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Bishops And Critics

St. Louis was recently host for two almost simultaneous but disparate meetings of concerned Catholics. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops in one hotel discussed a wide field of issues ranging from racism and ghetto problems to the priesthood and the budget for Catholic University. Across the city a less distinguished but quite historically significant gathering of 100 laymen, priests and religious met in a group called The National Committee on Catholic Concerns. They talked about the strength and weaknesses of the American Church and their hopes for its stronger leadership in the years ahead.

The participants in the Catholic Concerns discussions talked earnestly about the assets and handicaps of the U.S. Church which they believe call for immediate and clearer episcopal leadership. Opinionated, intelligent, fault-finding but restlessly zealous, they were in unanimous agreement that the American Church is in serious crisis. It is too rooted in old methods, they claimed; too slow in moving into new freedoms, still too undemocratic. The group listed five problems which the Bishops, they demanded, must grapple with: clerical celibacy, racism, selective conscientious objection, experimental liturgy and parish structure.

The 14-page "consensus statement" of the Concerns group reflected a cross section of nearly every vocal cause and interest in the American Church. Although filled with proposals which expressed exasperation with their Bishops' leadership, one short sentence in the consensus probably summed it up: "Teaching, governing and sanctifying in the Church need new contemporary forms". But this was not rebellion nor hopelessness. For as one speaker said: "We have not given up on the institution. We are all drawn here for the love of the Church, for love of the institution which has meant so much to all of us, but which simply must be renewed and reformed and updated if the voice of Christ is to speak."

This doesn't sound like a splinter group itching for power nor frightened souls piling into lifeboats as the bark of Peter sinks. They see themselves as analysts offering constructive and (so far) respectful challenges to their shepherds because they are convinced that the Bishops as a body lack the imagination and courage to deal with the disturbingly new movements of our times.

Because they have a broad base of well-educated, well-placed members, this Concerns Committee will not soon fall apart nor stop proclaiming its dynamic goals. They intend to meet concurrently with the Bishop's Conference, not simply to whisper in the shadows, but to reflect to the shepherds bold, new light from the family of God below the level of Bishop. —Father Richard Tormey

The Pastors Meet

Our front-page report on the diocesan pastors' discussion of the financial predicaments of parochial schools details two hopeful notes in a blue symphony.

First, despite towering monthly debts to maintain full schools, the pastors have indicated a courageous determination to keep faith with the children and parents who want their schools kept open. Second, democratic discussion of the issue, arranged by the Priests' Council in the presence of Bishop Sheen, is an historic forward step in diocesan government.

Many pastors went to the Canandaigua meeting instructed by their parish councils, armed with the opinions and expectations of their people and hopeful that somehow when the laity knew the facts, parish finances would survive the frightening school-cost drain. They were not forgetting the needs of public schoolers nor the adult programs they wish to install. They were not discounting the already heavy burdens of church support their people carry endlessly. Although administration of any deficit project is sleep-killing and frustrating, they indicated to their Bishop and Council that they would not partially close nor totally give up their people's schools. The pastors have placed a new hopeful trust in their parishioners to show that they can afford the education they demand for their children.

No Bishop can believe that he knows the spirit of the diocese nor the mind of the priests until he hears scores of them talking about the same question from their varied backgrounds. This is hard to manage in a large diocese. The Priests' Council deserves praise for arranging the Canandaigua confrontation as a far-reaching and long-needed tool of communication. May it be the beginning of frequent, open discussions where diocesan officials and our Bishop sit in when parish councils talk to pastors, when religious and clergy confer with the laity, and when youth wants to dialogue with its elders.

Viva Mother's Day!

Now that Mother's Day is safely past, it can be told.

A Rabbi, and a well-intentioned one at that, has proposed that Mother's Day be done away with. And Father's Day as well.

Rabbi Bernard Weinberger of New York City has suggested the separate days honoring Moms and Dads make way for one Parents' Day or Family Day.

He criticized the current celebrations for "fragmentizing" family life and isolating the single role of the parents to the detriment of the family's total fabric.

"We would be better advised to designate one day as parent or family day that would include the total relationship of the family unit," he said.

The Rabbi's point is well taken. But this, along with the recent decision in Canada to reduce Holy Days of Obligation, could begin a trend toward eliminating favorite holidays.

Why not a "family day" in addition to Mother's Day and Father's Day? For although we love wives, husbands, brothers and sisters, Mom and Dad still deserve that one distinctive day every year when they can be singularly honored.

Cost: \$140 Billion To Keep World An Armed Camp

By J. J. GILBERT
Washington — (NC) — Military expenditures round the world may amount to \$50 per capita per year, and more than 7 per cent of the gross national product of all countries.

This estimate is based upon an estimate of military expenditures in 1965, and the clear indications that the rate of spending in this field has taken a sharp upturn since then.

Data collected for 1965 and just made public indicate that the military expenditures in 120 countries in that year amounted to \$140 billion. It is noted that a United Nations panel of experts estimated the 1962 expenditures to have been \$120 billion, and that an American study for 1964 indicated a total expenditure of \$130 billion.

Preliminary figures for 1966 indicate that there has been an accelerated rate of rise in military spending to a new all-time high figure of between \$150 billion and \$160 billion.

The increase of between \$15 billion and \$20 billion between 1965 and 1966, it is said, would be more than twice the current annual total of foreign economic assistance extended by all countries to less developed areas of the world.

And, it is further said, it is at least equivalent to a year's expenditures by less developed nations for public education and public health programs for a population of more than two billion.

Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact apparently accounted for 84% of the world total expenditure. The two major military powers — the United States and the Soviet Union — spent an estimated \$92 billion, or more than 64% of the total.

Great costs associated with the development and maintenance of nuclear weapons are reflected by the fact that the five powers possessing nuclear weapons also had the highest military expenditures.

Expenditures worldwide in 1965 on public education were estimated at \$116 billion and on public health at \$46 billion. Neither category took as large a share of the GNP as did defense.

In 1965, about 21 million men, or 6 out of every thousand persons in the world, are thought to have been in armed forces on active duty. NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, with a quarter of the world's population, had almost half of its armed forces.

Italy Election Serious But on Peaceful Side

By JAMES C. O'NEILL

Rome — (NC) — Italy's first national elections in five years, in which 36,000,000 eligible voters can participate on May 19-20, have built to a quieter climax than most of the other postwar contests in this country — not that there aren't serious matters at stake.

The Catholic-oriented Christian Democratic Party, the country's largest, is fighting to keep its No. 1 position and at least keep the 38 per cent of the popular vote total it won in 1963.

Italy's Communist Party, the second largest, campaigned to make inroads deep enough in the other leftist parties to smash ultimately the Christian Democratic Socialist coalition that has unasily governed a prosperous but problem-ridden nation.

At stake are seats in the Italian Senate and House of Deputies, the makeup of which will largely determine the political future of the country. Instead of a choice between two candidates of two parties for president, Italians are presented with candidates from 16 parties, at the very least, with different slates in every province and region.

In effect Italian voters are not being asked to choose between one of two parties but to ratify the present center-left government of Christian Democrats and moderate Socialists. Any significant shift to right or left could bring down an alliance which has never been very strong

at best. Many political observers in Italy believe there will not be any significant shifts because the country's general well-being and the tendency of Italians to vote strictly according to party and class lines.

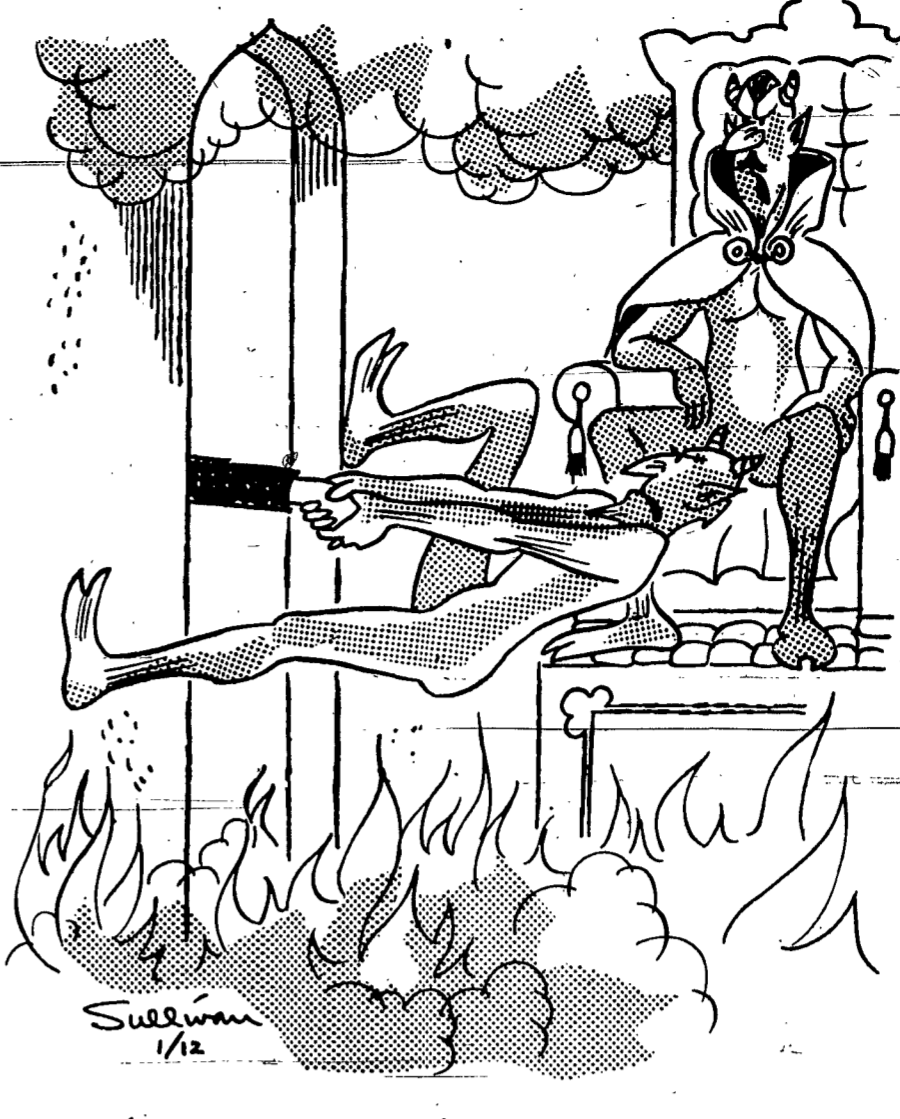
However, the communists, who picked up a million new votes between the elections of 1958 and 1963 and hold 25 per cent of the popular vote are pushing hard.

Italy's Catholic bishops have issued a statement affirming freedom of political choice for Catholics but at the same time have stressed need for unity of Catholics on moral and religious issues.

One of these is the spreading demand for legalization of divorce, a demand opposed by Christian Democrats but supported by communists and many elements in various other parties.

The question of revisions of the concordat between Italy and the Church is also part of the political picture and there is always somewhere in the background a minor tone of anti-Church, anti-clericalism which is one of Italy's most enduring political inheritances.

Factors which could have some drawing power for an increase in Communist Party votes include the general preoccupation with war in Vietnam and the new anti-Stalinist development and relaxation of control of the communist government in Czechoslovakia.



"DON'T TELL ME IT'S ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE DEATH-BED CONVERSIONS!"

Underground Church: Sign of the Times

By GARY MacEOIN

The symposium on "the underground Church" sponsored by the theology department of Boston College was for me the most graphic illustration to date of the depth of the changes the Church is experiencing. The speakers and their audience included many of the most reputable and distinguished people in this country's Christian community.

What many of them said was away out. "Offensive to pious ears" would have been the theological note in the days before Vatican Council II. Yet, as I listened to these priests, nuns and committed lay people, I was convinced that we have here a movement that the institutional Church can ignore only at its peril.

The groupings of Christians who go under the generic name of the underground Church are so vaguely structured as to defy definition. Perhaps their clearest constant is a search for a new form of basic Christian community to replace the socially defined parish. Another important constant is their grass-roots origin as a spontaneous development without encouragement from the institution and usually in a state of tension in their relations with it.

While the phenomenon is expanding in most parts of the Catholic world, it is particularly dynamic in the United States. According to Father Rocco Caporale, S.J., "there is no diocese where one or more such groups are not to be found."

With few exceptions, these spontaneous groups are not officially recognized by the hierarchy as valid ecclesial units, yet nearly all include one or more priests as members. Sometimes a laicized or suspended priest. Combined with the desire for a priest to lead, the community's worship is a rejection of the cultural distinctions between priest and layman which characterize institutionalized religion in our society.

We usually think of the underground Church in terms of liturgical experimentation, but the Boston College symposium stressed also its other dimensions, including the theological. "We are burdened now with inescapable knowledge of the moral failure of institutional Christianity," to quote Dr. Mary Daly. "The appalling evidence of the failure of the Church in Nazi Germany, of the failure of the Church in America to speak out over Hiroshima, over Vietnam, and of its refusal to demon-

strate the sincerity of its words concerning civil rights is too evident to be totally ignored. The Christian who faces these things — and specifically one who identifies with institutional Catholicism — is torn and divided within himself. He experiences himself as present within the Church and yet in isolation, closer to his agnostic friends than to many of his 'fellow Catholics.'"

Speaking as a sociologist, Dr. William Osborne insisted on the distinction between those who actively seek a new type of Church organization through experimentation, approved, or not approved, and those who are ceasing to participate in all religious activity and organizations, traditional as well as experimental, while still regarding themselves as Christians. These last he describes as drop-outs, and if I understood him correctly, he regarded them as the greater threat to the Church.

What most surprised me at the Boston College symposium was a widespread conviction that it was naive to imagine that the institutional Church could ever be persuaded to update at a pace acceptable to the members of the "underground." The need for an institution was not directly challenged, nor the need for authority as a constitutive factor of society. But these elements were not stressed. The ideal presented was that of the hippies, to do one's thing and let the future work out the long-term effects.

I heard only one person argue meaningfully against this attitude. That was Paul Saraha, head of the Community of Pope John XXIII in Oklahoma City. The Community is one of the most radical of the current experiments in Catholic living, being distinguished from the others principally by the fact that it is above ground because of the approval of the Bishop.

Does this mean that the others who scoffed at authority were simply rationalizing their own disobedience? I suspect the answer is more complicated. Taken in its world dimensions as a spontaneous grassroots movement, Christians who seek meaningful forms and activities to replace the conventional, the underground Church has a profound prophetic significance. Tension with the institution is inevitable. Indeed, it is its reason for existence. It is legitimate to hope, however, that other bishops can join Bishop Victor Reed of Oklahoma City in channeling the movement constructively.

Prayers Must Contain Trust

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

To pray in the name of Christ is not like receiving a blank check signed by Christ as though all we had to do was to fill in whatever we desired and His Father would honor it. Nor does praying in Christ's name mean simply using His name in prayer; that would be using the scabbard in lieu of the sword. "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

To pray in the name of Christ means simply to offer prayer to the Father in the light of all that Christ has revealed about the Father.

Before Christ, many men believed that two powers ruled the world: a good one and an evil one. Christ revealed that the Father is always on our side, that behind the suffering and sorrows of life his loving hand is outstretched to embrace us.

Prayer is the response to that love as the embrace is to the embrace, the kiss to the kiss. With it comes the joy and strength that only love can give. God's love never changes, but ours does. Prayer prepares us to receive God's love.

Before Christ, men believed God was localized or else far away in heaven, so prayer was to them a beating against a silent heaven to

try and get a hearing — his attention. Christ revealed that God is everywhere and omniscient. He knows, he cares, he loves; he has plans for all of us, plans that are best for each of us. Prayer is not an attempt to change his plans.

Does the child lisping his prayers really know what he wants? Do we? But God does. We pray to dispose ourselves to want what God wants, to bring us into harmony with his plans. Praying does not change things, it changes people. People change things.

So many pray, but they do not pray in Christ's name. For instance, one prays for success. But if he is not willing to accept failure, then he is not praying in the name of Him who prayed before He chose his apostles and chose a Judas. Another prays for happiness. But he prays in Christ's name only if he is open to sorrow as well as to joy, if he means, "Let this chalice pass, but not my will but Thine be done."

If we pray like a music box that reels off a fixed number of tunes and then is silent, we do not pray in the name of Jesus. If we pray as we play bingo, hoping to win but expecting not to, then we do not pray in the name of Him who never worked a miracle unless the person asking showed faith.

He prays in the name of Jesus who prays to God as the child to his father — with love, with confidence, with trust. For the great revelation of Jesus was "the Father himself loves you."

Quotes from the News

Christian Idea of Peace Makes Sense After All

Fifteen centuries of nationalistic jockeying for position on the world's track have badly compromised our original clear vision of ourselves as God's peacemakers.

But nuclear power has forced man the realist to see that the words of the gentle Christ do make sense after all.

Christians have been called "suckers" by the worldly wise of every age. I often feel that our current skimpy theology of peace and war owes more to the slogans of the American Legion than to the original teachings of Christ. — Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul, Minneapolis in Sunday sermon.

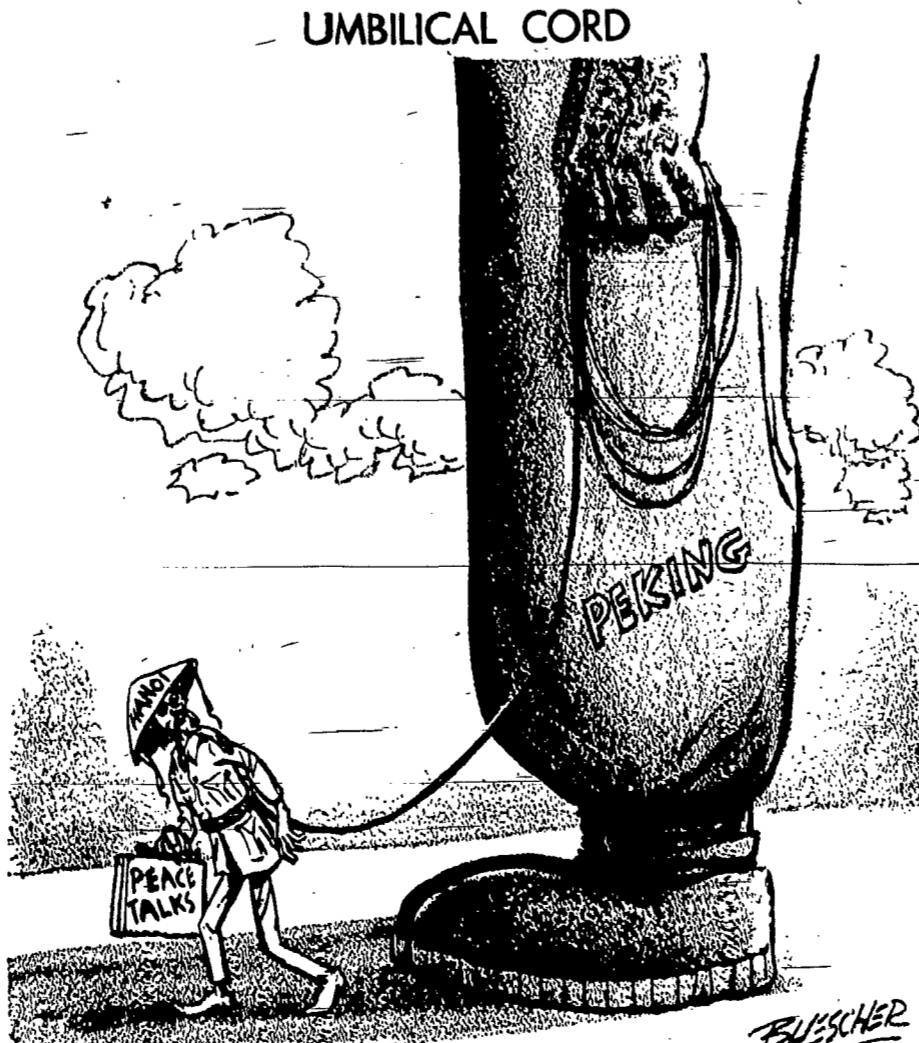
Religion Is Relevant To World's Problems

People who ask that religion be made relevant ask that religion be put to their own use and this is a radical misunderstanding.

Religion is always relevant. It is relevance itself, par excellence.

Do we expect things from the Bible or are we prepared to find out what the Bible expects from us? Many have expectations which the Bible and God cannot possibly meet. Then when they are disappointed, they decide that God is dead.

The Bible is relevant by showing us how our lives are shamelessly irrelevant. — Dr. Charles Malik, former president of U.N. General Assembly to American Bible Society.



Jubilarian 50 Years For Pastor In Elmira

Monignor Leo G. Schwab, pastor of the West Elmira parish, will observe the 50th anniversary of his ordination on June 9, his 74th birthday on June 10.

Bishop Sheen will co-mass with him at 4:30 p.m. Mass of Lourdes. The bishop will speak there. There will be a reception from 1:30 to 4 in the parish hall and a dinner at 6 at the M Hotel.

Monignor Schwab, dean of Chemung-Schuyler diocese, was named a domestic worker in 1959. Pope John XXIII named him a domestic worker for his success in establishing a parish, to which he had added a school. Since then, he has been built.

The Golden Jubilarian is one of the five St. Bernards ordained for the Rochester diocese in 1918. The class was on June 8 by Bishop John J. Sheen.

Monignor Schwab, a Rochester, was educated at St. Bernard's, St. Anselm's and St. Bernard's. He has served in the diocese for 43 years as a priest.

After a brief initial assignment at Immaculate Conception, he was assistant pastor of St. Ann's, Elmira, until 1934, six years as assistant at St. Leocaster. He was appointed present post July 1, 1944.

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