

'Slow Justice is No Justice' - - Bishop Says on Racial Topic

This is the text of Bishop Kearney's talk at Mass at Immaculate Conception Church, Rochester, Sunday, April 12. The Mass was the fourth annual blessing of the Rochester Catholic Interracial Council, an organization of priests, nuns and lay people who study and seek to apply the Catholic Church's teachings on racial justice.

I am very happy to begin your Interracial Sunday observance by celebrating this holy Mass to ask God's blessing on the very important program you carry on through the year for His people, the sheep of His flock and for the welfare of our country.

As we kneel here at the altar of God this year we remember that great leader in this work for interracial justice, Father John LaFarge who recently was called to his eternal reward.

As a young Jesuit priest, Father LaFarge was assigned to southern Maryland and he was so upset by the situation he found there that he decided to become "a voice in the wilderness" — to proclaim the basic truth of Christianity that all men regardless of their race or color are meant to be brothers.

In an effort to solve that problem in Maryland, he organized the first Catholic Interracial Council. He had to face many disappointments and he was hampered at every turn but his presence here today is witness that Father LaFarge's voice was not crying in a complete wilderness.

His voice speaks through your activities and, before it is too late, we pray today that his voice will at last be heard.

We are witnessing at this time the very real danger that — as he frequently warned us — patience can run out.

There is therefore the urgent importance of your program to continue the efforts for racial justice under the leadership of dedicated, thinking men. The issue is now so charged with strong emotions that we need the common sense and faith and patriotism of responsible people like you.

Interracial justice is a subject which few people can approach without experiencing some degree of emotion. Yet no point of controversy has arisen in modern times which is in greater need of being separated from emotional overtones which might distort the objective truth of the issues involved.

It would be impossible to overlook the part that human emotions have played in bringing the subject of racial differences to its present stage of contention. Nor would it on the other hand be right or reasonable to say that the emotional reactions incidental to racial differences have no relation to the ultimate solution of the problem.

Emotions belong to human nature no less than do intelligence.

gent perception and voluntary choice.

The problem in any field of human relationship is to keep emotions under control and to bring them into proper integration with the other human forces which function in the development of the society in which God has destined us to work out our eternal destiny.

To a great extent this incompatibility of emotion and temperament is regrettable, and we all look forward to the day when human friendships and personal relationships will tend more positively toward the broader and firmer basis of intellectual interests and devotion to the ideals of virtue. We must not be surprised, however, if the forces which bring human beings together and keep them apart spring from the deep roots of emotional and bodily constitution, rather than from the nobler potentialities of the soul. Nor must we be surprised if prejudice, the perpetuated consequence of emotional preference and blind refusal to discover and live by the truth, sometimes present an insuperable temporary obstacle against personal association which will not yield to reasonable argument.

This is one of the sad and perhaps inevitable concomitants of a weakened human nature. We must, however, deal with human relationships as they actually exist, even as we prepare a program of social restoration from which we hope to obtain better results in years to come.

We must be careful to avoid the tempting methods of violent reform when the harmful, immediate effects will be out of proportion with the long range improvements for which our ideals move us to agitate.

We must nevertheless recognize the limits beyond which this policy of cautious and hopeful expectation may not be carried. If it is true that the members of society must struggle with their human shortcomings in their personal relations with one another, it is equally true that no group of human beings is morally justified in claiming for itself alone the total advantages which are destined for all who share in a common human nature.

Let us make no mistake about it: The rights of conscience in society and of participation in the benefits which society is destined to create and to utilize for the common good are among the inalienable rights with which every human being



Bishop Kearney offered Mass and gave the sermon at Immaculate Conception Church for the Rochester Catholic Interracial Council Sunday morning. He is shown after the Mass with Rev. Robert Kreekel, Council chaplain, and Franciscan Father Roy Gasnick who spoke at an award breakfast later in the morning.

is born into this world. God himself has bestowed them. God himself indicates the general principles according to which they must be implemented and protected.

With greater emphasis it should be stated that positions

in the service of the public should never be closed to anyone who is able to fill them simply because of the color of his skin, his ethnic or national associations, or the direction in which his conscience directs him to worship Almighty God.

Bishop, Franciscan Urge Racial Justice

(Continued from Page 1)

hands are empty at their sides in the midst of national, state and local trials.

FATHER GASNICK, who filled his talk "The Racial Crisis and the Christian Conscience," said religious leaders of all denominations in the United States have spoken with a united voice, a voice often rejected by supposedly religious people, on the racial issue.

"It is not by accident that the three faiths in this country have been brought together by the race problem; it is not by accident that an interracial movement is going on now here and all who share in a common human nature.

The Franciscan priest, long and widely known for his work for interracial justice, said, "For the Christian conscience there

can be no neutrality" and he called for active support of civil rights legislation now bogged in Senate debate, for demonstrations and action in defense of these rights wherever and whenever they are violated.

"Those who give lip service and no more are the hypocrites condemned by the Lord."

Awards for interracial action were given Rev. Andrew Gibson of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Herman Walz, Rochester attorney. The awards were a memorial to the late Mrs. Harriett Schuyler who was instrumental in establishing scholarships for Negro children to attend Catholic high schools and was active in numerous other interracial programs. More than 500 attended the awards breakfast sponsored by the Interracial Council and the Third Order of St. Francis. Dr. Nathaniel Hurst was toastmaster and civic and religious leaders also attended.

Cuba Churches Reported Open

Washington — (NC) — New York attorney James Donovan said here that, as far as he knows, the Catholic Church is not being persecuted in Cuba. "All Catholic churches in Cuba, to the best of my knowledge, are open and reasonably well attended," although mostly by women, old people and children, he said in a talk at the National Press Club.

Donovan personally negotiated with Fidel Castro for the exchange of 400 million worth of U.S. medical supplies for 1,200 prisoners captured in the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961.

ALTHOUGH ONLY Cuban priests are allowed to preach in Cuba, he said, they are free to preach against materialism and other godless philosophies like communism. "And many of them do so," he added. "I've heard them."

Donovan said Castro has set upon "a major weakness of the Catholic Church throughout Latin America — the failure to develop a strong native clergy."

He said Castro does not object to priests in Cuba as long as they are Cubans "and not Falangists from Spain." The Falange is a right wing Spanish political movement.

"Until there is a more effective Catholic social action in Latin America, none of its problems are going to be solved," he said.

Donovan said Castro has been

to give society in positions for which they are completely qualified. Our personal reactions must never be allowed to blind us to the way of fair and equitable recognition of the rights of those with whom direct Providence has destined us to live as members of a common society.

If the Kingdom of God is to be realized through the apostolate of the Church, we must be deeply concerned about the sixteen million Negroes who live within the United States. They must not become embittered and disillusioned by our failure to walk out in practice the teachings of Christ our Lord which commit the Church to make them sharers on an equal basis in the blessings of Catholic action.

Organized opinion among the Negroes considers that the United States, as the chief exponent of democracy, owes it to itself as well as to them to blot out this stain of racial discrimination. They know that they have been for generations loyal Americans, contributors in countless ways to our national success.

WHAT IF the oppressed and humiliated millions turn their backs on Christianity, rejecting that source of strength in the hands of God, Christians act as if they did not believe the doctrine?

WHAT IF these millions, in despair, turn to Communism, hearing its propagandists assure them feverishly that in Communism alone can they find equality?

WHAT IF, in blindness, they give to that foreign ideology numbers it has not been able

to suffer from the various strains of which they are made. It would be the responsibility for the death-blow which a hacking of Communism would give our institutions.

So, the future of our nation — great though we are — will not be assured until we again make spiritual and moral principles the very religion the vitalizing force of our life.

America cannot wait another generation to accomplish justice for its own people. Here as elsewhere, slow justice is no justice. The times of promise and plan must give way to fact and accomplishment. The time grows late, and the patience of the oppressed runs thin.

Let the love of Christ rouse us, for our duty now is long delayed and late. Christians bear from the vanguard that leads us into a future of universal justice, fraternal love and lasting peace.

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The Rochester Catholic Interracial Council 1964 awards were given by Dr. William Gillman, left, and Dr. Nathaniel Hurst, right, to Rev. Andrew Gibson and Herman Walz, attorney at a breakfast following Mass Sunday, April 12.

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