Archbishop for approval which he cannot always allow. . . . Among causes for child marriages the Archbishop said the following: "Too many teenagers are keeping steady company; there is 'excessive freedom of dress and conduct among us'; and there are 'amusements without check, which all disturbing concentration and lead to tragedy more often than a sound Christian society should sustain.' . . . The Archbishop says that "somebody should say 'No' strongly and often to these children, before a mother starts weeping at her baby's lost innocence. And a father, suddenly righteous-minded, rises up in his wrath to demand that his daughter 'done right by' while his wholly unexpected grandchild is given a name other than Tom, Dick or Harry." . . . Archbishop Brady said "the Church cannot and will not give approval to wedding ceremonies that are to be only ceremonies. Parents can weep and should until their throats are sore. Signing a marriage paper does not solve a problem which is also a surprise. . . . 'Christian marriage is not a formula for the moment to regularize yesterday's mistakes. It is for life. It is a contract. It is a sacrament. It is a permanent and a holy thing. It demands responsibility which the too young have not yet attained. . . . Unless there be certainty of a solid and lasting union, the Church cannot witness nor bless what it expects to fail," the Archbishop said.

Making Marriage Click

You Are Partly Right

By MSGR. IRVING A. DEBLANC

One of my best friends had a baby out of wedlock. It was like a hanging. Generally when a baby is born, there is a glow of pride in the mother, rejoicing in the family. Not here. It was a hollow, pathetic thing to watch. The plans were that my friend would give up her baby for adoption. Circumstances require it, I know, but that must be the greatest punishment of all. And to think the boy gets away scot-free. These double standards! I am furious. Of course, we do are so silly and gullible. Wouldn't more sex education be an answer? Bertha. You are partly right. Correct education, especially by parsons, would be a great help in preventing these tragic affairs. So many youngsters are constantly exposed to the seamy side of sex before they have the faintest concept of the total meaning of life. They see sex as a personal matter and seldom grasp it as a social and eternal responsibility. Mere information about sex is not sufficient. There are some who know the vocabulary of sex almost as well as an obstetrician but go on gleefully using gutter talk. Soon they want to see, feel, and experience it all. Educators must go far deeper than mere instruction. We can teach ethics—that which "ought" to be—but we cannot teach virtue. We cannot teach purity, we can praise it, explain it, favor it, love it, but still not teach it. It has to be willed from within. This means we have to teach attitudes. Parents should be in the best position to influence attitudes with their own deep, sincere reverence toward sex. Yet one study shows that 90 per cent of our parents do not give sex education. Purely is too often associated with the unpopular, the unmanly, the "ouch," the person who has not "touched home." Purity should be attractive, one of our toughest possessions. Any fool can be impure. Boys should by no means need special assistance. A boy's temptations and emotions are quite different from

Boston Prays For 'Silent' Church

Boston (RNS)—Richard Cardinal Cushing Archbishop of Boston, in urging a "crusade of prayer" while Nikita S. Khrushchev is in the United States, recommended that his parishioners recite two prayers, one for the "Silent Church" behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains and the other to Our Lady of Fatima.

The prelate observed that the Soviet Premier's visit spanned September 15th, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows and September 25th, the day after the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy.

Referring to Mr. Khrushchev as "the dictator of Soviet Russia, the prophet of universal Communism," Cardinal Cushing said he could see only one way to bring about a change in his attitude, "only greater opportunities for Communist propaganda and further encouragement for the people of captive nations." The cardinal granted pastors and those in charge of shrines and chapels permission for public services with benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

"Each day for ten days," he said, "the Rosary and prayers to Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Mercy will be offered for the ruled and rulers of Russia, for nations in bondage, for the sorrowful languishing in prisons and refugee camps, for suffering people everywhere and for universal peace, (the fruit of just war)." This "secret weapon" of prayer—observed either privately or publicly, Cardinal Cushing said, "will be the greatest contribution we could make towards easing the tensions of these critical times and the greatest encouragement we could give to the 'Silent Church'—and all those suffering under the tyranny of totalitarian governments."

Of those for whom it is impossible to profess their faith openly, to practice the Christian life regularly, to receive the holy sacraments frequently, to talk in a filial way with their spiritual guides, may You Yourself be in a hidden altar, the invisible temple. Superabundant grace and paternal voice, which helps them, encourages them, heals their ailing spirits and gives them joy and peace. . . . "May our fervent prayer be of help to them. May our fraternal solidarity—make them feel that they are not alone. May their example be edifying for the whole Church, especially for us who think of them so affectionately."

"Grant, O Lord, that the days of total be shortened and that very soon—perhaps together with their converted oppressors—they may be free to adore and adore You with the Father and the Holy Spirit, live and reign for ever and ever. Amen."

THE PRAYER to Our Lady reads: "O Lord Jesus, King of Martyrs, comfort of the afflicted, support and consolation of all those who suffer for love of You and because of their loyalty to Your Spouse, Holy Mother the Church, in Your kindness hear our fervent prayers for our brothers of the 'Silent Church.' Grant that they may never weaken in the struggle now being in the Faith. Rather may they experience the sweetness of the consolation You reserve for those souls whom You desire to call Your companions at the height of the cross."

"To those who must bear torments and violence, hunger and labor, may You be the unshakeable strength which supports them in their trials and fills them with the hope of glory."

Daily Mass Calendar

- Sunday, August 23—Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost (green). Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Philip Benizi, Creed, Trinity preface. Tuesday, August 25—St. Louis (white). Gloria; VR. Wednesday, August 26—Mass as Sunday except no Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Zephyrinus, no Creed, common preface; VR. Thursday, August 27—St. Joseph Calasanzius (white), Gloria. Friday, August 28—St. Augustin (white). Gloria; 2nd prayer of St. Hermes, Creed. Saturday, August 29—Beholding of St. John the Baptist (red). Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Sabina. VR—Votive or Requiem permitted.

Aged Chief

Blantyre (RNS)—Ninety-year-old Nyaninima, oldest chief in Nyaninima, was baptized by a missionary three days before his death in Chipemphera. A chief for 71 years, he was baptized by Father Henry Stumpf, superior of the Nyaninima Mission and a member of the White Fathers congregation.

THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1959 VOL. 70 No. 47
ST. PAUL, MINN. OFFICE: 225 5th St. S. - Room 5210 - Rochester 1, N. Y.
ALBANY OFFICE: 112 State St. - Albany 2, N. Y.
MILWAUKEE OFFICE: 512 State St. - Milwaukee 2, W. Is.
SINGAPORE OFFICE: 101, Cross Street - Singapore, S. Is.
Sole agent for U.S.A.: The Catholic Book Concern, 115 N. 4th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
Subscription price: \$2.00 per annum in advance. Single copies: 15c.