

# Religious Education in Pluralistic Age Takes a New Look at World Around Us

Dear Father Shamon:  
I have already received your gracious acceptance to the newly created office of Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education.

Since the proposed office is new in diocesan structures, may I explain how it came into being.

1. We are living in what might be called a pluralistic age, in which fragmentation, division and splitting of unities have followed fast upon the fission of the atom.  
2. This pluralism in Western Christian civilization formerly

took on the form of an intellectual conflict between Christian sects. A benign civil war was waged between them, each claiming to be a bearer of truth.

3. Two world wars, the rise of world religions and the rise of three totalitarian ideologies made pluralism more universal. Christianity was no longer engaged in a civil war; rather there was now a kind of invasion from the outside, sometimes directed against religion, and at other times making religion so broad as to be ineffective.

4. The Church could not live in the world and be unaffected by this pluralism. In one particular area—the fission of the atom—breaking the link of religious teaching into departments, such as the Department of Education, the Contraband of Christian Doctrine, the Newman Apostolate, teaching Religion in High Schools and Adult Education. This was exactly the problem Paul had in Corinth when some groups said, "I am for Paul," others, "I am for Apollos," and still others, "I am for Cephas." (1 Cor. 1:12)  
To remedy a situation in which the pluralism of the world created even a pluralism in religious education, we now take steps to unify all religious education in the diocese under

This is the text of Bishop Sheen's letter to Father Albert J. Shamon explaining his appointment as Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education in the Rochester Diocese.

one Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education.  
It will be your function to:  
1. Supervise and unify religious education in the diocese in parochial schools, catechetical schools, Newman centers, high schools, adult education—wherever the World of God is formally taught.  
2. Cooperate with the Ecumenical Commission in making pluralism serve Christ's reconciling message to the world. As Dr. Visser 't Hooft expressed it: "The very realities of the plu-

ralistic world bring the churches closer together, they cast us all back upon the original basis of our faith and force us to take a new look at the world about us. So Pluralism may offer an opportunity for a new united testimony by the entire Church of Jesus Christ and to the world."  
3. Cooperate with all educational agencies who seek to introduce objective courses on religion in elementary schools in accordance with the decision of Justice Clark who wrote concerning the Abington School Case: "Nothing we have said indicates that such a study of the Bible or religion, when presented as a part of the secular program of education, may not be effected and be consistent with the First Amendment."

Your Appointment as Episcopal Vicar for Religious Education will become effective on May 4, 1967.

In conclusion, as we well know, the spirit of evil is in the world, whittling away the wood of the Cross by denying sacrifice, leaving us only a plastic Christ on a plastic Cross. But the Holy Spirit is at work too, in ecumenism, in defense of the socially disinherited, in the

missionary impulse to care for the uncared. Millions of young are waiting to be claimed by God. This is our work and I beg you to help me, remembering always the words of Jesus: "How much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."  
In union with our High Priest, I continue to be,  
Your Co-Worker in Christ,

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*Fulton J. Sheen*  
Bishop of Rochester

## Disregard for Authority Jeopardizes Liberty

(Following is a letter Bishop Sheen sent to pastors of the Diocese urging observance of Law Day, May 1.)  
Reverend and dear Father:  
No responsible effort to bring the Church or State into a more effective relationship with the modern age has ever been undertaken without regard for law and the authority from which it springs. Since God is that authority, it should be quickly recognized that all men who exercise authority do so as stewards of a high divine trust and all those who are subject to authority lose their cherished liberty by a careless regard for authority.

Nor dare we disparage authority because history or personal experience has uncovered abuses on the part of those upon whom it has been conferred or those for whose welfare it is exercised. Abuses and confusion must at all costs be met by a reasonable and Christian approach with reflective thought to the common origin and the common destiny, as well as the common good of mankind in the present situation. This calls for forbearance in action, leadership in the exemplification of principle, and respect for such orderly channels for redress as may be established.

To foster respect for the law, to increase public understanding of the place of law in American life and to point up the contrast between freedom under law in the United States and governmental tyranny under communism, the American Bar Association has sponsored through its subsidiaries the observance of May 1 each year as Law Day.

Aware of the great benefits that can be preserved for society by a correct understanding and deep respect for the law, we request that the proclamation of "Law Day" be vigorously commended to all the people of our diocese.

With a blessing, I am,  
Devotedly yours in Christ,  
+ FULTON J. SHEEN  
Bishop of Rochester.

## 'Spiritual' Value For Better World

Vatican City — (RNS) — The massive tourist activity of our time has "drawbacks," Pope Paul VI told a group studying the subject, but "we must also admit that it is pregnant with human and spiritual values."  
"What is new about tourism," Pope Paul said, "is the way it is carried on today. It is a vast undertaking that has become highly important in many aspects and for many people. We have only to look at the commercial, publicity, technical and economic aspects that have all mushroomed in very recent times."  
Among its spiritual values, he said, tourism contributes to mutual understanding by removing barriers of isolation and prejudice. It helps the exchange of ideas and dialogue among men and helps to pave the way for peace and the building of a better world, he said.

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## Our Need 'To Learn from Those Who Can Teach'

This article is both a report and a commentary. Rory M. Culhane, the article's author, is a member of the McQuaid Jesuit High School faculty, in the school's department of religion. Dr. Joseph Fletcher, widely known author and lecturer, an Episcopalian clergyman, spoke at McQuaid earlier this year on current trends in the study of ethics and morality. Mr. Culhane reports on what he said and comments on those areas where there is a similarity or a divergence between Dr. Fletcher's position and that of Catholic moral authors today.

Although all the areas of human knowledge have expanded to levels unthinkable twenty years ago, theology, politics and literature have remained as stable as ever, in fact, in regard to background may pass judgment.  
Not that these areas are free of complexity but the mere fact that one has gone to church (or even stayed away), had a moral problem, read a book or voted entitles him to his opinion.  
Because of the many pre-conceived and prejudicial opinions concerning "Situation Ethics" which people have formed, I am rather reluctant to attempt to review in a few words what Dr. Joseph Fletcher attempted to capsule from a lifetime of investigation into sixty minutes of presentation to an adult audience on the seventeenth of January at McQuaid Jesuit High School. This will have strains of an "apologia" as well as the intention of review.

It is the general consensus of exegetes of most denominations that the Ten Commandments were not given physically to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The hierarchy device which we find in the Bible is an attempt to convey the idea that a man or man seeking the will of God formulated this code in an attempt to bring them closer to Yahweh. (A code similar to this, based on the same ten commandments, was found in Babylon hundreds of years before Moses but devoid of the theistic orientation of the Ten Commandments.)  
The content of these Commandments is different from the concepts which we have attached to them today. Adultery, for example, was a sin which only the female could commit and fornication is never mentioned. However, the Commandments do represent man's effort to look at his society and formulate laws by which he should live. As society became more complex, so did the laws by which it was governed.

The appearance of Christ gave new emphasis to an old law: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Not an easy law but one demanding great self responsibility and the honesty to see it as a tremendous challenge. It has been two thousand years since that message was first delivered so emphatically and the present-day application and presentation of its principle demands an understanding of the present state of Christianity. It is from this position that Dr. Fletcher began his address.

To understand the meaning and direction of the "New Morality" it must be placed in two frames of reference. The first frame would be that which Cardinal Bea called the "New Reformation" or what many Protestant theologians call "the end of the first reformation." Any sensitive theologian realizes that theology must involve itself in the social conditions in which man finds himself.  
This reappraisal is reflected by the depth of the present investigation into the meaning of man and the awareness of the

rapidity with which the world changes. He is conscious of the fact that as man's knowledge is said to double every ten years, theology cannot remain stationary.  
This "New Reformation" has been realized in three phases: first, the "New Theology." This is a break away from the "classical," mythical, metaphysical formulations employing deductive reasoning. The "New Theology" employs inductive reasoning and empirically oriented, fact-minded investigation. There are no "a priori" or ontological statements. It attempts to show that there is a massive change in orientation between the Old Testament and the New Testament; that the Judaic code of justice is not the Christian concept of love; that the Old Testament concept of justice is a heritage but not the principle of the new commandment. The category of the "New Theology" can be broken down into the Conservative wing (Fletcher places Bishop James Pike here), on the far left are the "Death of God" theologians and the mediating position is occupied by the moderate, Einarby, "Honest to God" Bishop John A. T. Robinson, Anglican Diocese of Woolwich, England.

Secondly, there is the "New Evangelism" which represents a shift away from proclamation to one of demonstration. There are, he said, no pulpitering claims; it is reflected in acts rather than talk. It is concerned with the application of the Christian commandment rather than the cloistered formulation of codes of behavior and purpose which have little meaning outside the classroom. On the Conservative wing of the "New Evangelism" Dr. Fletcher would place Hendrik Kraemer; on the left wing, Malcolm Boyd; and, in the middle, Elsie Fox, author of "The Secular City."  
The third phase of the "New Reformation" is the "New Morality." Dr. Fletcher places himself in the middle with Bishop Francis Simons of Indore, India. On the left he places Bishop John A. T. Robinson and on the Conservative right, Jesuit Father Robert Johnson.

Against this "New Reformation" backdrop there is also a "Socio-Cultural" frame of reference the stimulus which we encounter daily in our social atmosphere. Dr. Fletcher feels that this has been reflected by three corruptions of Christianity: pietism, moralism and legalism.  
Pietism is the distortion of authentic piety by taking the Christian aspiration for social obligation, redemption and concern and by making it a private, one-to-one, soul-saving relation-

## New Church Education At Nazareth

FATHER GEORGE S. WOOD conducted cornerstone blc 23. Four hundred civic aishioners and friends at placed an item in a copper The new church, with a c this Fall.

The days of the security-seeking Christian as Dostoevsky pictures him in *The Brothers Karamazov* are over: the "agglomeration" can exist only with enlightened consciences. For now, as never before, man must know what he believes in and not just that he believes.  
In order to practice the "love" concept of situation ethics we must have enlightened minds and we must teach the God of Love rather than the Grim Reaper concept which presently underlies our anthropomorphic God in judgment. This, after all, is the challenge of Vatican II.  
The world must be our teacher with its variety of approaches to the problems of all men. We must listen to the Hans Kungs, Dostoevskys, Albert Camus and Joseph Fletcher to see which approaches will work and to see the grave responsibilities of all choices of "free will."  
The ideal condition would be, I admit, that men should be right by instinct; "... but since we are all too likely to go astray the reasonable thing is to learn from those who can teach." — Sophocles, *Antigone*  
We cannot teach all truth to all men but we can orient them. We can make them aware of the soul-searching demands which they must face.  
"To every man... there comes a moment when that which before was meaningless first lifts, as it were, one corner of its curtain that hides its mystery and reveals, in a burst of delight which later and fuller understanding can hardly ever equal, one glimpse of the indefinite possibilities within," as C. S. Lewis so wisely observed in *Out of the Silent Planet*. "A man need not know all to be aware of the "indefinite possibilities within."  
"Four Myths about Parochial Schools" and "Parochial School Questions" were two recent articles contributed by Father O'Neill to *America*. Father O'Neill has also written for *Ave Maria*, *Catholic Education Review*, and the *Catholic School Journal*.  
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abandoned to himself on the earth that his actions become definite "engagements." He bears the responsibility for an outside power, but of himself, and which bears the imprint of his defeats as well as his victories.  
"Situationism" is the mediator between the absolutes of legalism and the discordant spontaneity of antinomianism. A situationist enters every situation armed with principles which he takes seriously as guide lines, illuminators, because he takes law and order seriously. Certainly, he sees all these moral principles to be well-framed ethical generalities based on experience and honest reflection. But, he also knows that only a "free act" is an authentically, genuinely human act.  
To be a human act the burden of proof rests on the individual and his act must reflect a serious decision in a given situation. No law can be valid always, and the individual sees that he can employ all known ethical generalities only as guidelines. He sees these guidelines as relative rather than absolute; particular rather than universal; inductive rather than deductive; and empirical (fact-oriented) rather than "a priori" (principle-oriented).  
The situationist is concerned with the serious issues of freedom, obligation and judgment."  
Quoting Margaret Mead, Dr. Fletcher stated that ours is a secular world which "means a world where there is never one answer but a diffusion of vocations and responsibilities with creative openness and the possibility of change." Situation ethics is the most secular of the three ethical decision-making methods. It is people-centered with belief in the "law of Love and not the love of law" and the love of people, not principles.  
True, the number of times when "love will go against what a law would also dictate is few. After all, aren't the number of Antigones and Kierkegaardian Abrahams negligible? Why the need to change? Why not keep the code with our present system of casuistry?  
The question is one of psychological orientation and not semantics. The "New Morality" is part of the "package deal" with the "New Theology" and the "New Evangelism." The ethics of Fletcher is but one "window" (if I might use Rev. Bernard Haring's analogy) of many aspects of the total picture and question of theology. All these aspects are concerned with man, society and God and hence the conflict of Love and law has many practical problems.

Legalism arms a person with moral principles which are, supposedly, inherently and intrinsically valid regardless of the situation. The legalists say that any situation can be changed by any law; that lying is always wrong. The end of these laws is personal happiness of the security of having done the "right" thing. As C. S. Lewis' *Big Ghost in The Great Divide* states: "Happiness... as you will come to see... lies in the path of duty." One can state that God exists but this fact is relatively unimportant if we have a code to tell us what is right or wrong. It isn't God who motivates an action but adherence to the law.  
Antinomianism goes in the opposite direction: Every situation, it is said, is radically discontinuous and unique. There are no laws or ethical principles in any spontaneous actions. There is no web of experience to the human milieu. A situation 'A' and a situation 'B' may have the same external characteristics but the solution to 'A' bears no relevance to the solution to situation 'B.' It is the legalistic in all senses. There is no concept of Christian unity or direction. However, it is not chaotic. It confronts the Dostoevskian question, "If God does not exist, then everything is permitted" and answers like Simone de Beauvoir: "On the contrary, it is because man is

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Is the present anti-abortion law in keeping with the Christian spirit when there are more than half a million "illegal" abortions performed annually in the United States at the cost of more than 5,000 women, the majority of whom are married? Is the "pill" the lesser of two evils when, considering mechanical forms of contraception when the pill's possible mental and physical effects are still of grave concern in the medical field? The draft? Civil disobedience? Capital punishment?  
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It means education based on the reality of the New Testa-

ment, the presentation of Christ as the author of a new covenant based on Love. It means that one admits that faith is capable of an intellectual foundation. It means that both the teacher and the pupil must be staggeringly aware that what they are encountering is a reality and not sentiment or hearsay.  
We have a polarized concept that all truth and all its intricacies were made known to us by about the year 33 A.D. Neither history nor the New Testament will substantiate such a view. "We must constantly investigate and see the deeper meanings which only history and thought can lead to a concept as staggering as Christianity. We must be very careful that we are not... so occupied in spreading Christianity that (we) never (give) a thought to Christ." The task is mammoth in proportions; exciting and frustrating in scope. The answers are not easy but "let us begin."  
The days of the security-seeking Christian as Dostoevsky pictures him in *The Brothers Karamazov* are over: the "agglomeration" can exist only with enlightened consciences. For now, as never before, man must know what he believes in and not just that he believes.  
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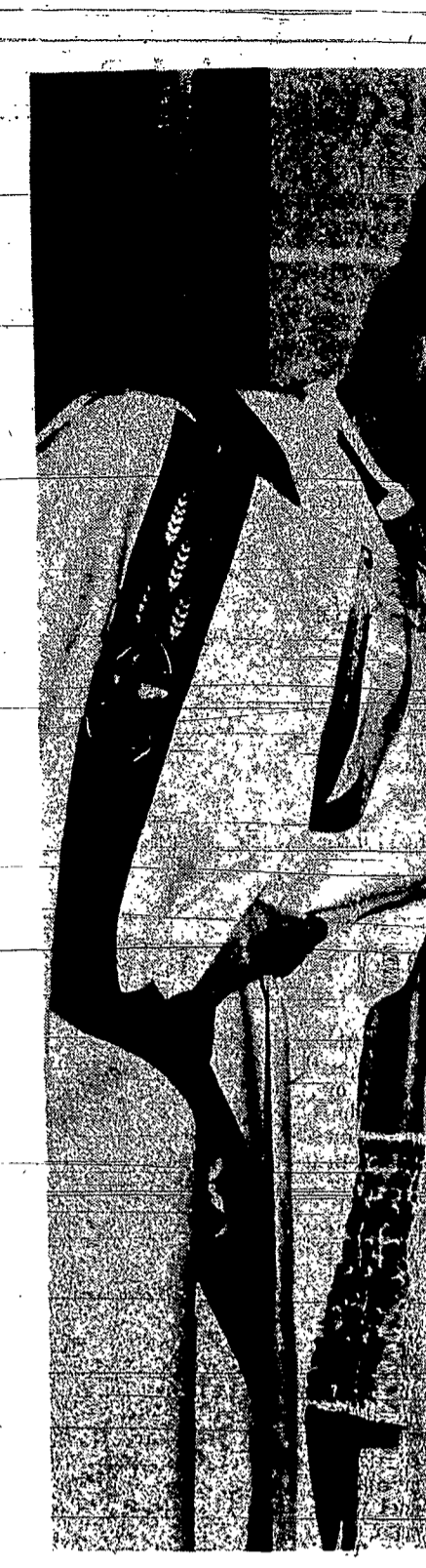
## Poor Nations Have Responsibilities Too

By GARY MacEOIN  
Indeed, as Jacques Nobeocourt, Rome correspondent of the *Paris Daily Le Monde*, has pointed out, there is significant internal evidence that the text approved as final by the Pope on February 20 was much more explicit on this latter point than the text signed and released March 28, dated March 26.  
Nobeocourt draws attention to the fact that the resume of the encyclical given the press sums up paragraph 24 in terms which the official text does not justify. It quotes Bishop Larrain of Chile (killed in an automobile accident in June 1966) as saying—in reference to the right of expropriation of unused and misused private property, that "scandalous situations exist which must be ended, and reforms are urgently indicated which must not be delayed."  
Paragraph 24 of the published text, however, has no reference at all to Bishop Larrain. It asserts the right of expropriation in substantially the same words used by Pius XII and John XXIII, but without the atmosphere of crisis and urgency conveyed by the summary and also conveyed by a pastoral letter of

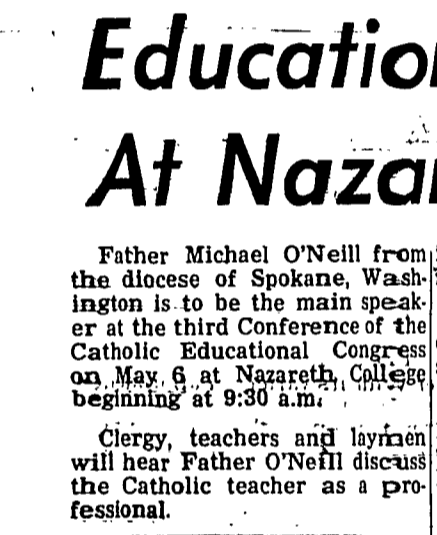
October 1966 of Bishop Larrain, a pastoral letter quoted twice in the encyclical (with-out acknowledgment in paragraph 15 and with acknowledgment in paragraph 32). It would appear that Bishop Larrain was in the "fine text," though not in the published text, of paragraph 24.  
The explanation suggested by Nobeocourt, who is usually well informed, is that the text was watered down after February 20 by two Italian sociologists who had helped to formulate Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra*, Msgr. Pavan and Msgr. Ferranti-Toniolo. "At the last moment," to quote Nobeocourt, "they must have won out over the realistic dynamism of the disciples of Father L. J. Lebrat and Bishop Larrain, both of whom had died in the early summer of 1966 without having seen their proposals for an encyclical come to fruition."  
Others suggest that it may have been not only these clerical advisers but also representatives of governments which fear basic social reform who intervened to tone down the language. If Christian Emperors no longer are accorded the formal right of veto, it would be naive

to imagine that nations which proclaim separation of Church and State stand by with folded arms when they suspect their interests are threatened.  
Irrespective of who is directly responsible, the effect of this watering down not only in the context mentioned but throughout the encyclical is to introduce a double standard of judgment. From each according to his capacity" is presented exclusively as a judgment on the obligation of the rich nations to contribute to the development of the poor ones.  
This is, of course, part of the meaning. The second edge of the sword, however, is not sharpened. For the principle also means that the poor nations must give according to their capacity, if their economies are to be modernized. The rich cannot do all the job, cannot really do the major part of it.  
"Scandalous situations exist which must be ended, and reforms are urgently indicated which must not be delayed." That was how Bishop Larrain put it. The encyclical as published has declined to support him.

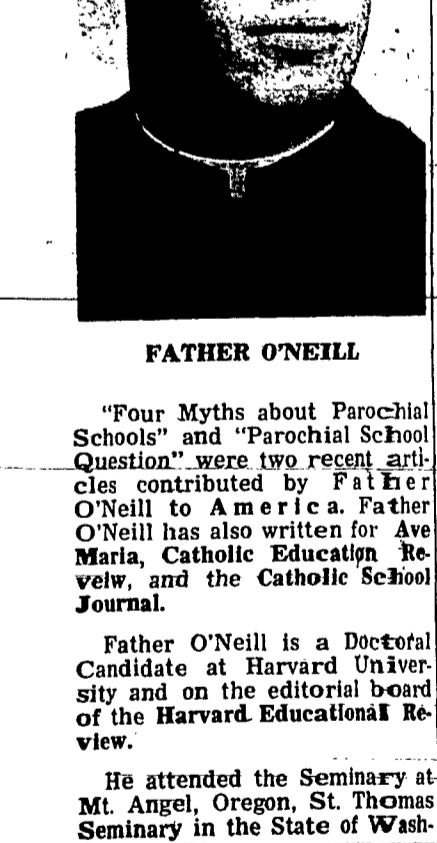
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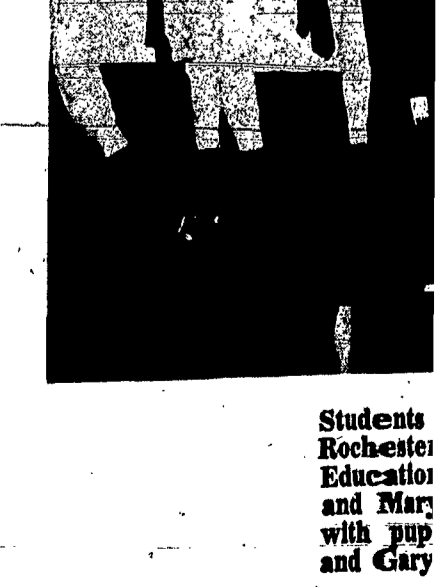
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