



On Inviting Another To Grow

Religious art has turned from pictures to quotations. Sometimes my spiritual reading is limited to sentences on the cards of young men announcing their ordination. Here is one from Evelyn I put on my wall: "To love someone is to bid him to live, invite him to grow."

It fascinates me because it suggests that love is a summons or a call. It is an invitation to become oneself, to drop the fears that shackle and inhibit us and to become our better selves by responding to an invitation.

These words are abstractions, a lot of sweet talk which has little meaning until we see it fleshed out with instances. Here are a few:

Showing Appreciation

I was coming into the sacristy of a church recently for a concelebrated Mass. There was an elderly lady sitting down. She had spent the greater years of a long life as a sacristan, but was now slowed down.

The pastor was also in the sacristy to greet each priest. After the greeting he took each priest over to the aging sacristan and introduced the priest to her. The pastor treated her as though she was the parish's most precious treasure. Each introduction was not a ritual performance. He wanted each priest to share the joy the parish had in having this living relic of the past.

I watched the woman glow each time. The pastor was bidding her to live, inviting her to grow. He was telling her in the most genuine accents that life is worthwhile, that old age can be an evening glow, a beautiful sunset or twilight.

The other for instance likewise involves a pastor. I had heard of his reputation as a lover in slumland U.S.A. I had heard for years of his inviting down-and-outers of every des-

cription to pick themselves up and begin to live, but never with cheap words but by loving actions.

I met him at a convention of what we now call urbanologists. I wanted to learn to love from a master lover so I sought him out and trailed him. I managed to sit at a table of ten with him at the closing banquet.

A layman at the table began to take the lead in table conversation. His remarks were studied with comments that were racist innuendoes. While I was assessing the situation and wondering about taking him on in open confrontation, the pastor whom we shall call Bill, came to life.

He called the layman by his first name, "Jim." In unctuous tones it was, "Jim this" and "Jim that." Jim was becoming his great hero as he addressed questions to him and the subject turned away from his negative and demeaning approach to race.

I was confused. After the meal I repeated the whole thing to a friend who likewise knew Bill. I said I could not under-

stand Bill. Why did he identify with this man who could be a fellow traveler of Governor George Wallace? Is the pastor so naive that he does not catch the nuances of a conversation?

Value of Each Person

My friend said: "You don't know Bill. He becomes overwhelmed by each person he meets. It matters not whether they are racists or integrationists. Each one is a person to be loved and that is enough for Bill."

As the years have passed on I have come to know Bill and see him in his parish. Each Skid Row visitor to the rectory is treated with dignity. He is bid to live and invited to grow. I suppose only few people really come to live and grow, but his call is always going out.

There is much self-deception in our attempts to be lovers. We think that our principle concern is the growth of the other person, but in reality we often are using the other person for our own selfish gratification. In marriage one partner may invite the other to come together sexually and then lose interest

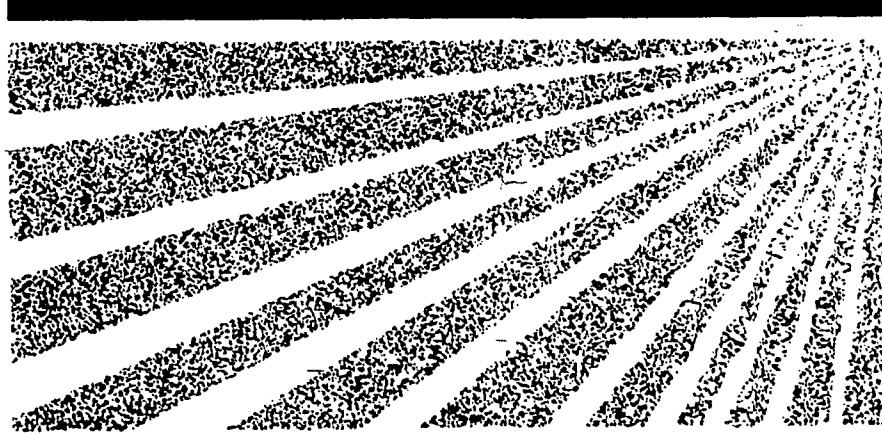
in the other after sexual satisfaction is achieved for oneself.

The politician before an election and the salesman with a customer is inclined to make the other person important through flattery, but seldom is anyone mistaken. It is not taken as a bid to live or an invitation to grow. It is a polite and harmless game that people play.

How do we know when we are truly calling the other person to live and inviting him to grow and not simply using him? The place to begin is in a frank recognition of our own emotional needs. A mother who does everything for her children, may need this "giving" as a form of control over her children. A price may be demanded of them in the way of conformity to the feelings and convictions of the parent.

The person who is always "giving" in order to possess the other is not inviting to live and to grow. The true lovers invitation has no strings attached, no matter how subtle.

If you do not measure up, relax. No one loves perfectly. We are all in process.



Spectrum Of Opinion

Letters of Love

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Any one who experiences a change from one habitat to another appreciates a letter from home, or from "back there."

Years ago, in a syndicated article, Bishop Sheen commented on the significance of passing greetings. His remark was substantially: "When you meet a friend and he says: How are you, he really is not inquiring about your health. He is saying: 'I love you.'"

This is true of cards, of notes, of letters, of gifts. They say: "I love you." I suppose we will have to except bills, advertising, and the reluge of communications which come from bureau headquarters in Church, State, Military, Education and Industry. The bill obviously demand justice. The advertising insinuate needs we rarely have.

The floods obviously from bureaus may be 1) coordinative, 2) directive, 3) inspirational. They are often 4) a substitute for doodling by people who sit at official desks without much to do. These people write instead of whistle or draw words pictures instead of doodles.

People in hospitals are cheered by a card which really says: "I'm thinking of you." People separated by distance are bolstered by a letter from friends. Few people need this bolstering as much as young men in the Military Service. They read of draft card burners; anti-Viet Nam demonstrations; violence and luxury at home, and begin to wonder: "Does any one love us?"

Father Herman Brinkman is a six foot, five inch Redemptorist who gave many thrilling missions in our diocese. His preaching was stimulating. His understanding in the confessional gave courage. He was two hundred and thirty pounds of Christian compassion.

Within the past year he enlisted as an Army chaplain, and after training at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas, was shipped to Viet Nam. On July 26 he wrote from Long Binh, where he had been but five days with his 9th Infantry.

The spirit of the man is fine now, with some sad memories of hard battles where

they lost many buddies. The area here is quite secure. The spirit is fine, but every blessed one of them is counting the days until he will leave here. The great topic of conversation is "How long to go?" It is not the danger that they hate. It is the wet, the mud, the rain, the humid character of the country. Everything is musty, damp. Clothes never dry. The working day is twelve-hours-long. Seven days a week. If the mail is slow coming, morale drops low. THE SADDEST SOLDIER IS THE ONE WHO COMES AWAY EMPTY-HANDED FROM THE MAIL LINE."

A great priest often says: "Every one needs to be loved." A letter, note, a card, a gift is a message of love. Love is real when expressed.

Is there some one hoping to hear from you? Write that letter, and use the beautiful Christmas stamp of the Madonna and Child. There is the Mother of Fair Love with Love Incarnate bringing your letter which says to the receiver: "You are not forgotten. You are in my heart."

Joseph Brieg

Scholar Places Foot in His Mouth

Speaking to the National New Student Federation the other day, Jesuit Father John L. McKenzie, the New Testament scholar, alleged that Christians, historically, have merely "achieved structure" when they thought they were "achieving community." He went on:

"For example, the family is historically not a community of love but a breeding community, as most moral theologians still tend to regard it."

I do not quite see how a "breeding community" can be an example of "achieving structure" and failing to "achieve community" but let that pass. What matters is that Father McKenzie's remark is a caricature of the thinking of moral theologians, past and present; and it is doubly a caricature of the overwhelming majority of marriages and families.

It is not because moral the-

ologians have looked upon the family as a "breeding community" that they have made some mistakes through the centuries, in their thinking about marriage. To the contrary, it was because their piercing consciousness of the holiness of sex, and of the eternal value of birth and life, obscured their view of some other aspects of the matter.

I feel, as deeply as anybody, the problems of some large families, and of their mothers. But it seems necessary to remind the intellectuals that we husbands and wives, most of us, like children; we love children; we want children. Children are the greatest joy of our love in marriage.

My wife and I, for example, are not some strange supernatural beings from outer space. We are typical of married couples generally. We are parents (at the moment) of nine; and

each of the little ones has been welcomed with celebrations.

Anybody who suggests that our family (or any family we know) has been a breeding community and not a community of love is talking through his hat.

Mary and I took each other for better and for worse etc., knowing no more about sex than you could put in your eye without blinking; and we made our share of errors about it. But one thing we instinctively sensed — that sex, for all its humbling and even ludicrous aspects, and its tragicomic fall-short of movie-magazine romantic dreams, is profoundly sacred.

Call it a "breeding community" if that is your pleasure, but it is a poor sort of community of love if its love does not wish to reach out creatively to the Father of all fatherhood and motherhood.

Letters to the Editor

Protestant Decries Blaine

Dear Editor:

As a Protestant, having read recent editorial comment in your paper, I am now ready to take a chance and to say, repeal Article I, Section 3 of the State Constitution, then get to building the needed walls and setting the proper gates in them.

Since Jefferson's time, and before, we Americans have been building walls and putting gates with locks in them, giving keys to responsible leaders, teamed with laymen, who learn to use the keys. In a former community where our family lived for ten years, Dundee, New York, there was a wall with its gate shut to the small sects that would invade the public schools, the "non-denominational" youth groups that wanted to meet in our classrooms. Now in Avon, New York, there are different walls with different gates set in them. But we hold our own keys, and they serve for us.

The so-called Blaine Amendment, Article XI, Section 3 seems to recognize only a wall. It tends to cut off interaction, directly or indirectly, between public schools and parochial schools. It is not realistic, so it is time we repealed or revised it.

Some Protestant friends ask fearfully, "If there were no Article XI, Section 3, where would we be? We would be under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and that is about all the security we should expect or deserve as free men."

The "Blaine" Amendment, like Prohibition, gave us all a false sense of security. Had we been conscious of the two themes running through the United States Constitution, free exercise and non-establishment, we might have seen the danger in the regents prayer.

For although there never was heard a sectarian word in the one we had, the words could later be changed, and my grandson have been obliged to hear "Holy Mary, Mother of God," or my Jewish neighbor's grandchild, "O Lord, Father of the only Savior, Jesus Christ."

We may as well remove the so-called Blaine Amendment. Paul W. Brayer's excellent letter to your newspaper was encouraging in that he made clear that the people of New York, and many of them Roman Catholics, have said "No" to the use of public money for essential services in school that are religiously related.

Mr. Brayer and I could together bring in bricks and mortar for that wall, agreeing even as we watch our children going to school on the bus or getting needed medical or social services that we could do without "Blaine."

We have new walls to lay and new gates to set. But perhaps we must get rid of "Blaine" before we can do anything together.

—R. Irving Dethl, Avon, N.Y.

Cites Fairport Approach

Dear Editor:

This is my contribution to the continuing dialogue on parochial schools and religious education.

We must face reality even if it hurts. School costs will continue to rise and with the decrease in the number of people entering religious life it is obvious that we will have increasing difficulty in maintaining the Catholic schools. It does not appear that either of these trends will be revised in the near future. Nor does it appear that sufficient new sources of funds can be found to save the floundering system.

Threats of school closing had little effect during the election campaign to encourage the whole community to lend their support. The appeal made by Msgr. Roche recently has evoked very little reaction and it would appear that the community has little concern whether or not the schools stay open. Without increased support the present system cannot continue.

There are, however, other systems, and it might be surprising to many in our area to learn that at Assumption parish in Fairport, there is no parochial school but in its place there is a parish religious school which reaches nearly all of its children. But even beyond that it reaches the adults of the parish. We would do well to look carefully into the Fairport system and see if it could work elsewhere.

Where shall we go and how we should go must be determined by all the people of the diocese. Their voice must be heard not only by selection but by election. Financial support for any system cannot be expected until it is enthusiastically endorsed.

Although I agree generally with the conclusions reached by Paul W. Brayer in his letter to the Courier I believe we need more than dialogue. We need action now.

—Casper C. Paprocki Irondequoit

Improve CCD Plan

Editor—

As a person active in CCD, I am concerned with present inadequacies in the religious education of public school students. On a part-time basis, we are attempting to do an effective job with this ever increasing group. However, we can only scratch the surface of the potentialities available to the religious educator today.

Furthermore, either a reduction of the parochial school system or an end of it is inevitable. If action is taken properly, an excellent religious education can be provided all students during and after a transition.

A system of religious education is needed. This centrally organized system of professionals teaching in regional or neighborhood schools should work with three groups:

- 1. Public School Students
2. Parochial School Students (because those that might be left should not have a then

substandard religious education either.)

3. Parent/Adult Education (it is important that the parent know how to go about the education of his child; adults seem to be anxious to further their knowledge and understanding of Christ in our modern world.)

In today's heterogeneous society perhaps this is the best approach for the student:

A) Secular education obtained in the ever expanding background of the public school peer group.

B) Religious education by professionals dedicated to the teaching of religion and its related subjects; trained in the appropriate teaching methods for the subject—striving for active commitment from the student.

Establishing and operating such a system is no easy task. However, we should be able to afford to do it properly—concentrating the educator in one area of endeavor rather than spreading him so thin that he can do little as it ought to be done; keeping class sizes to reasonable levels; providing more than one our of instruction per week; giving parents insight into how informal instruction in the home can complement formal instruction of the school.

Several alternatives that Catholic education can pursue exist. Hopefully quality religious education for all will become a primary objective. Can we in good conscience continue to pursue secular education for the parochial school student while religious education is inadequate?

—Arthur W. Maurer Rochester

Father Cuddy On New Beat

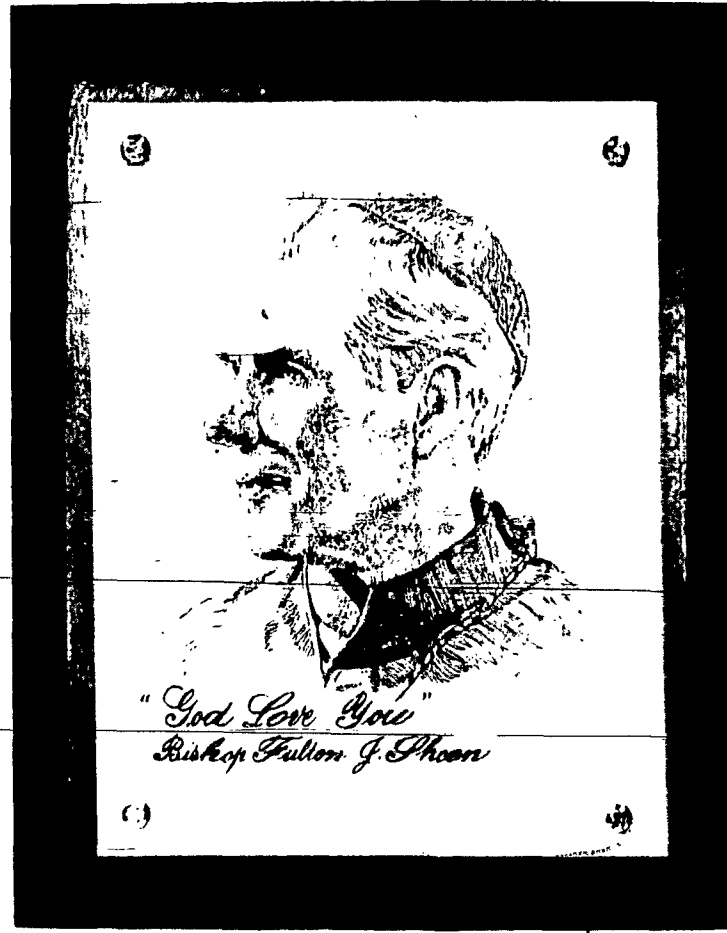
Hornell — Father Paul J. Cuddy has this week assumed the duties as chaplain of St. James Mercy Hospital, and director of the Department of Religion.



FATHER CUDDY Our Man in Hornell

For the past few days he has been busy getting acquainted with the hospital and said, "I'm greatly impressed by the competence of the staff and with the family spirit that is present all around the hospital."

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