

Victory at Polls Far Short of Final Goal



Text and Symbol, Passion Sunday

(The author of this article is a curate at St. Paul and Augustine Church in Washington, D.C., and vice chairman of the University Neighborhoods Council there. Besides taking part in the March 25 climax of the Selma-Montgomery march, he was in the protest march in Selma two weeks earlier.)

By FATHER GENO BARONI

Montgomery — (NC) — In some ways it was a scrap of cloth, the flag of the Confederacy flying over the Alabama capitol, that spoke most clearly at the huge demonstration climaxing the Selma-to-Montgomery march.

The flag seemed to represent a twofold challenge — on the one hand to the militancy of the non-violent movement and on the other to its compassion. Both were in the hands and on the lips of many of us as we walked those last miles to the capitol building.

In their talks the leaders of the movement seemed to outdo each other in calling for stepped-up militancy, urging efforts to go further and faster. No doubt about it — this must be done.

There were also many among us, too, who were asking how the movement can begin to disarm the entrenched hostility of white southerners. How, we wondered, can ways be found for the Old South and its partisans to share in the victory when it comes, as inevitably it will?

I flew to Montgomery on one of three chartered planes from Washington, D.C. Comparisons between this occasion and the circumstances of the earlier protest march in Selma were inevitable.

In the group this time were a number of representatives of the white middle class — almost "let set" types. One wondered if some of them at least were on hand simply to earn their merit badges as civil rights activists.

But others obviously had dif-



Marching from Selma to Montgomery, singing "We Shall Overcome."

ferent motives. One very old white minister said he was going to Montgomery to represent the conscience of his people. It was the same story with many of the other clergymen — they had been deluged with requests from people asking them to go to Alabama and represent them.

We gathered, 25,000 of us, at the City of St. Jude, a Catholic parish and educational and medical center outside Montgomery. There was a circus-like atmosphere in the large open field behind its red brick buildings — a lot of confusion and plain going around in circles. There were few Catholic names on hand, but many priests were there — perhaps 800 to 1,000 — from dioceses all over the country.

The group was neither as tense nor as committed as that which had taken part in the Selma march. The danger was less this time, and there was a

feeling that this demonstration would be a sort of mop-up operation.

Then we started marching, walking "eight abreast" the 3.7 miles through the poor Negro district of Montgomery. There were people in front of the houses and on street corners along the way, old people and bright-eyed pre-school children, and they waved, clapped, cheered, reached out to touch our hands, chanting "freedom, freedom."

As we marched we were accompanied by the constant clatter of three helicopters overhead. The men of the federalized Alabama National Guard — bearing Confederate emblems on their chests — were also much in evidence. All this was a sharp contrast with Selma, where the federal presence was lacking.

On the way I met a 10th grade boy named Billy. He said he was 100 per cent in favor

of the demonstrations and very happy to see priests and nuns in them — although he was dismayed at the absence of local Catholic clergy and nuns, because they did not have permission to march.

There was a sense of history in the air on the streets of Montgomery — not alone history in the making but history that had already been made. This was the heart of the Confederacy. But it was also the birthplace of the non-violent civil rights movement, the scene of the famous bus boycott a decade ago, the starting point of Dr. Martin Luther King's work.

If it had been possible, I would have liked to get the autograph of Rosa Parks, the old lady who began the boycott by refusing to go to the back of the bus. Very much on the minds of us marchers were the words of that old Negro lady who remarked during the boycott, "My feet is tired but my soul is rested."

After the march and rally it was hard not to feel that Alabama and its people would never be quite the same again. You could see the appropriateness of the words of the speaker who compared Alabama to Egypt, Governor George Wallace to Pharaoh, and Dr. King to Moses calling on Pharaoh to "let my people go."

There was a wonderful spirit everywhere. A 12-year-old girl named Jacqueline took some of us to her house to sit down and get some rest. There were people here from all walks of life, people of every religion and no religion. I met one man, a professed atheist, who said this had been a religious experience for him.

And others were surely with us in spirit—Pope John XXIII,

4 COURIER-JOURNAL
Thursday, Apr. 1, 1965

for example, and Jim Reeb, the Unitarian minister who was killed by segregationists after taking part in the Selma march. I kept thinking of the words of St. Augustine that, for me, justified my presence: "Those who sit at rest while others take pains are like turtles who buy their quiet with disgrace."

I spoke to two priests from Montgomery. They said that in the recent past the city had come a long way. They supported the freedom movement and they praised Dr. King and his leadership. But they were fearful, too, of the trouble that might come from pockets of hard core resistance in rural areas.

All of us thought a lot not just about the past and the present, but about the future, too. What will happen to the Billie and Jacqueline of Montgomery and the hundreds of students who came from the poor Negro colleges of the South to march?

You can only hope that people will in fact begin to think in terms, not of a "Negro problem," but of an American problem.

So many unanswered questions remain.

How is the gap to be closed and communication reestablished with southern whites? How can we root out ingrained hostilities? How can we avoid the note of triumphalism in our own attitudes as the freedom movement stirs ahead? How can we show the white people of the South that we are not interested in defeating them but only in establishing the reign of justice in their land — and ours?

Bishop Kearney's Appointments

APRIL

- 2 Friday—St. Joseph Church—St. Monica Sodality Mass—9:00 a.m.
- 3 Saturday—St. Francis de Sales Church, Geneva—Capuchin Ordination—9:30 a.m.
Cardinal Mooney High School—St. Genesius Award—12:30 noon.
- 4 Sunday—Bausch and Lomb Cafeteria—Nocturnal Adoration Society Communion Breakfast—8:15 a.m.
Mark Twain Hotel, Elmira—Catholic Charities Dinner—7:00 p.m.
- 5 Monday—St. Joachim Church, Canisteo—Low Mass and Blessing of Church Addition—7:30 p.m.
- 7 Wednesday—St. Joseph Church, Penfield—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
- 8 Thursday—St. Salome Church—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
- 9 Friday—St. Francis of Assisi—Family Rosary for Peace—7:00 p.m.
- 10 Saturday—St. Philip Neri Convent—Low Mass and Blessing of new convent—9:00 a.m.
Nazareth Hall Cadet School—Blessing of Auditorium—11:00 a.m.
St. John Fisher College—Glee Club Concert—8:15 p.m.
- 11 Sunday—St. Thomas the Apostle Church—Opening of new church—12:30 noon.
St. Thomas More Church—Confirmation—3:30 p.m.
- 12 Monday—St. Louis Church, Pittsford—Confirmation—3:30 p.m.
- 14 Wednesday—Nazareth College—Closing of Retreat—11:00 a.m.
- 15 Thursday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Pontifical Mass of Christ—9:00 a.m.
- 16 Sunday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Pontifical Mass—11:00 a.m.
- 28 Wednesday—Rochester Club—Catholic Women's Club Dinner—6:30 p.m.
- 29 Thursday—St. Agnes High School—Alumnae Banquet—6:30 p.m.
- 30 Friday—St. John the Evangelist Church—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.

Bishop Casey's Appointments

APRIL

- 4 Sunday—Bausch and Lomb Cafeteria—Nocturnal Adoration Society Communion Breakfast—8:15 a.m.
St. Mary's, Bath—Blessing of New School Addition—2:00 p.m.
St. Benedict's, Odessa—Blessing of New Church, Low Mass—4:30 p.m.
- 6 Tuesday—St. John of Rochester, Perinton—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 8 Thursday—St. Margaret Mary—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
- 11 Sunday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Blessing of the Palm, Procession, Solemn Pontifical—Mass—4:00 p.m.
- 15 Thursday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Pontifical Mass of the Last Supper—7:45 p.m.
- 16 Friday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Liturgy of the Passion and Death of Our Lord—2:30 p.m.
- 17 Saturday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Easter Vigil Service—7:30 p.m. Solemn Pontifical Mass of the Easter Vigil—8:45 p.m.
- 19 Monday—Sacred Heart Hall—Rosary Guild Mother-Daughter Party—8:00 p.m.
- 24 Saturday—Bishop Kearney High School—Low Mass and Address, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women—Convention—9:30 a.m.
- 25-30 Sunday-Friday—Sacred Heart Retreat House, Auriesville—Annual Retreat

The Catholic COURIER Journal

Vol. 76—No. 27 Thursday, April 1, 1965

MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President
MAIN OFFICE: 31 Scio St., 464-7650 — Rochester, N.Y. 14604
ELMIRA OFFICE: 117 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. RE 2-5688 or RE 2-5423
AUBURN OFFICE: 168 E. Genesee St. AL 2-4446

Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
Single copy: 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S., \$5.00
As required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
Canada, \$5.50; Foreign Countries \$6.75



Civil rights marchers flood area before Alabama's capitol in Montgomery. Confederate flag flies over dome.

Can the Church in Brazil Renew Itself?

By GARY MacEON

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil—Not even San Franciscans are prouder of their city than Cariocas. I understand their sentiments, for these are two of the most beautiful cities on earth. This year, the Cariocas are shouting even louder than usual about the home town, because they are celebrating the fourth centenary of the founding of Rio de Janeiro.

Not to be left out of the festivities, the Catholic Church authorities have decided to mark the date by building a new cathedral. The design is magnificent, no medieval re-creation like our national shrine in Washington, but a swirl of color and geometry attuned to the off-beat dynamism which is Brazil at its most architecturally creative.

Its beauty, nevertheless, is not enough to justify it for a significant group of educated and socially-conscious Catholics, with a representative cross-section of whom I have talked here. "They must have rocks in their heads," was the consensus of their opinion. If I may translate loosely but accurately.

What I am trying to say is that a broad trench is opening between a lay-Catholic elite, totally conscious of the nation's social ills and aware of the need to concentrate all efforts at their solution, and a clerical establishment, conditioned to a Pavlovian reaction that has little relation to today's facts.

Seventeen months ago I wrote an article for a national magazine on the Latin American presence at the Vatican Council. At that time, some of the Brazilian contingent in Rome summed up the situation in their country for us. "Of the 200-odd bishops," they said, "some twenty are conscious that basic social reform is necessary and that the Catholic Church must take the lead. Perhaps half that number is equally convinced that it is the Church's duty to oppose any such threat to order. The other 160 are not interested. What is important is not feeling equipped to make judgment."

I have asked the same people to evaluate the position today. "A tremendous withdrawal has taken place," they tell me. "Frightened by the resuscitated left-wing

influence in the Goulart government, the official Church almost unanimously halted the army coup d'etat of last year as a crusade against Communism. Only two voices continue to cry in the wilderness for social justice, Archbishop Eugenio Sales of Natal and Archbishop Helder Camara of Recife. What may be even more serious is that the Church is identified in the eyes of the people with the military dictatorship. If it goes wrong, the Church will be the first victim."

Such, it seems to me, is the dilemma of Catholicism in Brazil. The revolution of April 1964 urgently needs a conscience to keep it on the road of constructive social reform to which it pledged itself in its triumph. Since the other social forces in the country are tainted by their excesses under the former regime, only the Catholic Church can perform this function.

The Church, unfortunately, is inhibited by its tradition of subservience to a state which controls the advancement of clerics and subsidizes Church activities. Here in Rio, for example, no vigorous official voice has been raised in defense of the Church-sponsored basic education program

starved of its funds by Governor Carlos Lacerda because its social program offended his right-wing susceptibilities.

It is left to a handful of lay Catholics to struggle to keep it alive in the face of state opposition and Church compromise.

"What will the historian have to say of the Church hierarchy which has not realized the error of closely aligning Church structures and the kind of capitalism condemned by several popes?" Such is the question posed by a priest from Europe who has worked in Brazil for many years.

"I am not thinking exclusively of the pastors who represent the Church before the masses," he adds, "nor of the 200 bishops in the nations, but also of the directors of religious congregations and orders. These have enormous influence on the Catholic mechanism in Brazil. Too often we think of the bishops as the absolute masters of the Church here. Actually, I more fear the conservative religious families hypnotized by the preservation of their own interest and privileges."

LBJ Commends Nuns At Selma Hospital

Selma — (NC) — Good Samaritan Hospital here has received a personal commendation from President Johnson for its role in caring for Negroes injured March 7 when Alabama state troopers halted a civil rights march with tear gas and clubs.

The verbal message from the President was personally extended to Sister Michael Ann, administrator, by LeRoy Collins, head of the Federal Community Relations Council. Collins has been in Selma several times in connection with the voter registration drive being led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sister Michael Ann called Collins' message from President Johnson "a refreshing interlude in the continuing events in Selma."

"Hospital personnel are accustomed to being called upon to give more than is humanly possible during times of community crises, but the events of March 7 drained all of us, not only physically and mentally but also emotionally and spiritually," she said.

Good Samaritan Hospital is owned by the Fathers of St. Edmund and supervised by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Rochester.