

Getting Jitters Over Ecumenism

By DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A.

"What worries me," said a priest friend from another country, "is that people like you with your wishy-washy stands compromise the Catholic Church. Christ established the Catholic Church as the one, true Church. This we must stand for. People like yourself are too anxious for unity and seem to agree to everything and water down and destroy the Church we have known for centuries."

I replied by picking up the Council documents and reading selected passages from the Constitution on the Church. What had happened to my friend was that the Church had passed him by.

It is sad to see a good and faithful servant left behind clinging to his treasures and no one paying attention to them. This is happening to bishops, priests and lay people everywhere.

When I get these feelings I go to a lecture, attend a conference, read a relevant book or have lunch with a relevant

friend. If I don't I too will be waving the living vital Church of our times goodbye and go into old age with the memory of the way things were. The Church is on the move. He who stops or even hesitates is lost to its full life.

This is the era of ecumenism and we had better be with it. Ecumenism seemed to my friend another word for compromise. The fear of compromise can be a healthy as well as a neurotic fear.

When two parties, husband and wife, employer and employee, North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam are at odds on an issue or issues, they fear to talk it out for two reasons: one, there is the possibility of being over-powered by the other and agreeing to something that goes against our principles; the other is the fear of losing our righteousness and seeing our cherished values and practices going down the drain. The fear of compromise is basically the fear of being open to change.

The only ones who fear the ecumenical movement are the ones who have not taken the first steps.

The Theological Level

The ecumenical or unity movement among churches is taking place at two levels: one theological and the other grassroots. At the theological level we have formal and informal committees that discuss doctrines and practical issues. On the formal level we have Catholic bishops and theologians meeting with their counterparts of a particular denomination.

Bishops are practical men who meet to resolve conflict and do not permit themselves to get hung up on theoretic theological disputes. The Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church have some common practical concerns brought about by mixed marriages and other situations where they pray or worship together. The denominational heads of both churches want to make practical rules that will make for happier and

holier marriages and true communal worship.

Before reaching agreement there must be an understanding of each other's theological position. Understanding the other person's point of view does not mean accepting it. For bishops to negotiate a settlement does not mean a compromise any more than an agreement between husband and wife, General Motors and the UAW, North and South Viet Nam.

What these Methodist and Catholic bishops and theologians do when they lock themselves in hotel rooms for two or three days does not threaten me. I have no fear that they will trade infallibility for an agreement not to proselytize in Peru or that we will accept inter-communion if they will accept the doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

The Grass Roots Level

Since I am neither a bishop or theologian, I am not too concerned with their approach to ecumenism. I have mine, and like a shoemaker, I must stick to my last. I work at the grassroots or community level of ecumenism.

Priests and ministers of my area share the common concern of dealing with people who are threatened by Negro movements. Racial violence and the threat of it has brought us together in a working relationship. The agenda of our meetings deal with this continuing community problem. We do have an annual ecumenical prayer service, but this does not bind us as does the gritty problem that is bearing the community at its seams.

Let's Communicate... with Becket Hall

Becket Hall: What is the difference between the Christian church and the Catholic Church?

Dave B. There is no denomination which has the formal title "Christian Church," yet all the faiths which propose to follow

Christ call themselves Christian churches. The Catholic Church sees itself as distinct from the other Christian churches in that it is the Church directly founded by Jesus Christ through the Apostles; which thus holds the fullness of sacramental life. However, the members of the Catholic Church have much to learn from the sincerity, devo-

tion and example of their Christian brethren. We all have the same goal: Jesus Christ, and it is our hope that soon we all may be unified in our search for Him.

Becket Hall:

Recently it seems that there has been a de-emphasis on Confession. I wonder if in the future there will no longer be any confession?

Cynthia S

We do not see that there is a de-emphasis on Confession in the Church. Penance is sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ and thus is an integral part of the Church. What we have today is less frequent Confession rather than a de-emphasis.

We should look for reform within the Church. Christ gave us the Sacrament, the Church has given it form, the form may be outdated. Men may no longer want to confess in a dark and mysterious atmosphere. It may be more desirable to come face to face with the priest, our guide, the representative of Christ. Furthermore, the structure of the canonical penance might be changed to make the penitent aware of his obligation to repair the damage caused by his sin.

As people of God we must approach the Sacrament of Penance as intelligent men and women. We are fooling no one by not being honest with God, ourselves or the priest. If Penance is seen as an ordeal or, on the other extreme, as merely a function we should examine our motives. Adults, having problems of adults and not of children, should come to Confession with a deep understanding of what they are doing, realizing that they have come to better themselves as men and as Christians through the assistance of the priest and God.

Address question and answers to Let's Communicate, Becket Hall, 75 Fairport Rd., East Rochester, N.Y. 14445.

On the Right...

Innuendo in a Photograph

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

In 1947 a vehemently anti-Catholic Paul Blanshard wrote a series of articles for the Nation magazine. They were later published as a book "American Freedom and Catholic Power." It was a great hash of innuendos and misrepresentations. His technique was devastating. He presented half truths, and facts out of context. He suppressed significant facts. He presented less damaging mis-statements.

To illustrate: On Confession he wrote: "Most important of the devices of priestly control is that of the confessional. Every good Catholic is supposed to kneel down at least once a year before the dark screen in the church where, in a confessional box, a priest is posted unseen to hear him confess his inmost thoughts..." (Am. Freedom and Catholic Power, p. 39).

We note the sinister: 1) "Device of priestly control"; 2) "the dark screen"; 3) "a priest posted unseen." There was a certain dry humor to Catholics in this description. No one expected Mr. Blanshard to understand the Sacrament of Penance and a Teaching Church. We did smile that he thought penitents wanted eyeball to eyeball contact

with the confessor. Priests noted the invidious term "posted" and grunted as they remembered themselves parked in "the box" in reluctant Christian resignation as they performed a duty which superseded their hearing the Notre Dame-Army game over the rectory radio.

Twenty years later Mr. Blanshard has become kinder to the Church, more sympathetic and understanding. Strangely enough, twenty years later some of the liberal Catholic Press seems to have taken his place — with half truths, facts and photographs out of context, constant innuendos slid into articles. A sorry example appeared in our own Catholic Courier October 6. On the front page was a picture of a smiling nun addressing a symposium at McQuaid High School auditorium. On the wall behind her was a big banner: "Planned Parenthood." So many of our parishioners were stunned by the vague but lively implications inferred by the picture, that I wrote: "Dear Sister, What can I tell you people? They are mystified. And if this is so of our area, I do not doubt that it is true throughout the diocese. I just hope it isn't making the national press."

The Sister made a gracious reply: "Really, it is very disturbing. The affair was a symposium on population problems, not on contraception. I was not a speaker, but was asked to introduce a visiting Sister who is a specialist in population problems. The picture must have been the photographer's idea of humor. Right next to the pictured banner was an equal sized banner which said: McQuaid Jesuit High School—but I suppose the other banner made a more sensational picture. Indeed, the symposium was not a disregard for Our Holy Father, but rather an academic exchange of ideas. It is unfortunate that the picture is so misleading."

A year after the Blanshard book, Henry Morton Robinson published a fascinating historical novel entitled "The Cardinal." In the forward the author wrote: "The Cardinal" is neither propaganda for or against the Church... It is a story to be read as a narrative woven by a watcher of our world...

The Press is a portrayer as well as "a watcher of the world." Could we ask that the Press present the world in its true being?

Joseph Breig

What Dr. Dooley said about Vietnam

Political judgments are not the province of this column. I leave such matters to persons who specialize in that field, just as I specialize in religious and moral questions.

I realize, however, that politics involves morality, and morals sometimes involve politics.

With that preface, let me say that I have been thoughtfully considering the objections to the U.S. presence in Vietnam (which means also the Australian, Korean, New Zealand and Thailand presence).

The conclusion to which I find myself driven is that the objections grow, for the most part, out of emotionalism and forgetfulness.

I mean emotionalism about the fact that war is bloody, sorrowful, sacrificial, wasteful. And I mean forgetfulness about events — especially events in and after World War II.

We can dismiss the emotionalism out of hand. It is not a sound basis for making either moral or political decisions — no matter how many people fall into that error.

As to events, I have been re-reading the late Dr. Thomas A. Dooley's book, "Deliver Us From Evil" (Farrar, Straus, N.Y., 1956; Library of Congress No. 59-7816).

Perhaps you will remember that Dr. Dooley was a Navy physician when (as he relates beginning on page 28) the Navy was undertaking the largest evacuation operation in its history.

The task was that of helping hundreds of thousands of refugees from communist North Vietnam to reach sanctuary in South Vietnam.

Dr. Dooley tells of some of the communist atrocities against the refugees, especially those who worshipped God. Out of consideration for the feelings of readers, I will mention only one of the less revolting.

That one concerned Dr. Dooley's chance meeting, at Hickham Field in Hawaii, with a couple of dozen of South Vietnam Air Force cadets.

These were young men who had been among the younger refugees from the north. As they surrounded Dr. Dooley, shouting greetings and grasping his hands, he saw that "each had a big scar where an ear should have been."

Then he remembered. In the North Vietnam province of Bao Lao, near the Red Chinese frontier, the people were predominantly Catholic. "The communist Vietnam," Dr. Dooley wrote (page 9) often would "tear an ear partially off with a pincer." (So that it had to

be amputated.) That was one of the penalties for the crime of listening to evil words. The evil words were the words of the Lord's Prayer.

The refugees, Dr. Dooley wrote, were people who had been so hideously mistreated by the communists that they boarded the Navy vessels to get away, even though they were "numb with fright" of the Americans. Communist propaganda had told them that the Americans were monsters of wickedness who roasted babies alive presumably for breakfast.

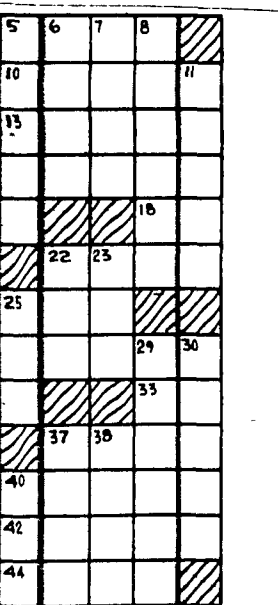
Turn now to page 59. "Japan conquered Vietnam in 1940. Within three months, by using Vietnam's raw materials, airfields and seaports, Japan was able to overthrow Cambodia, Laos, Formosa, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia and Malaya. She became a threat to Australia and marched to the very gates of India."

"Utilizing such seaports as Haiphong and Saigon, Japan shipped weapons and materials each which led to the defeat of MacArthur's forces and the conquest of the Philippines in 1942."

In the light of Dr. Dooley's book, it is not difficult to understand why South Vietnam is resisting communist conquest, or why the U.S. and other nations are helping.

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

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| ACROSS | 14 Roman handle | 15 Sting insects |
| 1. Sport | DOWN | 17 Hawaiian |
| 5. Jaffe | 1. Pearl | 20 Open poet |
| Levene and Levenson | 2. Auk genus | 21. Seize |
| 9. Propelled as a raft | 3. Dissolve | 22. Persian weight |
| 10. Attempted | 4. Name sakes of Mr. Sullivan | 23. Epoch |
| 12. Reclines | 5. Drinking aid | 25. Test |
| 13. Belgian marble | 6. Macaw | 26. Terminate |
| 14. Incline | 7. Aromatic herb | 27. Slitted out |
| 15. Hurry | 8. Withdraw | 29. Western state |
| 16. Compass point | 9. Heavy timber | 30. Outer garment |
| 17. Not high prefix | 10. Strong cotton | |
| 18. Twofold | 11. Vinslow Homer, for one | |
| 19. Danish coins | 24. Arabian nomadic tribesman | |
| 22. Appear | 26. Messenger's trip | |
| 24. Vinslow Homer, for one | 31. Exclamation | |
| 26. Arabian nomadic tribesman | 32. Pippen | |
| 28. Messenger's trip | 33. Conversational | |
| 31. Exclamation | 34. Silver | |
| 32. Pippen | 35. India | |
| 33. Conversational | 37. Flutter | |
| 34. Silver | 39. Summon forth | |
| 35. India | 41. River into North Sea | |
| 37. Flutter | 42. Bamboo-like grasses | |
| 39. Summon forth | 43. Mainland Chinese | |
| 41. River into North Sea | | |
| 42. Bamboo-like grasses | | |
| 43. Mainland Chinese | | |



Answer

Comments from Readers from CCD Classes to California Peace March

Priestly Ideal

I read the article in the Oct. 13 Courier Journal by Father Paul Cuddy, where he learned from a lady enrolled in one of the Diocesan Adult Education courses, that an instructor of one of the courses said, "Priests have been using the pulpit to talk about money, building and the like, taking away from the time that should be used for the Word of God."

I am enrolled in this course and I want to state that I have never heard such wonderful dissertations as I have heard from this instructor. He is teaching us to be mature Christians, viewing the Church with realistic lenses rather than the antiquated lenses of "Father knows best." He is teaching us to grow in love and loyalty where it is deserved and not where it is demanded.

Now, this instructor did not state that talking from the pulpit about money, building and the like should be completely eliminated but that it should not absorb the entire time of the homily.

It is no secret that today there are priests who look upon their vocation as a job—when they tire of it, they quit. They are in the same category as married couples who get a divorce when their marriage becomes boring or does not meet up with the ideas of fulfillment that they imagined. Many priests today, should never have been priests. They were pushed through the seminaries because of the shortage of priests. The instructor told us that far better to have one good priest than 10 bad ones who are a cause of scandal.

Well meaning lay people say, "Well, they are only human—it is their weakness—they are sick." If a man is sick, he seeks help—if he cannot be helped,

then he stays in an institution until he can be helped. This would apply to a priest. Far better to relieve a priest from his priestly duties than have him be the cause of scandal. Our Protestant brethren would never stand for this. We can learn from them.

For the benefit of Father Cuddy's enlightenment, there were priests and are priests in our class. I wish that all priests could have heard last week's lecture — what a priest should be.

Anne Christoff Rochester

Open-mindedness

Editor: As a senior who, after four years, has become quite proud of his school, I am naturally upset when it is charged that McQuaid has done a "dis-service" to our community. I am referring, of course, to the letter written by Mr. and Mrs. James Likoudis of Watkins Glen, New York, published in the Courier Journal of October 13. These two "open-minded" Catholics referred to the Symposium as "shocking," "disgusting," and a "miserable spectacle." The panel of eight speakers were "supposedly Catholic," a "melancholy parade of lay and religious sophists," and "pseudo-intellectuals." Having attended most of the Symposium myself, I would like to make a number of observations on this article.

First, the tone of Mr. and Mrs. Likoudis' article implies that they themselves did not attend the lecture series. I submit that they would be much better qualified to bring such serious charges (and they are serious) if they had witnessed the "atrocity" first hand. Instead, they first accuse the Courier of "bizarre sensationalism in religious jour-

nalism," and then use this journalism for a scathing attack upon the unwitting event. This, to say the least, seems rather inconsistent.

Second, Mr. and Mrs. Likoudis tend to cast character aspersions with reckless abandon. For example, the eight "pseudo-intellectuals" who spoke at McQuaid have an educational background spanning twenty-seven universities in the United States, England, Japan, Australia, Belgium, France, and Canada, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, L'Institut de Paris, the Sorbonne, Oxford, and Louvain. The overriding requisite for intellectualism these days seem to be agreement with Pope Paul VI, which I consider, euphemistically, not necessarily true.

Third, the Symposium was attacked on the grounds that it demonstrated "shameful capitulation" to the ideology of the Planned Parenthood League. Had Mr. or Mrs. Likoudis either been at McQuaid or seen the half-hour TV special, they would have heard Father Albert Bartlett, S.F., rector of McQuaid and moderator of the Symposium, thank the speakers for their enlightening presentation of their opinions on some of today's problems. McQuaid, as far as I know, never adopted any position for or against any of the speakers. McQuaid's function was purely instrumental—a forum to further public communication. And, as even Mr. and Mrs. Likoudis admit, "dialogue with contraceptive Planned Parenthood" isn't so awfully bad.

Finally, just a few comments concerning the nature of the church in relation to this incident. Mr. and Mrs. Likoudis were "dutifully shocked" and "dutifully disgusted" that any Catholic would dare question Church tradition. I personally

do not consider it anyone's "duty" to turn himself in from the divergent opinion of others. As Teilhard and so many others have said, man, and thus by nature the church, are evolutionary forces. The crux of evolution is change—and change necessitates open-mindedness and communication. Why else did Pope John call Vatican II? Why else is the Bishops' Synod now meeting in Rome?

I say this not to justify any particular issue, but to support open-mindedness on all issues. Once we close our minds to communication, we preclude innovation, stagnate evolution, and stifle our humanity. In my opinion, Populorum Progressio exemplifies the type of open-mindedness to a relevant religion, and I think the McQuaid administration for the public service they are performing.

—Thomas E. Kay Senior, McQuaid Jesuit High School

God's Will

Editor:

Up to, and including, the present time, Pope Paul I has continually stressed that the norm in the matter of birth control continues as stated by the Magisterium of the Church.

It is most important that all Catholics keep in mind the basic distinction between the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on any individual or group and the Divine inspiration given our Pope in matters of faith and morals.

The speakers and those in attendance at the McQuaid Symposium hold one idea on the population problem. Msgr. Ligutti (Courier, Oct. 6, p. 14) is reported to have an opposing view: "...rats consume or spoil enough food to feed 20 million people. But instead of

killing the rats, we say, stop having babies." (India)

Our Mission priest has told us in Watkins Glen this week that we should pray that soon we will know God's will in this matter and that we will have the courage to accept it. We wish to stress that according to Catholic doctrine, God's will, in this, will be made known through the Pope.

—Mr. and Mrs. Albert D. Roldano, Watkins Glen.

Millions of Souls

Editor:

Having read your October 6 front page article on views given at the recent planned parenthood symposium, may I offer at least one explanation in defense of the Catholic Church's stand on the matter.

First, we must be willing to accept these fundamental beliefs:

- (1) With every human conception there is created a soul that will never die.
- (2) The creation of souls is pleasing to God.
- (3) The immortal direction of our soul (heaven or hell) depends on our mortal attitude.
- (4) In our earthly life we must be willing to accept inconvenience and suffering as conditions for eternal happiness.

Because the soul transcends the body in both magnitude of purpose and longevity, we must look beyond our worldly concerns. For example, a child born to a poor family may live only a few hours, but the soul of that child is glorified forever!

Or consider a family of ten children, all of whom may experience hunger and considerable personal strife. Yet, ten

souls are given the opportunity to have everlasting life in God's Kingdom!

Even millions of families may suffer from severely limited living conditions, food crises, and catastrophes. But think of the millions of souls who will survive in any event for an infinite amount of time!

Planned parenthood is really a method of short-sighted soul prevention. It sacrifices eternal living for the sake of a flesh-and-bones existence that is not to be inconvenienced. It disregards the spiritual future for a more comfortable present.

I am happy to stand up and be counted as one who strongly defends my Church's position on planned parenthood and birth control.

—Robert Maurice, Rochester.

Truly Dedicated

Editor:

An action taken by a young priest and long-time friend of mine, Father Mark Sullivan of the Rochester Diocese was the finest example of Christ-like love and courage that I have ever witnessed of a priest. I refer to Father Sullivan's active participation in the anti-war and anti-draft demonstrations in Oakland, California Tuesday, October 17.

I accompanied Father Sullivan to the demonstration. We arrived about 6:00 a.m. When the police fell into formation across Clay Street near the Army Induction Center preparing for their attack on the demonstrators, Father Sullivan advanced to the front line of demonstrators face to face with the armed police. He stood there in silence hoping, presumably, that his presence might help to subdue the violence the tense atmosphere indicated was impending.

When the police started their attack, being back the unarmed demonstrators with clubs and gas, Father Sullivan, shocked by the needless brutality, especially toward women demonstrators, repeatedly shouted to the advancing police: "Can't you see what you are doing. In the name of God, stop!" Several times he was knocked to the ground. He was finally overcome when, attempting to throw his body between police clubs and a woman, he was struck in the stomach and knocked to the ground.

Father Sullivan's heroic participation in this demonstration was a source of edification to many of the student participants. Many students who seemed surprised and impressed to see a Catholic priest participating in the demonstration, and who commented to Father Sullivan that they had all but given up their faith in the Church as an institution truly concerned with promoting peace and justice for all men, were obviously edified. Maybe the courageous witness of Father Sullivan will help to buttress the waning faith of some of these youth.

Father Sullivan's action during Oakland's "bloody Tuesday" is an example of the kind of relevant involvement that should be characteristic of priests' work. Having known Father Sullivan for some time, I know that his conduct during the Oakland demonstrations is typical of his constant interest in and concern for all God's people who ever the nature of their problems. He is truly dedicated to the work of Christ; he is not restrained by a false sense of respectability and priestly propriety.

—Francis S. Goodrow, Berkeley, Calif.