

JOSEPH BREIG SAYS



Article in 'America' Shocking

I cannot describe the feelings of incredulity and disappointment that came over me upon reading Jesuit-edited America magazine's statement advocating that the Church reverse its teaching on the immorality of contraception.

Among the reasons for my depression are such facts as that I have long been an admirer of the Society of Jesus; that I have many Jesuit friends, and that my two sons are products of a Jesuit-conducted university.

Because I have come to expect intelligence and wisdom in Jesuit pronouncements, I was rightly shocked by the superficiality, not to say sophomoricism, of America's approach to a matter of such immense importance.

Here is a subject of great moral breadth and depth, one to which Pope Paul VI has been devoting the profoundest sort of study because, as he has said, "it is a vast question, a very delicate question, and one on which we ourselves, because of its religious and moral implications, have the right and indeed the obligation to speak."

Into this sensitive field came

America, heavy-footedly presuming to instruct Pope Paul and the World Synod of Bishops. And what authority did America adduce in support of its proposal that the Church abandon a moral teaching which goes unbroken back to a time when, in the Roman Empire, Christians suffered hideous persecution from a society which had made contraception a way of life, and had become so sex-mad that the history books merely hint at the moral abominations into which it had plunged?

America referred to the views of some Catholic physicians (whose competence is not in the field of moral theology) who "see positive as well as negative human values in the use of contraception in certain situations"—whatever that means.

Then, with ineffable innocence, the magazine babbled about "the use of contraception for the achievement (save the Mark!) of a truly Christian marriage." And this astounding performance was crowned with a quotation from "a distinguished Catholic physician" (who was not named) who thinks that without contraception most couples cannot "achieve the values proclaimed by the Church as part of the marital state."

The magazine went on to resort to an argument that would get you zero-minus in any Jesuit classroom—that "as long as the technique is not harmful to anyone else and can be genuinely useful for the clients bodily and psychic health, how can nature forbid it?"

For one thing, the question assumes what remains to be proved; for another, exactly that type of "reasoning" is always offered to justify all kinds of strange practices—for example homosexuality.

The triviality of the America statement is but one reason I am depressed by it. Another is its shocking lack of respect for the teaching authority of the Church.

The Pope is studying the matter, as he has said, profoundly and prayerfully. He intends to deal with it in depth. He has said that the traditional teaching remains in force and "demands faithful and generous observance." And he requested that nobody speak or write against that teaching. Why couldn't America's magazine editors have the elementary loyalty and courtesy to wait for the Pope to speak.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE



Impatience Can Hurt Faith

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

A friend once said: "I make decisions cautiously when in a cheerful mood—I buy—with discretion when in an exuberant mood. I rarely make any decisions when in a dismal mood. And in all moods I try to keep balance."

Most people seem to run in mood cycles. We move from placid mood to a somber, "down" mood; which is followed by a cheerful, love-the-world mood. And it keeps on.

Well balanced people control their moods so that when they are "down" they stay calm and don't bite the heads off those they meet; when they are "up," they don't contract to buy Detroit and Chicago; and when they are in a placid mood, they know that sooner or later there will be an up or a down, and accept all as a part-of-life.

As we read the religious news in the papers we are often influenced by moods, but there is a general consistency in judgment even if a variety of emotional intensities.

When we read: "Nuns flaunt Bishop's orders," we pause; "Friest contests chancery decision," we weigh; "Bishop refuses to suspend defiant curate," we are curious; "Lay group forms association to disassociate from parochial association," we smile; "Traditionalists deny authority of Bishop," we chuckle; "Balloons, cigarettes and James Joyce integrated into Eucharistic liturgy," we gag.

Much of the inconsistencies in the present religious turmoil in the Church would have brought gales of literary fire from the soul of the late G. K. Chesterton, and the bludgeon quill of Hilaire Belloc. Unfortunately, there seems no one of their stature to ridicule the ridiculous and to flatten blatant heresies and anarchy.

However, if we are tempted to discouragement, we might take courage from "The History of the General Councils of the Church" by the English historian Hughes. He stated that after most of the Councils there was an uproar that makes today's ruckus sound like a mutter. A bit of verse which has helped many people during times of distress is this:

"From the time that you're born till you ride in a hearse, Things are never so bad they couldn't be worse."

KEEP SMILING. IT'S A GREAT CHARITY.

French Lax On Going To Church

Paris — (RNS) — Only about one French adult in five goes to Mass regularly, although 85 per cent claim they are Roman Catholics, according to a survey published by the Catholic weekly, La Vie Catholique Illustrée.

Reasons offered for not going regularly to Mass included lack of time, other business, and distance from the church. Only 6 per cent ascribed their behavior to matters of doctrine.

A total of 59 per cent of non-practicing believers feel that the Church is "too much for the rich"; 71 per cent feel the Church should not refuse Communion to divorced persons; 30 per cent say the Church is not firmly opposed enough to the Vietnam war; and 58 per cent feel the Church attaches too much importance to sexual problems.

The magazine said that 69 per cent of those who answered the poll said they would approve permission for priests to marry. The percentage also believes that married priests would be better able to understand family problems.

A smaller proportion, 58 per cent, said they favored priests holding second jobs as workers, doctors, technicians, etc., in order to "be able to understand the circumstances of different classes and social strata."

U.S. 'Violent,' Jesuit Says

A Roman Catholic Biblical scholar and theologian has charged that the U.S. is not a "Christian country," but the "most violent nation in recorded history."

Father John J. McKenzie, S.J., also claimed that the Catholic Church has accepted violence "as long as it is used by governments," and has remained silent "in our present orgasm of violence in Vietnam."

Writing in the April-May issue of The Critic, published by the Thomas-More Association, Father McKenzie contended that this country has been even more violent than "such thugs as the Assyrians, the Romans, and the much overrated Mongols and Tartars."

No nation, he said, "has killed so many people, citizens and aliens, in so short a time. We have inherited all the violent traditions of Europe together with our own violent traditions of the frontier."

To call America a Christian nation, the Jesuit continued, is "so

manifestly false that one does not know how to frame the denial, if any one counts on the Christian beliefs and habits of white Americans to restrain their violence, forget it."

He asserted that history shows that the "American way" of resolving differences and problems between men has been "to bash in the heads of the disagreeing persons."

Turning to the institutionalized Catholic Church, he wrote that it "has always been with the status quo, which is not as harsh as it sounds; it has always stood for law and order because it cannot stand for lawlessness and disorder."

But, he added, what does the Church say when "law and order institutionalize injustice?"

"It has rarely had a prophetic voice in this situation," the priest said. "Its position at the moment is ambiguous because the Church may face an internal revolution; but lack of unity means that she sounds an uncertain trumpet."

LITURGY

Offertory Procession - Why?

The Christian idea of sacrifice is radically different from its general human concept. Christian sacrifice is not an attempt to placate God's wrath through violent destruction of something owned by man and given over to God to win His favor. The Christian-sacrifice is based on the fact that the Father has, once and forever, sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

Therefore Christian sacrifice can only consist in the remembrance of the one sacrifice of the Cross: "Do this in memory of Me." The Mass is a sacrifice because it re-presents sacramentally the sacrifice of the Cross.

The Offertory has only the function to prepare the sacramental sacrifice celebrated in the Canon of the Mass. The reason why the Council has emphasized the importance of the Offertory is the fact that it clearly shows that the Sacrifice of the Mass is not only the sacrifice of Christ offered for us, but also the sacrifice of the Church.

Christ has given His sacrifice into the hands of the Church that we may celebrate it. While this is being done essentially through the priest who acts as representative of Christ and of the Church, the bringing of gifts by the members of the congregation to the altar expresses our active participation in this sacrifice.

A. Functions of the Offertory:

1. It is an act of purification: the bringing of earthly gifts is an act of reparation, of detachment, of generosity, which "covers" our sins.

2. The Offertory is an act of faith: we give of our own that God may transform our gift and make it the vehicle of His merciful love for us. At the Offertory we act like Mary. We enter into her own disposition of mind in the act of incarnation: "Be it done to me according to your Word." Mary is the "Queen of the Offertory" (cf. the custom of singing an antiphon to Mary at this moment.)

3. The Offertory is an act of charity. The gifts of the faithful are brotherly gifts. They are not gifts to God, but a token of my love for my brothers in Christ. They constitute the "horizontal" from man to man, which cannot be separated from the "vertical": man to God.

4. The Offertory is an act of joy. God loves a cheerful giver. Because it is the Holy Spirit who inspires the act of Christian giving, and not an external law, the Offertory always has been accompanied by singing.

5. The gift offered at the Offertory is a spiritual gift. It is not man as man who is able to offer gifts to the Father, nor is his gift a "material" one. It is not because of its intrinsic value or its quantity that it is pleasing to God. "The Father is seeking those who adore him in spirit and in truth." New Testament worship is essentially a spiritual act. This does not mean that everything material is excluded from it, but that everything has to be offered "in the Spirit."

Our gifts become a spiritual sacrifice in the fullest sense through the sanctifying action of the Canon, but the Offertory itself is already a spiritual act. "In the Church nothing can be consecrated that has not been offered," says Tertullian. The act of offering in the Church was, therefore, reserved to those who were fully members, living members of Christ's Mystical Body. In the Eastern Liturgy non-Christians and catechumens were asked to leave the church at the beginning of what used to be called the "Mass of the faithful."

The offering of material gifts cannot be separated from prayer. The offertory procession is introduced by the Common Prayer of the Faithful, and it is accompanied by the prayer over the gifts. The Offertory procession itself is, in its deepest signifi-

cance, a prayer. The Offertory Procession is a preparation for the Communion Procession.

B. Practical Conclusions for the Offertory Procession:

1. The "value" of the offertory procession does not depend on the reality of the physical giving. It is not necessary that I have baked the host which I offer, nor is it necessary that I bring it to the altar. The emphasis of the offertory procession is not so much on the "vertical," what I do for God, but on the "horizontal"; to make peace with my neighbor, what we do for one another.

2. The gifts should not be limited to the bread and wine to be consecrated, but should include always gifts for the poor, for the needs of the Church, etc. (collection!)

3. In the Eastern Church the offertory procession is introduced by the invitation of the deacon: "Let us love one another!", which is followed by the kiss of peace (shaking of hands), a custom which might be introduced also in our churches.

4. One of the main purposes for reviving the Offertory Procession is to make it clear that the Church is not a closed clerical circle. It is not the sacristy nor the pastor's rectory that feeds the altar, but the congregation. Therefore the bread and wine should not be brought from the sacristy but from the place of the people. Otherwise a wrong image is projected.

5. The Offertory Procession makes it clear that the last meaning of sacrifice in the Christian sense is unity. "Every sacrifice is offered that we may adhere to God in holy unity." (St. Augustine) It makes it clear that we are the gifts which are to be consecrated, that we are not gifts acceptable to God, as long as we are not truly one.

An explication of the very nature of bread and wine may be useful. Bread and wine are in themselves a lesson in unity: the process of making bread or wine is the process of gathering the many grains or the many grapes, of freeing them from the shells which divide them, of uniting them through the work of the mill and the wine-press into flour or juice, which then through baking and fermentation turn into bread or wine. We (not only I) are the gifts that are being put upon the altar. We are being consecrated, transformed into Christ, and so we ourselves become the bread of life for others.

(Rochester Diocesan Liturgical Commission)

Theological Reform Urged By German

A renewed concern for the future of the world and the emergence of a unified mankind necessitate a complete re-examination of Christian theology, a noted German said.

Dr. Jurgen Moltmann of the University of Tuebingen, Germany, who is visiting professor of systematic theology at Duke University, said "two experiences" have wrought a new challenge of theology which "can be met only through a reorganization of the theological system itself and a reorientation of the entire theological endeavor."

One of these "experiences," he held, was in the fact that in conversations with modern atheists, humanists and Marxists, one always arrives at the point where the deep schism of the modern age is immediately recognized.

A second "experience," Dr. Moltmann said, is that of our having arrived at a "turning point in history, with something like one world emerging for the first time."

'Third Man' Unwelcome Phenomenon

By GARY MacEoin

Recent discussions with seminarians and college students in widely scattered parts of the United States and Canada brought to my mind again and again the phenomenon of the Third Man.

I am referring not to the popular film theme but to the phrase coined by Father Francis Roustang, S.J., in an article in a French Catholic magazine in October 1966. The rapidity with which it has gained currency establishes the quality of the coinage.

The reference is to an early Christian text, the Letter to Diognetes, in which the Christian (contrasted to the Jews and the pagans) is called a third race, a third people, a third man.

Father Roustang, however gave the expression a totally new meaning. He used it to describe the man who is personally committed to moral values and faith in Christ, but who is detached from or unconcerned with institutional structures, as contrasted with the conservative who wants to defend existing Church structures, and with the progressive who wants to change them.

My recent experience has convinced me that the Third Man is to be found not only in colleges but in seminaries more often than I had suspected.

I would immediately make a distinction which I consider important. The attitude of the affected seminarians and students in Catholic colleges tends to be one of unconcern. They have learned, to use their own language, how to turn the institution off. They react conventionally to what its spokesmen tell them. But there is no meeting of the minds, no dialogue, and ultimately no impact.

"The whole thing is as formalized as an Oriental dance," one frustrated theology professor told me. "The kids simply refuse to go beyond the formulation in the Baltimore Catechism which they were taught in grade school. They are terrified at the thought of the self-evaluation which would follow a measuring up of their religious professions against the things that matter to them in life. And the tragedy is that the college authorities approve. Those of us who attempt to awaken them are quickly isolated as trouble makers."

I have found more welcome for the trouble maker on the secular campus. I am not offering the result of a sociological investigation, but I speak from a long and committed observation, and it is my conviction that the understaffed and under-financed Newman Center is playing a part that cannot be overstated. At least some Catholic colleges could take lessons from them on how to communicate with the student, how to develop the climate which he needs today in order to develop his Christian life.

Newman Centers, however, also function within a framework dictated by the local Church authorities. To go no further than the liturgy, the more committed of the students often find the gap between their vital needs and the official specifications so wide that they go underground. And, apart from other problems, the "underground Church" tends to be a way station to detachment from all institutional structures, to the production of the Third Man in the strict sense of the term.

I find it hard to understand the reluctance which many churchmen seem to have even to discuss this problem, and I think it dangerously naive to imagine it will go away or be resolved simply by giving the young people a guitar Mass.

Once again it's the season for the fast ball, the knuckle ball, the curve ball. Plan to celebrate every victory with

a highball.

Old Grand-Dad  
Head of the Bourbon Family

Kentucky straight Bourbon whiskeys. 86 proof and 100-proof bottled in bond. Old Grand-Dad Distillery Co., Frankfort, Ky.