

Newman Clubs, End of an Era?

16 COURIER-JOURNAL
Friday, Dec. 2, 1966

Theology Study Reported Starved

Washington — (NC) — There is a need for a "thoroughgoing revolution" in the theological education which is being starved when compared with other professional training in this country, the dean of Harvard University's divinity school underscored here.

Large foundations as well as the churches have failed to support innovation in theological schools, Dean Samuel H. Miller said in an address at a luncheon in the Cosmos Club here.

"The cost of theological education doubled between 1940 and 1950; between 1950 and 1960, it doubled again, and it bids fair to double in this decade once more," he continued. "Yet the use of church money for theological education is vastly erratic and inefficient. Scores of denominational schools, too small to achieve a community of religious dialogue in the face of overspecialization, or too much concerned with conforming to stereotypes imposed by denominational custom, are in need of radical revision."

To save theological schools, large and small, denominational and undenominational, from "mediocrity," Dean Miller recommended "a vast and critical review, with an eye to reducing their numbers, redefining their functions, relocating their services."

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olicies designed to keep their activity limited.

Is it time for us to begin to question whether Newman Associations in general, valuable as they may have been for another age and mentality, can possibly hope to meet ALL the expectations of today?

The Church needs a university chaplain. Catholic students should have the opportunity afforded by his convenient office and Mass-on-campus (intriguing possibilities of liturgical experiment?); guidance and counsel and Sunday night socials — in short, the availability of the cleric of good will answers, no doubt, the needs of some. But as "total presence," attempting non-credit, extra-curricular "theology" classes and seminars, Newman groups often are seen as rickety postures of the old "ghetto" mind: existing on the campus fringe for the "defense" and "protection" of the few non-participants in the Catholic systems reluctantly permitted by the Church to be on a secular campus.

The presiding chaplain—and American bishops and priests as well, for that matter—are generally in no sense products of the secular campus situation they are asked to evaluate. Too often they are forced into a demeaning struggle for their own support or—the "ghetto" mind in a more elaborate disguise—reduced to the humiliation of engratiating themselves into social calendars to "work on" this or that key figure in university personnel.

Clearly the university chaplain needs and deserves all the facilities necessary to function realistically as chaplain. But the new situation thrusts itself far beyond the "chaplain phase," I believe. To settle easily for more and better buildings, for example, or more clergy doing the same old things more elaborately the old way, may make Christianity on campus superficially more impressive. But the most advanced enterprises of this kind today (Arizona? Wisconsin?) continue to reach only a tiny fraction of Catholic students. Further, such a placement of resources seem to imply a radically wrong concept of what "impressive" means in both Christian and university terms.

Many bishops and priests, then, are confronted with a situation now for which nothing in their training or experience prepared them—even as recently as 10 years ago. Engagement, want, and need: the "How-to-City" on River Boulevard time. At least one bright spot, however, may be emerging as a base on which to build some reinforcement to the presently bleak picture of the things of God in the halls of Academe.

A growing number of priests and sisters have of late years been appearing on the local university campus, to prepare themselves academically for work elsewhere. Their almost universal experience has been that in the casual encounters of classroom struggle they can do more—or BE more—of Christ than ever would have been possible in an office or room, detached from the mainstream and therefore identified with the bureaucracy—as even the ideal "Catholic Center on Campus" would seem to be. These priests and nuns have often found, sometimes to their great surprise, a more ready and genuine acceptance as people within the secular university milieu than they could honestly have hoped for "back home" in their own school situations. The meaning systems through which their presence filtered, though often alien to their own, was rarely hostile.

One reason, perhaps, for this paradox is not hard to find (specific density of stereotypes?). As a result of these oblique encounters, dozens and perhaps hundreds of people who never had anything to do with priest or nun before, and who indeed can go through years at the university without even hearing of "religious presence" there, have found at the very heart of their academic life some warm friendships and understanding that, I take it, is the preamble to modern concepts of "witness."

Surely this is a healthy development from all points of view. For the priests and nuns have learned too. The best, and the vulnerable to every agony" is to share it in some measure. And this impact on our teachers is more and more affecting their work in specifically Catholic institutions. For as the Catholic colleges go on with their work, trying to enlighten those present with Christian values of life penetrating their academic and life experience, the very quality of that insight is being hammered out right now on the secular campuses the teachers attend—with or without an accepted Christian catalyst for the secular humanist dynamism that animates it.

Can some of these people be left for work in their fields on those campuses? If I understand "witness" correctly, I wonder if they couldn't stay there as examples of the Christian life show-and-experienced, actually lived in the "Outer-City" on River Boulevard. Might this not be a worthwhile experiment, just to see what the grace of God might possibly do with it? I wonder if the

same concept Bishop Casey is using with inner city work in Paterson, and Bishop Sheen urges as the present task of missionaries, might be fruitfully applied locally in a different sense of the word "feeding." Such an experiment is not without precedent elsewhere, and even at the University of Rochester where ordained and religiously committed ministers of other Christian persuasions have found it possible to be "what they are — men of God — while impressively performing academic tasks in their other areas."

Because of historical forces, a simple communication gap that still exists locally, certain attitudes of distrust and suspicion must be "lived out," I suspect, on both sides. But surely we are beyond the old-time misgivings about infiltration and proselytizing by now. And only the very immature today confuse the questioning process, an established learning method as old as Socrates, with "challenges to faith," requiring instant "defense."

But a priest or sister engaged in non-theological work on a secular campus? Certainly not very many, and not someone routinely assigned to it. Yet so far as the non-theological part is concerned, I'm really not sure it matters very much. What passed for theology in our recent history, a largely notional affair controlled by a static, "here-are-the-answers" version of Thomism, is frankly of little interest to students on secular campuses. Not until they are older, maybe much older, will they want to know "about religion" in the sense of whether certain structures or systems are "true" — these questions seem somehow trivial compared to the compelling issues before them.

The modern American university has vast specialized areas of study and research, and enormous complexities of structure which, while giving its new student an identity card (mostly for library purposes), rapidly then submerges him in manifold bewilderments and competitive pressures at the very time in his life when other awareness becomes keenest — technology, the Bomb, situation ethics, basic social changes, sex, career, the draft, and so on. He is promptly forced to seek meaning.

Perhaps at this point the exposed official Catholic witness has something to offer — his deep conviction, for example, that impersonality is un-Christian, his own coherence system manifested (not "preached") and evaluated among all the others they see, including the proposition that the search for meaning is a pseudo-hunger in the first place. The Church person who can bring his own sensibilities to bear at this point, who has his finger on the pulse of the university and does not have to "prove" that his religious commitment in no way corrupts, compromises, or otherwise interferes with his work on campus — who can most of all listen — seems to me desperately needed at this time on

Campus Dateline

Communism Breakfast
The Parent-Teacher Association of Nazareth Academy will sponsor a Communism breakfast for the sophomores of the academy and their parents, Dec. 4 in the school cafeteria following a Mass offered by Father James Williams, school chaplain, at 9 a.m. in the auditorium. Guest speaker will be Howard Hosmer of the staff of WHEC.

Spaghetti Supper
The Student Council of Nazareth Academy will sponsor a "Dad's Christmas Fun Night" in the school cafeteria, Dec. 11. The event will open with a spaghetti supper, after which students will present an informal entertainment.

English Awards
Several area high school students have been honored for their achievements in the field of English. Bonnie Sutherland of Bishop Kearney and Maureen Dey and Shannon Wiksom of Nazareth Academy have been cited by the National Council of Teachers of English in its annual achievement awards competition.

Miss Dey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dey, 195 Danforth St., was named a national winner and received a certificate of superior achievement. Miss Wiksom, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Wiksom, 436 Yarmouth Rd., was named runner-up. Also named a national runner-up was Miss Sutherland, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Sutherland, 204 Frankland Rd.

In announcing the winners James Square, executive secretary of NCTE, stated that the Council recommends these students for college scholarships in 1967. The NCTE sends all winners and runners-up scrolls of recognition and it honors their high school English departments with certificates of merit.

Essay Contest Winners
Two Bishop Kearney High School seniors who wrote prize-winning essays in a contest sponsored by the Rochester Optimist Club were honored at a banquet Nov. 16 at Pilgrim's Landing Restaurant. Greg Conderacci and Liz Wilson won second place and honorable mention in a competition designed to encourage law enforcement among teenagers.

Judging the entries were Judge John Conway, Police Sergeant Don Williams and Bill Beoney, columnist for the Democrat and Chronicle.

Exchange Students
Notre Dame High School, Elmira, opened its doors to its second exchange student of the year on Nov. 19, when Costanza Caro joined the student body. She arrived from Bogota, Colombia on an exchange program sponsored by the International Fellowship. Costanza will live with the family of Notre Dame junior Mary Kelly for three months and for the remaining time will stay with the family of senior Mary Ann Gridley.

Miss Lucrecia Braham, Guatemala City, joined the student body in September preparatory to entering St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing next year.

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Day of Reflection Set By Sr. Joseph Gilmary

Horseheads — A day of reflection will be given by Sister Joseph Gilmary, S.S.A., at St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, on Sunday, Dec. 4.

This is a special Advent project of the Altar and Rosary Society, under the chairmanship of Mrs. William Hulbert and Mrs. Donald Stebbins, and is open to the ladies of the area, especially the teenage girls attending public high schools.

Sister Joseph Gilmary is Regional Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph and lives at St. Joseph Convent in Auburn.

Her first conference at 2-30 will be "Kindness or Charity: the Foundation for Family Community." Second conference at 3:30 will be "Kindness or Charity: the Foundation for Parish Community." Following the conferences, there will be a Bible Service on "God's Love for Man."

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Theology Award To Dominican

Washington — (NC) — Cardinal Spellman of New York and Father Paul McKeever, president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, joined to present the society's Cardinal Spellman award to Dominican Father Paul Kevin Meagher at a ceremony at Holy Redeemer College here.

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