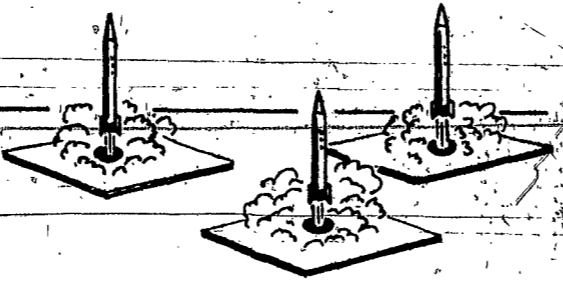


U. S. Bishops and the ABM



The question of the antiballistic missile installations urged by the Nixon Administration and opposed by many groups in Congress, peace organizations, religious bodies and scientists deserves every citizen's consideration.

The Courier-Journal here reprints portions of the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, "Human Life in Our Day, November 1968," which speak strongly on the issue of nuclear armaments.

It is in nuclear warfare, even in its "cold" phase or form, that mankind confronts the moral issue of modern war in its extreme case. This has become a situation in which two adversaries possess and deploy weapons which, if used against each other, could annihilate their respective civilizations and even threaten the survival of the human race. Nothing more dramatically suggests the anti-life direction of technological warfare than the neutron bomb.

It would be perverse indeed if the Christian conscience were to be unconcerned or mute in the face of the multiple moral aspects of these awesome prospects.

The Council did not call for unilateral disarmament; Christian morality is not lacking in realism. But it did call for reciprocal or collective disarmament "proceeding at an equal pace according to agreement and backed up by authentic and workable safeguards."

There are hopeful signs that such a formula may be strengthened by the Partial Test Ban Treaty and that the commitment under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to proceed to a negotiation of balanced reductions of nuclear weapons—at the same time extending the use of nuclear power for peaceful development of the needy nations under adequate inspection safeguards—may provide a positive, sane pattern for the future.

Meanwhile, it is greatly to be desired that such prospects not be dashed by irrational resolves to keep ahead in "assured destruction" capability. Rather it is to be hoped that the early ratification by the Senate of the Non-Proliferation Treaty—which in essence is a Treaty between the USSR and the other nations—will hasten discussion of across the board reductions by the big powers.

The Council's position on the arms race was clear. To recall it: "Therefore, we declare once again: the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity. It is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready" (n. 81).

Nonetheless, the nuclear race goes on. The latest act in the continuing nuclear arms race is no doubt the US decision to build a "thin" anti-ballistic missile system to defend against possible nuclear attack by another world power.

In themselves, such anti-ballistic missiles are purely defensive, designed to limit the damage to the United States from nuclear attack. Nevertheless, by upsetting the present strategic balance, the so-called balance of terror, there is grave danger that a United States ABM system will incite other nations to increase their offensive nuclear forces with the seeming excuse of a need to restore the balance.

We seriously question whether the present policy of maintaining nuclear superiority is meaningful for security. There is no advantage to be gained by nuclear superiority, however it is computed, when each side is admittedly capable of inflicting overwhelming damage on the other, even after being attacked first.

Any effort to achieve superiority only leads to ever-higher levels of armaments as it forces the side with the lesser capability to seek to maintain its superiority. In the wake of this action-reaction phenomenon comes a decrease in both stability and security.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops pledges its united effort toward forming a climate of public opinion for peace, mindful of the Council's advice that "government officials . . . depend on public opinion and feeling to the greatest possible extent." We will therefore, through existing and improved agencies, support national programs of education for Catholic Americans and for all Americans in collaboration with all religious groups and other organizations.

We commend the arduous and unceasing efforts of statesmen and specialists in the field of arms control and disarmament, and to add our own encouragement of systematic studies in this field.

COMMENTARY

A LAYMAN'S VIEW Parents' Rights Disregarded

Editor: I am a concerned parent who is deeply puzzled about many things regarding the diocesan Sex Education Program. I am opposed to the Rochester Syllabus for reasons I will outline below.

But first, permit me to state what type of sex education I favor—

I favor the Church or school making an all-out effort to help parents educate their own children about sex. Neither the Church nor the school has ever expended this kind of effort (comparable to this sex program), or time or money on any such endeavor.

I favor an after-school voluntary program discussing puberty and its accompanying changes, being offered not forced, to parents and/or their children in separate meetings for boys and girls no sooner than sixth grade, and preferably seventh grade for boys.

With regard to the syllabus itself, in paragraph after paragraph, I could ask the question—Why? And so far, no one has given me, and many like me, a satisfactory answer to even one why.

I wonder why parental rights have been so flagrantly disregarded in this dispute. This country has much social unrest because the rights of the individual are not respected. Usurping this parental right can only create more unrest and more problems. Efforts should always be directed towards helping the parents to function more adequately if the school wishes to improve a child's chances for mental health and the good life.

I wonder why our educators think that force-feeding sex education to children every year at every age level will help solve the problems of what they call an already "sex-saturated society"?

Children do not see with adult eyes so who says they are ill-affected by the sex they may see on TV or in magazines? But once given the knowledge of the sex facts, they can no longer be unaffected by such advertising. Why should innocence be sacrificed for sex knowledge and children robbed of an already too brief childhood?

In addition, problems of premarital sex, out of wedlock babies, promiscuity and the like, have little or nothing to do with a lack of sex knowledge. In fact, where sex education courses similar to this one are taught in schools, such problems increase alarmingly.

I wonder why "better a year too soon than a day too late" is stated as a reasonable maxim in the syllabus.

Many reputable experts in the field of child psychology would not agree. To quote a few:

The Gesell Institute book on Child Behavior (which the AMA recommends as America's foremost authority on Child Development) warns parents to give simple answers to just what the child asks so we will "avoid the greatest error of all—telling too much too soon."

Dr. Wm. McGrath, a psychiatrist from Phoenix, Arizona, wrote in the April 14, 1968 Arizona Republic, "There is a phase of personality development called the latency period, during which the healthy child is not interested in sex. This latency period is not just a cultural or moral convention. It serves a very important biological purpose. It affords the child an opportunity to develop his own resources, his beginning physical and mental strength. Later, when he is ready, he can take on other responsibilities and discharge them."

"Sophomoric and supercilious persons, who are without learning in philosophy or in science, fail to realize the significance of the latency period. When we plead that it should remain inviolate, they scoff and accuse us of narrowminded prudishness."

Dr. Rhoda Lorand, Ph.D., certified psychologist of N.Y. State, and a practicing child analyst with 20 years experience states: "Our experience has shown us that such forcing of sexual preoccupation on the elementary school child is very likely to result in sexual difficulties in adulthood, and it can lead to disturbed behavior in childhood."

I wonder why the proponents of the program seem unable to differentiate between privacy and secrecy. "Sex is sacred—not secret" is a pet slogan. I find the syllabus a complete invasion of privacy of the whole family unit.

In the orientation programs I attended and ones I read about, the ability to toss about, anywhere at anytime, a vocabulary comprising such words as penis, vagina, masturbation, intercourse, erection, etc., is presented as a victory overcoming secrecy about sex. I consider this an utterly insensitive approach.

I wonder why such detailed and clinical information is thought necessary. Most parents would tend to feel inadequate and insecure after exposure to the syllabus should they try to impart this information to their offspring. The fact is that any parents, however clumsy and inarticulate, make up in love what they lack in technical skill, in explaining the facts of life to their child.

Many happily married people can attest to the fact that such detailed knowledge of sex is not necessary for a compatible sex life. The essential ingredient for happiness and success in marriage is still—love. When that is truly present, one does not need any formal education in the technique of expressing it in marriage. It comes quite naturally—and always has.

It seems a bit ludicrous to add—we are our brother's keeper. Don't we as Christians have a moral obligation to concern ourselves with all our youth—especially those in public schools where God can play no part in such programs? If sex must be presented in an amoral setting, when it can be neither moral nor immoral, neither beautiful nor ugly, but . . . nothing, is this really what we want inculcated in our public school children?

A strong modified stand by all our Catholic Dioceses across the nation, of a genuinely reverent and prudent sex program, could set a national example and perhaps our public schools would follow suit.

—Mrs. Edward Mangano, Rochester.

Women 2nd Class? It's Revolting!

The contemporary question of why woman is of an inferior status in the Church will be answered only when knowledge is pursued for the sake of truth and not with a partisan purpose. What gives Catholic women today a feeling of inferiority in the Church originates in the prevailing attitude in parishes or schools that women constitute the mysterious other half of mankind with which Catholic priests seldom enter into a meaningful, personal relationship. The problem is pastoral. It is difficult to show a truly pastoral solicitude for concerns and hopes one can never share.

Cardinal Suenens wrote in *The Nun in the World*—"Christianity started a new era for women when our Lord proclaimed the fundamental equality of the sexes and raised the dignity of women for all time." Then the Cardinal quoted from Lenin: "The experience of all movements of liberation proves that the success of a revolution depends on the degree of participation by women" and he added that this was a good phrase, because "Christianity is the greatest and most radical revolution for freedom in all history."

—Katherine Burton, The Sign—April 1969

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Pray, Think -- After Surgery?

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



To have lived 60 years before having surgery or even before being hospitalized is remarkable enough. But that same feat is a deprivation of experiences and understandings which can never be learned from books.

After three years of procrastination, a few months ago I presented my body to a skillful surgeon for inspection and his conclusion. The inspection was thorough. The conclusion was: surgery.

Now, people tend to divide surgery into "major" and "minor." Be not deceived. The old expression: "It depends on whose ox is being goaded" applies when it's one's own body. All surgery, from a tonsillectomy to a heart transplant looms up as major when it's our own.

With complete innocence I trotted into St. James Mercy Hospital, Howell, for my surgery, and for the education of my psyche. To demonstrate the thoroughness of my innocence, I brought along a suit case of books and magazines, religious and profane, and a typewriter, under the illusion that there would be plenty of time and opportunity to "catch up on things to be done." How foolish can a man be!

In the early thirties there were many seminarians at St. Bernard's from my home town of Auburn. At that time there was a High Church Episcopalian Rector, who, intelligent and tireless, wearing a raven coat in the winter, by stopping frequently at St. Alphonsus Church for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to recite the rosary. He was ecclesiastical in action as well as in spirit at a time when denominational loyalties were demonstrated not only by fidelity to one's own Church, but also by hostility to others.

The Rector was a friend of Father Fred Straub. He was a man of

great scholarship as well as of great charity, and he greeted all who came within eye shot with Christian cordiality. One summer day he met a group of us seminarians. With kindness he discussed our work. Then he sighed: "Ah, seminary days! A time to pray. A time to study. A time to think."

I must have been thinking the hospital was a kind of antiseptic seminary. This would be the longest opportunity to pray, to study, to think! Time to Think . . . After the surgery the care and consolation processes began. Most of the thinking was of the constant discomfort; and of the interminable comings and goings of solicitous nurses, aides, housekeepers, well-wishers, et al. I remembered with a wry smile calling on an old man a year ago. He was in evident pain and made no effort to be either heroic or stoic.

"Louie, you must be suffering a lot. How do you feel this morning?" Louie groaned, and from the depths of his stomach he said: "Father, I hope my worst enemies will have the same! Not very good New Testament sentiments, but it fitted well with the cursing psalms of the Old Testament."

Time to Study . . . A peculiar ennui took over the soul, and the normal intellectual interests gave way to what can be described only as a "state of blah." It could be likened to the feelings of a wounded animal which drags its body to a quiet covert, and just wants to be left alone. The bale of reading material rested undisturbed in the dresser drawers.

Time to Pray . . . of the seven capital sins, Sloth is listed last. It means: "Indifference to spiritual things." Dante considered sloth so heinous that he put souls damned through slothfulness in a special category of the malicious. One would think that sickness and distress would turn one

to God in fervent prayer. Well, don't bank on it after surgery.

For decades I have been indignant that no one ever asked to be anointed. So I had it planned to be anointed the second or third day after the operation. There was no danger of death. But anointing of the sick has for its first purpose the giving of health and strength to a sick body.

What are the facts? My zest for spiritual things was almost zero. Mental prayer was impossible; the breviary too much of an effort. A simple imitation of Christ, suitable for only a few precious sentences.

The rosary, at least, was tolerable. But when the third day came, I was so completely indifferent to spiritual things that my anticipated anointing never came to pass. This was not a matter of sin. It was simply a condition of the post-operative convalescent.

Conclusion . . . What happens in the psyche of medical patients may be different. These conclusions apply only to surgical patients.

1. Come to the hospital prepared for great care but no rest. Thermometers, blood pressure instruments, trays, charts, cleaning, queries: the whole business is first cousin to the third degree treatment.
2. Be assured of the interest of your friends and neighbors, and your own indifference to anyone's will, good or bad.
3. Do Your Praying When You're Well. And if the priest thinks that you warrant it, ask him to anoint you. How splendid is the anointing prayer: ". . . Free your servant from sickness, restore his health, protect him by your might and give him back to your holy Church, with all that is needed for his welfare. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

CHURCH AND THE CITY

How Adults Can 'Protest'

By Father P. David Finks

There is a published account of the "revolution" at Columbia—last spring written by a student participant, and entitled the "Strasberry Statement." The author gives some insight into student attitudes when he explains how he scrawled under some leftist graffiti: "I'm sorry about defacing the wall, but babies are being burned and men are dying, and this university is at fault quite directly."

The danger for most of us in this time of multiple revolutions and militant protests is the emotional reaction of the suddenly disturbed sleeper. We want the protesters' silenced, the symptoms suppressed, without stirring ourselves sufficiently to get at the underlying causes of our complicated maladies.

There is much in this rich and powerful nation that needs changing from our continued involvement in the Vietnam War to citizen apathy in the face of malnutrition of millions of our children. But it will do no good to tell the young that the problems are too complicated for effective solutions.

Dr. George Wald, Nobel Prize Laureate at Harvard says: "Nothing is as destructive to the young as the realization that we, their elders, are baffled and helpless. That we so plainly cannot begin to cope with situations we freely concede to be altogether wrong, and that threaten their and our lives. The only cure for student unrest is adult unrest."

The church community, I hope, will feel this escalating unrest in the face of human problems all around us. We cannot allow our "revolutionaries" to slip away convinced that the institution is beyond reformation. It would be encouraging if young Catholics cared as much about the church as the activist students care about Harvard and Columbia.

Most Catholics cannot really accept Cardinal John Wright's saying at the Bishops' meeting in Houston that financial difficulties prevent the church from exercising a greater leadership in social reform. The problem is not lack of money, but unwillingness to tighten our ecclesiastical belts and use our finances for social change.

Somehow the money is found to jet new Cardinals to Rome for the investiture. The Bishops managed to raise some \$750,000 in a few months to finance further research into the "rhythm" method of family planning.

One wonders if laymen and priests through their fledgling associations can lobby for an effective Task Force on Urban Problems in the Diocese of Rochester.

Perhaps a dynamic layman with planning experience could be hired for a year on a Peace Corps type assignment by the two associations or organize such a lobby.

Assistant pastors in each area could band together on their own to devote up to 24 hours a week to com-

munity ministry in their sector. The structures are there, but our people will never be involved until the priests are enthusiastic about community problems.

Lawyers and business types could be mobilized to plan how we could temporarily mortgage some church property to raise seed money for non-profit housing developments.

An education task force could evaluate diocesan planning for Catholic schools before they are dismantled one by one for financial reasons.

Kings Preparatory, with a little encouragement, could concentrate on the drop-outs and kids from poverty areas who are college material. Greater youth better prepared for college will not be as insecure and volatile when they get there.

These are not necessarily impressive dreams. We have a strong mandate from the American Bishops. The local scene in the Rochester, Elmira, Auburn, Geneva areas is ripe for cooperative action with ecumenical groups and non-church agencies. All that is needed is to pick an issue and begin.

This is the adult unrest that Harvard's Dr. Wald is speaking about. In fact he goes on to say: "If you produce enough adult unrest, I think I can promise you that the students of this world will be glad to stay in their classes, getting ready to live in that better world that we adults are preparing for them."

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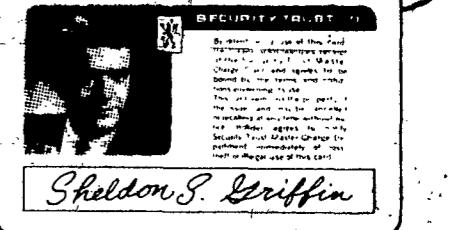
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