

Thinking Man's Faith

Era of Immense Possibilities

Signs in offices and factories advise us to "Think." Commercial tell us to smoke the cigarette with the "thinking man's filter."

Which prompts the questions, "Are we Catholics a thinking people? Do we have a thinking man's faith?"

Outsiders are of the opinion that Catholics have all their answers in neat little books called catechisms and if the answer isn't there then the priest or the pope will provide it — but lay people have neither the need nor the right to think for themselves.

Pope John in his recent encyclical emphatically refuted that opinion and his refutation stands as a mighty challenge to Catholics, clergy and laity alike, to do some powerful thinking and then stir themselves to action.

"Our era is penetrated and shot through by radical errors, it is torn and upset by deep disorders. Nevertheless, it is also an era in which immense possibilities for good are opened to the Church," the Pontiff wrote.

"In the applications of doctrine there can arise even among upright and sincere Catholics differences of opinion," he explained. "When this happens, they should be watchful to keep alive mutual esteem and respect and should strive to find points of agreement for efficacious and suitable action. They should not exhaust themselves in interminable discussions and, under the pretext of searching for the better or the best, omit to do the good that is possible and is thus obligatory."

How many times have we heard the present segregation issue debated with all in agreement that "something should be done" and then everybody disagreeing about the "best way" to do it with the net result that "interminable discussions" end in nothing being done and we forfeit to others the leadership in practical programs whose goal is justice for all men regardless of their race or color.

And schools — every taxpayer will lecture you endlessly about the soaring costs of education, particularly in suburban areas. But how many of the complainants ever attend a school board meeting or even make the basic effort to be rightly informed on the problems facing school officials, public and parochial?

Or television programs which feed young minds with methods of crime and push juvenile crime records to soaring new statistics — and we say as we watch, "Programs like this shouldn't be on TV." But we buy the products which sponsor such shows and "haven't the slightest idea" what to do about improving the TV diet.

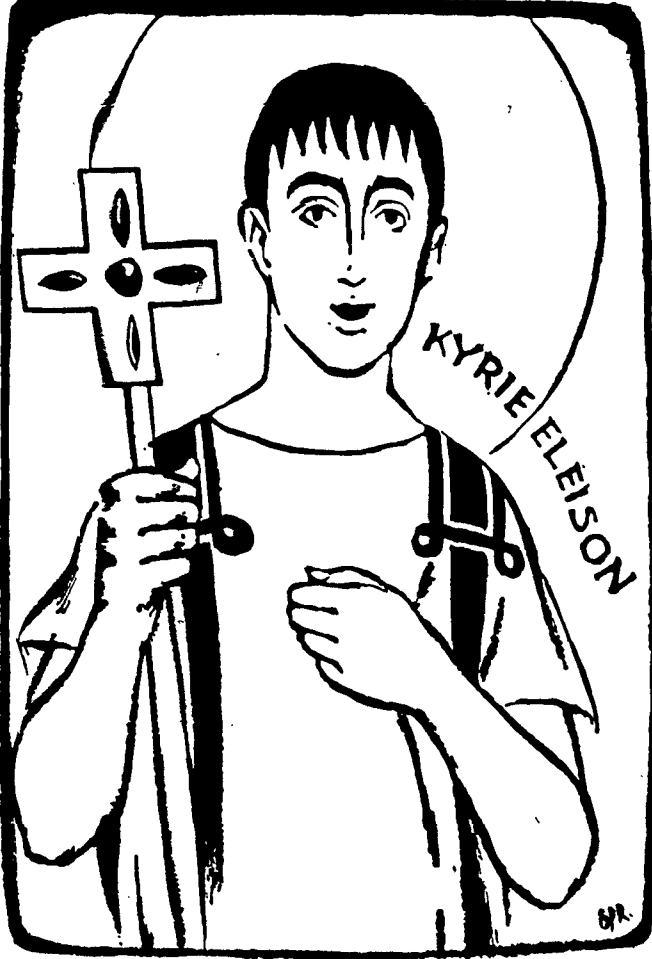
Foreign aid — that is something Congress debates and finally approves but, it seems, ordinary citizens have nothing more to do with it than foot the bill in income tax payments. Have we ever thought we might help our nation expand the frontiers of freedom by bringing a Latin American, European or Asian or even an African youngster to be our guest for a year to study in an American school and learn our ideals in a person-to-person way rather than long-distance in textbooks?

There are of course scores of other topics which we need to think through and fashion for them a plan of action.

President Kennedy in his inaugural address appealed to us, "Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

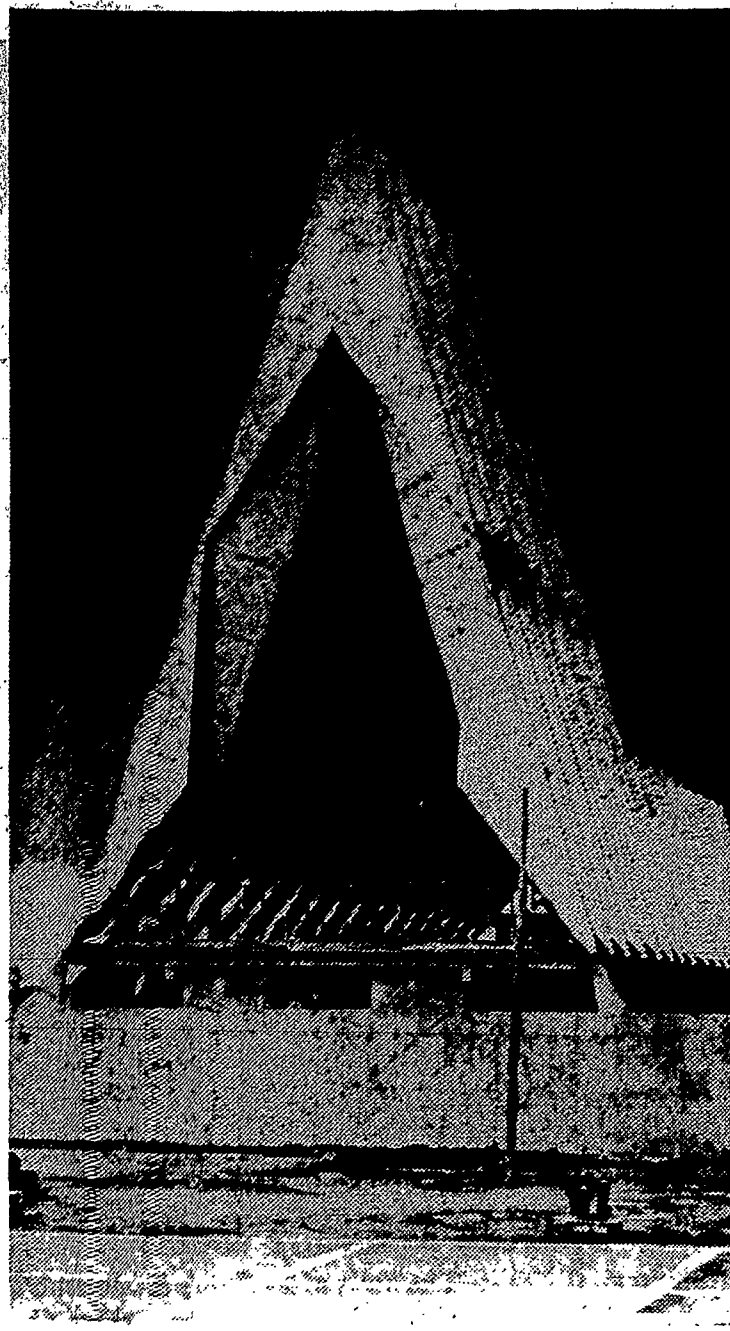
Both our Pope and our President have asked us to show we have the ability to think and the courage to act.

There will be disagreements and crosscurrents but the greater tragedy lies in stagnation.



Saints of Unity

St. Nicholas the Pilgrim . . . was a young Greek who wandered about Southern Italy carrying a cross, and crying out "Kyrie Eleison." He was generally treated as a tramp or a lunatic, but after his death at Trani in 1094, miracles were alleged at his tomb. His feastday is June 3.



Modern Design for New Chapels

Bold and striking architectural lines characterize these two chapels — one in Germany, the other in Colorado. The German church (left) is in Offenbach and represents the Greek letters alpha and omega, symbolic of the Saviour who termed Himself the beginning and

the end of all creatures. The Colorado chapel (right) is a \$3.4 million edifice for the U.S. Air Force Academy. It contains three separate chapels — one for Protestants, seating 900; one for Catholics, seating 500; and another for Jews, with a capacity for

Faith Prospers in Franco Spain

(This is the last of four articles on the 25th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War by the director of the Office of Information and Statistics of the Church in Spain and former editor of Ecclesia, official organ of Spanish Catholic Action.)

By MSGR. JESUS IRIBARRÉN (N.C.W.C. News Service)

July 18 marked the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War in Spain. Since that time the Church has found itself involved in constant controversy regarding its relations with the regime of Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

But a family's history is not measured by its friendly or hostile relations with others. Outside relationships and social ties do not lack importance. But what is most important and most intimate takes place within the home, behind closed doors.

Thus the life of the Church in Spain does not rest chiefly on an alleged political attitude, but on its spiritual intensity. While the secular press limits itself to reporting on the relations between the Church and the Spanish state — which are really dependent on the opinions and wishes of the Holy See — what is important to Catholics is to know whether, 25 years after the violent outburst of hatred, God continues to perform His works among the people.

In all countries the Church contributes to the establishment of a climate of mental health as a result of its sound system of values. One consequence of this general moral health is a low suicide rate.

In the period 1951-1955, Spain had an average of 5.5 suicides for each 100,000 inhabitants. The following are the comparable rates for some other countries during the same period: the U.S., 10.2; England, 10.6; Germany, 18.6; and Austria 23.

It appears that the happiness or sadness of a people is determined not by whether they live under a democracy or a dictatorship, but by whether they live according to the Faith and place their wills in the hands of a church as essentially cheerful as the Catholic Church.

Church law on marriage has the status of civil law in Spain through its concordat with the Holy See. Lack of freedom to get a divorce in many cases lack of freedom to be unhappy. This is so because a united and compact family is happy. A survey made by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics showed only seven divorced persons for every 10 million Spaniards.

American readers will be interested in some considerations on divorce. In our opinion, legal divorce is a boomerang: it actually separates couples before they are divorced. While the mere possibility of obtaining a legal divorce makes each conjugal offense a step toward divorce, the impossibility of getting a divorce makes disappointed spouses think that the best way to have peace is through forgiveness.

The Spanish state considers all valid marriages indissoluble. Separation cases of Catholic spouses are handled by church courts and their decisions are binding according to civil law. In 1959, not one petition for separation was filed in eight Spanish dioceses.

Another survey shows that out of every 1,000 married women in Spain, 237 have between five and 10 children. Thirty-five of each 1,000 have more than 10 children. The relation that exists between divorce and the birth-rate is obvious. When marriage is looked on as a temporary contract, children are avoided as an obstacle to freedom.

Large Christian families

abound in religious vocations. Of the seminarians and novices studying in Spain last year, 6,669 had more than seven brothers or sisters.

Sunshine, gaiety and a warm climate are also moral factors that have to be taken into account in Spain. All of them lead to love, and love in cheerful countries often leads to false steps.

Whether Spain is improving or worsening as a result of the patient activity of the Church can, perhaps, be seen by looking at statistics on illegitimate births. These show that 46 per cent of the infants born in 1949 were illegitimate. This percentage declined to 5.2 in 1950, 4.2 in 1955 and 2.4 in 1959.

This means that 97.6 per cent of the Spanish children born in 1959 were children of marriage that were valid not only legally but also canonically. To make a com-

parison with the U.S. it would be necessary to bear in mind the existence of divorce in the U.S., which forces Catholics there to distinguish between legal adultery and moral adultery.

There are constant discussions between Anglo-Saxons and Latins on the criteria to be used in measuring the strength of Catholicism. Religion is something more than a club in which one is a member in good standing once he has paid his dues.

Attendance at Mass and support of the parish are duties on a different level from the obligations imposed by the Divine Commandments. Does one cease to be a Catholic if he stops going to Church?

We Spaniards admire the strong organization of the Catholic Church in countries where, to live with Protestants, it has to make a vigorous public affirmation of its individuality. The fulfillment of outward duties in Spain is more easily abandoned.

The fulfillment of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass varies. In regions in Navarre and the Basque country from 99 to 100 per cent of the people attend. In industrial areas eight per cent of the people go to Sunday Mass, while in rural areas in central Spain the average is from 48 to 62 per cent.

But because of this Spaniards do not consider that only half of the people are Catholics. On the contrary, everyone calls for a priest at the most important moments of life.

The Catholic Church works hard among these 30 million and remains far more distant from the political struggle than the big sensational newspapers claim. It does so because Christ did not come into the world to make Democrats or Republicans, but to make saints.

Assault on Barriers of Division

By DR. CLAUD D. NELSON

(This article summarizes the "interim impressions" of a life-long Protestant student of the Christian unity movement who spent six weeks in Rome reporting on the forthcoming Second Vatican Council. Dr. Nelson — consultant on interreligious relations to the National Conference of Christians and Jews and former executive director of the Department of Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches — discussed with cardinals and other high-ranking members of the oman Curia reactions to the Council not only among Catholics but also among Anglicans, Protestants and Eastern Orthodox. Before his Rome assignment, he had engaged for over six months in extensive correspondence and conversation with many Catholic and Non-Catholic experts on the significance of the Vatican Council, especially its relation to the growing ecumenical dialogue.)

New York — (RNS) — When Pope John, on Jan. 25, 1959, announced his intention to convene an Ecumenical Council, it was at first widely believed that this would be a Council to deal with Church unity. But it was subsequently made plain that the Council would encompass a vast range of other matters of vital concern to the Roman Catholic Church itself.

Nevertheless, the general rejoicing occasioned by the initial impression of the Council, while over-optimistic at points, served to underscore the general feeling among all Christians that the time had come for a vigorous and sustained assault on the barriers that the Churches had erected between themselves through the centuries.

When Pope John made his historic announcement — during the 1959 Chair of Unity Octave — he indicated at once that he desired his pontificate to be remembered as that of the Council. In a number of previous pronouncements he had emphasized his predominant interest in the cause of Christian unity.

This served to recall that as far back as 1897, Pope Leo XIII had sounded a call for unity, by way of a general "return" to Rome, only to have it fall on deaf or hostile ears.

Since then, local, national and world councils of churches have developed outside the Roman communion. How far that development has influenced Pope John in summoning a Vatican Council — at least two of his predecessors had given thought to such plans — is an unnecessary speculation. But the fact remains that the non-Roman councils are a highly relevant factor in the total situation that confronts the Second Vatican Council.

This is the official name given by Pope John in June, 1959, to what he still considers and often calls the Ecumenical Council. There are Catholic writers who speak of the ecumenical movement sometimes with clear reference to the activities of the World Council of Churches, sometimes with the seeming intention to include all thought and action tending toward Christian unity.

For Catholics, any official distinction between unity and union is far more difficult than it is, for example, to the Eastern Orthodox. The latter proclaim their essential and adequate unity though divided into autocephalous patriarchates.

The whole theory of a single united Church, headed by St. Peter and his successors, renders it extremely unlikely that any theological distinction between unity and union will be attempted by the Council. That is, it may be hazardous for the Theological Commission to take into account the religious pluralism that plays so important a practical role in

problems of religious liberty. Pope Pius XII showed in his December, 1953, address to Italian Catholic jurists both the necessity and the possibility, at the international level, of respecting Christian pluralism politically without recognizing it ecclesiastically.

Furthermore, Pope John has indicated over and over, that the coming Council will not deal directly with union but must clear the way for it: the Council must help to renew and purify the Church, and prepare it to deal with today's world. Only then, he says, can it confidently invite "separated brethren" to take or retake their place in the one house of the Heavenly Father.

But the separated brethren meanwhile are not to be ignored or neglected. Pope John has created a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (originally "union"). It is an continuing contact, genuine dialogue, with the staff of the World Council of Churches, and has helped it bring about a meeting of Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians for explorations in the field of religious liberty.

The Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury and York have appointed a liaison person who has taken up residence in Rome to work primarily with the Secretariat.

This reporter's most cordial and fruitful conversations during his six weeks in Rome recently were with the staff of the Secretariat, and with its president, Augustin Cardinal Bea. What they have said and done, and the indications they gave for further research, assure me of their devotion and competence in promoting Christian unity.

The announcement of the Council and preparation thus far made for it have greatly stimulated and helped to orient dialogue — honest speaking and attentive listening — among Christians across confessional lines. The Church of Rome has itself become a participant in the ecumenical dialogue, no longer leaving it to the somewhat hazardous inclination of individuals. In addition, more individuals now have the inclination; and because it is less hazardous, unofficial but meaningful conversations have been multiplied.

There are major questions, as yet unanswered, with regard to the Council, which are of absorbing interest to all who take seriously the prayer of Jesus, (recorded in the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel) for the unity of his followers, which he spoke of as a condition of the world's acceptance of His divine mission.

There was general expectation, two years ago, that the warmly expressed desires of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul for closer relations would soon meet with an impressive measure of realization. It seems

(Continued on page 5)

Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, August 6 — Transfiguration of our Lord (white). Gloria, Creed, Trinity Preface.

Monday, August 7 — St. Cajetan (white), Gloria, 2nd prayer of St. Donatus.

Tuesday, August 8 — St. John Mary Vianney (white), Gloria, 2nd prayer of the Martyrs, 1951 — Rev. Bernard Casey.

Wednesday, August 9 — Vigil of St. Lawrence (purple), 2nd prayer of St. Roman.

Thursday, August 10 — St. Lawrence, martyr (red), Gloria.

Friday, August 11 — St. Tiburtius and St. Susanna, martyrs (red), Gloria.

Saturday, August 12 — St. Clare (white), Gloria.

Reapings at Random

Our Own Negligence Causes Most of Our Sufferings

By GERARD E. SHERRY
Editor, Central California Register

The recent spate of forest fires in California has taken an immense toll in both lives and property as well as some important economic resources.

To those who do not live near the timber lands of our country, a forest fire may seem an exciting business which one could claim to have seen in one of Walt Disney's nature studies. Alas, to those close by, the forest fire is a horrible thing. It shows no mercy to either humans or the things of nature.

We live in the shadow of the High Sierras which separate California from Nevada. A couple of weeks ago a fire which started out as a small blaze finished up engulfing and destroying two towns and some 80,000 acres of timberland.

To anyone who has seen the splendor of Yosemite National Park and its little towns nestled in the valleys, it is a cause for sadness. Just imagine what it must be like to the people who live there. The towns, Ahwahnee and Nipitnawasse were in the direct path of the flames. And the several

hundred inhabitants literally fled before the fire.

Everything in these two towns was destroyed. Houses, general store, gas station, post office — everything went up in smoke. A larger town on the highway leading to Yosemite Valley, Oakhurst, was, also, threatened. Indeed it got to the point where buildings on the outskirts were manned by their owners defiant of the flames that threatened to engulf them.

It never touched Oakhurst; but only because some 2,000 fire fighters worked day and night to stop it. For almost two weeks they battled the Sierra blaze. No eight-hour day here. No comfortable lodgings; just a bed under the stars. Yet, these men toiled until the fire was under control.

The damage is in the millions. This country will have to wait many a year before new saplings (to be planted later on) soar to the heights which make the Sierras and Yosemite such a wondrous sight.

I toured the area soon after the fire had been extinguished. It made one almost want to weep. It was bad enough to see the burned

out remains of two towns that several hundred people called home. Just as important, however, was to be reminded of the mountains which once housed giant Redwood and Pine which now were denuded and charred through the wrath of the forest fire.

It is true that some of these fires are caused by the lightning which almost daily stalks the Sierra heights. Unfortunately, most of such fires are the result of man's carelessness: the match or cigarette carelessly thrown from the moving car; the fire in the high, dry grass; the campers who left smoldering embers to the mercy of the night winds.

Yes, man's own neglect causes most of man's suffering. Lives are lost. A husband and wife died in the fire I have described. They were unable to race the roaring flames.

It makes one think that being amused at Smokey the Bear is not enough. Man has to have a sense of responsibility. He has to be sure that he has taken all the precautions. The summer is the time to be extra cautious. In our area you have to be doubly so. We have a drought which is in its third year. Tall timber is so parched the slightest spark will set off a holocaust.

It is discovered, too, that some humans don't care. Arson is practiced, even in the forests. It is awfully hard to catch such people. They are the type we should be most afraid of. They seem to have a peculiar delight in observing the misery and panic which results from their actions.

A friend who had to get out from the Sierra fire, which engulfed his home, described his sense of futility in packing a few belongings in a car and rushing the family to safety. Significantly, this friend also commented on the plight of the animals. Deer, rabbits, squirrels, gophers, wild cats — many natural enemies — racing in packs to get away from the fire. My friend seemed to be more moved by this sight than he did from his own misfortune.

What is the moral of all this? For heaven's sake be careful in and out of forests. If one does not care too much about one's self, think of others. It is mostly others who suffer from our careless mistakes. Smokey the Bear may only be a fragment of someone's imagination, but what he represents is reality.

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