

Affirmation of Love

Editorials by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

Recently I read an article by a woman in a periodical from England, in which she spoke of the self-denial which was required in the sex life of husband and wife because of the indisposition, physical or mental, of one or other party. Such self-denial, she continued, was never difficult, because of their deep love for one another. What was interesting about her statement was the primacy of love in prompting self-denial.

This brought my mind back to the emphasis on detachment in treatises on the spiritual life. Most of them begin with the idea of "Purgation" or self-denial. But is that where we should begin? Does not all self-restraint fit into the larger picture of love which prompts it?

The suggestion of an answer came in the latest book of one of the most Christian of all psychiatrists, Dr. Paul Tournier: A PLACE FOR YOU. He writes: "We always have to face the necessity of letting go of something. And we ask ourselves: What is it that can make us let go... We must not forget that it was Satan and not God, who wanted Jesus to throw Himself down from the Temple."

Then he proceeds to make the same point about all detachment similar to the idea expressed by the English woman, namely, that there must be a love which inspires self-negation, otherwise it becomes a burden, and prompts rebellion.

Apply this to celibacy; here we are not concerned with its historical basis, nor the fact that it is an ecclesiastical tradition, but only the psychology of why it may become a yoke that is bitter and a burden heavy. It is not because celibacy has been thought of too often as something a priest must "deny himself," rather than as something he may "leave." The two are not the same. The rich man in the Gospel would never have been asked to "sell all he had," if he did not have the riches to sell. How can you give away what you do not have? Why start with detachment before one knows the value of attachment?

Is it not the most natural thing in the world to rebel against celibacy, or any form of self-denial, if one does not have in his heart a "passionless passion and wild tranquility" for someone else? To "leave" home one must have a home; but to be "denied a home" makes it impossible to show faith as Abraham did in leaving the land of Ur for the Promised Land. Abraham could not sacrifice or detach himself from Isaac if he did not love Isaac, and even above Him, God Himself.

One must have cake to fast from cake, but also there must be a motivation. But if one starts talking about "cake-denial" as the first movement in life, one will always consider fasting or celibacy in terms of "limitation," or "ecclesiastical law," a destruction of human vitality, or a denial of biological rights and all the other jargon of immaturity.

A woman is courted before she marries. But suppose that her parents told her that marriage was a denial of love for her family, and a forgetfulness of happiness at the hearth and table; would not her marriage be ruined? But is not the daughter inspired by a higher love which demands that she leave father and mother? Does the joy of marriage have to be spoiled by presenting it as the limitation of parental affection?

In like manner, why does celibacy have to be presented as a negation of love rather than an affirmation of a higher love? If sex is considered as a thing "denied," how can it ever be "left" for Christ's sake? In fact, by considering it as a denial, the longing for it is increased more than if one never had it. No one can renounce until he has received; no one can give until he knows what he has been given.

Celibacy is a 'Gift'

The only direct quote of Our Lord in St. Paul which is not found in the Gospel, is: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But why do we have need to give? Because we have received! The young woman who leaves her parents has received love, so she gives herself to her husband, though this involves leaving father and mother. This is precisely the way Scripture defines celibacy, — as a "gift." We have received; so we give. We receive the love and the mission of Christ, so we leave marriage.

The engaged man closes the door on the field of eligibles for the sake of his beloved: — The concentration upon her follows the elimination of others for the sake of love. He narrows his flesh-love to one life — but first of all because he loved; and the celibate does the same when he receives the gift of being Christ the Teacher, Christ the Sanctifier, and Christ the Shepherd.

A young woman who is courted might say to a proposal by a young man: "How do I know you love me exclusively. There are 242,805 other eligibles in this city. Do you know all of them?" His answer might well be, "In a certain sense, I do know them all. The mere fact that I choose you, negates all the other women. Love is not just an affirmation, it is also a negation. Having found what I believe to be "perfect" in the realm of human love, there is no longer any need to be free to choose. The freedom of choice which I enjoyed before, now becomes freed of perfection, which is to serve you.

"We all give away freedom of choice, some to the herd, some to alcohol, some to the opinion of the world, and so forth. My greatest freedom is to be your slave. The human heart is something one can give away but once, and to you I give it. Two things in life, I believe, poison us if we take them back: one is the air we breathe out; the other is the love we surrender to another. I shall never throw back the gift of love in your face. I am yours 'until death do us part.'"

Celibacy is the same kind of response to love, except the Giver, in the case of celibacy, is Perfect Love. A husband finds in a good wife means to Christ, but the celibate does away with the means and receives the End of all striving, the Sacred Heart. As the married man gives up all women but one, so the celibate gives up even that one for the sake of the "Love we fall just short of in all love."

Celibacy is a bore when one falls out of love for Christ; marriage is a bore for the husband who falls out of love with his wife, or vice versa. In both cases, fidelity foretastes heaven and infidelity foretastes hell.

As marriage is unthinkable without love, so is celibacy. In each case there is a solar system, a sun around which all love revolves as a planet. When either marriage or celibacy gets out of that orbit there is hell to pay. The husband can think of a thousand reasons why he should leave his wife, and the celibate can think of a thousand reasons why he should leave his Church, so both have "reasons." Here is where rationalization begins, for no one does evil for an evil reason. The husband may say: "My wife does not understand me, but some one else does." The celibate may say: "I have always been in favor of the pill to control population." Then he takes a partner because he "loves children" and immediately increases the population. As Shakespeare wrote: "What damned error, but some sober brow will bless and approve it with a text."

Pentecostal Movement

'More Than Just Speaking in Tongues'

New York—(RNS)—The phenomenon of the Pentecostal movement developing within the Catholic and historic Protestant Churches is discussed in a special issue of *Commonweal*, magazine, weekly edited and published by Catholic laymen.

The Nov. 8 issue featured the third set of "Commonweal Papers," devoted to the Holy Spirit.

In an article on the Pentecostals, Father Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., of St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., noted that "a number of priests and nuns, uncertain in their vocations, have been reconfirmed in them" through involvement in the Pentecostal movement.

He also pointed out that the neo-Pentecostals of today are of very recent development in the traditional Protestant churches they first appeared in 1955 and in the Catholic Church in 1967, he said.

Catholic Pentecostals, he added, generally encounter less hostility from their church leaders than Protestant Pentecostals in their respective Churches.

Two characteristics of the Pentecostals which are strongly fixed in the popular mind, Father McDonnell said, are "speaking in tongues" and the ministry of healing. Both are suspect in the traditional Churches and account to some extent for the bad press of Pentecostals in those Churches, he held.

Neither characteristic, however, is of principal importance, Father McDonnell said, but is simply a manifestation of the Spirit, and particularly of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

This Baptism is not the pouring on of water, he explained, but an "experience in which the Christian knows that the Holy Spirit not only dwells in him, but that he dwells in the Holy Spirit."

It "can be a highly emotional event," he admitted, "but often it is simply an experience, calm and disciplined, of the presence of God."

"The prayer meetings of Protestant neo-Pentecostals," he says, "tend to be much more restrained than those of classical Pentecostals. Catholic Pentecostal meetings are even more so, being the height of propriety."

In discussing the more spectacular signs of "tongues" and healing, the priest pointed out that "it is appropriate to be somewhat skeptical about miracles, but it would impoverish the Gospel to rule out the luminous and wondrous from the lives of ordinary Christians."

"One cannot," he said, "accept the New Testament witness and then postulate a deistic God who observes from afar but never manifests himself in history."

Father McDonnell sees both the Underground Church and the Pentecostal movements in the Catholic Church as a white middle-class "quest for transcendence."

CHURCH HUMOR



Letters to the Editor

Editor:

In the October 1 edition of the *Courier-Journal*, Fr. G. Stuart Hogan suggested that readers of the Catholic press, who are sick and tired of the sensationalism, irresponsibility and excess of so many of today's journals of opinion, especially with regard to the all-too-evident period of confusion and doubt through which the American church is now passing, might obtain a more balanced view of things as they are and as they should be by subscribing to the *Wanderer*.

While I will readily agree with Fr. Hogan that much of what purports to be responsible, Catholic journalism today is decidedly misleading, poorly informed and given to blanket statements and out-of-hand condemnations of those who are not in the vanguard of the new Catholicism, I think that the suggestion that the *Wanderer* offers a satisfactory alternative is an unfortunate one.

The *Wanderer* might be placed in the same category as the *National Catholic Reporter*. One tends to extremism on the right, the other to extremism on the left. Both display a singular talent for (mis)interpre-

ting the news from a noticeably biased point of view and both commit the unpardonable offense of accepting for publication only those letters from readers who wholeheartedly support their particular point of view. In short, neither the one nor the other practices anything approaching objective journalism.

Both seem to operate on the false assumption that today's Catholic audience is so poorly instructed as to have to abdicate their thinking and judgment to the news media. Is it not better, and more realistic, in this age of increased education and sophistication, to present matters objectively, from all sides of a given argument, and presume sufficient goodwill and intelligence on the part of the reader to form his own judgment based upon the broad spectrum of evidence presented.

For those who prefer to do their own thinking, in as calm and objective a manner as we can in this age of instant everything, may I suggest two diocesan newspapers which appear to be sufficiently balanced as to offer to every reader, not only opinion which can be easily identified as "conservative" and/or "liberal,"

but also that which can be taken as simple presentation of facts, uncolored, unadorned with slogans or jargon, uncluttered with innuendos and aspersions.

I speak of the *Delmarva Dialogue* (Diocese of Wilmington, Del.) and the *Catholic Messenger* (Diocese of Davenport, Iowa).

—Phillip K. Schlosser
80 Fairport Rd., East Rochester

Editor:

Seminarians and priests are exempt from the draft, but they are not exempt from moral complicity in Vietnam. The Catholic bishops and priests of Nazi Germany never openly questioned Hitler's war. I would not for a moment equate these wars, but have we nothing to say about the morality of Vietnam?

Surely in such a complex issue as Vietnam, no one can speak with perfect knowledge. Yet our TV D' draft status is a tacit acceptance of the Vietnam war. For if we say nothing, our silence has clearly spoken.

I have been profoundly affected by the celibate witness of the Fathers Berrigan in Baltimore. It seems to me that the Vietnam war, however moral its original intention, has escalated far beyond the bounds of morality. By what rationale do we destroy a nation in order to save it?

If we are leaders of Christian morality, then our task is not only to witness against an immoral war but also to lead others in that demonstration.

—Mark Masterson,
Saint Bernard's Seminary

Editor:

Well, there are earthquakes and then there are also heavenquakes.

Our earthquake of 2 August was followed up by a heavenquake in the form of contributions from the mission-minded people of the Rochester Diocese — many of them fellow-priests. And, it was the *Courier-Journal* who reached into the hearts and bank accounts of these generous people.

Frankly, without the *Courier* appeal on the front page of the Aug. 16 issue, I could not re-build the school. We are still constructing our mission church, and every penny has gone into this construction.

To you, Father Torney, and all contributors, we say thanks and blessings. To us, the brilliance of your charity is a radiation of the burning love of the Sacred Heart for the missions.

—Father John D. Hurley
Priest of the Rochester Diocese
Mt. Carmel Mission
San Luis, Quezon, Philippines

The Holy Father

Catholic Press Duty: Counteract Materialism

Vatican City — (NC) — The Catholic press has the challenge of counteracting the widespread materialistic and hedonistic mentality of today, Pope Paul VI told the fourth national assembly of the Catholic Union of the Italian Press.

Pope Paul, writing to the meeting being held at Taranto, noted that the present-day mentality is contributed to "unfortunately by the daily and periodical press very often." But he said that the "harmful influence of publications which are indifferent, not to say hostile, to religious and moral problems can be effectively countered by the Catholic press."

The Pope said that the Catholic press has a twofold task:

"To set minds free from error, prejudices and attitudes which are contrary to healthy morals and religious principles, thus preparing and soothing the way for the good news of the Gospel, and to present the Christian message while at the same

time interpreting the events of history and the facts of life."

Pope Paul also noted the need for Catholic journalists to be on the staff of papers and magazines which do not declare themselves Catholic but which do respect Christian principles and values.

On the staff of these organs, said the Pope, there should be Catholic journalists "capable not only of being good journalists but also of offering readers a vision of things, and in particular of the life of the Church, which is not superficial and exterior but true and profound, so that public opinion may be able to understand the Church and its actions in the world and in its most intimate dimension, which is the spiritual and transcendental sphere."

Speaking of the press in general, Pope Paul said that respect for truth must be foremost in its principles. "because only on this condition does the press fulfill its intrinsic and indispensable function of serving the common good."

Our concern here is not with rationalization, but rather with the problem of the place, detachment, purgation and self-denial have in the spiritual life. Our thesis is that one should not begin with it. Celibacy is not first a negation. Pure water is not just the absence of dirt; a diamond is not just the negation of carbon. A gift precedes the surrender; a woman is a gift to a husband, and an ambassador of Christ is a gift of God. In both cases there is a "leaving" of something less, because one has "received" more.

Returning again to Dr. Tournier who has unconsciously upset much of text-book spirituality by explaining why those who cease to love, find their gift a burden. He wrote "People call today for a dynamic psychology. Well, there it is! God is a force that man can encounter, and which can oblige a man to let go of that which he would not, or could not let go. It is a force outside himself. Before the renunciation, we see only what we have to let go: a grudge, a security, or something for the religious life. He sees only what he is going to lose by it, something he feels is almost impossible to give up.

"When the renunciation does take place, one is well aware that it is not a natural movement, but that the power has come from the outside, from God Himself. God practices an inexhaustible 'support psychotherapy.' All Christ's calls to detachment are accompanied by promises of 'inheriting eternal life.' The aim of all psychology is the moral autonomy which men strive so hard to achieve; and the revelation of faith is that when one abandons oneself to Jesus Christ, one attains one's freedom."

The hardest things in life are sweet when we say with Paul: "For me to live is Christ."

+ Fulton J. Sheen

Word for Sunday

How to Explain Death to Child

By Father Albert Shamon

One of the problems confronting catechists is that of presenting the mystery of death to a child. To avoid traumatic injury, this must be done carefully. Marie Fargues tells us that when she began to teach religion, she unwittingly led a little girl named Mary Jane, to the subject of death in the very first lesson. As far as she knew Mary Jane never came back to another religion class.

Mary Jane was a poor, neglected child. Her mother had died, her father was a drunkard. Marie had extracted from the father permission to prepare Mary Jane for First Communion. Mrs. Fargues discovered Mary Jane knew nothing of God. How could He be introduced? Mary Jane "Let's draw the life of a woman. We all like to draw; so Marie said to her, call her Mary Jane, if you want. What was Mary Jane in the beginning of her life? And after that? And after that?"

The little girl did not seem surprised. She drew rather well. "Here's an infant in her crib." "Here's a child learning to walk." "Here's a little girl going to school." Then Marie suggested they invent sketches about the future, adding the word "perhaps." "Perhaps Mary Jane will be a teacher." "Perhaps she'll marry." "Perhaps she'll have children." "Perhaps grow old." "Draw her as grandmother." Marie encouraged. "And after that? There must be a continuation of the story."

"The little girl looked so suddenly frightened," said Marie, "that the terrible word of death halted on my lips." Still Mary Jane heard it. Marie hastened to add, "After death Mary Jane's spirit goes to God." But no

time had been spent to arouse a love of God in Mary Jane so that death could be presented as a meeting with One who is loved and trusted. Marie said Mary Jane's first lesson in religion was perhaps her last. For a drunkard father and an older sister were not going to have ladies "frighth" the life out of Mary Jane by telling her she is going to die."

The Gospel is gentle toward children, tactful, respectful, penetrating and profoundly true. How beautifully the two parables of Sunday's Gospel can portray life, death, and resurrection to the child. "The Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed... sown in a field... growing into a tree. Or like leaven... buried in three measures of flour until all was leavened."

Our Lord never told stories for the fun of it. His parables were stories with two meanings. The first meaning is what He said; the second is what He meant.

WHAT JESUS SAID

the living seed the leaven becomes a tree is hid is buried becomes bread

WHAT JESUS MEANT

man lives dies to a new life On one side is the parable; on the other, the truth of faith. If we cross the parable, what Jesus meant remains: life, death, another life. Such is the destiny of each man and woman. (Read Fargues' "The Child and the Mystery of Death." Paulist Press).

Eastern Conc...

By ALEX MACDONALD

Auburn — Problems of coordination of rural parishes, technical work and improvement in the pastoral ministry area were discussion subjects at a meeting here of priests of the five counties Eastern Vicariate of the diocese.

Alarmed by the enlarging and pastoral problems of the area of Cayuga, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties, met under chairmanship Rev. Raymond J. Wahl, Sheen's Vicar for the Eastern vicariate, to hear commission reports on their concerns.

Father John L. O'Connor, Michael's parish, Newark, and Father John J. Glogowski of Holy Trinity parish, Auburn, reported on the problems of religious instruction in the area. The need for more training and support of the religious teachers, in terms

Catholic Interracial

Inner C... Schedu...

Representatives from several "Catholic Interracial Council" groups will be featured in the final session Sunday of week series of seminars on the Catholic Interracial Council.

Sunday's meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in St. John the Baptist School hall, Humboldt. The series is titled, "Confessions of Black and White."

Paul W. Brayer, OIC president, will be given a brief talk by given representatives, among others, Urban League, Friends Board of Urban Ministry, Area Youth Ministry,

300 Sisters In Study

Sisters from every part of the diocese will study urban problems at current programs of the urban ministry of Rochester churches long Urban-Suburban Workshop to be held at St. Agnes High School, Saturday, Nov. 23.

About 300 religious women will attend the scheduled talks by the joint Office of Urban Ministry of the Rochester Diocese and Area Council of Churches.

Keynoting the lectures are the Rev. Mr. Franklin Florentino of the Office of Urban Ministry of the City of Rochester. Rev. Mr. Franklin Florentino of the Office of Urban Ministry of the City of Rochester.

The purpose of the program is to acquaint Sisters with urban problems and to provide them with approaches to urban problems. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions.

Active workers for urban ministry have been invited for the program. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions. The program will be a series of lectures and small group discussions.

Next Week

Center -- Dead

Next week's *Courier-Journal* is a 100-page Center for Urban Ministry of the Diocese of Rochester. Bishop Sheen and Bishop Gorman will be featured in many pages, including Thanksgiving messages, therefore, to be sure the *Courier* office no

Church in

St. Margaret Mary Church, 1000 E. Main St., is now "on guard" against vandals.

Following several acts of vandalism and theft, church officials last two years have been locking church doors during all but Mass hours.

Through formation of

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