



Jose Feliciano does his thing.

Oh, Say Can You See...

New National Anthem?

Catholic Press Features New York — "The Star-Spangled Banner" has come under so much bombardment lately that one would think it's the national anthem instead of the national anthem.

In Worcester, Mass., "The Catholic Free Press" editorialized that our national anthem fared poorly in competition with other anthems heard during the Olympic Games in Mexico City, and suggested that with the approach of our 200th anniversary, "maybe the time now is right to prepare a new national anthem."

In the ecumenical "Christian Century," the editors announced they would wage a major campaign to replace "The Star-Spangled Banner" because, among other reasons, "the experience of the American people is too rich and our land too boundless for us to fix our most ritualized sentiments upon the single moment in Baltimore harbor during a war (the War of 1812) which is one of the sorriest chapters in our early history."

In "Life" magazine, Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone George London—recently appointed musical administrator of Washington's John F. Kennedy Center—explained in detail why "most singers try to avoid singing it in public. It's just too hard," and went on to propose that Congress commission one of our leading poets to write a new set of words to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

On TV, CBS commentator Harry Reasoner praised soul singer Aretha Franklin's gospel rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the Democratic national convention in Chicago and suggested that normally the musical aspects of our national anthem "leave much to be desired."

Reasoner's comment brought angry phone calls and irate letters suggesting that he "go back to Russia," and so forth, but what has really stirred up controversy is our leading poet to write a new set of words to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

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India Ministry Backs Conversion Ban

New Delhi, India — (NC) — The Indian law ministry has upheld legislation of two state governments that virtually ban conversions to Christianity.

V. C. Shukla, minister of state for home affairs, told the national parliament here that the law ministry feels that the two statutes, put on the books by the Orissa and Madhya Pradesh state governments, do not violate the Indian constitution.

The constitution says that "subject to public order, morality and health... all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion."

Both laws, called Freedom of Religion Acts, outlaw conversions of women and children and prescribe heavy punishment to those who employ "force, fraud or inducement" to make conversions.

The Indian Catholic Union recently began court action challenging the constitutionality of the two acts.

Earlier, Archbishop Eugene D'Souza, M.S.F.S., of Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesh, asked Catholics to oppose the legislation "even if it means going to jail."

Asked whether his government would enact similar legislation for territories under its direct administration, Shukla told parliament that the purpose of the two laws can be served by certain provisions in the existing Indian penal code. The minister added that it is the well-considered policy of his government not to interfere in religious matters.

Some members of the legislature have been critical of Brahmananda Reddy's government for having permitted Father Ferrer to work in Andhra Pradesh state following his return to India from a forced four-month absence abroad.

The priest was deported by the Indian government in June after a prolonged controversy over his activities in Maharashtra state labeled "anti-national" by his opponents. Hindu anti-missionary groups charged that the Jesuit was using his social welfare activities as a guise to convert Hindus to Christianity.

Merton: From Empty Life to Great Writer

Bardonia, Ky. — (NC) — Thomas Merton, who passed from an empty, groping childhood and a pleasure-filled, disappointing youth into prominence as one of the greatest spiritual writers of this century, is dead at age 53.

His death, during a trip to the Far East, was announced here by a spokesman for the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani, where Merton had dedicated himself to a life of contemplation and penance since 1941.

The abbey spokesman said a cable with the news of Merton's death arrived here from the American embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. He was electrocuted when he moved an electric fan and touched a short in the cord.

Merton, a convert to Catholicism, was catapulted into prominence in 1948 when — under obedience to his abbot — he wrote his autobiography, "The Seven Storey Mountain." This was soon followed by another work, "Seeds of Contemplation," dealing with the life of prayer. Both books were long on the best seller lists and Merton's reputation and cult were firmly established. But he remained modest about his talent. "For my own part I would rather hoe beans or pitch hay than write books, he once said.

THOMAS MERTON was born on Jan. 31, 1915, in Prades, a French town in the Pyrenees. His father was an English Anglican and his mother an American Quaker. Both were artists.

Merton was educated in France, England, and the U.S., and traveled widely in Europe. He was graduated from Columbia University, New York, where the process of his conversion to Catholicism began. Among his teachers at Columbia was Daniel Walsh, professor of philosophy, whom Merton credited with having a providential effect on his career and with encouraging him in later years to become a Trappist monk.

Last year, at the age of 60, Dr. Walsh was ordained a priest in Louisville, with his old friend, Thomas Merton, standing beside him as a sponsoring priest.

Possibly the last of these circular letters is the one dated November 9, 1968, New Delhi, India, and titled "ASIAN LETTER 1."

Asian Letter #1 is filled with a sense of life's teeming absurdity in the Far East. Thomas Merton could never have grown old and somber even if he had wanted to. He described Bangkok traffic as "wildly exciting." Especially, too, in the Himalayas where you whiz around corners at dizzy heights and speeds and meet these huge busses coming the other way, painted to look like dragons. Usually the road is just about one lane wide anyway, but somehow, one manages. I am still alive."

It is the image of a man who, for all the time in his 53 years spent in one place, knew the long loneliness of the journey which all men must travel. "In one sense," he said, "we are always traveling, and traveling as if we did not know where we were going. . . . In another sense we have already arrived."

But in his last journey, Thomas Merton finally met the Dalai Lama, religious leader of the Tibetan Buddhists, in the mountains of the Himalayas. He had three long interviews with the Dalai Lama and many others with Buddhist and Christian monks. He was tremendously impressed with every "I also hope," he said, "I can bring back to my monastery something of the Asian wisdom with which I am fortunate to be in contact—but it is something very hard to put into words."

It is curious that the image and reality of mountains followed him everywhere. "The Himalayas are the most beautiful mountains I have ever seen. There is something peculiar about the light there, a blue and a clarity you see nowhere else." Born in the Pyrenees, the greater part of his life spent in the Kentucky hills, he died suddenly in an accident under the shadow of the Himalayas.

"I wish you all peace and joy in the Lord," Father Louis concluded in Asian Letter #1, "and an increase of faith: for in my contacts with these new friends I also feel consolation in my own faith in Christ and His indwelling presence. I hope and believe He may be present in the hearts of all of us." Not so far from home, after all.



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Books

The following books are recommended by the Diocesan Schools sex education committee as basic readings for parents and teachers. They are available from the Family Life Bureau, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, as well as from individual publishers.

The Wonder of Sex (1966) — Dr. and Mrs. John Wilke. Hiltz Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. 45224. Paperback — \$1.50. A clear and practical presentation by a physician and his wife that reflects their experience as parents. The authors have conducted a series of teacher training programs throughout the country.

Your Child's Sex Life (1968) — Valerie Dillon and Rev. Walter Imborski. Cana Conference of Chicago, published by Delaney Publications, 720 N. Rush, Chicago, Illinois. 60611. Paperback — \$1.25.

A clear presentation of the child's emotional growth written by a parent and a priest. It presents basic information in the context of the child's thinking patterns and treats pre-teen years very well.

Sex Education of Children and Adults (1968) — Family Life Bureau, USCC, Washington, D.C. Paperbound — approximately \$1.00. An extremely useful booklet that gives a clear and orderly presentation of the development stages of a child's life. Contains background papers on the psychological development of conscience.

The Wonder of Life (1967) — Milton I. Levine, M.D. and Jean H. Schumann. Golden Press, New York. Hard cover — \$2.95. This book is invaluable in presenting birth and growth to younger children.

Parents Guide to Christian Conversion About Sex (1967) — Concordia Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

Teachers of the primary grades may find the following helpful, also:

Your Child From 1 to 5 — U.S. Children's Bureau; publication No. 30, Washington, D.C. (Pamphlet)

A Doctor Talks To 5 to 8 Year Olds — Dona Z. Meilach, Ph.D. in consultation with Elias Mandel, M.D.; Budlong Press Company, 528 N. Virginia Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Children's Books:
How Plants Grow — Golden Science Workshop (Age 6-9)

The Growing Story — Ruth Krauss; Harper, and Row, 49 E. 33rd Street, New York City, 10016.

All About Animals and Their Young — Robert McClung; Random House.

Horton Hatches the Egg — Dr. Seuss; Random House

A Baby Is Born — Milton I. Levine, M.D. and Jean H. Schumann; Golden Press, New York City (1965).

Growing Up—How We Become Alive and Are Born and Grow — Karl de Schweinitz; The Macmillan Company, New York (1965).

The Wonderful Story of You — Benjamin and Sidonie Gruenberg; Garden City Books, Garden City, New York (1960).

I Wonder, I Wonder — Concordia Publishing Company; Don Bosco Films, New Rochelle, New York, 10802, Cat. No. 14C1501.

Deaths

Mrs. Haggerty — Patricia O'Flaherty Haggerty, wife of Vincent Haggerty of 751 Garson Ave., died Dec. 7 at the age of 41. The funeral Mass was offered by six priests Dec. 11 at Corpus Christi Church.

H. L. Bachman — A requiem Mass for Howard Lyman Bachman, formerly of Wilbur Street, was celebrated Dec. 13 at St. Augustine's by Father Richard Mattie.

Mrs. Haggerty, a native of Jersey City, had lived here about nine years. She was a member of the Corpus Christi Mothers' Club.

Surviving besides her husband are three daughters and five sons; her father, Dr. Brian O'Flaherty of New York, and two brothers, Robert, of Chicago, and Adrian, of New York.

H. L. Bachman was born in Seneca Falls and had lived in Rochester 47 years. He was a veteran of World War II.

Survivors include a brother, William, of Rochester; two sisters, Mrs. Josephine Cook, Rochester, and Mrs. August Weber, Erie, Pa., and several nieces and nephews.

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No Action Planned Against Fr. Ferrer

Hyderabad, India — (NC) The Andhra Pradesh state government has no intention of taking action against the controversial Spanish-born Jesuit missionary, Father Vincent Ferrer, its chief minister told the legislature here.

Some members of the legislature have been critical of Brahmananda Reddy's government for having permitted Father Ferrer to work in Andhra Pradesh state following his return to India from a forced four-month absence abroad.

The priest was deported by the Indian government in June after a prolonged controversy over his activities in Maharashtra state labeled "anti-national" by his opponents. Hindu anti-missionary groups charged that the Jesuit was using his social welfare activities as a guise to convert Hindus to Christianity.

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Education

NCEA Aide

Washington — (NC) — A official of the National Catholic Educational Association has praised a special report on federal responsibility for higher education for accelerating "educational quality and equality of opportunity."

The report by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education said the federal government's proportional share of support for higher education will need to rise from its present \$4 billion to over \$13 billion by 1976.

The 54-page study recommended increased federal aid in several areas, including a national opportunity grants, supplemental matching grants, a student workstudy program, a counseling and information program, medical education, and construction. It also urged the establishment of a National Foundation for the Development of Higher Education.

Father Clarence W. Friedman, associate secretary of the NCEA college and university department, said the report "sums up what we've been saying for years."

He said the report "is a prophetic statement of what we must do to meet the needs of our people."

The words are those of John W. Johannaber, executive secretary for mission personnel of the Methodist Board of Missions.

An increasing number of conscientious objectors turning to the military obligation to find a challenging alternative to the military obligation, he said, and he asked for "innovation and flexibility" in the board's use of such personnel.

Observing that the young generation has said it wants "to do its own thing," the executive asked the board how it can conform to that demand to classical disciplines, acceptable theological statement, conventional middle-class style.

"Some students are committed to a revolutionary stance," he said, "but they are neither wild-eyed heretics nor apostles of violence. They are men and women of deep conviction."

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