

# Bishop Calls for Creative Groups to Lead Renewal

Strange though it seems there has always been trouble when the world talked about a "Population Explosion". The Book of Genesis reveals that before the Flood there was a "Population Explosion" and a decline of loyalty to God, as the descendants of believing Seth married with the unbelieving descendants of the race of Cain (6/1). Again in the beginning of the Church, there was another "Population Explosion" which brought with it a conflict of the Greeks and Jews about how Church money was to be divided. (Acts 6/1)

Now we are in a third "Population Explosion", which has similar consequences: an appeal to secularism over the Cross.

## THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORLD

The Church, which during the advent of Communism was like sheep led to slaughter, later became tolerated by the world; today, however, it is the scapegoat. Even her own children, who have grown up, love to spank their nurse and mother. The press enjoys the smear, but too often it throws the mud we put into its hands.

Some of her faithful, in the interests of "peace" resort to violence and destruction, not only to overcome personal frustration, but also to win the approval of a gangster society; some teachers and clergy, painfully conscious of being over thirty, become afflicted with a "middle age-syndrome", and sacrifice their intellectual integrity and spiritual leadership in order not to be divorced from the young Placardists and Protest-ists. Like the Ten Lost Tribes who really were not lost but just flizzed out, some today lose their faith in their exile in the world.

The Pope, called to shepherd the Church, once was target of bigots, now finds butting goats among his sheep and lambs. The bishops, too, provide a target for some in the game of darts; the hurlers unmindful of the fact that most bishops would resign today were it not for the fact that they take the sharp digs in order to share in the Crown of Thorns of their Lord, knowing that only by suffering with Him will they be glorified with Him. (Romans 7/17)

## THE BEAUTY OF THE PRESENT

These are great times in which to live because they are times of testing. We live in the age of Bloodless Martyrdom. Eleven of the Apostles shed their blood, but John suffered without loss of blood, out of love for the Lord. It costs something to be loyal to the Church today: it takes the sensitive ears of Faith to hear the Lord saying to the world as He did to Saul: "Why do you persecute Me?"

It is this very unpopularity of Christ in His Church which probes our faith. It is easy to remain loyal when it costs nothing; but it is hard to affirm fidelity, as Peter found out when a sexy young girl asked him if he belonged to Christ. Then began that long history of those who deny their role as priests and religious in the face of warm fires on cold nights with the words: "I don't know that man".

But this is precisely what I like about this moment in history: it makes us stand up and be counted. Twenty years ago we could take the Church and its teaching in stride; now we have

to break our step to fight for it... Now the Catholic has to pluck up courage and face the incredible and inconceivable idea that someone may be wiser than he.

Sure the Church is imperfect, and thank God it is! Otherwise there would be no room in it for me, and maybe you! Every ship gathers barnacles, even the bark of Peter; it is not a continuous thing like the writings of Plato, but a Good Friday-Easter Sunday Thing, dying to one age to rise to another.

The Church at this moment is not to the taste of those who would reduce it to social service, but if it were, it would not be the Church. It has scandals as Christ had the scandal of flesh hanging from Him like purple rags, but it is Divine beneath that humanity. The Church is still Christ living in the world, acting through her, suffering through her, loving through her.

To leave her is never again to be the same, though like the prodigal, one has the illusion of freedom. To remain with her is to suffer for the moment with her ancient forms, its weakness and its false teachers. But to be faithful to her is also to see signs of her Resurrection.

The Lord is cleaning house and it is always a messy time; He is reducing the army of Gideon and it is always a humiliating experience. But "I am with you all days" still rings in our ears, and we live in hope during these days of Eclipse when the sun is behind the clouds.

## HOW WILL RENEWAL COME?

But how shall the Church be renewed? By a Creative Minority; not a minority like cancer cells who stay in the body of the Church only to destroy its unity, but a Creative Minority who in the midst of confusion rejuvenate the organism.

The Holy Spirit never operates through majorities. Only twelve were with Christ and only ten times twelve with His Spirit on Pentecost. The stagnation of masses, whether in the Church or Democracy, is the fundamental cause of our crises today. Scratch society and you will find the primitive and the chaotic under the surface.

God's way of renewal is through a leaven in the lump of ordinary humanity; it is not through the Drill, which is Totalitarianism, nor through Violence, which only changes institutions but never persons, but through flames of inspiration burning in the torches of a few whom Christ enkindles. Others catch fire from these few and the light of truth and the heat of love spread outward.

## THE MINORITY'S CHARACTERISTICS

A. This Creative Minority which will renew the Church comes from below, not from above. All the shepherds do now is to induce a few sheep to go into greener pastures and then the other sheep will follow.

B. The Creative Minority must find monologue with Christ before dialogue with Christians. "Without Me, you can do nothing", said Our Lord. Christ must be known by these few, not as an outside Truth, like the distance to the moon, but as the inside Truth that will teach and influence others. (John 16/13; 17/19)

C. This Creative Minority, while forming new centers of apostolate, will ever realize that like Our Lord they will encounter an unbelievable power of evil which Our Lord called the "Prince of their world". This Prince acts with good reasons, offering Bread when hungry, angels in a tumble from a steeple, and the feeling of individual righteousness against any illumination of the Spirit. Though this Prince often divides and separates, he also organizes, but it is always against the Unity of the Brethren. This is the way we pierce his disguises.

This Creative Minority, acting for and with the Church, will be like the minority Jethro chose for Moses: "You shall represent the people before God and make them know the way in which they must walk". (Exodus 18/13-23)

## SPECIAL CREATIVE MINORITIES

As time goes on many other areas of apostolate will be mentioned, but we limit ourselves to two: our lay teachers in schools, and our priests.

A. LAY TEACHERS: St. James has warned: "Let not many of you become teachers for you know that he who teaches shall be judged with greater strictness". (James 3/1) Why? Because the pupils in our schools are so much clay to be moulded as Christians. If we are building schools just to teach geography, spelling or mathematics, while paying taxes to support public schools to do the same, then the time has come for us not only to examine our budget, but also to examine our conscience.

Lay teachers are in our schools to teach children to encounter God in every human situation, to sacrifice their time, their talents and their possessions for their neighbors, to be honest in a cheating world, to be witnesses to virtue in their age group, and not least of all, to help save America and the world.

This noble vocation will be kept alive through a creative few who will realize that they must be religious teachers in schools where there are fewer and fewer "religious" (members of sisterhoods).

I have failed badly in trying to create a unified Christian formation for all our young, both in Catholic and public schools; I have also failed in trying to inaugurate ecumenical Christian formation for the un-churched youths, but maybe the Lord has given me this humiliation to pass it on to the truly apostolic lay teachers themselves.

## FILLING THE SISTER-SHORTAGE

May the Holy Spirit Who once set aside "Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13/2) arouse leaders among lay teachers to fill the breach created by a decrease of sisters. Is God making a valley in order to raise a mountain? Up to this time the laity think of themselves as only filling a "gap", a "sister-gap". This is not a vocation! The laity are called not to fill up holes, as Priscilla, Agrippa and Apollo, the lay teachers with Paul, were not hole-fillers.

Is the decline of vocations among religious a Divine Sign that we are to use the laity not as ambulances when sisters fall off the cliffs, but as spiritual carpenters of the Church of God? This is

the way St. Paul thought of them. "And He gave to the Church some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and TEACHERS. This He did that God's consecrated people should be fully equipped, that the work of service might go on, and that the Body of Christ should be built up". (Eph. 4/11, 12)

There is never wanting among the laity a "creative minority" to organize for higher salary, but in the Church, for Christ's sake, may a Creative few organize to build up the youth in Christ, and then after having "sought first the Kingdom of God the higher salaries will be added unto them".

B. THE PRIESTS: The Diocese is full of Christ-like priests, but on account of the times in which we live, they are good in isolation like scattered pieces of mosaics.

Their battle to be Christ-like is difficult against the three-pronged fork of Satan: 1) To gain acceptance, and to avoid rejection; 2) To be exceptional in anything, from dress to liturgy; 3) Never to be too exceptional, especially in spirituality.

But until the priesthood is renewed, everything is antiquated. The Bishop alone cannot effect this change, except by encouragement, inspiration and example. Renewal must come from within the priests themselves.

In each area of the Diocese may a few group together quietly, positively and without any publicity, like scientists in a laboratory, preparing a vaccine or a remedy for a plague. These few will add more gradually, trusting in the Spirit to leaven all. Is not this how Scripture described invisible influence?

## A SALT FOR SEASONING

St. Paul said a "believing husband sanctifies his unbelieving wife", and St. Peter said that "even if husbands do not obey the word of God, they may be won to God without any word being spoken, simply by seeing the pure and venerable being honored by the wives". Apply them to the priesthood; the yeast will ferment the dough, the salt will season the meat, the stone dropped in the pond will cause ripples which will affect the distant shore.

The Creative Minority will help us priests make the almost sickening discovery that we have kept a large part of ourselves locked away in a secret garden of our heart, and hence are living on the surface of our souls. They will make the rest of us discover that the reason we do not understand our role is because we are not totally surrendered to Christ and that there is only one way to happiness for us and that is to be crucified with Christ.

This Creative Minority will center themselves about the Eucharist, for only by knowing that He shared His Bread with us will we share ours with others: "They recognized Him in the breaking of bread".

*Fulton Sheen*



MSGR. EDWARD A. ...

## Five

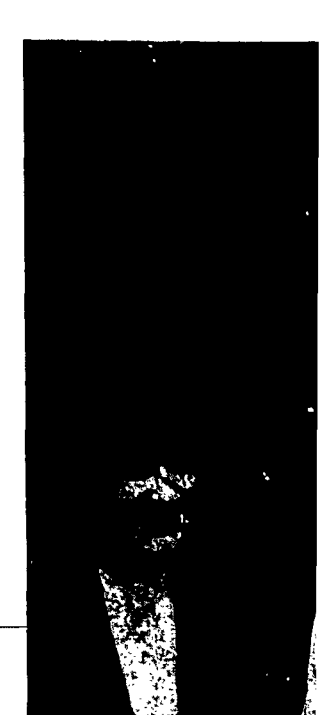
Five priests of the Diocese will be celebrating the anniversary of their ordination during the week of Dec. 15. Among them, Fr. Widman, serves as a Navajo and two, Fathers Joseph Lynch, are brothers.

Father Joseph Lynch, Holy Spirit Church, ordained by Bishop James J. Conroy on Dec. 18, 1943. His assignment was to St. Anthony's, where he then taught at the Holy Spirit Seminary until 1964.

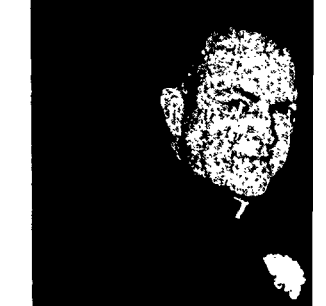


## Sisters at Holy

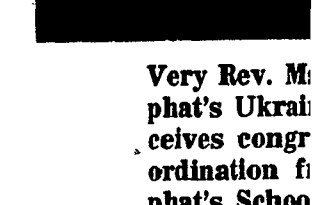
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Leaders of the Holy Jubilee ceremonies School Sisters of No. pictured with the p. (from left) Mrs. Fra



Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph M. Schmon of the Stamford, Ridge, Iroquois, celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination Dec. 6.



Very Rev. Msgr. Nicholas pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Ridge, Iroquois, celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination Dec. 6.

Among those present were Rev. Joseph M. Schmon of the Stamford, Ridge, Iroquois, Diocese, who celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination Dec. 6.

Other guests included Seredowich, pastor of St. Baptist Church, Syracuse; Adamiak, pastor of Holy Church, Youngstown, O.; Pelensky, Lackawanna, O.; Babak's brothers and sister; Mr. and Mrs. John Babak, Mich.; and Mr. and Mrs. Babak, Gary, Ind.; and a uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Pecki, St. Albert, Alberta.

## Msgr.

Very Rev. Msgr. Nicholas pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Ridge, Iroquois, celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination Dec. 6.

COURIER-JOURNAL EDITORIAL PAGE

## Unjustified Language

Editorial from The Universe, of London, 11/1/68

A man who offers himself for the priesthood of the Catholic Church knows perfectly well what her teaching is about authority and jurisdiction. He knows that he will be expected to preach and teach what the Church preaches and teaches.

The bishops have to see that what is said from the pulpit, or in the confessional, is the Church's teaching, and not something different, or even opposite.

It is now three months since Humanae Vitae reiterated what was the teaching of the Church. When the priests who no say that their consciences will not let them accept it, first came forward for ordination, it was the same teaching.

If Humanae Vitae was a shock coming suddenly out of the clear sky, it should not have been. The sense of shock came because for years now there has been so much permissiveness in so many other directions.

In those three months the hierarchy has dealt very patiently with dissident clergy. But, in the end, the bishops have to meet their own inescapable responsibility, both to the Holy See and to the faithful committed to their care.

They have not deserved to have the brutal adjective "brutal" thrown at their heads by a group of laymen.

We must never forget that there have been tabulated no fewer than 72,000 different kinds of organized Protestant Christianity, the fruits of private judgment on faith and morals.

If the Church has as the first of her marks that she is One as well as Holy and Catholic and Apostolic, it is because there is a divinely ordained centre of unity, whose rulings on faith and morals it is of the essence of Catholicism to accept.



"We haven't failed completely, Arthur. They're all saying grace."

## Letters to the Editor

Editor: Thank you for carrying Father David Fink's articles on the Inner City. They're really tremendous—intelligent, compassionate, and very courageous. It's so easy to become smug and selfish especially in the outer city and suburbs, that we need a courageous gadfly like Father Fink.

The seminars and discussion groups sponsored by the Urban Ministry Office are very well-attended. One held at St. John's on Humboldt Street has just been completed, as has a conference between Rochester sisters and black leaders. The ecumenical Lay Seminar, of which Father wrote in an early column, is filled to capacity, and includes many creative and intelligent people as members, including the manager of a large, industrial complex in the Rochester area.

—Mrs. Theresa Klem Webster, N.Y.

## Religious Activity Seen On Increase in U.S.S.R.

Bonn, Germany — (NC) — Leading Soviet papers have noted that religious activity among the Soviet people is constantly increasing, and one publication has accused religious communities of sowing "the poisonous seed of individualism" in the population, the German Catholic news agency KNA reported here.

The Soviet periodical for atheist propaganda, Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), related the growth of religious activity to insufficient efforts to bring about "scientific enlightenment." The magazine also explained the increased religious activity as the effect of anti-

## Word for Sunday

### Legion of Mary Needs Priests

By Father Albert Shamon

Many, many years ago Pope Pius XI offered the Church a method of winning the world for Christ. It was the cell method of Catholic Action.

A cell is a group of 10 or 12 people coming together for a specific action. The cell is so effective for two reasons. First, it is the apostolate of like by like — that is, persons in the same occupation become apostles of others in that same occupation. Teachers, for instance, become apostles of teachers and students of students, and so on. Who knows better the mind and aspirations of those in the world than those in the same world?

Secondly, the cell is organized action. Because it is, it takes the individual out of his isolation, it fortifies him, gives him ideas, checks up on him. For precisely because the cell is a small group, everybody is important, everybody talks, everybody belongs, everybody acts, everybody grows.

There were two groups in the world who took the Pope seriously in 1921 and used the cell method. One was the Communists. By the cell method, they have conquered more of the world than Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar. The other was an Irish group composed of Frank Duff, Father Toher and 15 Irish ladies. On Sept. 7, 1921, they formed a cell in Dublin, Ireland, around the great Mother of God; three years later, they called their cell the Legion of Mary.

So many today bemoan the terrible plight of the Church and the

world; they wring their hands in hopeless and helpless anguish they wonder what can be done — and all the while, the answer, like Poe's "Purloined Letter," is so obvious that it is not even seen.

In the Garden of Eden, God promised victory to the woman and her seed. And who is the woman but Mary? And who is her seed but her children? Certainly, then, the Legion of Mary must be one of these — fashioned, as it is, under her, moulded according to her spirit, and rising up in a darkened world like the dawn, fair as the moon, resplendent as the sun, and terrible against the powers of evil as an army in battle array.

Blessed by Popes, acclaimed by Cardinals as the "miracle of modern times," why are so many so loath to flock to the standard of Mary's Legion?

Not yet 50 years old, can it need updating? The truth is, to adapt Chesterton's remark about Christianity, "the Legion has not been tried and found wanting; the Legion has been found hard and not tried." The discipline of the weekly meeting seems too hard for many. Yet what made the Roman Legion the formidable and invincible fighting machine that it was, was its adamant discipline.

However, I see a deeper reason for the lag in the Legion — a lack of priests interested in the Legion, committed to it. The Legion needs priests — and, let me add, priests have a great need for the Legion!

Published Weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association

COURIER-JOURNAL

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