

How Human Can Christians Be?

(Continued from Page 1)

"Isn't this just like the Italian?"

There quickly followed, as I recall, a feeling of approval: "Finding God in all things," "a thoroughly Christian atmosphere in the whole of life," were a few of the comments that came to mind.

Today, however, the memory of the sign and of my reaction to it somewhat embarrasses and chagrins me. Today I feel: A bank is a bank is a bank. It is not a church. It is a place for money and finance, not for devotion.

There are surely enough churches in Rome whose names may honor the Holy Spirit.

However homely and even trivial, the example may serve to raise the issue: Is my present attitude secularistic? Or does it represent a legitimate Christian secularity?

And if banks are to be stripped of Christian labels, why not political parties and (to be trivial again and closer to America) breads and wines and hotels and aspirins and cough medicines? But then — what of hospitals and welfare organizations? More delicately still, what of schools and learning? Should we not also say: A poem is a poem is a poem; or, an atom is an atom is an atom, and leave the non-religious aspects of education and scholarship unembarrassed by religious preoccupations?

One of the most deeply rooted attitudes of modern man is his refusal to see his cherished human values captured or manipulated by forces and institutions he considers extraneous, whether it be by party-line communism or party-line Christianity.

To what extent should the Church accommodate herself to this tenacious mentality? And to what extent is it a matter not merely of pragmatic accommodation (which frequently breeds even deeper resentment), but of a real exigency of the gospel, that human institutions be permitted a larger autonomy in Christian thought and action than they have enjoyed in the past?

The dilemma confronting Christian man today may be expressed as follows: He is, on the one hand, deeply convinced that the incarnation profoundly touches human (and cosmic) life in all its aspects; for him it is inconceivable that any area of human endeavor should be unaffected by the gospel.

On the other hand, he knows from history and experience that the world has not been saved by the "incarnation" of human values ultimately serves neither these values nor Christianity. Is there not some way that the world can be fully Christ's world without violence being done to its very Weltlichkeit?

Secularity is by no means new in modern Christian thought.

Three decades ago, Jacques Maritain gave it powerful and distinctive expression in his remarkable book "True Humanism." He held up for the coming age the ideal of a Christendom (a term that today is expendable) that would not represent, as did the Middle Ages, a "consecration" of the temporal order and its "instrumentalization" for spiritual goals, but would rather aim at a reformation of the world in the character, i.e., that would leave to the created and the temporal a certain status of autonomy

that they lacked in the Middle Ages.

Much of what Maritain said may need revision today, but the basic insights were truly prophetic and are now finding many echoes in Christian thought.

Many Catholic thinkers have been writing in this vein. The Dominican Father Chenu has recently asked whether and in what sense the phrase "consecratio mundi," despite its occurrence in modern papal documents, is an appropriate one to describe the layman's function with respect to the world. Another prominent Dominican, Father Edward Schillebeeckx, in his essay "The Church and Mankind" (in the volume of the same name in the Paulist Concilium series), moves in a similar direction. On one specific aspect of the Church-world confrontation, that of religious freedom and Church-State relationships, it has been the effect of the contribution of Father John Courtney Murray to show that we are not reduced to choosing between a secularistic and a secularistic solution.

Among Protestants a very influential movement, which stems from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (executed by the Nazis in 1945) and finds its chief popularizer in Bishop John Robinson, whose "Honest to God" and other publications, currently have English Christians excited, has called for a secular version of Christianity in tones that have shocked many people. More recently, Paul Van Buren's "The Secular Meaning of the Gospel" and Harvey Cox's "The Secular City" show that the movement is by no means confined to the other side of the Atlantic.

Modern theology gives us an immense advantage over the man of the Middle Ages. For him, it was only the presence of the institutional and sacramental Church that rescued the world from its sinful condition, or at least brought the world, conceived as a neutral reality, within the sphere of the holy. For Francis Xavier, the ancestors of the pagans he evangelized were lost, because only the presence of the baptizing Church made salvation possible. More broadly, only the formal consecration (not to speak of exorcism) of the temporal gave it salvific status.

Today, we realize that the theology underlying such conceptions, though correct in its intentions, is in error in its necessity of Christ and the Church for salvation, was not correct in some of the inferential steps that led to the Church in the full scope of their presence and activity, we are aware that there is salvation for men and institutions outside the institutional, sacramental Church. We realize, too, that the world as set over against the Church, is not necessarily to be conceived as a hostile or merely neutral force.

By the incarnation, by the cross and resurrection, the world is already Christian and ecclesial in its dynamic orientation. Its Christianity is, in Rahner's new famous term, "anonymous," but it is real.

To quote Father Schillebeeckx: "in the plan of salvation, the concrete world, by definition, is an implicit Christianity: it is an objective, non-sacred but saintly and sanctified expression of mankind's communion with the living God; whereas the Church, 'qua' institution of salvation, with her explicit creed, her worship and sacraments, is the direct and



May Day Rite At St. Agnes

Bishop Kearney, who presided at St. Agnes High School's May Day, is pictured with the members of the court, from left, Marsha Haase, Kathleen Zapf, Joan Woolston, Paula Schickler, the May Day Queen, Eleanor Celentani, and Margaret Munch.

sacral expression of that identical communion" (The Church and Mankind, p. 84).

Even from this sketchy presentation, one may see the implications of such a theology for the Christian's attitude toward the world — and toward the Church. The world is not so much to be consecrated, captured, given meaning and salvific relevance. Rather it is to be recognized, endorsed, brought to fulfillment. Also, if the world is, in a true sense, the disclosed Church, the Church in her turn is the world fulfilled and manifested. In St. Augustine's beautiful phrase: "The Church is the world reconciled." She is not only the sign of Christ but the sign of the world — "sacramentum mundi."

From all this it may be seen that Christian secularity is not merely to be distinguished from secularism; it is at the opposite pole from it. Where secularism is the negation of the sacred, Christian secularity is the affirmation of the sacred in the secular.

Record Total Given Missions

Rome — (NC) — Catholics the world over last year gave almost \$31.8 million to the missions through the Church's official channels — an all-time record, according to figures released here.

Contributions to the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1964 totaled \$26,922,000, the society's secretary general, Mgr. Raymond P. Ettefjord of Dubuque, Ia., said. This was an increase of \$2,043,319 over 1963. Another \$4,899,056 was raised for mission seminaries by the Society of St. Peter's Apostles for the Native Clergy.

The figures are contained in the annual report issued during the plenary meetings of the superior councils of the Pontifical Mission Societies, May 12-14. These include the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Society of St. Peter's Apostles for Native Clergy and the Pontifical Missionary Union of the Clergy.

Mgr. Ettefjord noted how, ever, that despite the increase in the money given to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith by Catholics throughout the world still falls far short of the needs in many mission territories.

larish maintains that religion and Christianity are irrelevant for the world. Christian secularity insists that the world itself, even prior to its contact with institutional Christianity, is inescapably religious and Christian.

Of the many possible ramifications of this view of the Church and the world, only one may be touched on here: the role of the laity in an era of Christian secularity. Among many others, Maritain, Rahner and, in a more pragmatic way, John Copley, have warned against conceiving the lay apostolate as merely the secular arm of the institutional Church.

Certainly there is in the Church a variety of instrumental roles — from parish catechist to member of a secular institute — for those of the laity who wish to participate in the hierarchy's task of formal evangelization. But the layman's primary role as Christian and therefore as apostle must be simply his active, Christian, witnessing presence in and to the world through his performance of the tasks of the world.

A host of other questions are raised by this idea of Christian secularity: Does it throw a theoretical light on the current debates over Catholic schools and over the presence of the Church on secular campuses? Will it reduce our emphasis across the board on Catholic organizations in favor of greater participation by Catholics in the secular counterparts of these organizations?

One thinks, for example, of some recent differences of opinion regarding the Peace Corps as compared with Catholic lay missionary organizations. What of the nature and role of religious men and women in a Church characterized by secularity? Should religious (who, as religious, are not members of the clergy) reinterpret their embracing of the evangelical counsels in such a way that, while still to be distinguished from the members of secular institutes, they are less removed from the world and the secular quest?

Or, on the contrary, in an era in which the Christian role of the laity and of the secular institutes in the world will be stressed, should religious withdraw from some of the active roles they have assumed in the modern Church?

COURIER-JOURNAL
Friday, May 28, 1965

College Honors Bishop's Brother

(Continued from Page 1)

may disagree with the opinion expressed.

"There can be no better proof of the sad materialism of our day," Bishop Kearney said, "than in an era where there is so much legislation against drugs that injure the body and against impure food preparation, so little concern is shown in the matter of poisoning the mind and soul of the young — and all because of the professed horror at the word 'censorship'."

Prior to the formal indoor ceremonies, viewed by more than 1200 in the Kearney Sports Building, the Cardinal officiated in the actual dedications. Madonna Library and then the sports structure were blessed and the dedication Crucifix placed in each building.

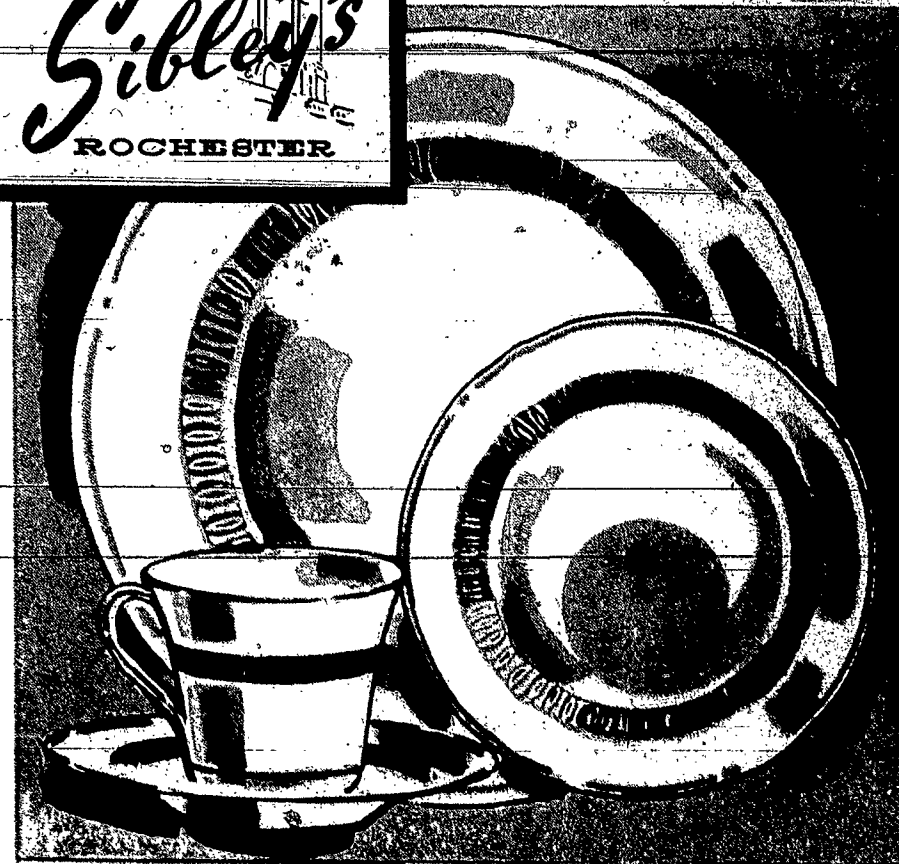
The program in the Kearney building included four numbers by the College Glee Club; one was Rubinstein's "Scherzetto," which featured the vocal ensemble and a violin obbligato played by Miss Marie Kreeck, a junior from New Rochelle.

Another student from New Rochelle, Miss Janet O'Shaughnessy, president of the Student Council of the college — presented the Cardinal with a spiritual bouquet from the students.

Madonna Library, first of the two buildings to be dedicated, will house 100,000 volumes. It is a 25,000-square-foot structure and includes a "Little Theatre," conference rooms, a rare book room, curriculum library, a listening room, and microfilm reader.

The Kearney Sports Building is an 18,000-square-foot structure also built of contemporary brick and natural stone exterior. In addition to the gymnasium, auditorium, it includes stage, dressing rooms, a student lounge, storage, and physical education equipment.

The two buildings are the last of four buildings new or acquired within the past year by the college. Last fall, the college opened the first two new buildings — St. Edmund's Hall and Mater Dei Hall, two new residence halls.



Celesta, 5-pc. place setting . . . 19.95



Golden Melody, 5-pc. place setting 21.95



Bolero, 5-pc. place setting . . . 21.95



Crescendo, 5-pc. place setting . . . 25.95



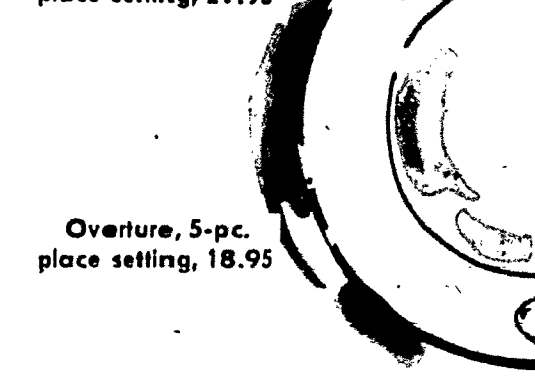
Golden Scroll, 5-pc. place setting, 27.95



Picardy, 5-pc. place setting, 21.95



Capella, 5-pc. place setting, 24.95



Overture, 5-pc. place setting, 18.95

we proudly introduce

THE
SYMPHONY COLLECTION
exquisite new porcelain
by Castleton

The beautiful harmony of the traditional and contemporary mark these Symphony patterns as classics-to-be. Elegantly shaped, exquisitely patterned, glowingly translucent, yet so practical that Symphonies are dishwasher- or safer it will be love at first sight when brides (and their mothers) see this new Castleton china . . . why not put it on your gift list? You'll find the Symphony Collection only at Sibley's (in Rochester), in our China Department, Fourth Floor, Downtown.

BRIDES-TO-BE . . . help your friends when it comes time for them to choose their bridal gifts for you . . . sign up in Sibley's Wedding Gift Registry on the Fourth Floor.

4¹/₄%
paid quarterly
from the day
of deposit

Community Savings Bank

Cor. Main & Clinton/Cor. Exchange & Broad
300 Waring Road/424 Ridge Road West/Cor. South
Main & Church, Pittsford, N.Y./Midtown Arcade

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation



If you miss it here.

or here



you'll get
the message
here

Whether or not you see "Smooth As Silk" on a bottle of Kessler—you can't miss it when you taste what's in the bottle.

Kessler the Smooth As Silk whiskey

Full 86 proof \$4.99

JULIUS KESSLER COMPANY, LAWRENCEVILLE, INDIANA. BLENDED WHISKY. 40-50% ALC/VOL (80-100 PROOF). 75% ALC/VOL (150 PROOF).