

Reapings at Random

Take A Stand For Or Against But Don't Hedge

By GERARD E. SHERRY

Editor, Central California Register

Several columns ago I offered a book prize for the best substitute for the label of Catholic "liberal". It surprised me to receive so many letters. Not so surprising was the negative approach from quite a number of the correspondents. Indeed, most referred less to the Reapings than they did to a reprint of a recent article of mine in the February issue of the Catholic Mind.

I was challenged for suggesting that uncommitted Catholics should take either the liberal or conservative roads in the future. I was also challenged as to what I meant by "competent ecclesiastical authority". The last point made by quite a number of people was that there are really very few uncommitted Catholics. I am happy to explain this a little bit further.

Frankly, I am convinced that there is no Middle of the Road (excluding Chesterton's in Orthodoxy) for the Catholic of the future. He must leave the Middle of the Road, with its hesitations and its fears, and dare to speak and act in defense of truth and morality.

I do not mean to be trite. We have compromised for much too long with the rest of the world.

We must now stand up and be counted in a very real way. If it means being unpopular, even among fellow Catholics, then so be it.

The times are too serious for pussy-footing or the pious mouthing of cliches.

It is my conviction that Catholic editors have a special role in these times — that of striving for religious and professional competence in order that they may become part of the new leadership; promoting the new spirit of adventure which has come about through the emergence of new nations and new forms of government.

So many of us are afraid of innovations, be they in terms of spiritual formation or temporal affairs.

My piece on the Liberal was not meant to be anything else than provocation to renewed activity. Furthermore, I would much prefer the vital conservatism of a Bill Buckley or a Barry Goldwater to the wishy-washy attitude of those who try to walk on the white line in the middle of the road.

When we talk of Liberals or Conservatives, I frankly admit to a confusion of labels. In many things the Catholic Liberal is quite conservative and vice versa. I think that there is much that the Buckleys and the Clancys and the Sherrys have in common — they all are agreed on the need for a vital Catholicism. We all want to be part of a lay apostolate which is composed of active witnesses in the world, rather than a collection of inactive membership lists from our many Catholic societies.

As to the point on "competent ecclesiastical authority" — the only "competent" au-

thorities in the Church are the Bishops. Of course, there are other types of ecclesiastical authority. The pastor of a Church is an authority and parishioners have an obedience to him.

But I am referring primarily to teaching authority within the Church. For example: Father Glinder of the Sunday Visitor is not a "competent" ecclesiastical authority; yet, there are thousands of Catholics, including priests, who accept him as such even though he may distort many stands taken by the Church.

It is true, of course, that the Clancys and the Sherrys and the Buckleys may also distort at times. But then we do not claim to have any authority whatsoever. We are mere servants within the Church; and we have all the human limitations which grace alone can alleviate. There are many Catholics who believe that when a layman speaks he is probably in error, but when a priest speaks, he speaks with authority.

One can argue about the semantics involved. To me, competent ecclesiastical authority is in the person of the Hierarchy of the Church. The rest of us give only a variety of judgments, some which may be prudent and some which may not.

It is obvious that the apathetic Catholics number millions and not merely thousands. History proves it over the ages, and current events confirm it here and now.

Personally, I don't care if the uncommitted all became ardent conservatives. They

would at least be taking stands; they would at least become vital. Even if I consider them wrong, I would have the happy thought that they had at least risen from the state of ennui and assumed the mantle of vital Catholics.

Finally, if you throw aside liberal and conservative labels, there still remains the problem of the uncommitted. The important thing to remember is that not only are they uncommitted to labels; many also are uncommitted to God and His Church. Some go through the mechanical motions of religious piety, attending Mass and Sacraments, but derive little benefit from them.

This because their participation in the Sacramental life of the Church is passive. It is a form of Calvinism which says God is good and He will save us even if we are apathetic. Hell can be filled with such people. We might even find ourselves there, unless we are prepared to return to the Apostolic Age.

Who won the book prize? Frankly, it was a priest from a religious order. His Superior refused to let him enter the controversy over labels even to the extent of a letter to the editor. His obedience being total he could only give it to me in private conversation.

He spoke of pragmatic liberals within the Church as opposed to doctrinaire conservatives. It appeared to me to be the best description of the average Catholic Liberal who believes in conservation — but not at any price. Surprisingly enough, I have decided to give him a copy of Bill Buckley's "Up From Liberalism."

Support Asked For UN Agency

Washington — (RNS) — A prominent Catholic editor has declared that both religious and patriotic motives should compel the American people to give strong support to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Msgr. Francis J. Lally, editor of The Pilot, Boston Archdiocesan newsweekly, described UNESCO's "Fifteen Years of Growth: An International Experiment" in the quarterly National Catholic Educational Bulletin published here.

Msgr. Lally is the National Catholic Welfare Conference representative and vice-chairman of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.

HIS ARTICLE stressed that the UN agency has proposed aims and projects "which suited the American ideal" while coinciding with the historic role of the Church "to free men from the chains of ignorance and the paralysis of poverty."

Warning that "it would be catastrophic to leave so powerful an agency for good in the hands of secularists, atheists

and the prophets of doom," the Boston editor declared:

"All religious people will feel that the UNESCO program, though not in itself religious, must respect those values which religion promotes and must provide for man a climate of living which leaves him free to express the deepest longings of the human soul in a religious way."

"The presence of committed Christians in the UNESCO operation, as member states and as cooperating workers, will insure a moral direction in all of its activities which will be salutary for all involved."

Msgr. Lally made a special plea for Catholic participation in the UNESCO program.

"It would be difficult to imagine a national and international program so full of meaning and opportunity both for the American and the Catholic," the editor stated.

"When one brings his talents and abilities to support the ideals of UNESCO in one's own country or on the world scale," Msgr. Lally added, "one can serve too a true patriotism and an authentic spiritual inspiration."

Courier Circulation

Parishes Report Gains

Thirty seven parishes reported increased totals in subscriptions to the Courier Journal, according to tabulation of February's circulation campaign.

Biggest gain is reported by St. Felix Church, Clifton Springs, which has jumped from 167 subscribers to 320. Rev. Francis Turner, pastor, stated.

Other significant gains were

reported from St. John the Evangelist parish, Greece, from 967 to 1013 for an increase of 46; St. Mary's Church, Elmira, 714 to 738, a 44 increase; St. Margaret Mary Church, Apalachin, 140 to 172, a gain of 32 and St. Casimir Church, Elmira, 577 to 608, up 29.

New Our Lady Queen of Peace parish in suburban Rochester enrolled as a "total coverage" parish with 146 subscribers.

Other parishes reporting increased totals are: Holy Cross, Rochester, 771 total, up 27 over last year's 744; Immaculate Conception, 804 (21); St. Ambrose, 1192 (19); St. Leo's, Hilton, 225 (18); Our Lady of

Perpetual Help, Rochester, 540 (17).

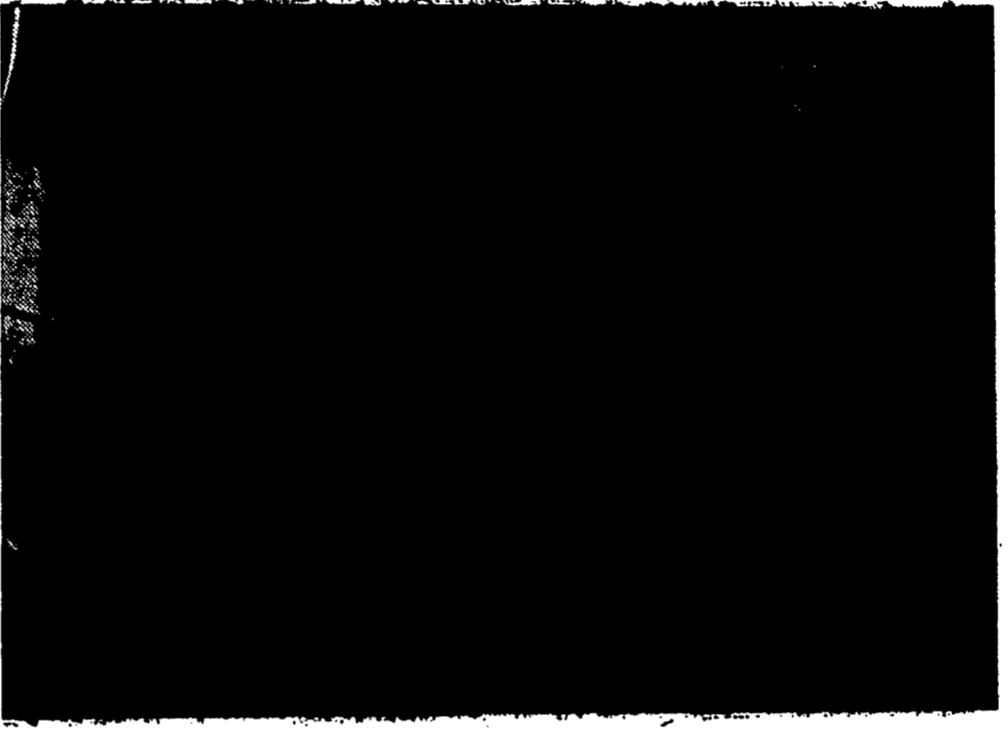
Also St. Mary's Church, Dansville, 684 total (17 increase); St. Ann, Palmyra, 340 (16); Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Rochester, 265 (13); St. Thomas Aquinas, Leicester, St. Raphael, Piffard, and St. Lucy, Reefst, 202 (13); St. Mary's, Rexville, 77 (3), and St. Joseph's Canisteo, 142 (12).

Also St. Agnes, Avon, 313 (gain 11); St. James, Trumansburg, 132 (10); St. James, Rochester, 968 (9); St. Columba, Caledonia, 150 (8); and St. Patrick, Mumford, 47 (3); St. Francis DeSales, Geneva, 769 (8); Blessed Sacrament, Rochester, 1002 (8); St. Patrick, Corning, 343 (8).

Holy Angels, Nunda, and Holy Name, Groveland, 99 (7); St. Peter and Paul, Rochester, 490 (7); St. Mary, Canandaigua, 1063 (7); St. Joseph, Wayland, 282 (5); Holy Family, Rochester, 793 (6); Assumption, Mt. Morris, 290 (5); St. Charles Borromeo, Elmira Heights, 341 (5); Catholic Chapel, Freewille and Dryden, 161 (4).

Also St. Patrick's, Owego, 620 (4); Sacred Heart, Auburn, and St. Ann, Oswego, 354 (2); St. Pius, Cohocton, 81 (2); St. Patrick, Macedon, 175 (2); Sacred Heart, Perkinsville, 106 (2); Catholic Chapel, Bradford, and St. Joseph's, Campbell, 115 (1); Our Lady of the Lake, King Ferry, and All Saints, Ludlowville, 158(1); and St. Mary's, Rochester, 127 (1).

Additional parish reports will be published in next week's Courier Journal.



Lenten lunches can be nutritious.

Devotions For Lent

Fasting from food is a penitential practice even older than Lent. Our Saviour set the example for His disciples by fasting 40 days before He began His public life of preaching and miracles. He told them emphatically the struggle against the devil can be won "in no way except by prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:28) The Church authorizes bishops to decide specific fast laws for their own dioceses, which accounts for variations from one diocese to another. Fasting is meant to be a way of developing self-control. It should not spell gloom and complaint. Our Lord warned against such reaction, "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites . . . but thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen by men to fast, but by thy Father, who is in secret, and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee." (Matt.6:16-18)

Dinner Dance Set By Groups

Bath — The annual St. Patrick's Day dinner dance sponsored by the Rosary and Altar Society, and the Holy Name Society of St. Mary's Church, will be held March 17 in the new church hall.

Accommodations are limited to 300 persons and Bathites are urged to secure their tickets early. They may be purchased from members of the sponsoring clubs and at the following stores in Bath: The Smart Shop, Sona-Tori Dress Shop, Stabel's Jewelry, The House of Cars, Orr's Shoe Store and Foster's Shoppe. Persons employed at the Westinghouse electronic tube plant may secure tickets from Tom Connolly.

Priests Die In Prison

Rome — (NC) — Two priests of the Swatow diocese in southeastern China died in prison in their communist-ruled homeland, it has been learned here. The deaths were reported by Fides, mission news agency.

Fides identified the priests as Father Paul Chen Ping-ten, born in 1913, who was arrested in April of 1959 and condemned to 16 years in jail, and Father Paul Chen Ti-min, one year his junior, who was arrested in September of 1955 and sentenced to a 12-year prison term. Fides said the latter died nearly two years ago.

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East German Prelate Dies. Berlin — (RNS) — Archbishop Heinrich Juenke, former head of the Diocese of Meissen, East Germany, died in a West Berlin hospital at the age of 77. The Meissen diocese is the only German See with all its area in the Soviet Zone. It is directly subject to the Vatican and has about 450,000 Catholics.

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Elmira Faces McQuaid

By FRED BUTTACCIO. McQuaid Jesuit High School will meet Notre Dame of Elmira in the finals of the Diocesan Catholic High School Basketball tournament at the R.I.T. gymnasium starting at 3:15 p.m. this Sunday afternoon.

Both teams will be seeking their first tournament crown held by Aquinas Institute the past two years.

Notre Dame of Elmira advanced to the finals with a first round victory over St. Anthony of Padua from Watkins Glen last Sunday, 58-43, led by Bill Limoncelli's 22 points. Last Wednesday at Elmira the Crusaders sharpened their eyes for McQuaid by stopping St. Francis De Sales 66-52 led by Dick Ramick and Bill Limoncelli.

THE CRUSADERS are a fast team who take full advantage of their opponents' mistakes and what they lack in the height department they more than make up with good outside shooting and aggressive defense. Fast breaks have been a potent weapon for the Elmira team which feature scorer Billy Limoncelli and Jim Ramick. Eddie McCloskey does his share of bucket getting as does Justin McCarthy, a hawk on defense.

Coach Jim Flynn's club is coming fast in the late stages of the season, evidence of this was their tremendous win over Elmira Southside two weeks ago, 57-50. Elmira Southside was one of the leading teams in the Southern Tier loop this season. McQuaid may be in for a busy afternoon come this Sunday.

Mt. Carmel of Auburn suffered defeat at the hands of St. Francis De Sales last Sunday in what was termed as a major upset. Twice during regular season play Mt. Carmel had beaten the Saints badly. On a

Aquinas Center At Dartmouth

Hanover — (NC) — A new \$480,000 Catholic student center will be constructed at Dartmouth College here, Bishop Ernest J. Primeau of Manchester announced. The center will provide new quarters for Aquinas House, which was established in 1953, with religious and social facilities for about 400 Catholic students at Dartmouth. The center

De Sales took a great victory over the Mt. Carmel team by an amazing score of 74-68. De Sales put all their efforts into this game, it would seem because against Notre Dame on Wednesday they couldn't find the range against the defense minded Crusaders.

Billy Limoncelli scored 16 points to lead the Notre Dame team into the finals along with Dick Ramick's 24 points, proved too much for the Saints who stayed fairly even until the 3rd quarter and the splurge started. De Sales will meet Aquinas this Sunday for the Consolation honors beginning at 2:00 p.m.



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