

# NOW HEAR THIS ...

## An Urgent Moral Issue: We Are Stockpiled and Trained For Germ Overkill

By Father Richard Tormey

In the middle ages war parties sometimes dropped plague-infected corpses into their enemies' villages wells. To poison non-combatants drinking water was considered as ethical as pushing a sword through some foot-soldier.

But since those days the horror of using germs or poison as a deadly weapon which one's enemy could not even see has always revolted society. Almost as soon as scientists have discovered chemicals or biologicals which could be used militarily there have been periodic outcries to stop them.

Public revulsion against the gas warfare of the first World War led to a treaty signed in Geneva in 1925. Our government unfortunately refused to share that international prohibition against the inventing or using of lethal gases.

A sequence of recent events now

reveals that our nation still toys with the notion that wholesale death could be poured on our enemies from a test tube. Whether for aggressive action or as a deterrent, chemicals and biologicals are standing ready for U.S. use.

Three events should alarm us: a mass death of sheep in Utah last year, killed by nerve gas blown over their grazing area from a nearby Army test site; the alarm raised last month by a Congressman who objected to the Army shipping tons of obsolete but menacing war chemicals across the country for burial in the Atlantic Ocean; and finally a recent United Nations report on little-known-to-the-public chemicals and bacteriological weapons actually poised in U.S., Russian, Chinese and other hands.

The U.N. report wishes "to contribute to public awareness of the profoundly dangerous results if these weapons are ever used". Compiled by

14 science authorities from East and West, it lists all the deadly ways major governments have devised to destroy enemies either through their nostrils or mouths.

The report is a frightening catalogue. It speaks of the possibility of world-wide plagues resulting from man-made germs. Whole cities would die almost before the citizens knew they were under attack. Invisible, odorless clouds of germ-laden mists could be released from hostile submarines or from small aerosol bombs dropped from planes. These death-carrying mists inhaled by soldiers, civilians and animals would start fatal lung diseases. Five tons of bacteria for example, spread by air could infect in a few days half the people in an area of 20,000 square miles.

This is not hypothetical or science fiction. The U.S. Army is stockpiled and trained to employ these weapons.

The chemical agents discussed in the report include nerve gases which bring asphyxiation by a mere whiff, toxins which cause death by respiratory paralysis within 12 hours and others which create a 2-day severe illness.

Biological agents such as deadly viruses, bacteria and fungi are far more potent than the chemicals because they multiply after being sprayed over the target.

Research in the cloak-and-dagger secrecy of the military laboratories, has apparently never ceased since World War I when about 100,000 deaths on both sides were attributed to some 30 types of gases used with shells. The U.N. says that today 13 nations are working on test-tube weapons that they could put into use immediately in case of wartime need.

The incredible destructive power of nuclear weapons has so obviously wiped away distinction between combatants and non-combatants that moral theologians long ago agreed that the use of the atom or hydrogen bomb could not be justified. Even if the bomb was aimed exclusively at a

military target the shock force and the atomic dust would destroy the innocent miles away.

They also ruled that a national policy which based its future on its stockpiles of the atom bomb would be suspect morally because it would show an implied intent to devastate our enemies, all their people, not just their military.

Revelation about the continuing development of chemical and biological warfare, both in materiel and strategy, plunges us, unhappily into a moral crisis as grave as the question of nuclear confrontation.

Germ and gas warfare hopefully might not make civilian areas the targets of direct attack. But if the mass killing and sickening of civilians could occur as horribly as the scientists predict, are we justified in preparing these weapons any more than we are in continuing to build larger and more destructive bombs?

Militarists may argue that our preparedness with atomic missiles and bombs is solely for national self-defense and as a deterrent to forestall

an enemy's aggressive lust. But do the plans for poison gas and germ warfare sound like aggression-cooling or self-defense? Since we have such frightening nuclear power why do we even think in terms of chemicals and bacteria? Such preparations seem so utterly callous about life, as indifferent about non-combatants, as the Bomb!

President Nixon announced three weeks ago that he wanted a top-level review of American policy in this vapor-warfare and a new look at why the U.S. refuses to adhere to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. He should be told our alarm. Mounting public dismay over the new knowledge that our nation has been secretly developing weapons so horrible which have nothing to do with whether one is a hawk or a dove about the Vietnam war.

To accept our nation's possible future actions uncritically when they promise the killing of non-combatants more numerous than in Vietnam may make us accomplices before the fact.

# COMMENTARY

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## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### Whose Row Is Hardest to Hoe?

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

A friend of mine from Rochester wrote regarding the article on celibacy. (Courier-Journal, June 27)

"Just whom do you think you're kidding by that article on Celibacy? Who are these priests so undivided from Christ because no wife stands between? Either you know different priests than I do or you're joking."

"I think I am a fairly well organized mother, and that I take good care of my family. You know what a good man my husband is, but his work brings home a pretty slender pay envelope which is hard to stretch even for ordinary needs. However, we manage, even if we don't live in the same luxury as our parish priests."

"I serve meat loaf and creamed chicken. It goes farther that way. At the rectory they're eating off the fat of the land. I skimp to get enough money ahead to pay the insurance on our—oh, my!—the Ford—around in flashy and expensive cars. I used to run down to morning Mass, but no more. I have to schedule my time for my family. The Mass I could go to is always from 5 to 20 minutes late—and never any apologies. If there was a wife for the priest, she'd see that he got over on time. As for vacation time, I wish the Fathers would share mine, and let me share theirs. I'd have a ball and they'd have nervous prostration."

"No, Father. I could add dozens of things that divide our celibates from Christ. Celibacy as an ideal may be better, but as far as I'm concerned, the real thing is that our priests are substituting the goods of this world for a helpful wife. Doesn't this knock your pretty picture of the undivided priest into a cocked hat?"

"I suppose I'll be sorry for writ-

ing this. I still have a hangup to think of priests as 'other Christs'. But your article, as made me so mad when I compare the ease of the priests' life to that of my husband's, I'm going to mail the letter before I get second thoughts."

After catching my breath, and meditating on the letter, I replied:

Dear X — You have many admirable gifts, but the one I have enjoyed most through years of friendship is your candor.

It is true that we celibate priests can be pretty self-centered, and I think the clamor today for the doing away with celibacy comes not from Christ-centeredness, but from self-centeredness. Have you noticed that the cry from the anti-celibate people is mostly the need of a wife to fulfill me, to satisfy my maleness, to develop my kipsoid personality.

Were I a woman, I should be indignant that my celibate complainant's thoughts are of himself rather than of me, of his supposed needs rather than mine, or even of the needs of the Church and the good of the people.

You do not exaggerate regarding some rectory tables, some inordinately flashy cars, some sloppy service of the people. You could have included the visitation of the 'interesting parishioners' to the neglect of pastoral visitation of the 'little people.'

You know your own parish. I know the whole diocese better than most priests. I have a strong sense of the fraternity of the priesthood, and have always made it a point to visit brother priests of any age anywhere.

In all fairness I have found most of our priests live pretty much on the

level of their parishioners: at table, in transportation, perhaps less so in recreation. By and large they do give good service to their people. They certainly are genuinely concerned about them. They are good men, with the faults that most men have, but with a simple devotion to Our Lord, to Our Lady, and to their people.

I suppose what is hardest for priests and parishioners is the problem: How can all priests be brought to live the ideals of celibacy?

This may give you comfort. You do have priests to serve the parish. Even if they are not ideal, they are there. Minimal service is better than none. You do have a good husband and children. You may envy the rectory table, cars, et al, but you have what celibates do not, a devoted family.

If your priests were married, are you confident that the parishioners would be considerate of the rectory wife? Through military service and civilian life, I have known and admired many Protestant ministers' wives. There is a general theme among them that parishioners can be demanding and mean, and even vindictive.

I think a self-centered celibate's life must be terribly lonely. He would be filled with 'Plom' (poor little old me). Your prayers, your understanding, and your sense of humor could well direct some of us to a firmer union with Christ.

My own life has been greatly helped by a few ideal priests, and by many great women whose personal family life has been an inspiration to keep plugging away that my own self-accepted celibacy may be an instrument of service to God's people, and of union with Christ, Our Celibate Lord.



## ALL IN THE FAMILY

### The Rigors of a Week's Recreation

By Sarah Child

"What? You're taking the children with you? What kind of a vacation is that?" a friend wanted to know when we told her we were New England-bound with kids in tow.

We're funny like that. We not only take our kids on trips, we also sit down and eat supper with them every night. We take them out to restaurants on occasion, sit with them in church and on hot summer nights let them stay up very late to perch on the front steps and help us serenade the moon (quietly).

We're nuts of course.

When two of my husband's co-workers discovered our vacation plans they presented him with a package to be used for medicinal purposes.

"Peg and John said that when things get rough we're both to apply a little of this," the children's father said.

We had almost a quarter of a mile of our 500-mile trip under our belt when I first expressed a need for first aid—but my husband, strong man

that he is, said to look for the humor in the situation.

Our baby, several months away from 2, had just mastered his longest sentence. "I was here first" from his 4-year-old sister as they fought for the standing space in the back seat that completely obscured their father's rear vision.

Eight hours, 50 battles, and 25 rests later we pulled into the driveway of our housekeeping cottage. Within two minutes our youngest had spilled his drink of water and broken the glass on the floor in front of our host.

By week's end his total included two shades ripped from their rollers, one bed slightly dampened, one bottle of facial moisturizer dumped on our collection of sea shells and one flooded bathroom.

"See," my husband and I said to each other proudly, "he can be a good boy when the wants to."

His sister, fastidious and ladylike, browsed with ardor and appreciation in the not-so-quiet shops that fill

every picturesque coastal village.

"Oh, Daddy," she exclaimed for all to hear, "see the pretty dish with the picture of the bare lady on it."

Determined that I should not cook all week long, my husband decided to try the children at dinner-out.

"Your children are most welcome," said the suave, tanned head waiter as he ushered us into a room replete with red carpeting, crystal chandeliers and an organist.

Our daughter, a restaurant goer from six months, primly placed her crimson napkin in her lap and, lapsing just a little, used her teaspoon to get a sip from the water goblet.

Not to be outdone, her brother neatly placed his napkin over the lighted hurricane lamp and stuck his knife, fork and spoon in his goblet.

It may not sound like progress to some parents but we think it's a decided improvement over last year when he patted the waitress' posterior every time she leaned over to serve the next table.

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## A LAYMAN'S VIEW

### Time to Secularize Catholic Colleges

By Peter Goodsell

I remember the surprise and indignation I felt as a Catholic high-school senior after reading John Cogley's article in a Spring 1967 Commonweal, "The Future of an Illusion", in which a bleak prospect was foreseen for Catholic educational institutions and their abolition urged. Inured as I then was to the cause of Catholic education, I could not understand the logic of Cogley's argument.

For, as I would like to show, the aim and spirit of Catholic-supervised instruction cry out for revision and, as we know them, may begin to disappear in the near future.

The financial crises of individual Catholic schools are well known to those attending them, and Catholic lobbying in the state legislatures is based on knowledge that much more state aid is essential to head off the prospect of being forced to close.

State educators find themselves in the peculiar position of overloading the public school if many Catholic grade schools should close, while violating the constitutional guard against respecting an "establishment of religion" if they remain open. As the New York Times points out in a recent editorial on a case in Connecticut, this is the basic law involved.

This is the final issue no matter how ardently legislators may manage to avoid it by bills for non-religious textbooks, lunches, and so on.

We must face the fact that Catholic schools have largely outlived their usefulness. The original idea of parochial education as a strengthening influence for the faith of the young, even in its modern guise of making religion relevant to youth, is today an anachronism which harbors its own dangers for students who are adapting to secular society.

It is probably in the elementary schools where Catholic education will be phased out first, to judge by the financial state of many rural parishes. It is my feeling, confirmed by my own years in a parochial school, that the training given is not doing

its job in informing the child's education rather, too much of the school day is spent injecting religious stories or morals into unrelated areas (history, general science) with overemphasis on "the Catholic view."

I feel that such teaching makes no lasting contribution to the student outside of impressing incomplete notions of subservience to spiritual and secular authorities and a set of moral strictures against which he later rebels. This is not a psychological dictum, but an impression reinforced by my own learning under this system. Thus, at grammar-school graduation we were advised to "feel very uncomfortable" when we entered the secular high school; an attitude which, I am afraid, still lingers.

One would expect that the outlook for Catholic high schools and colleges is more stable than that of the elementary, if only for the fact that legislatures will of necessity be aiding them for some time to come. In that the Catholic high schools largely parallel the seculars in all but religious orientation, and are again in a financial bind due to the need for changing tuition, they continue the implicit separatism of Catholics from the secular world.

Perhaps the "Catholic elite" prep schools may continue to thrive on the ideal of Christian excellence, but I think human and monetary resources might be better used elsewhere.

It is the colleges, though — the would-be intellectual centers of the Church — which are falling into the limbo of an identity crisis as to their commitment and purpose. Faced with ever-rising costs, stiff competition for better professors, students and facilities, and the label of mediocrity attached to the "small Catholic college," many of these institutions paradoxically are waiting for want of the very qualities — worldly renown and financial wealth — which the Christian traditionally professes to scorn.

The anomalous intellectual position of Catholic college administrations is blatantly brought out by such controversies as Mary Daley at Boston

College, Father Charles Curran at Catholic U., and Jacqueline Grennan, who took the logical step to improve Webster College and secularized it.

My own tenure at a small Catholic college presents, I think, a typical atmosphere: department of philosophy and theology staffed wholly by clergy; a large business division; a compulsory military-training program; the absence of open commitment to a critical intellectual attitude, especially in religious matters.

Such colleges are admittedly striving to change their stilted aspects. But the ideals under which Catholic colleges operate are, I believe, impossible of fulfillment and often obstacles to the academic diversity of the students' learning. It seems futile to regard the Catholic university as a force for intellectual creativity, in part by its very nature, again by the restrictions placed on it by clerical overseers.

It may be significant that the most outspoken stand on student disorders taken by a college president was Father Theodore Hesburgh's at Notre Dame, a Catholic university — the force implied often follows from the attitudes fostered by Catholic education.

The future of Catholic schools lies ultimately, I think, in turning them over to lay administrators and then secularizing. This is the obvious consequence to the problems of Catholic education and the hints given us by Webster College and the National Association of Laymen, who endorsed this program at their recent meeting in Cleveland.

Catholics must relinquish the cherished purity of the education cloister and recognize social and political evils, not as the fruit of Satan and the secular city, but as tasks that can be economically and scientifically solved if resources are used where they are really needed.

(Mr. Goodsell lives in Owego, N.Y. Readers may comment on his opinions or contact him through a letter to the Editor.)