

When Christ Made Big 'Mistake'

(Continued from Page 1)

make them see that the spirit of the world is not the same as His Spirit: "It is the Spirit which gives life; the flesh will not help you. The things which I have told you are spiritual and are life, but some of you will not believe Me." (John 6/63, 64)

Was it His announcement about Life that made them break, or had they broken before? Did their allegiance just then begin to fall? Was a crack there already which now merely widened? Did they have the placards of protest already and this gave them an opportunity to parade them? The fact is that they had already broken with Him even before He spoke: Jesus knew from the beginning which were the followers who did not trust Him. (John 6/64)

The Good Lord loses more in the affluence of full stomachs than in fire and persecution. Now the ranks are thinned; wide gaping spaces appeared in what were closely serrated rows of believers. "If this is what Christ teaches, I have no stomach for that kind of doctrine. I will leave." Our Lord watched them leave and they never came back.

They were never disciples, even from the start. "They will maintain a facade of religion, but their conduct will deny its validity" (2 Tim. 3/5). They had their own minds made up; they had their own gods, and that is why they left saying, "This is hard teaching indeed; who could accept that?" (John 6/60).

3. He split His embryonic Church wide open — by a hidden apostasy. Jesus had lost the chaff and the wheat of the disciples. Would He now retract and save scandal? Or would He create a greater schism even in the apostolic band?

Jesus now turned to His "twelve" — the first time they are so named in the Gospel, thus, signifying unity and compactness. The very way He asked the question showed that He trusted in them: "And are you too wanting to go away?" (John 6/67) Had they made up their minds to remain with Jesus as He stressed the primacy of Spiritual Life over Biological Life? The twelve indeed were shocked by the defections caused by the "hard saying."

A corporate body always needs a spokesman, and that Divinely appointed one was Peter in their name. He asked a question which he begins by acknowledging His Divinity: "Lord" — then, "Who else is there to go to?" Man is so constituted He must go to someone.

Then Peter gave the reason for loyalty: "Your words have the ring of eternal life! And we believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6/67)

But even among His Bishops there was one who stayed but was not a true follower. The break was not yet out in the open, but it was there just the same. It had been prophesied a thousand years before that the rept which he returned to Jesus would be the lost of Judas. The Lord tried His best to save him: He gave Peter His eyes, but Judas His lips.

But if His own do not accept Christ totally, where seek the cause? Satan! "Did I not choose you twelve — and one of you has the devil in his heart" (John 6/71).

Jesus had made His "greatest mistake." He lost public opinion, He lost "Christians" and disciples, and He splintered His Apostolic band. But He knew He would lose. If He flew in the face of the world and the worldly. And He did! From now on the Heart of Jesus has a cross in it. But is Life really that sacred that He could afford to lose the masses, to wreck an organized discipleship.



and to send 8 1/2% of His Board of Directors scurrying?

He evidently was ready to lose all He wanted no unwilling followers. That is why He asked the few left if they too wanted to leave. But what the Lord lost on that day — He got back a millionfold on the cross. He separated the sheep from the goats. He forced the choice between Himself and Baal and His reduced quantity for the sake of quality.

Peter's answer to the question of learning gives the acid test for decision in any hour of crisis. The test was the Holiness of Christ: "You are the Holy One of God." Now we can ask were the masses holy? Were the disciples holy? Was Judas holy? Are those who tell us to follow them holy men, that is men of prayer and sacrifice, never seeking their own ego or self-will? Holiness was Peter's test. It is still the best.

Group Asks Boycott Of Grapes

Lansing, Mich. — (NC) — The Michigan Catholic Conference has asked all Catholic institutions not to use California table grapes as a sign of support for striking California farm workers.

The state's bishops conference also expressed hope that all Michigan citizens would join in the grape boycott.

The conference statement said: "The Catholic Church recognizes the right of workers to organize. It is unfortunate that farm workers are excluded from the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act which gives workers the right to collective bargaining, minimum wages, unemployment insurance and other benefits."

"The Catholic bishops of California are supporting the cause of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee in their struggle with the grape growers in California. We can do no less."

"We hope all people of good faith will refrain from purchasing California table grapes and that all retail stores will remove these grapes from their shelves until the farm workers obtain union recognition, a living wage and decent housing conditions."

"We are asking all Catholic institutions to refrain from using California table grapes until this labor dispute is settled."

Religion, Education Failed On Race, Professor Says

New Orleans — (RNS) — The failures of education and religion are largely responsible for the racist attitude in the United States today, a Mississippi professor said here.

Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, a professor at Jackson (Miss.) State College, addressed the Council of Urban League Guilds during the National Urban League convention.

Institutionalized religion in the U.S., Dr. Alexander claimed, has lost its meaning, and "when the religion of a people is dead, they are without vision."

"Anything done in the name of religion is used as a 'drug' to sooth

the consciences of those who have lost their vision. Groups like the Ku Klux Klan have too long claimed to represent Christianity with such ridiculous theme as 'purity of race,'" she added.

She lashed out at the educational system, saying that white America is basically ignorant of the culture of other peoples. She called for a system that would foster understanding of the cultures of others in youth.

The present educational system, she added, "poisons the mental development of both black and white children," leaving them unprepared to live in a multi-racial society.

Sacrificial Nature Stressed

Portland, Ore. — (RNS) — Theologians and activists who stress the service ministry of the Roman Catholic priesthood instead of its sacrificial nature were sharply criticized at the 30th anniversary convention of Serra International here.

Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer of Portland, in a sermon at a Mass opening the annual conference, told the members of the international Catholic vocation-fostering organization:

"I need not tell you that there has arisen in the contemporary Church a mood which would minimize if not altogether eliminate the sacrificial nature of the priestly office."

"It is a mood (if that be the proper description of a trend which would jettison dogma and scorn discipline) which would lay paramount stress upon the ministerial aspects of the priesthood and the priestly life, which would regard it as an instrument of service for the betterment of humankind."

Archbishop Dwyer concluded: "The present crisis in vocations is not to be solved by presenting the priesthood as something less than what it is, something other than what its essence calls for. A sacrificing priesthood demands a sacrificial self-offering; holiness demands holiness; he who offers the sacrifice of Christ should be himself another Christ."

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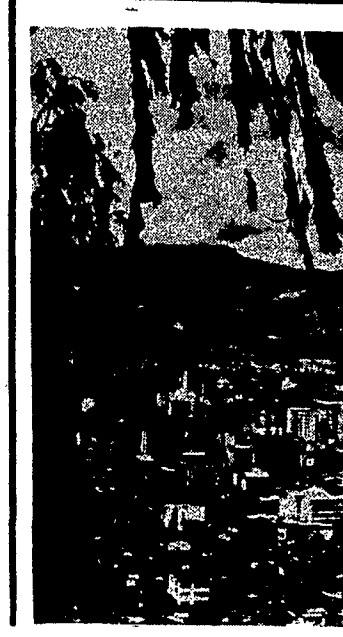
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The Eucharist

By JAIME FONSECA (NC News Service)

Bogota — This city has been feverishly to spruce itself up to serve as a dignified site for the International Eucharistic Congress to be held here Aug. 18-25.

While its two million in go about their daily business are constantly reminded of the fervent activity at key spots and by the heavy road work crossing an already congested

The work being done at the pace is found along the avenue to El Salitre, a vast turned into an impressive of housing units, radial roadway buildings and, at the majestic temple.

This is where the main congress, to be attended Paul VI, will take place.

Some years ago the group a cattle and produce farm owners gave it to the town to build hospitals, asylums, institutions for the poor.

The site of the Eucharistic congress has been completed months of hurried labor. The main "temple" (small built like a rotunda with a form for the benefit of the grounds, is a large cross seen from great distance ally at night when it is flood center of the congress site La Plaza de la Cruz (the the Cross).

Thirty-seven "sacramental fan out from the main alt centric arcs. These plazas are sites for the celebration for the distribution of Communion and for the hearing of hundreds of priests and bishops scheduled to concelebrate the Pope during the congress.

The organizers expect an 600,000 communicants during gress. With their 37 "s plazas" they believe that can be conducted in an ordicant manner.

Pilgrims trying to get a of the ceremonies at the P Cruz will have to travel a good mile from the outer the site. Public buses a vehicles will unload at the grounds and then proceed parking facilities nearby.

Pope Paul and other d however, will reach the field copter.

The organizing committee that about 750,000 persons - capacity of the grounds - moved in and out in about utes.

This problem does not lucky 10,000 pilgrims who able to live at the nearby del Papa Paulo, a housing 1,200 apartments and other These units will go to b families as tenants or owners once the congress i

Special Urged for

San Francisco — (RNS) of long-term links such as f or mergers, a leading Rolic educator has urged u and colleges establish special purposes.

Father John P. Whalen, r tor of the Catholic Unit America in Washington, D. ted the formation of "co institutions" which could tematic interest in such nat ions as urban and rural p and water pollution, and and political adjustment.

Using the sub-contract of industry, educational i could share their chance i of geography, Father Wha Catholic University alumni ing gathering here.

Father Whalen said th tions could pool their reso matter how separated geog without caring which institt ly gets credit for a study ting all the relevant data b ed before recommending fe sisted programs."

Father Whalen said that need exists for an educat gram which will take capa out of the rural and urba