

JOSEPH BREIG SAYS

Good For A Columnist's Morale

Being at least normally conceited, I am going to yield to the temptation to publish the letter that follows. (Fact is, it would be well worth publishing even if I were as humble as a chap ought to be.)

The note is from a woman in New York City who declines to allow me to include her name and address. It reads:

"Your columns have the human individual touch that evokes a response in the hearts of individuals. This is what general news articles and most columns do not do.

"Oh, they are good 'critiques,' good 'reports,' good 'advice' concerning problems—good serious heavy tomes of thought which too often belabor the individual concerning world problems, about which one can become depressingly filled with fears about the future—often when one most needs courage for the future.

"In a discussion in our lounge (I live in a resident of 375 business women, aged 35 to 40) your columns

came up for discussion. The consensus of opinion was that there is hope for the world if writers can relate to the human joys of people as well to the human problems.

"Two women flatly said that if they could pick up a newspaper and find in it one article directed to matters of interest in their lives—which were also matters over which they could mull with interest, they just might start buying newspapers again."

"They are saturated to numbness with world chaos and the perpetual 'brink of despair.' They are disgusted with the tomes analyzing psychological problems of teenagers and adults. They are weary of burdens that hold no heaven.

"Regardless of the battles and imminent dangers of rising crime and taxes, of changes and fears of changes, they are human, vital people who need to come home after a hard day of work and recreate for the next day.

"A columnist who can speak his

opinions in terms of people-interest; of pool and billiards evoking the familiarity of brothers, husbands and sons; of idealists who must walk alone (all women know them, and so do men)—such a columnist touches the heartstrings of familiar respect and concern.

"He brings matters into the proportions of the life of an individual. He eases the unknown fears. He speaks the language of the people, and makes the awesome cause a matter for reflective thought.

"Keep up the good work. Your 'pool, billiards, checkers, chess' article was fun and the column was all the more effective as a result.

"Christ himself, on the awesome morn of the Resurrection was as human as when he was suffering on the cross.

"His first act was to tease Mary Magdalene by withholding his identity for a little time."



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Cursillo Is Kin to Retreat

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



When I need theological stimulation I visit priest friends. Easter Tuesday I spent some time in discussion with Father James Russell of St. Anthony's Church, and Msgr. Wilfred Craugh of St. Bernard's Seminary.

These good priests live in the antipodes of the theological world; yet they are one in Christ's Holy Charity. I never leave either without feeling enriched and energized.

I left St. Bernard's at 7:45 p.m. Near Kodak Park I saw a swarthy man about 30 in laboring clothes, waiting for the bus. I stopped. "Are you going uptown?" He did not understand. I pointed: "Uptown?" "Si!" He got into the car, and beamed happily: "Thank you. Thank you. Muy tired!" Then he slumped back into the seat.

He noted the collar. "Where your church?" "Hornell. Near Pennsylvania."

"Ah, I made cursillo in Pennsylvania 1965."

"Did you like it?" "Muy bueno."

"Many things hard to me understand. You priest understand better. But helps me with Jesus Christ. I try to get wife make cursillo." He got out at Ravine Avenue. We shook hands: one in Jesus Christ.

Chance encounters reveal the constant vitality of the Spirit at work in the Church—even before Vatican II.

What is a "cursillo de cristiandad" (little course in christianity)? It is a kin to a retreat, a religious seminar and a revival. It usually begins on Thursday evening and ends Sunday evening with a climactic gathering of others who have made the course.

The average cursillo group consists of 40 priests and laymen. They are usually men of different ethnic, educational, economic and social backgrounds.

The "little course" has been in use in its present form in Spain since 1949. It came to Texas where it has done good work among the Latin Americans. In 1961 the English language cursillos began in the United States. In 1967 Bishop Sheen appointed Father Hugh Brady diocesan director of cursillos.

In 1957 I met a Texas priest on retreat at the Trappist Abbey, Spencer, Mass. He was working in the Austin diocese. I still remember his words:

"Cursillos are not for fanatics or for dabblers in religious experiment. They are for normal men and women who want to experience their Catholic faith. The course is doctrinally sound, and unfolds to the laymen in particular the life of the Church's doctrines.

"An old Mexican, a friend for years, had abandoned his Catholic faith in childhood. He drank, ran around, and was typical of the loose Latin male. A friend got him to make

a cursillo. Today he is a gay man of prayer, good humored, kind. He is devoted to the Catholic Church. He goes to Mass daily. He is one of our best apostles."

When the Kodak worker said: "I try get wife make cursillo," he was wishing her a special happiness. Jesus Christ said: "By their fruits you shall know them." (Mt. VII-16). The Kodak worker and the Mexican Texan are typical.

The Holy Spirit never stops working in the Church.

If you are interested for yourself, write: Rev. Hugh Brady, St. Anne's Church, Hornell, N.Y. 14843.

'Don't Fear Being Minority'

Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher, director of the Institute of Judaic-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J., has warned against a characteristic of much Catholic intellectual life in America which encourages commitment to a cause—"any cause, preferably to (one) that has popular appeal or smacks of sophistication."

The priest spoke in Milwaukee at the 25th spring symposium of the Catholic Renaissance Society, which was devoted to a discussion of "Minority Voices in American Literature: the Spiritual Dimension."

Msgr. Oesterreicher said some Catholics fear being a minority and thus "left out." The priest said the inferior state of a minority may be its greatness. This is not, he cautioned, a counsel to minorities to be merely "content with their fate."

In fact, "justice is too great a good for men to come to an agreement with injustice, to tolerate dehumanizing conditions. . . . The very existence of a burdened, ill-treated minority cries out for judgment and for a redress of all wrongs. It is not only the victim that cries out but God Himself. . . ."

"With all my heart, I hope that the search of the black man for more than a sham citizenship, for full op-

portunity of education, employment, and housing, for the unhampered enjoyment of his humanity will triumph," Msgr. Oesterreicher declared.

"I am confident that Dr. (Martin Luther) King's dream of a just and truly humane America, which incidentally spins out the vision of Israel's prophets, will be realized some day soon."

Gandhi Ideals Extolled

By Bombay Cardinal

Bhopal, India — (NC) — Valerian Cardinal Gracias of Bombay has called for India's rededication to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi during celebrations of the Gandhi birth centennial next year. The cardinal, who is a member of the national celebration committee, told a meeting here that it was Gandhi who gave India "the precious gift of secularization."

"Today when moral and spiritual values are at a low ebb, when our hold on the spiritual vein of the ancient civilization is loosening, when sacredness of family life and dignity of women is in peril, Gandhi is there in memory to tell us not to forget ourselves."

Education

Howe Issues Challenge to Catholic School Leaders

U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe challenged 12,000 participants in the National Catholic Education Association's 65th annual convention in San Francisco to take a long, close look at Catholic schools and their role in American society.

Outlining the problems faced by education in the U.S., the 49-year-old Howe suggested that Catholic schools have a unique opportunity to bail out American education. This opportunity, he said, grows from three special characteristics of the Catholic school system:

— The Catholic educational system is mainly metropolitan, and so is especially well suited to dealing with the problems of the city.

— Catholic schools are free of the political considerations that often clog the administration of public education.

— The diocesan boundaries of the Catholic school system include both cities and suburbs, and so allow Catholic educators to operate on a regional basis while public school educators are limited by city governments and localized school boards.

"These three characteristics," Commissioner Howe said, "fit the Catholic educational system to join the public system in improving urban education, and they give it some possibilities for elements of leadership.

"You," he told the Catholic educators, "can mount experimental programs without the slow process of seeking formal public approval; you can reach for desegregation without fearing retaliation at the ballot box—though you may encounter it in the collection basket.

"By refusing to abandon the inner cities as your traditional clientele moves to the suburbs, you can serve an American society that has not yet overcome the political fragmentation and economic myopia which make our cities powerless to help themselves.

"Indeed, you can seek new adventures of cooperation with public schools, if you can locate school leaders who are unafraid to challenge some of the unconstructive assumptions of traditional Church-state separation.

"In response to such a suggestion from a public official, Catholic education officials might well ask 'Why should Catholic education, which received precious little help from the public sector on its own financial problems, expect its resources to accomplish a social redemption that may properly be called the responsibility of public agencies?'" Howe said.

"Why should the Catholic parent, who supports his own parish school and at the same time supports public education with his taxes, dig even deeper in his pocket to educate non-Catholic children in the ghetto?"

"Why, when every request from Catholics for public aid raises a new

hue and cry from non-Catholics about Church and state, should Catholic institutions try to do their part to bail out the public sector?"

"To answer these questions, I will embark on a somewhat shaky foray into history and the rationale underlying Catholic education," Howe said. "In the process, I fully expect to raise some tempers. . . ."

"Catholic education emerged partly as a defense against a public education that was clearly Protestant, even anti-Catholic in nature. The public schools did not merely ignore the Catholic belief of some of their students; they were positively hostile to it.

"That time has passed. Though some schools in certain regions of the U.S. retain a definite tincture of militant Protestant feeling, I think it fair to say that most American public schools today are neutral toward religion. This being the case, I think one might argue that one of the original motivations for the establishment of Catholic schools has disappeared. And lest this statement sound like an outsider's improperly poking his nose into your business, let me quote an insider.

"In 1890, in an address to the National Education Association, Archbishop John Ireland had this to say:

"I am the friend and the advocate of the state school. In the circumstances of the present time I uphold the parish school. I do sincerely wish the need of it did not exist. I would have all schools for the children of the people state schools."

Hastening to assure his listeners that he was not advocating abolition of Catholic schools, Howe suggested that "an examination for priorities is in order for Catholic education."

"I would ask, finally," Commissioner Howe concluded, "whether preoccupation with success and the successful on the part of Catholic education in the United States might not very well represent the gravest threat to its continued health.

"If Catholic education is to retain its vitality, it must remember that its prime reason for being in the circumstances of our time goes back much further than John Ireland or John Carroll, further back than the founding of the American republic, further back than the Protestant Reformation, or Aquinas, Augustine, and the early Church Fathers."

"Catholic education draws its basic reason for being not from the American situation, but from the basic Christian message: love God; love your neighbor.

"If Catholic schools and colleges raise up a new generation of young Americans with a firm belief in God and a detailed knowledge of doctrine, they will have realized only half the opportunity that beckons them. They will have failed to grasp the additional opportunity of reaching out to serve those members of our society

who most need help—those members, those neighbors, who are not necessarily Catholic.

"In urging that Catholic educators take upon themselves a part of the burden of educating the urban poor, I recognize that I advocate a course which—from the economic standpoint—is dubious. But if our churches ever test their efforts against the single standard of fiscal prudence, they will work themselves out of existence. We have plenty of banks in America, and together with the bureau of the Budget in Washington they provide all the fiscal prudence we need—perhaps more.

"Christianity is supposed to offer something more. Let us be fools for Christ's sake," said St. Paul. This was the kind of statement that Dr. Martin Luther King understood, and—by rejecting an easy prudence and espousing a life of uncontaminated idealism—he built a majestic dream."

Will King's Death Change The Picture?

By GARY MACEOIN

Chicago — Billowing smoke from burning buildings hung pall-like over the slums of Chicago as over those of a dozen cities. It is far from the last tribute Martin Luther King would have sought. It should, however, not surprise us. As Rev. Jessie Jackson, the aide who grabbed his falling body has stated here, "Violence is undesirable. It denies the spirit of the leader. But it must be expected."

This is not because black Americans are violent people. It is, as Father John L. McKenzie, S.J., notes in *The Critic* this month, because white Americans are violent people.

"No nation has ever killed so many people, citizens and aliens, in so short a time," he writes. "We have inherited all the violent traditions of Europe, together with our own violent traditions of the frontier. . . . 'The American way' to resolve differences between man and man, whether singly or in groups, has been to bash in the heads of the disagreeing persons or party."

Stokely Carmichael, as the peaceable Rev. Jackson has just reminded us, is directly in the tradition of white American violence. And, because black Americans are caught up in our white culture, Carmichael will have followers as long as the violent discrimination of the white-manipulated ghetto culture survives.

Has the assassination of Dr. King really brought us white Americans to the point of total commitment and total dedication which the objective situation demands? We have had rivers of rhetoric here in Chicago, as across the nation, but I fear the Rev. Jackson's assessment is correct. "I do not think that massive change is impossible," he has said, "but I think it improbable." He accepts as legitimate the admissions of conscience, but he insists that these must be accompanied by "a programmatic expression" at the same intensity as that of the emergency which is tearing the nation apart.

Even the examination of conscience has still a long way to go. As I checked into a mid-town hotel here the day following Dr. King's death, the white porter knew the score clearly. "The one mistake," he assured me, "was the failure of the Memphis police chief to take that man into protective custody." He was talking not about the gunman but about the victim.

I only hope that every American diocese follows the lead of the chairman of the bishops' conference. I believe it was Dan O'Connell who proposed some time ago a moratorium on the building of Catholic institutions in favor of projects to eliminate poverty and its causes. I second the notion.

Stockholm Bishop Issues Intercommunion Warning

Stockholm — (NC) — Swedish Catholics were warned against permitting the ecumenical spirit to result in an "intercommunion" with "separated Christian brethren" that would violate the Catholic concept of eucharistic sacramentalism.

Bishop John E. Taylor, O.M.I., of Stockholm said in his newly issued "Guidelines on Intercommunion with Separated Brethren" that the practice of intercommunion by Catholics, individually or collectively, Evangelical (Protestant) Christians in this country damages the cause of ecumenism.

"To seek intercommunion by a single joint act without regard to the theological realities which are at the base of the Eucharist," he said, "is to reduce the Eucharistic celebration to a mere demonstration of goodwill."

Bishop Taylor said that intercommunion is therefore impossible for Catholics, in principle, despite "our grief" over this reality, because there are widely divergent ideas over such essential questions as the hierarchical ministry, the sacrament of Holy Orders, sacrifice, and the sacraments themselves."

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