

The Pricelessness of Israel

By JOSEPH A. BREIG

In the wake of a visit to Israel, a thousand impressions are contending for primacy in my memory — and in my heart. But let me begin by noting the curious fact that in that extraordinary — nay, that unique land — I found myself, almost subconsciously, using water sparingly.

I call this curious, because in the hotels of Israel (as in hotels in most places) when you turn on the taps, water flows freely. There would seem to be no reason for the visitor to conserve it. But the tourist in this part of the world soon comes to see water as life.

From the time of the Patriarch Abraham and earlier,

this has been true. Where there was a well, you and your family could survive, as could your animals — your camel, your donkey, your goats, your sheep. If there was no well, you moed on until you found one, or you died.

Today, Israel carefully impounds and husbands the winter's rains, and through a national authority disburses water according to need and according to the wise uses to which it will be put.

Within an hour after I stepped from a BOAC plane after a flight from London to Tel Aviv — crossing Europe and the Alps, the islands of Greece and the Mediterranean Sea — all my values began to be sharpened. A new apprecia-

tion was being formed not only of the preciousness of water, but of the preciousness of everything.

For all their breathtaking beauty, the hills of Israel — (and Israel is even more all hills and mountains than my native western Pennsylvania) are bare and rocky except where the Israelis have clothed them in lovingly planted trees. And where there is no irrigation, the valleys too are largely barren.

But where there is water, there is green miracle. Areas that a few years ago were a sere yellow are now a poetry of rich greens, producing vegetables and fruits — oranges, bananas, lettuce, peanuts, dates, figs, olives — plus refreshing shade from the brilliant sun in the blue

arc of the Mediterranean sky. In Israel, therefore, I learned to cherish water, and life, and everything that exists.

...If only we would realize the fact, there is a pricelessness about everything everywhere — about each day that dawns, each hour and family, every smile or tear on the face of a child. In Israel one intensely feels this. It is a pricelessness both ancient and modern.

One reads again the heart-piercing Bible accounts of how God chose Abraham to be the father of the Chosen People and of all the redeemed, and then test him almost beyond endurance, promising a numberless progeny but apparently not hearing Abraham's prayers for even one child. And then came the last crushing test of a man's humility and obedience before the Creator: Isaac, the son at last given to Abraham, must be sacrificed.

There in Israel, I nearly shivered as I thought upon the angel staying Abraham's knife at the last moment. Could I have offered one of my children? Not without a tremendous in-pouring of God's grace. And so again I felt, with a new poignancy, the pricelessness of human life — of each image and likeness of God.

Passaic, N.J.—(NC)—Catholics of the Byzantine rite have a "two-fold purpose in the Church: to reflect the universality of the Church, and to be the bridge to Christian unity." Bishop Michael J. Dudick said here.

Bishop Dudick spoke at a banquet following his installation as bishop of the Byzantine-rite diocese of Passaic.

(The Rochester Diocese has five parishes of Byzantine-rite Catholics: in Rochester—St. Nicholas on Remington Street, and St. Joseph's on Ridge Rd. East; in Auburn — St. Peter and Paul; in Bath — Christ the King; in Elmira Heights—St. Nicholas. These churches use an Eastern liturgy different in language and vestment and movement from the Western and Roman liturgy.)

In his banquet address, Bishop Dudick stressed that "despite their numerical minority," Byzantine-rite Catholics are an "important and essential element in the Church."

He said that this importance is based primarily on two reasons. "First, our continuing existence is of prime consideration in presenting the true image of the Catholic-universality of the Church as shown by unity through diversity. Second, we consider ourselves vital to the Church's continued quest for the unity of all Christians."

Speaking of the first reason, Bishop Dudick said that because the existence of the Eastern rite in full communion with Rome "the principle of unity in diversity cannot be questioned. The very fact that the Church assimilates and respects many spiritual values from diverse civilizations and cultures which fulfill the needs of the people is a sign of true Catholicity-universality."

Discussing Church unity,

Adventist Wins Fight Over Job

Glendale, Calif. — (RNS) — A Seventh-day Adventist layman in Laguna Beach, Calif., was reinstated in his U.S. postal job after being fired last December for refusing to work on Saturday, the denomination's Western headquarters announced here.

Paul Arct, who had worked at the Laguna Beach Post Office for 17 years, appealed his release to the postal officials in Washington. Before he heard from the petition, he was reinstated by Regional Post Office Director Ken W. Dyal, the Adventist office said.

Arct was fired for "abandoning" his job on Saturday, Dec. 20, 1967. To Adventists, Saturday is the "seventh day" of the week and therefore, the proper day for worship.

the bishop said that the Byzantine rite can "project to our separated brethren a favorable image of how the Eastern churches would exist when full ecclesiastical communion with the Holy See is ultimately achieved."

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For the first time in the issuance of its coin sets, Israel's specimen sets of 1969 are being made available for use as holiday remembrances and sentimental Holy Land gifts. The First National Bank of Rochester, along with 3,000 other banking offices, is selling the sets which also are of interest to coin collectors. The official issue commemorates Israel's 21st anniversary and includes the 1 lira (1 pound), half-lira, 25 agorot, 10 agorot, 5 agorot and 1 alora coin. Each bears the Hebrew date of 5729. The set sells for \$3.50.

Books

Population Ethics, by F. X. Quinn (Corpus Books; \$5.95). No problem across the continent or around the world is more immediate or more important than the population problem.

We cannot calmly place our faith in the infallibility of science and technology. Human rights and duties are involved; we must balance the material potential of numbers and machines with the moral dimension of man's ethical and religious necessities. The realities are all included here, realities of which we all may not yet be conscious: a food expert spells out for us the limited nature of human food supply; a demographer sets forth the various rates of population growth throughout the world, and an economist describes what happens to our economy in consequence; and a sociologist and a theologian state the need for an adequate philosophy of human sexuality and marriage. The point insisted upon in this book is that we face these particular facts and possibilities, and face them ethically and morally, considering human values.

A Christian-Communist Dialogue, Roger Garaudy and Quentin Lauer (Doubleday; \$4.95). When Pope John proposed to substitute love for fear as the operative agent in the Church's relations with the world, one of his major concerns was to Christianize Catholicism's attitude toward Communists. That was the first step—a giant one. This book is a second step; a small one indeed, but at least a step. Professor Garaudy, one of France's best known and most articulate Communists, and Professor Lauer of Fordham, have decided to stop discussing the possibility of dialogue and actually to engage in it. They cover a great deal of territory in the realms of philosophy, ethics, history, politics and social doctrine. The overall conclusion to be drawn is that the differences between Christianity and Communism are philosophical ones—which leads to the subordinate conclusion that cooperation in practice is not only feasible but desirable. This is no thunderclap of revelation, but it is a sound and welcome basis for further and more intimate dialogue, and will have substantial appeal for Johannine Christians of every denomination.

Prayers From the Burned-Out City, by Robert W. Castle (Sheed; \$3.95). This book of "now" prayers contains selections so human and spontaneous that one forgets that one is reading; one seems rather to be over-hearing, in some slum neighborhood, the puzzled, sometimes angry, demands for justice—and sometimes for injustice—or at least for understanding. The author somehow has captured more than a spiritual quality; he has written down a spirit, an attitude, in moving authentic terms, in such a way as to make this that rarest thing in religious publishing—a literary achievement.

Let's Talk It Over, Gara (Holy Cross Press; \$3.00). This is a volume of considerations for

Teens. Each consideration begins with a story that carries a punch and often a chuckle. Then the author draws from the story something to think about. School, home, and friends are

the three bases these considerations continually touch. Home, plate, of course, is yourself, and you are constantly reminded of how you can be the person you want to be.

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For Christmas, keep in mind the penniless young man who needs your help to become a zealous priest. Help him now and you'll have first place in every Mass he offers. . . . We'll send you his name immediately, tell you where he's studying, and he will write to you. By mail he'll be a member of your family. . . . How can you help him? All he needs (for food, clothing, lodging and books) is \$8.50 a month, for costs overseas are low. Please God, six years from now he'll invite you to his Ordination. . . . Meanwhile, will you let us hear from you? He needs your prayers, your encouragement—and the cost of his training (\$8.50 a month, \$100 a year, \$600 all together) you may take care of at your own convenience. The fact is he needs you, and so does God. We hope you'll write today.

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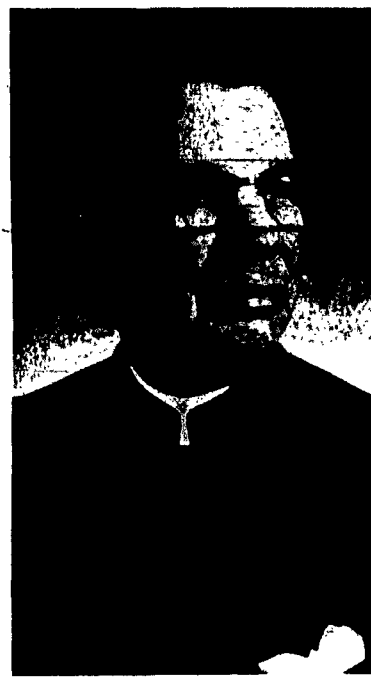
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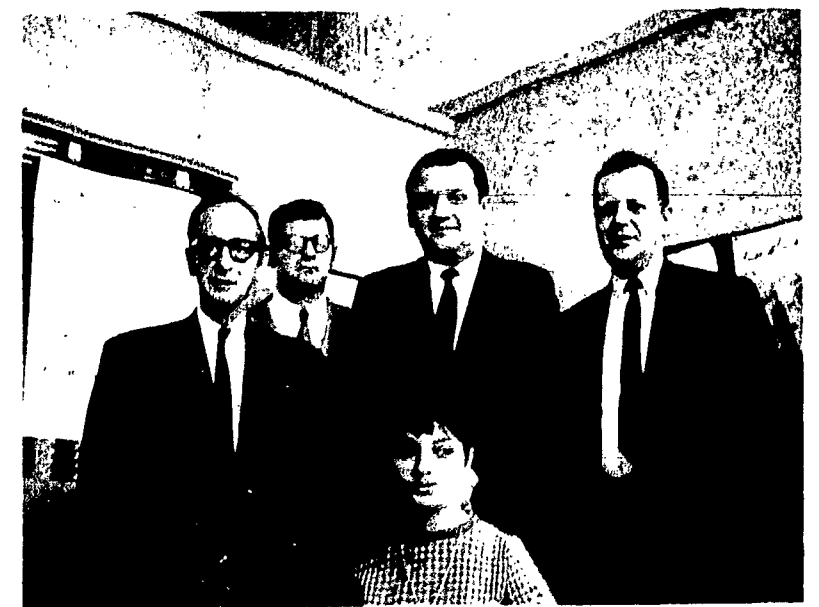
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