

3 Bishops Offer War, Peace Views

Courier News Summary
It is no easier to find a consensus on the "right or wrong" of America's war effort in Vietnam among Catholics than among any other religious group.

This was underscored by the recent statements of three American Catholic bishops who discussed the current American involvement at some length. The variance of their views indicates the general lack of consensus among their fellow Catholics in the United States.

The three were San Antonio's Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, Atlanta's Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan and Seattle's Archbishop Thomas A. Connelly. Their views were originally printed in the "Northwest Progress of Seattle."

Briefly, their positions are these:

Archbishop Lucey has no doubt about the basic rightness of American military activity in Vietnam. He bases his stand on the right of any nation to defend itself against unjust aggression, and the obligation of other nations to help one that is being unjustly attacked.

Archbishop Hallinan, while avoiding a direct judgment on the American role in Vietnam, insists that there are certain moral principles on which Christians should be united. He says that these (to be enumerated below) should be stressed, and that churchmen must be more active as advocates of peace.

Archbishop Connelly presents a seeming ambivalent view in that he "personally doesn't believe that we should be in Vietnam at all," but then says that "as long as we are engaged in the war, we should prosecute it to the fullest extent, get it over with and get out."

As an underpinning for his views, Archbishop Lucey leans heavily on the teaching of Pope Pius XII. He quotes that pontiff extensively on the right of any nation to defend itself against an unjust aggressor.

To capsize the San Antonio bishop's view, the strong man who sees a little man getting beat up by bullies has a duty to help the smaller man defend himself if possible.

Archbishop Lucey insists that "neutrality in the face of international crime when perpetrated by a major nation." He concludes that in the face of aggression in South Vietnam, the United States has no real choice but to defend the people of South Vietnam. "It is a sad and heavy obligation imposed by the mandate of love."

The archbishop of Atlanta, Paul J. Hallinan, takes a different approach. He admits that the political aspects of the Vietnam war offer many interpretations, stresses that the man of religion must try to clarify the moral principles applicable.

Archbishop Hallinan offers these as moral guidelines which can be put forward by the seekers for just peace:

- that indiscriminate destruction of people, stock piling for overkill, and the systematic withholding of military facts are wrong;
- that the continued use of negotiation and of world associations for peace are right;
- that the role of the conscientious objector and that of the man who defends his nation or another are both valid.

The Atlanta prelate doesn't try to offer a moral judgment on the American presence in Vietnam. He concentrates on the role of the Christian, especially the churchman, in building up a positive public opinion toward peaceful solutions.

"We can insist that our government pursue, without delay and repeatedly, every opening that has even the slightest hope of peace."

Archbishop Hallinan's contribution

tion then, is to admit that there are many possible views on the political and military aspects of Vietnam — but to stress certain moral imperatives on which men of good will can be united, in striving to create conditions for a just peace.

The third bishop who has spoken, out recently is Archbishop Connelly of Seattle. He states firmly that "all war is basically

immoral from one side or the other, and the sooner the nations of the world come to their senses, in this regard, the better off they will be." Yet, he insists that when a country becomes embroiled in a war, it is committed to prosecute that war, to win that war and to attain whatever legitimate means are a hand to attain that end.

He leaves no doubt that he

considers the basic cause of recent wars to be the Communist conspiracy. He sees the Vietnam war as the latest chapter in the long range Communist plan of world domination.

At this time, Archbishop Connelly sees no other course for the United States than to pursue the war in Vietnam to a successful end.

Gethsemani Trappists Install New Abbot, 36

Trappist, Ky. — (RNS)—Father Flavian Burns, 36-year-old native of Jersey City, N.J., was installed as Abbot of the Abbey of our Lady of Gethsemani here, a Trappist monastery in Kentucky's Nelson County.

He is the youngest abbot in the monastery's 12-year history, but not in the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, better known as the Trappists. Minimum age for an abbot is 33.

Abbot Burns succeeds Abbot M. James Fox, 71, who retired after serving the Catholic religious order for more than 48 years, 20 of them as head of the 125-member community here.

The Trappists devote themselves to prayer, religious study and writing and manual labor, and shun publicity. A member of the monastery is Father M. Louis, widely known as Thomas Merton, author of more than 25 books.

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House Backs

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) President Johnson's designation of 1968 as Human Rights Year is being used by some legislators to prod the Senate into approval of three human rights conventions which the U.S. has not yet ratified. This is the 20th anniversary of their drafting by the United Nations.

In a week of scant activity in Congress, considerable time was devoted to the issue—but principally in the House, which technically does not have any thing to do with the matter Treaty ratification is the province of the Senate.

Shortly after the first House session opened, Rep. Herbert Tenzer (D.N.Y.) introduced a resolution urging that the Sen

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