

## JOSEPH BREIG SAYS

### Arbitrary Groupings Irrational

Cleveland Amory tells about a club member in New York City who exclaimed to a fellow-member:

"There's a club down on 43d Street that chooses its members mentally. Now isn't that a heckuva way to run a club?"

The man was referring to the distinguished Century Club, which was founded 121 years ago, and has always selected its members solely on the basis of their attainments and intellectual eminence.

The Century Club, in other words, has never excluded people in arbitrary groupings — for instance Catholics, or Jews, or Negroes, and so on.

Such exclusions are depressingly common in many organizations — including those that call themselves "fraternal."

I have several reasons for saying that such practices are depressing.

First, they are irrational.

It would be reasonable to form a chess club, or a tennis club, or a fishing club, and welcome everybody interested in chess or tennis or fishing.

Conversely, it would be reasonable to say to prospective members, "We

don't want you if you don't care about chess" (or tennis or fishing.)

It would be irrational, however, to exclude Jews who are interested in chess or fishing or tennis, because they are Jews. (Ditto for Negroes or Catholics or whatnot.)

Second, such prejudice is seriously harmful to club members because it narrows their minds, and stunts their intellectual, psychological and social growth.

The mature person wants to know and understand, and learn from, people of other religions, cultures, nationalities, ancestry.

Isolating oneself from the rest of the world is an act of immaturity. Worse, it works to perpetuate immaturity throughout one's life.

It is also uncharitable, because it is a refusal to love one's fellowmen — ALL one's fellowmen — as God commands us to do.

Finally, irrational clubbish exclusiveness is a form of blasphemy because it rejects the world that God has made, and repudiates God's all-inclusive love of all his creatures.

Christ said that God will judge us according to whether we fed him

when he was hungry, clothed him when he was naked, visited him in prison, welcomed him when he was a stranger — because whatever we do to any person, we do to God.

We of the human race are God's family, and to insult any one of us is to insult God and God's providence.

It is to say to God, "You may love these others if you like, but don't expect me to do likewise. I not only don't want to love them; I don't even want to know them."

At this point, someone will say, "Now, wait a minute. I've got the right to choose my friends."

Yes, we've got the right to choose our friends — but we do not have the right to choose them irrationally, mindlessly.

God gave us the power of reasoning — of making choices intelligently, without blind judgments — and he requires of us that we use that power.

We are not using it when we plunge into blanket discriminations against others because of religion or race or nationality or ancestry, without reference to their qualities as individuals. That kind of indiscriminate and brainless discrimination reduces us to moral, spiritual, psychological, intellectual and emotional pygmies.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### Sunday Mass Still 'In'... Way 'In'

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Recently a dismayed mother buttonholed me at the Cenacle Retreat House in Rochester. "Father, my son is a sophomore at X Catholic High School in Rochester. A few weeks ago he came home from a retreat in the school and announced: 'The priest giving the retreat told us that we don't have to go to Mass on Sunday; that it isn't a sin; and sometimes we'd do better to go off into the woods thinking of God.'

"My husband and I have had a hard time getting him to go to Mass ever since. Has the law about going to Mass been changed?"

I replied: "Well, it's possible the priest who gave the talk was misunderstood. That happens frequently."

With an irritated glint in her eye she replied: "Father, he was NOT misunderstood. I have talked with other parents who have boys in X School. Their sons got the same message."

I do hope that the priest was misunderstood. Sometimes the clergy like to use the "shock treatment" to stir up thoughts and emotions in their listeners. Sometimes, however, they just declaim as false prophets. So let us discuss the obligation of assisting at Sunday Mass.

As Catholics we do believe that Christ gave to the Church the authority and the responsibility of making laws for the spiritual life of the people. . . . Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven." (Mt. xvi - 20)

The Church has a positive law: "Every Catholic shall go to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation." This law binds strictly in the conscience of Catholics.

The Church is a society, and she makes laws for the protection and spiritual needs of her members. It parallels the State, which is a civic society and makes laws for the protection and needs of its citizens.

For example: you can make a will — and everyone should have an up-to-date will — but if it is not properly witnessed, it is invalid. No matter what the subjective sentiments and intentions of the individual may be, the individual, for the sake of society is bound by the law. This law, rather than limiting freedom, is to protect the rights of citizens, and the freedom to dispense their property in a safe manner.

I doubt that the priest who is reported to have denied the binding force of the law to go to Mass on

Sunday should also declare that it would be equally all right for any Catholic to trot off and have a justice-of-peace witness his marriage. Yet the law regarding marriage of Catholics before a priest is a Church law equally with the law of Mass on Sunday.

What is this passion to disregard the laws of the Church? Certainly both social and individual freedom are founded in law; not in anarchy. When the Church sets the law clearly: "Every Catholic will go to Mass on Sundays", she is guiding the spiritual life of her members by responsible direction.

The sophomoreic mind suspects law as an infringement of freedom. We expect this of youngsters in their early teens. But I think it is a false teaching to start off with the premise that any high schooler, and a fortiori any other Catholic, is free to disregard the law.

St. Thomas teaches that "law is an ordinance of reason, prescribed for the common good by legitimate authority."

It seems a fatuous type of indifference which betrays a man to teach that the laws of the Church have no force binding in conscience.

Consider the consequences of the "You don't have to go to Mass on Sunday" on a class of 16-year-old sophomores:

1) If their parents are faithful Catholics, these parents will recognize the binding force of the law; their children will deny it. The family is in conflict.

2) The sophomore by his very immaturity, is solipsistic enough, without encouraging a divorce from the religious community.

3) If the sophomore can hold church law in contempt, he has enough logic to conclude that he has an equal right to reject civic and parental laws.

4) By "absenting himself from Mass, he cuts himself from community worship; he does not hear the proclamation of the Word; he deprives himself from the graces which flow from from commemorating 'the passion, resurrection and ascension of the Lord.' (Canon of the Mass)

Somehow, or other, the teaching is insinuated abroad that Jesus is our Equal Brother, rather than our Brother and LORD.

Our Lord teaches through His Church, and the Church binds us in conscience to the very days of the Apostles. In "The Teaching of the Apostles" we read: "On the Lord's own day, assemble in common to break bread and offer thanks (i.e. the Mass); but first confess your sins that your sacrifice may be pure . . ." (Didache No. 14). This is first century teaching!

A young pastor once observed: "When I came to this rural parish, I wondered that the Mass was at 9:00, and had been from time immemorial. It didn't take me long to learn that the hour fitted the needs of our families whose working and free hours are regulated by farm chores." No one contests that changed conditions can suggest changing of some laws.

But most of our Church laws are rooted not only in historic circumstances, but also in the roots of the ology and nature. The Church law requiring community worship through Sunday Mass seems a good illustration.

and he pointed to recent riots as a "result of endless experience of continuous indignities." He warned that "our cities are sitting on volcanoes because of this racism—smoldering volcanoes."

The need, he said, is more help for the Negro — in getting the job, in getting an education. "Nothing short of a Marshall Plan will do it," he asserted. "It will be well worth it."

Progressive legislation was seen by Golden as "the big answer" to America's racial plight. "Morals follow the law," he held. "The law is the important thing."

## Theology for Today

### Faith and Doubt: Move Slowly!

By FATHER AVERY DULLES, S.J.

Many sincere Christians in our time are tormented by the feeling that they ought to be perfectly certain about matters of faith, while in fact they are not. They are gnawed by doubts that strike at the roots of their religious life and cause inner anxiety of spirit.

To what extent, they ask, can and must the believer be certain about his faith?

Faith is by its nature a commitment, and without firmness there is no commitment. The biblical idea of faith is clearly opposed to doubt, as appears from the story of Zachary (Luke 1:18-20) and the words of the risen Jesus to His bewildered disciples (Luke 24:38; John 20:27). As a decision arising from the very center of the person, faith engages a man totally to the One who can command his full devotion.

The Catholic is committed by his faith not simply, as all Christians are, to God's self-giving in Christ, but to a Church that claims power to pronounce decisively on doctrinal questions. Adherence to the Church implies acceptance of all its dogmas.

Yet there are Catholics who, without wishing to leave the Church, look upon certain dogmas as meaning less, unimportant, even incredible. While regarding the Church as their spiritual home, they feel authorized to take a somewhat critical attitude toward it, as a good citizen does toward his government or a loyal son toward his parents.

Can their doubts be reconciled with their remaining in the Church?

In many cases, the questioning is confined to particular doctrines. Clearly accepting God, Christ and the Church, the believer hesitates with regard to certain teachings, often of a technical or peripheral character.

He may wonder about the "two natures" in Christ, about certain Marian privileges, or about some miraculous events of biblical history. So long as these doubts are not willful or arrogant, but honest and humble; there is no cause for alarm.

In many instances, the questioner misunderstands the formula he is attacking. At other times, what he is rejecting is not a dogma but a reformable Church teaching, or even a mere popular belief.

Or perhaps he is not rejecting anything, but simply saying that he can make no sense of what he hears; he cannot see its value or relevance. Or

he might even assent on the level of deliberate commitment, without being able to suppress hesitations that trouble his mind and heart.

In all such cases it is important to move slowly. The priest or counselor should not be too hasty in demanding a full and enthusiastic commitment to doctrines that are scarcely understood. If we keep the emphasis on the saving mysteries at the heart of Christian faith, which grip us with their inner power, other teachings will gradually fall into place.

With the growing stress on religious freedom and pluralism — within the Church as well as beyond its borders — we shall have to be more patient than in the past. We must expect individual believers to build their lives primarily upon those affirmations that they find religiously important.

Provided a man does not deny the teaching authority of the Church, he may be permitted to pay less attention to peripheral doctrines that he cannot presently assimilate. At most, he can give such truths what Newman would call a "notional" (rather than "real") assent. Only after prolonged and prayerful study does the full relevance of certain doctrines come into view.

More serious are those doubts that seem to call into question the stance of faith itself. Many believers in our day are attacked by the suspicion that faith, as such, may be unwarranted. They are tempted to reject Christianity altogether and base their lives on what seems obvious and clear from experience.

If a person has such feelings, he should not be distressed, as though his faith ought not to be threatened. By its nature, faith is suspended over the abyss of unbelief, and hence is liable to be questioned at any time. Caught in the grip of involuntary doubt, the believer must continually turn to God with fresh humility. "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:23).

When taken too much for granted, faith degenerates into superstition or fanaticism. When seared by doubt, it comes into its own as faith; it proves itself as steadfast adherence to the unseen God.

The man of faith, like Abraham, ventures boldly into the unknown and hopes against hope (Heb. 11:8; Rom. 4:8). Relying on God's word alone, faith grounds man's existence in its true source and gives solidity to his whole life.

(From AMERICA, 3-11-68.)

## Do Catholics Do Enough About Bias?

by GARY MacEON

With the possible exception of the late President Kennedy's evaluation of our obligations towards the developing nations, I can recall no moral judgment by politicians on a social situation as forthright as the report of the National Commission on Civil Disorders.

"White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II," it said.

The moral area is the specific concern of religion. It will, accordingly, be interesting to see what priority we as Catholics are now going to give to the elimination of this moral cancer. Hitherto, our voice has been strangely muted.

As George Hunton, first head of the first Catholic Interracial Council in the United States, pointed out in his autobiography published last year, the Catholic conscience has tended to follow at an interval of ten to twenty years that of the nation.

Last year, at the height of the Newark riots, I attended Mass in a church in the Newark archdiocese on the day or which the Archbishop (acting on the President's request) asked our prayers to end the slaughter and destruction. The preacher read without a word of comment the Archbishop's brief message from the Saturday evening newspaper, then moved to the serious business of special collections and bans of marriage.

The following Sunday, the preacher had found his wind and proceeded to deal with the issue. To his all-white congregation in a parish with a substantial Negro population (in its own place, of course), he expounded the parable of the Ten Lepers, of whom only one returned to thank Christ for curing him. We must learn to understand human nature, he told us. Even if nine of them show no gratitude for all we are doing by our hard work and high taxes to alleviate their lot, we should as Christians be happy when we find that one here and there is grateful to us for our generosity.

Is the picture overdrawn? Ask the Catholics who chanted "Go to hell, Groppi," as they urged their archbishop to silent a dissident voice. Ask the Catholic reactors who support campaigns against open housing laws and conspire with their colleagues to violate these laws where they exist.

Perhaps the ultimate question is why Negroes constitute some 12 per cent of the population of the United States but less than 1.7 per cent of the Catholic population. Wally Ruebuck, a Negro Catholic and a high-placed officer of the Third Order of St. Francis ("I'm the token of Catholic tokenism," he says), recently answered that question for an area he knows well.

"The Church has failed to project the image of Catholicism," he said. "It has failed to create harmony among the races, one of its fundamental missions. Instead, the Church has projected the image of white Christianity, which is repugnant to the Negro. I think it has failed in its mission completely, and if we look at the Church today, compared to the Church we had in Harlem back in 1950, I think we can see very clearly that it is vanishing."

George Hunton died last Fall, but if he were alive, I know he would agree. This is how he put it in his autobiography: "I have been going to Mass regularly all my life, and I've heard plenty of Sunday sermons on subjects pertinent and important. But I have never heard a sermon on racial justice in a Catholic church, except on those occasions on which a sermon was specially arranged for the meeting of an already interested group, such as a Communion breakfast of the Catholic Interracial Council. Our general Catholic public was never exposed to a discussion of the moral issues."

## Pope Paul

### 'Faith is the Light of Life'

Vatican City — (RNS) — Although many persons now question the value of faith, using "disastrous simplifications," faith remains the "light of life" and offers "eternal salvation," Pope Paul VI told a group of pilgrims here.

The Pope spoke at a Mass which he celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica for a large group of pilgrims from the Piedmont region.

"So many maintain that faith is not only useless to modern man but a pitfall in the path to liberation, a brake on scientific research," Pope Paul said.

"It obliges attention to the past that he wants to forget and put by. It ties us to incomprehensible and useless ritual practices and so on."

At the time of Baptism, the Pope noted, Catholics affirm that faith gives eternal life. "If that is so," he said, "what greater or more desirable good could be placed before faith?"

"Faith is the light of life and if it does not always solve the problems

of scientific and philosophical speculation, it does not impede rational solutions but affords comfort in the certainty of its higher teaching.

"Faith is the comfort of life and what would man's attitude be toward the problems of our destiny if faith did not hold us back from madness and desperation?"

### Archbishop "Tolerates" Worker-Priest Idea

Madrid — (NC) — Archbishop Casimiro Morcillo Gonzalez of Madrid told newsmen here that he is only "tolerating" the priest-worker movement.

"I tolerate them but do not approve of these lone snipers," the archbishop said.

He referred to a group of about 50 priests who have joined the ranks of labor and share the life of the workers. They are taxi drivers, bricklayers, miners and factory workers and say Mass every working day.



## announcing a distinguished arrival




it's reasonably priced...  
\$5.49 The Fifth

Canadian R & R is remarkably good. Canadians have known for years. Just as they've known G & W Ltd., Canada's oldest distiller wouldn't make the whisky any other way. Happily, this fine whisky, registered at the distillery is now available for the very first time in the U.S.A. Ask for R & R in the elegant bottle at your liquor dealer. Find out first hand how delightful Canada's good neighbor policy can be!

IMPORTED BY ASSOCIATED IMPORTERS, INC. BOTTLED IN THE U.S.A. BY GOODERHAM & WORTS, PEORIA, ILL. EIGHTY PROOF