GOMMENTARY

JOSEPH BREIG SAYS

Student Doubts: Not Exactly New

By JOSEPH A. BREIG

"People are no dang good," says the cynic.

(Or should we call him a realist?) "God is good," says the Good Book. This immense contrast between divinity's total holiness (selflessness) and mankind's self-seeking is sharply profiled in one of the most intriguing passages in the New Testament. Using it as evidence for his identity, Jesus puts this question to the peo**p**le:

"Why do you call me good? Only God is good.

As the English writer Arnold Lunn said, the question left the way open for one of two answers:

"You are not (totally) good. Therefore you are not God."

Or, "You are good; therefore you a re God."

Author Dorothy Thompson once expressed the reality of humanity's moral frailty in these words:

"There is a new sinner born every minute.

(Or every second.)_

That, she said, is the reason there is so much turmoil in the world. Just

about the time you get a person civilized (or sanctified) he dies; and his place is taken by somebody with whom you've got to start the whole process all over again.

-These-reflections-are-prompted-bya news account of a survey of 3,000 students (all males) at New York's Manhattan College, conducted by the Christian Brothers.

Franciscan Father Bruce M. Ritter, chairman of the school's Christian Life Council, was struck by the fact that the poll showed a split between faith and morals in the minds of the students.

He noted that they firmly believe in such revealed doctrines of faith as a personal God; the Trinity; the resurrection of Christ; Christ's real presence in the Eucharist.

On the other hand, they voiced doubts about traditional teaching concerning such matter as artificial contraception, abortion, papal infallibility, and the like.

"It is beyond question," said Father Ritter, "that our present Catholic college population is deeply troubled at the tensions they experience in their love-hate relationship with the institutional Church, and are almost

religiously schizoid in their inability to cope with the split between their doctrinal convictions and their moral uncertainties.

Allow me to say to Father Ritter: "Peace: be-of-good heart."

He is not describing merely today's college students; he is describing college students of every generation, including mine.

Somehow the impression has got around that there is something new about the shook-up-ness of today's students. There isn't.

In my day at the University of Notre Dame, we, like the Manhattan young men, willingly accepted such doctrines as the Trinity and the Resurrection. Why not? It cost us nothing.

But we too questioned teachings about morals—especially sex morals. After all, these were "hard sayings;" they demanded galling self-sacrifice - and who wants it?

libility of the pope, we questioned it because we had a grossly exaggerated and erroneous notion of what it meant. Since our idea of it was wildly unreasonable, naturally our reason boggled at it.

At 11 o'clock last Friday, May 10, nearly a hundred pastors of parishes with parish schools and a few educational specialists converged at Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua. There are 104 parish schools in the diocese. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Catholic schools future, and the problems of finance, personnel and structure. Bishops Sheen, Hickey and McCafferty were there.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Difference in Schools--Atmosphere

The pessimism about the future of Catholic education was not in evidence there. Rather, these pastors, tried in the fire of experience, were serious without being somber, convinced without being closed. They were spokesmen not just for themselves but also for their Boards and parishioners.

There was almost unanimous agreement: although every parish has different difficulties, the value of the religious schools to the parishes, to the Church and to the communitiesoverwhelmingly over balances the problems.

" It has always struck me as a great weakness in our presenting our religious school picture, to talk so much about "keeping up with the public school system.

In the first place, the public schools like all institutions have great troubles. Read the papers. Go to the meetings. This is not said in any critical sense. It just happens that everyone has troubles — and it is foolish to talk as if the Catholic school system was somehow unique in the troubled field!

In the second place, our presentation of the reason for the Catholic schools is rarely presented. It was a non-Catholic journalist, George Cornell, who expressed beautifully, our reason for existence in an article in the D & C Aug. 6, 1961.

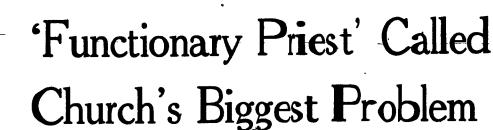
Cornell entitled his article: HOW PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS DIFER. He said: "They study the same subjects. They gripe with equal fervor about homework and tests. They're alike in most ways, Kius, going to school. Yet to pupils in parochial and public schools, there is a difference. MAIN-LY IT'S ONE OF ATMOSPHERE." "Their classwork follows the same general lines as public schools. What sets it apart is more in the climate than in the curricula. It's a subtle, largely unspoken element that invests each school day with a recognition of God's sovreignty over life and learning, and an awarentess of supernatural realities as well as the natural. The child is a citizen of two worlds. It is the educator's responsi-bility to equip him to fulfill this dual

geography, language and history. They're not inflated Sunday schools. In fact, only 30 minutes a day on the average nationally, is devoted to re ligious instruction; the rest of the day is spent in ordinary academic studies, which must meet the same state regirements of instructional time as public schools.

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"IT'S THE TONE, more than the teaching, that provides the religious note.

"There are prayers at the beginning and end of each school day, and grace at lunch time. In the Catholic schools, three-fourths of the teachers and nuns and brothers (although the proportion of lay teachers is rising), and they provide the young with an example of dedication to church serv-ICE. EVEN THEIR RELIGIOUS GARB IS A SILENT REMINDER OF



Brighton, Mass. - (RNS) - The central problem in the Roman Catholic Church today, according to Father Joseph Fichter, S.J., is the "functionary priest."

Stillman Professor at Harvard University and executive secretary of the American Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, Father Fichter made his observations at a meeting of New England's Catholic bishops and major religious superiors at St. John's Seminary here.

"We have more functionaries, more job-holders, than professionals among the Roman Catholic clergy today," he said, "and that is the Church's central problem - not birth control, or abortion or celibacy or Catholic schools.'

Father Fichter claimed that the



By Father Paul J. Curddy

Courier Journal - Friday, May 17, 1968

In the few years since these words were written the proportion of Sisters and lay teachers has changed. But the life of the Sisters, and the sight of the religious habit, remain still great religious and moral influences with our children.

And from my own observations, the lay teachers who teach in our schools are not the emerged Catholic laymen who make a vocation of constant carping at the Church, but rather are dedicated men and women who consider their teaching work in the Catholic schools as a special type of vocation, and who live it well.

The reason for the Catholic schools is the difference between the religious school and the public school: "Mainly, it's one of atmosphere."

and proficiencey." He said recent sur-

veys have shown, however, that some

87 per cent of America's young

priests "would like to continue their

education and become professionals."

Some 54 per cent of America's jun-ior clergy, he added, "say they are working below capacity. They are not

challenged by their work. The sym-toms of thats," Father Fichter said,

"The priest who follows the book,"

he continued, "is closed to hope and

involved im despair. And manage-

ment is to blame. It does not see the

priesthood as a profession; it lireats

Father Fichter said he saw the key

to professionalism "in the concept of

the hyphemated priest, the priest-

specialist. No lorager can the priest

"are boredom and frustration."

it like an occupation."

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A New Look at Nuns

Many are Restless but Not Leaving in Droves

(NC News Service Report

U.S. nuns are not leaving their convents in alarming numbers but are restlessly interested in new kinds of work within religious life, according to an official survey of 135,000 Sisters reported last week.

The Conference of Major Susuperiors said that the increased study with 649 questionnaire items per cont nation's nuns - 1,827 of the 175,000 - left religious life in 1966. Only 889 of these had taken final-vows. The research committee said: "This figure is dramatically lower that the. gaugestes popularly quoted and even appears insignificant in comparison with divorce statistics. Nonetheless it gives pause for the departure rate is clearly accelerated."



As for the teaching on the infal-

A spokeswoman for the religious superiors' said that the increased focus on "personal development" has caused many Sisters to see that they are not suited to the religious life and that they will find greater personal fulfillment elsewhere.

Admitting to contrast with the figures for departures from religious life in former years surveyed, the report said that those who have left recently did so "because of an increased use of psychological testing, psychiatric interviews and vocationiraterest testing."

Appointed in 1965, the committee was formed by the CMSW to "assess the resources and determine the responses that religious are making and can make to the invitation issued in Vatican II's Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life."

The survey was conducted in two sections. The first, in the summer of 1966, was a lengthy questionnaire to each religious order which held membership in the CMSW. These questionnaires were filled out by the general secretary for each community. It took eight months to process the information gathered from 415 communities.

The second section was a questionnaire sent to all the Sisters in the U_S. — 157,917. It drew a gigantic e - 135,109 or 75 per cent of all the nuns in the U.S. Forty Sister-sociologists, stationed in various parts of the country, helped to process the responses.

(Continued from Page 1)

societies of the North Atlantic -

North America, Britain, Western Eu-

rope — the basic notion about in-

come is to increase it and about

living, its claims on resources and its

expectations of fun and comfort go

up in step with higher earnings. One

can find it hard "to make both ends

meet" and be resentful of taxes at

\$6,000 a year, \$12,000 a year, \$24,000

a year, \$48,000 a year and so on up-

in fact, since taxes rise with income,

complaints can be higher as wealth

increases, even though expenditures

now cover two houses and three cars,

trast, reminds us that the higher the

income, the greater the responsibility.

The final counsel of perfection was given to the rich young man: "Sell all

Short of this evangelical extreme.

the wealthy must not satisfy their

own rising superfluitles at the expense of the basic needs of others. If

they do, they will enter eternity as

easily as a carnel through the eye

of a needle - not a wholly reassur-

you have and give to the poor."

Christian teaching, in stark con-

In general, a family's standards of

wealth to accumulate it.

The Progress of Peoples

2 Errors of an Affluent Society

THE NEW BREED A GLENMARY NUN

Of the survey, a spokesman for the research committee here said: "Although the findings of particular sections and even particular items in the survey may very understandably altract high interest, it is the fact of the survey's having been taken at all, and the fact that it has provided such an extensive body of data about religious life in America, that is the real news.

One section of the survey of "high interest" today would be the section on religious garb. It provided some interesting results which might be considered opposite to popular notions.

Asked if religious should be allowed to alternate wearing religious habits, secular clothes, and vacation clothes according to the occasion, 19.9 per cent of the Sisters responding to the survey said yes, 62.7 per cent said no, and 11 per cent said they did not know.

Statistics on the division of labor among U.S. Sisters show 72 per cent are teachers, 8 per cent are involved in health work, 5 per cent in catechetical and missionary work, and 36 per cent in welfare work.

In a set of 30 questions on post-Vatican developments the Sisters showed an increased belief in the value of dialogue, a recognition of the Spirit dwelling in the community and speaking through its members, and a new respect for "the holy" in the world.

In 1965, 65 per cent of all U.S. Sisters held bachelor's degrees, and -19 per cent were in the process of getting them. Of those who held the B.A. in 1965, 21 per cent also held master's degrees and 1.7 per cent held doctorates. Master's degrees were most frequently in the fields of education, literature and theology and religious education.

The CMSW spokesman noted that the survey indicated that U.S. Sisters have new interpretations of the meaning of their vows. "Chastity is perceived as allowing the genuine love of the other, poverty as a willingness to share one's goods with the poor and obedience as a willingness to listen to the community as it speaks through many voices," the survey re-

survey: -Sisters tend to be a healthy group

since only 3 per cent are totally inactive due to old age and 2 per cent totally inactive because of illness.

ity, 40.4 per cent of the nuns said

"For the most part, however, the parochial schools spend their time like any other school, bearing down such subjects as mathematics,

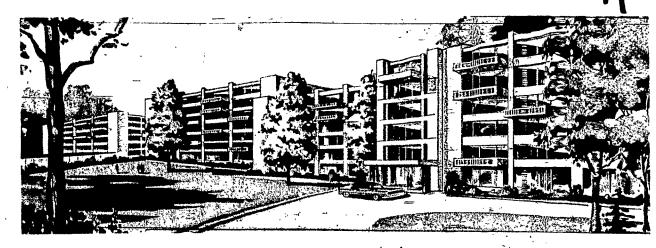
day of the "priest" has gone and the day of the "professional priest" has arrived.

motions . . . he sees little need for originality or initiative; he is bound to conformism. The 'professional priest,' on the other hand, is adaptable and flexible; he sees the need for initiative, originality, creativity, renewal, reform, improvement."

Unlike the job-holder, Father Fich-ter said, "The professional priest sees stages of competence; he is always doing his job better; he has personal responsibility.

But, Father Fichter said, because of the present structures, the Church today "has a low level of efficiency

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Presbyterian Residence Center Corp. 1775 East Ave. — Rochester, N.Y. 14610 be just a p-riest; ine must be a priest who does something; this is where the professionalism comes in."

"The 'functionary priest,' he said, "I' Father T, William, Coyle, C.S.R., is one "who only goes through the girl executive Secretary of the bishops" committee, Cagreed with Father Fichter's call for professionalism and said that the Catholic seminary no longer could be comsidered to be a "finishing school." He said the changing concepts of education and of the ministry itself, have demanded a change in the concept of seminary education.

> lle said he foresaw the day, for example, when priests would no longer be ordained "just because they happen to be members of a particular semimary class." Instead, he said he expected that serminarians in the future would follow up from one to five years as deacons working in a parish.

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who have "never had it so good."

A second pre-supposition of contemporary society is that obligations and responsibilities stop at frontiers. A man of different nationality or citizenship is_no formal concern of ours. The Gospel approach is wholly different. All must be fed, even the least of the little ones. All must be clothed and sheltered. Even if the man in the ditch is a Jew and his rescurer a Samaritan, their traditional enmity must make no difference.

The centurion's son is cured even if he is, in modern terms, a "hated imperialist." There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, in the allencompassing generosity of God. The brotherhood of man is not "Fourth of July rhetorie" but the basic meaning of our prayer: Thy Kingdom come.

This column will, therefore, try over the coming months to give not only the facts about our strange new world round which the astronaut strolls in 90 minutes. It will trys to suggest the context without which Christian judgment and response are hardly possible. For if we judge only as secular citizens, will the "salt keep its taste"? May it not be fit only to be thrown

port said. Other significant findings of the.

-Asked if their congregations should work in inner city community centers for remaking the commun-

- 68.3 per cent thought they should become involved in catechetical work with adults and 84.2 per cent said they should be involved in catechetical work with

