

Graduation Day Speeches Needed

The ritual of graduation is annually enacted every June to award diplomas to kindergarten pupils or college seniors.

A major ingredient of the ritual is the commencement address.

Amherst dean Eugene S. Wilson in a recent New York Times tongue-in-cheek essay rated most such talks as a waste of time. Diploma-bound seniors are deaf to the speaker, Wilson claims, and within a few years can't even remember who the speaker was or what his topic was.

We think graduation rites are something like baptism or funeral ceremonies—the words of the ritual are meant as much for the audience as for the central character.

Even if all graduates were literally deaf for the occasion, we think commencement speeches are needed. Bishop Kearney at Nazareth College graduation told the students they had four years of intellectual training. "Now it is time for the heart to speak," he told them.

And the heart is willing to hear a message of love repeated limitlessly.

Parents who have sacrificed to provide children with the increasing costly education deserve a public tribute — and so do the teachers who have contributed to these young lives far more than is represented by a teacher's wage.

These parents and teachers and their friends at the graduation ceremony are well aware of the hazards and pitfalls the students will face when they leave their ivied campus. For them the message of "opportunity and responsibility" is often clouded by bitter frustrations and they need this reminder that "stout hearts" need never abandon hope.

And all of us "older folk" so easily settle down to a complacent routine in life which too often fails to include continued study. Graduation speakers who say "your education is never a completed task" nudge us to go back to the books, especially new books.

Twenty years ago at the University of Virginia, the commencement speaker had a message the nation needed then, and still needs, even if the starry-eyed graduates failed to hear it.

"I call for effort, courage, sacrifice, devotion. The love of freedom is still fierce, still steady in the nation today," said President Franklin Roosevelt less than six months before Pearl Harbor.

Snag, Progress For President

President Kennedy's federal aid to public schools program hit a major snag in Congress this week. With a strange twist of political maneuvering, his program was defeated by the very weapon he devised to assure victory for his plans.

The House Rules Committee, expanded earlier this year to overcome Republican and Southern Democratic control, ruled 9 to 8 to hold up action on the public school aid until parochial schools were first helped by a revised version of the National Defense Education Act.

This revised version allows forty year government loans for privately operated schools to build classrooms for teaching science, mathematics and foreign languages and also gymnasiums or other physical fitness facilities.

"Catholic pressure" will undoubtedly get the blame for blocking the administrations effort to pour up to five billion dollars into the public school systems of the country.

Admittedly, clergy and laity in large numbers flooded Congress with protests against the administrations plan to skip six million Catholic school pupils in its proposed aid to education.

Receiving less publicity, however, is the widespread "Catholic support" for two of the President's other programs—his bid to win Congressional approval for a close to five billion dollar foreign aid plan and his person-to-person Peace Corps.

This week the bishop who heads the U.S. Catholic Church's worldwide relief program "heartily" endorsed the President's foreign aid program. "Without the aid that came to them from the United States of America many countries would have already buckled under Communism," Bishop Edward E. Swanson said. Catholic spokesmen across the country (including the Courier-Journal in its editorial two weeks ago) have asked support for legislation to continue American aid to needy nations.

Also this week, President Kennedy's Peace Corps found Catholics generally more in favor of it than are other religious groups. The Vatican Radio has commented that "the very idea of the Peace Corps is beautiful, even magnificent."

In Washington, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, central coordinating agency of the nation's bishops, has set up a special "Peace Corps Desk" and issued an all-out call for Catholics to volunteer.

Heading the Peace Corps Desk is F. Robert Melina who offers prospective Corpsmen information on how to enroll. (His address is 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington 5, D.C.)

In this decade of decision, our direct financial aid to needy nations and the person-to-person Peace Corps might well be the most important factors in extending the frontiers of freedom. We think both of these proposals of the President deserve support and citizens should so inform their Congressional leaders.

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Capitol Honor for Priest

Washington — (RNS) — A statue of Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, S.J., pioneer missionary and explorer of the southwest, will be placed in the United States Capitol as a gift from the people of the State of Arizona if Congress approves a resolution introduced by Rep. Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.).

Approval is virtually certain, since each state is entitled by custom to have two statues in Statuary Hall and its adjacent corridors.

Thirty years ago Arizona

sent a statue of General John Campbell Greenway (1874-1926) — a member of Theodore Roosevelt's famous "Rough Riders" and a mining engineer and pioneer settler — but never sent a second.

Arizona is this year commemorating the 250th anniversary of Father Kino's death which occurred in 1711 at the age of 66, apparently from a heart attack, while consecrating the Host at Mass in a new church.

An entire issue of the state's nationally-circulated

pictorial magazine, "Arizona Highways," has been devoted to Father Kino's story and pictures of the early missions he founded. Other honors are being paid him.

FATHER KINO was born Aug. 10, 1645, in the Italian village of Segno in the Tyrolean Alps. He studied for the priesthood in Germany. In 1663, at the age of 18, he lay critically ill and prayed to St. Francis Xavier that he might either die in grace, or if he lived, serve as a missionary. Two years later, recovered in

health, he entered the Jesuit order.

Six times between 1665 and 1678 he asked his superiors for an overseas assignment but it was always refused. In 1678, when he was 32, his appointment finally came, but it was not to the Orient as he had expected, rather to Northern Mexico where Spanish Jesuits had launched a very difficult mission to the Indians who lived in the desert above the Gulf of California.

Moslem Faith, Chief Topic at University

By FATHER PATRICK O'CONNOR
Society of St. Columban

Cairo — (NC) — Moslem teaching in Al Azhar University here, reputedly the chief center of Islamic learning, seems to differ little from what it was centuries ago.

Not only has it stayed the same in essence — which was to be expected — but apparently it is presented without much relevance to modern conditions.

The basic doctrine of Islam — the Moslem religion — is still, happily, the existence of One God.

I asked a member of the Islamic Cultural section of the university whether the professors deal with the current forms of the evolutionary theory. Do they tackle present-day materialism?

He answered that these matters were treated only "by way of survey." Apparently there is no attempt at systematic refutation of modern materialist fallacies, even Communism.

In the secondary "institutions" that are part of Al Azhar's educational network, science is taught, as in other Egyptian schools, in the University itself only Islamic doctrine and law and modern languages merely as instruments for Islamic propaganda.

Moslems believe that the Koran was dictated word for word by God, not written by men under God's inspiration (as were the Christian Scriptures). During his four years of primary and five of secondary schooling, the future Al Azhar student must learn the Koran by heart. This learning by rote is apparently a large part of Islamic education.

An Al Azhar spokesman said that "we believe in an Islamic state." He insisted that I was mistaken — I wasn't — in saying that the provisional constitution of the United Arab Republic proclaims no state religion.

An Al Azhar professor declared recently that the permanent constitution should make Islam the official religion and that all legislation should be based on Sharia (Islamic) law. "Arabism," he said, "is the vessel in which Islam has been placed, and Islam is the animating force in Arabism." He said that there should be freedom of belief for non-Moslems.

Arab League officials would prefer not to identify Arabism thus with the Moslem religion.

The director of the Islamic cultural section of Al Azhar wrote last year in the university review, attacking "missionaries and orientalist" (foreign scholars specializing in Arabic studies) as "a fifth column of imperialism in Egypt and the Moslem East." He appealed to the Islamic Congress to act jointly with the Ministry of Educa-

tion, on the side of laxity.

"He holds that Islam is not opposed to birth control," the spokesman told me, "but approves of it in three cases. These are: 1) if a wife is sure that pregnancy will mean danger for her; 2) if she has a disease that would be transmitted to her child; 3) if the husband does not wish his wife to have a child."

"Many groups in Egypt are asking the government to put provisions in the constitution for birth control," he added. "I do not think that the government will agree."

Islam is opposed to abortion, which is contrary to the Koran, he explained.

No Christian had ever been invited to speak in the university, he said.

Moslems regard Our Lord as just another prophet. They deny His divinity and deny the Blessed Trinity. They respect the Blessed Virgin, "Miriam," as the mother of Christ, but since they refuse to accept His divinity, they fail to appreciate her dignity and role.

I asked two of the younger Al Azhar officials how they felt about the treatment of Islam by Christian writers.

"Unfair," one man called it. He said that Christian authors over-emphasize the factor of polygamy, thus implying that Islam flourished by appealing to sex instinct. They were unfair also, he al-



Saints of Unity

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM . . . succeeded St. Maximus as Bishop of Jerusalem. He is famous for a series of instructions, one for Catechumens in Lent before Baptism; and the other on the effect of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion and the offering of prayers for the living and the dead, with details of the customs of the Eastern Church. His feast day is March 18.

try to be friends to the Western world but find ourselves betrayed."

He specified two points on which he believed Islam is misrepresented. One is the Jehad, the "Holy War," which, he said, is misinterpreted. As well, he claimed, Islam is "darkened" by being identified by Western writers with the history of the Turkish empire.

(The present government-backed pressure to restrict Christianity and promote Islam in Egypt and the Sudan seemed to me akin to "spreading Islam by the sword.")

Telephones ring on modern desks in the congested offices of Al Azhar. English-speaking sheikhs, wearing business suits, pass documents in Arabic to sheikhs wearing the white turban and flowing robe. In the mosque across the street the students sit on the ground, listening to the doctrine of Mohammed that they will repeat throughout restful Africa and Asia.

"Enrique replied, matter-of-factly. 'The clouds are picketing the sky and won't let the sun come through.'

"For example," says the veteran Maryknoller, "recently I asked my Mayan cook, Enrique, about the threatening weather."

Whenever I read the parable of the man who buried his one talent, I get mad. Most people think he buried his talent because he was afraid of losing it in a bad investment. Actually, he buried it because he was too lazy to speculate with it. And because he was so lazy, we can be sure that he didn't bury it too deeply. Burying things takes work.

The success of a well balanced and well developed

culture rests on the necessity of every individual pulling his share of the load. Every man then, is a chink in the solid wall of progress. Every lazy man is a threat to the balance of society. He is a blundering obstacle in our way, a drudge and a sluggard.

Obviously then, sloth creates many dangers in the ordinary sphere of the material; but it is an absolute tragedy in the realm of the spiritual. If a man wants to save his soul, he must be very busy about the whole thing. He cannot earn heaven by just sitting around on earth doing nothing. He can never say, "I have done enough" because when he says he has done enough, he is really finished.

So there can be no tint of laziness in a man's service of God. God must be praised. He must be given the honor that is His due. And this is not done in a big soft chair. It requires that on Sunday morning, a man get himself off to church, by way of showing God he loves Him, and not just talking about it. And this bit about "I serve God in my own way" sounds sort of touching and personal like, but the man who serves God in his own way, rarely serves God at all.

Furthermore, not all of us are dauntless enough to stand up before the relentless prodding of Satan. Our only salvation is to run. And the lazy man, because he does not run, is easy prey for the fiery darts of Satan. A man must be busy about giving his fellow men their just due. A vibrant, living charity demands a vibrant busy man.

The salvation of one's soul demands the constant vigilance and constant progress. One who stands still goes backwards. Such are the spiritual dangers of sloth. The lazy man doesn't get anything done He doesn't even get his soul saved.

Obviously, no one can disagree with this. And it must not be taken as a condemnation of the activities of Catholic intellectuals. There are silly men in intellectual circles as there are in politics, science and every other field of activity. Their actions sometimes contradict their alleged competence. They should be cautioned against excesses which impair the stand and traditional thought of the Church.

The discussion on the progress of intellectualism or scholarship in Catholic life has been going on for many years.

Jesuit Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs several years ago. In it he made some rather interesting observations. I think the following quote is very pertinent:

"The intellectual life is neither committed to Christianity nor does it antecedently reject it. That it is not committed to Christianity is clear enough from history. Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes, Moses, Maimonides, Ibn Sina and Einstein were not Christians but so one would deny that they were scholars. That the Christian can be a scholar is just

as plain. Abelard, Aquinas, Copernicus, Galileo, Erasmus, Newton and Newman were Christians and no one would deny that they were creative intellectuals.

"This very simple truth is often ignored by Catholic apologists. Some give the impression that Christian faith inclines to make every Christian an intellectual; that scholarship is an inevitable byproduct of Christian commitment.

"To put it quite simply, faith by its own inner essence does not produce scholars. On the other hand it does not exclude them from its community. The call to scholarship is independent of the call to faith. However, if the Christian is a scholar, his intellectual life will be a function of his faith."

Father Weigel's point is not at variance to the point made by the Apostle Jerome. Indeed, the Pope's representative to the United States was simply saying by all means let's continue the search for knowledge, but let's not compromise on fundamentals. He carried this over on the other two subjects that he discussed in his speech in relation to the Liturgy and Church Art.

It has nothing to do with liberal or conservative points in the Church. Yet, in the same issue of the magazine some Catholic

For nine years, Father Kino served in the barren and desolate area of Baja (lower) California. His map published in 1687 proved for the first time that this was actually a peninsula and not an island as had been supposed.

For the next 24 years he served the vast parish of "Puneria Alta," a territory, then largely unknown and uncharted, of 50,000 square miles that included much of what is now southern Arizona.

Starting from the Mission of San Ignacio which established 60 miles south of the present-day border city of Nogales, Father Kino gradually explored northward, making friends among the Indians and establishing missions. In January, 1691, he said Mass in what is believed to be the first Christian worship service held in the present state of Arizona.

In 1692 he reached the area of what is now Tucson. By 1700, he was exploring the Colorado River at the site of the village of Yuma. He was the first white man to cross the burning desert and mountains to reach the California coast.

Before he died, March 15, 1711, during dedication of the Chapel of St. Francis Xavier in Magdalena, he had added nearly 200,000 square miles of land to the maps of his day, including nearly all of Arizona.

If Father Kino's statue is placed in the Capitol, he will be the third Catholic priest thus honored, the others being Father Marquette, whose statue was sent by Wisconsin, and Father Junipero Serra, sent by California. The new state of Hawaii is considering a proposal to send the statue of Father Damien, a pioneer missionary to the lepers.

Reapings at Random

by GERARD E. SHERRY
Editor, Central California Register

Strange isn't it? Anytime a Bishop or a leading Churchman warns Catholics against excesses, his words, completely out of text, are applied by some to the philosophies of their opponents.

Archbishop Vagnoni, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, recently warned Catholic intellectuals against secularism in their attempts to bridge the gap between the Church and the world. There was nothing unusual about this. It's all been said before. Though, perhaps, not as firmly and as eloquently.

Some people immediately tagged all Catholic intellectuals as "liberals." Some of them are no doubt liberal, and some are no doubt conservative in their philosophy. What the critics didn't emphasize was that the Delegate was not condemning Catholic intellectuals.

He made the point that "as the protagonists of the new position should not summarily be accused of heresy, neither should they insist in presenting as definitive truth . . . theories and opinions which can receive the definite stamp of truthfulness only from the magisterium of the Church.

"The Sacred Books of the Bible are too

Scholarship, Faith — Partners for Progress

basically fundamental . . . to be left to the individual and private interpretation of even a large number of scholars."

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that they want to read their opponents out of the Church on the slightest pretext. Everything wrong with the Church is attributed either to the Liberal or the Conservative Catholic. Yet, these labels have no real connection with the issues exposed by the Apostolic Delegate.

There is a tremendous freedom given the intellectual mind by the Church and the Delegate was by no means suggesting that it be stifled. As one of the authentic teachers he was merely advising against compromise which would be a repudiation of Catholic doctrine. Every Bishop has the right and duty to do this if he feels that such dangers are present.

Thomas F. O'Dea of the University of Utah seemed to sum the whole thing up when he said, "The role of the Catholic intellectual in America must, in part, be prophetic" — endlessly championing points of view which are counter to those prevailing in his society. Divorce is now part of the American way of life; euthanasia may become so. The Catholic intellect, rightly used in the secular order, not only can profit by the positive results of the best modern thinking but can also serve to correct some of its unfortunate elements, but only on condition that Catholic thinking be regarded as collaborators and not as dead by enemies."