

# A Meditation

By Daniel Berrigan, S. J.



Some 10 or 12 of us (the number is still uncertain) will, if all goes well (ill?) take our religious bodies during this week to a draft center in or near Baltimore.

There we shall, of purpose and forethought, remove the 1-A files, sprinkle them in the public street with homemade napalm, and set them afire.

For which act we shall, beyond doubt, be placed behind bars for some portion of our natural lives, in consequence of our inability to live and die content in the plagued city, to say "peace peace" when there is no peace, to keep the poor poor, the homeless, the thirsty and hungry homeless, thirsty and hungry.

Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise. For we are sick at heart, our hearts give us no rest for thinking of the Land of Burning Children. And for thinking of that other Child, of whom the poet Luke speaks.

The infant was taken up in the arms of an old man, whose tongue grew resonant and watic at the touch of that beauty. And the old man spoke: this child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel, a sign that is spoken against.

Small consolation; a child born to make trouble, and to die for it, the First Jew (not

the last) to be subject of a "definite solution." He sets up the cross and dies on it; in the Rose Garden of the executive mansion, on the D.C. Mall, in the courtyard of the Pentagon.

We see the sign, we read the direction; you must bear with us, for his sake. Or if you will not, the consequences are our own.

For it will be easy, after all, to discredit us. Our record is bad; trouble makers in church and state, a priest married despite his vows, two convicted felons. We have jail records, we have been turbulent, uncharitable, we have failed in love for the brethren, have yielded to fear and despair and pride, often in our lives. Forgive us.

We are no more, when the truth is told, than ignorant beset men, jockeying against all chance, at the hour of death, for a place at the right hand of the dying one.

We act against the law at a time of the Poor People's March, at a time moreover when the government is announcing ever more massive paramilitary means to confront disorder in the cities. It is announced that a computerized center is being built in the Pentagon at a cost of some seven million dollars, to offer instant response to outbreaks anywhere in the land; that moreover, the government takes so serious a view of civil disorder, that federal troops, with war experience in Vietnam, will have first responsibility to quell civil disorder.

The implication of all this

Next Monday in a Federal Court in Baltimore nine young Catholics, including three priests, two Brothers and a former Sister, will go on trial for an alleged crime committed against the U.S. last May 17 in Catonsville, Md. They are charged with entering a draft headquarters, removing 800 1-A files and burning them.

The principles which created this plan, the zeal which drove the nine to fulfill it, their indifference to the consequences of their "act of conscience," intended to give witness against the Vietnam war and to shake up the general public, are extremely difficult for many Catholics to understand and approve.

The following article, written a few days before the Catonsville action, by Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., is reprinted to help readers enter the mind and the feelings of one of the participants. It will offer some frame of reference for following the news-account of the trial next week.—The Editor.

must strike horror in the mind of any thinking man. The war in Vietnam is more and more literally brought home to us. Its inmost meaning strikes the American ghettos; in servitude to the affluent. We must resist and protest this crime.

Finally, we stretch out our hands to our brothers throughout the world. We who are priests, to our fellow priests. All of us who act against the law, turn to the poor of the world, to the Vietnamese, to the victims, to the soldiers who kill and die, for the wrong reasons, for no reason at all, because they were so ordered—by the authorities of that public order which is in effect a massive institutionalized disorder.

We say: killing is disorder, life and gentleness and community and unselfishness is the only order we recognize. For the sake of that order, we risk our liberty, our good name. The time is past when good men can remain silent, when obedience can segregate men from public risk, when the poor can die without defense.

We ask our fellow Christians to consider in their hearts a question which has tortured us, night and day, since the war began. How many must be tortured, dislocated, starved, maddened? How long must the world's resources be raped in the service of legalized murder? When, at what point, will you say no to this war?

We have chosen to say, with the gift of our liberty, if necessary our lives: the

violence stops here, the death stops here, the suppression of the truth stops here, this war stops here.

We wish also to place in question, by this act, all suppositions about normal times, about longings for an 'untroubled life in a somnolent church, about a neat timetable of ecclesiastical renewal which in respect to the needs of men, amounts to another form of time serving.

Redeem the times! The times are inexpressibly evil. Christians pay conscious, indeed religious tribute, to Caesar and Mars; by the approval of overkill tactics, by brinkmanship, by nuclear liturgies, by racism, by support of genocide. They embrace their society with all their heart, and abandon the cross. They pay lip service to Christ and military service to the powers of death.

And yet, and yet, the times are inexhaustibly good, so-aced by the courage and hope of many. The truth rules, Christ is not forsaken. In a time of death, some men—the resisters, those who work hard for social change, those who preach and embrace the unpalatable truth—such men overcome death, their lives are bathed in the light of the resurrection, the truth has set them free. In the jaws of death, of contumely, of good and ill spirit, they proclaim their love of the brethren.

We think of such men, in the world, in our nation, in the churches; and the stone in our breast is dissolved; we take heart once more.

## 'Club Football' Big At Catholic Colleges

New York — (RNS) — "Club football"—a name many connected with the activity would like to change—has become a recognized intercollegiate sport. Much of the credit is due to church-related institutions.

Despite the name of the game, it still takes 11 men on the field, a coach and assistant coaches, the usual amount of equipment, a crowd of football fans and some cheerleaders to play club football. However, it is a markedly different brand of football from that played at Notre Dame, Purdue, Southern Cal, Holy Cross, and West Point.

The big difference is that club football is student-operated and there are no scholarships for players.

One of the leaders in the development of club football as an intercollegiate sport controlled by students has been New York's Fordham University, a Jesuit school with a rich and very exciting football tradition.

In an effort to bolster football, Fordham has established the National Club Football Services which provide information on 43 teams which will play the game this fall. Of these, 31 are teams which will be fielded by church-related institutions.

Among Catholic schools with club football teams are:

- Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.; Fairfield (Conn.) University; St. Michael's College, Winooksi Park, Vt.; Fordham, Manhattan College, Riverdale, N.Y.; St. Peter's College, Jersey City, N.J.; Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J.; Iona College, New Rochelle, N.Y.; St. Francis College, Brooklyn; St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y.; Canisius College, Buffalo, N.Y.; Niagara (N.Y.) University, and St. Bonaventure University, Olean, N.Y.

Also Siena College, Loudon-

ville, N.Y.; Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.; Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.; King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; La Salle College, Philadelphia; St. Vincent's College, Latrobe, Pa.; St. Louis (Mo.) University; Loyola University of the South, New Orleans; Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala.; Loyola University of Los Angeles; St. Mary's (Calif.) College, and Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Last year's national championship went to Iona with a 9-0 record. Others in the top five were Adelphi (7-0); St. Mary's of California (6-0); Detroit (3-0-0), and Fordham (4-3-0).

Fordham, Georgetown, and NYU were responsible for the inauguration of club football in 1964. The following year, 12 schools had teams, 20 in 1966, and 35 last year.

The 43 institutions which will sponsor teams this fall represent an enrollment of over 200,000.

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## Books

**The Search for Meaningful Existence** by Charles B. Ketcham (Weybright; \$6.50). The absence of contemporary authority based on moral values almost universally accepted up to the first World War; Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God, and the later impact of his statement on theology; the apparent struggle in the arts, in philosophy and theology, and in political life to transvalue, to re-erect—all this seems to the Rev. Dr. Ketcham, James Mills Thoburn Professor of Religion at Allegheny College, Pa., to point toward a new morality founded on a new Humanism. He covers much ground in this book.

**The Changing Face of Theology** by Patrick Fannon (Bruce; \$3.95). This worthwhile book may be described as a primer of modern theology for the layman. It gives, in capsule form and in an engaging style, a summary of the main thrust of Catholic thought since Vatican II, particularly in the revolutionary areas such as the role of the laity, the means of faith, the structure of the institutional Church, ecumenism, eschatology. All in all, it is a well balanced, realistic and painless informative work.

**A Time of Change** by Frederick Crowe (Bruce; \$4.50). Father Crowe has revised a series of lectures intended "Mainly for the generation moving toward middle age," that is, those "who grew up in the old Church and are destined to live out a good part of their lives in the new." He attempts through the use of history and tradition, to interpret agglomeration, in various areas of the Church's life—liturgy, morals, dogma, the Church in the modern world, and ecumenism. Having established guidelines, he moves to a discussion of the problems at the Synod; the problematic; the open spirit of man. He then discusses the limits of agglomeration. Father Crowe has succeeded admirably in his goal.

**To Hell with the Kids**, by Verna King Gruhke (Bruce; \$4.95). "American education has fallen upon evil times," writes Verna Gruhke, and it is the professional educator who is almost solely responsible for the sad state of affairs. In "To Hell with the Kids," Mrs. Gruhke documents her chilling charge from the viewpoint of a dedicated teacher with more than 30 years of experience. She sees Federal ineptitude, fraud, kick-backs; she is critical of teacher education and certification, loyalty oaths, administrators, school boards, sports programs, the PTA, discipline and even her fellow teachers. But it is the Professional Educator—the PE, as Mrs. Gruhke disdainfully calls him—who bears the brunt of her caustic, hard-hitting comments. It is the PE, she says, who has developed the philosophy of making the kids the losers in modern education. Yet "To Hell with the Kids" is not only a book of scathing criticism. It also is the story of the frustrations and joys of a teacher who loved and was devoted to her profession. There is the heartbreak of pregnant high school girls, the fear of a classroom confronted by a young student with a loaded gun, and many other incidents that filled Mrs. Gruhke's teaching life.

**Who Is A Christian?** by von Balthasar (Newman; \$4.50). Hans Urs von Balthasar maintains that many current attempts to justify Christian belief by picking up the megaphone of popular culture beg the basic question: Who is a Christian? Balthasar presents a yardstick by which a Christian

can be measured, and therefore, becomes involved not only in a very relevant critique of contemporary Christianity, and of Catholics in particular, but also of some of the attitudes of the radical reformers, let alone of those who inhibit valid renewal in the Church, backing unequivocally what he considers valid in the steps that are being taken, exposing what he considers spurious. A timely and exciting book.

**The Future as the Presence of Shared Hope**, by Muckenhirn (Sheed and Ward; \$4.95). This book deals with one of the most creative areas in contemporary theology and philosophy, an area increasingly to the fore in writing, lecturing, and symposia titles. The unity underlying the essays of this book comes from the theme of the future precisely as it raises speculative questions for philosophers and theologians, those

whose profession it is to reflect on the meaning of life and human values.

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