

NOW HEAR THIS ... Bishop Shannon's Road to Surrender

By Father Richard Torney

About a year ago a Senator from Minnesota, admired by millions for his opposition to the Administration's war policy, stalked into sulking obscurity after defeat at the Democrat convention.

His supporters, especially the young and liberals inspired by his challenges to the structure of our government, were hurt by his rejection of leadership.

Last week a Bishop from Minnesota, respected for his conscientious dissent against a papal encyclical, surrendered his sacramental dignity as an Apostle, contradicted his vows and fled—from his role in the Church—because he wanted a "new life style."

His admirers—who had called him "the hope of the future of the U.S. Church"—were sickened by the scandal of his defection. The causes and values which he had so bravely promoted were tainted by the shock of his secret infidelity.

Both the Senator and the Bishop are qualified scholars, able-writers, magnetic personalities. At one time they were professors in the same St. Thomas College. Professionally and personally sensitive to truth and critical of cant, they seemed gifted with a charisma of potential leadership.

Similarities between Bishop James Shannon and Senator Eugene McCarthy really tell us nothing when we ponder their lives because their career-changing decisions were in non-comparable fields. But the consequence of their actions and motives will scar young Americans for a long time to come.

Although only 48 years old and a bishop for only three years, Bishop Shannon had reached a unique prestige in the Church. But his popularity had not been flashily sought for nor

found only among the new-breeders.

He was elected by his brother bishops to the administrative board of the U.S. Bishops' conference—trusted by them to be spokesman to the press at their semi-annual meetings. As a teacher-scholar with several earned degrees and long a president of a fine college he had achieved deserved status in national educational groups.

Blessed with quick intelligence, warmth and youthfulness of viewpoint, he had become the "episcopal bridge" over the generation gap between Catholic young-people and the hierarchy.

The editor of *The Catholic World* wrote of Bishop Shannon in its August issue (before the news of last week):—"Catholic intellectuals have looked to Bishop Shannon as one prelate who will move heaven and earth to make the reform of Vatican II a reality on the American scene. It can be said of him in a way that cannot be said of any other American Bishop that he is the hope of the future."

He was the first Catholic Bishop to speak-out against the Vietnam war; he walked with civil rights demonstrators in Selma; shared an anti-war prayer service at Arlington Cemetery with the late Dr. Martin Luther King; was a signer of petitions against A.B.M. defense system; wrote a weekly syndicated column which constantly nudged clerics and bishops to get moving on the demands of Vatican Council.

This week we were bewildered by Bishop Shannon because he had always previously shown himself a man of strong principle.

Last September—when he wrote Pope Paul about the contraception issue he pleaded: "I cannot in conscience give internal assent to the

papal teaching. I take this awful step, Your Holiness, with the greatest possible reluctance but with a conviction and a certitude I have seldom experienced previously in my adult life."

The letter, he added, was preceded by "weeks of anguish, days of prayer and hours of fear." He followed this with a resignation, tendered to his superior in St. Paul.

Yet he could discard his previous conscientious principles about celibacy, about the sacrament of marriage, about the discipline of his Church. He had lived by these for a lifetime but he rejected them.

His humanity this Spring destroyed the Christ-like image of a thinker, reformer and leader. Perhaps it never was "Humanitas Vitae" which disturbed him—but simply "humanitas."

But what makes a man contradict his position, abandon promises, flout conventions and throw away responsibilities which offer him a role in progressive leadership? What lures a man to turn away from the acknowledged role of prophet and influencer and lover of a Church he has wanted to make more Christ-like?

The lamented departure of Bishop Shannon adds a new pigment to the picture of the moral relativism of our times leading to a decay of values—the Church and society depend on. Will more of our people now say:

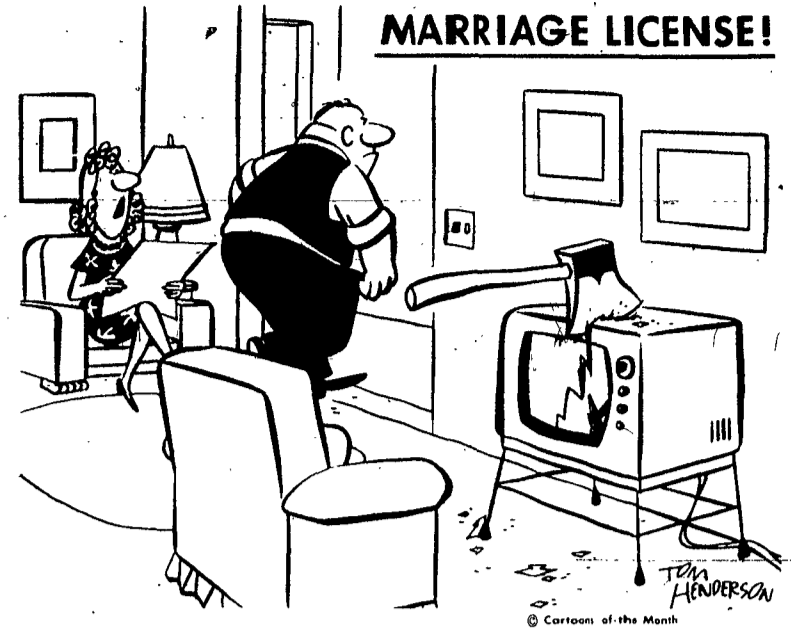
"When a Bishop gives up on celibacy, why worry about the commandment on adultery? If Shannon can reject a few traditions and laws and still speak of 'loving the Church' and of 'not leaving the Church,' anybody can accept as much of the Church as he chooses."

There is a grim reality that sexual discipline within marriage and celibacy outside of marriage are being ex-

amined by many under frightening pressures from our surrounding society, influences heavily weighted as "pro-self" and "pro-sex." What the world is doing and thinking is so much with all of us—so enticing, so attractive, so apparently satisfying, that principle shivers and compromise moves in.

The married Catholic, as well as the priest or Sister, is living under pressure of appetites the world urges us to unleash. Compromise with the world's ways, it says: "Take care of yourself, get what you want. Everybody's doing a little of it. Drop responsibilities to oneself and to others, and to God." These are the slogans of our sensual culture.

But the harsh truth, and we see it in Bishop Shannon's plight, is that compromise leads to surrender and capitulation.



"I wish you wouldn't watch the late news!"

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

On Celibacy: Part II

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

A couple I once knew married and were happy for a while. After a few years the wife became discontented. Finally, she quit her husband and rented a small apartment. Because she was lonely, she invited a couple of married girls in the neighboring apartments for a morning Kaffee Klatsch. Each day she poured out her discontent so effectively that the girls began to catch the virus.

Fortunately they began to realize that before Mrs. Plom (Plom is an AA term for "poor little old me") came, they were happy wives, that her constant criticisms were brainwashing them. They quit the Plom Kaffee Klatsch—and saved their marriages.

There is a parallel between married Plomites and anti-celibate Plomites. The latter talk much and sentimentally. Until recently, no priest would consider reneging on his life-long commitment. This new "right to wholeness and happiness" brainwashing infiltrates the soul, the will. Suddenly it is less hard to rationalize oneself into rejecting vows taken for life.

Observation and study force me to conclude that the decision to leave the priesthood is usually tied in with a ripe love affair. It is not always so. I think it is almost always so.

But, we ask: "How does a priest who has freely accepted celibacy become so involved?" (I do not buy the fiction: "I was forced to accept celibacy in order to have priesthood.")

That's as silly as a man's contention: "I was forced into marriage in order to have my wife." The same freedom of choice is given to each.)

This is my own theory!—Many priests are victims of a well-intentioned but unwise charity.

Psychologist Eugene Kenedy, M.M., complains that few priests give themselves completely to others in their counseling. Consequently the counselee feels let down by the "barrier" placed by a counseling priest. Follow Father Kennedy's advice and what happens?

A distressed woman, frequently married or divorced or religious or searching, comes to the priest for counsel. If prudence and a strong loyalty to his vows do not guide a correct charity, he becomes emotionally ensnared. His integrity is threatened. His emotions becloud his conscience.

Gradually the Church he loved at ordination becomes the Institutional Ogre insisting on his fidelity. He pleads for release.

What are the pleas to justify the rejection of his promise?

Sometimes the priest says: "I have a right to fulfillment as a man." We ask: "Fulfillment of what? Sexual fulfillment, both physical and psychological? The physical was given to God and accepted as a sublime offering. Would we be Indian givers, demanding back what we freely gave?"



In an article on the importance of women in the Church, Msgr. J. J. O'Sullivan of St. Paul's Seminary, Minn., wrote of the psychological relationship: "Women figure largely in the Gospel stories, especially in the Gospel of St. Luke. To them, Christ gave complete acceptance. He was casual without being crude. He was matter-of-fact without being familiar. In this, He was, as in all things, perfect." (Leaflet Missal, July 20, 1969)

On the Carson show three years ago, the much publicized James Kavanaugh declared: "Why, when I was ordained, I was just a mere boy!" I recall my reaction: "Says who! The Church doesn't ordain children. The age at ordination is usually 24 or older. Men are free to leave the seminary up to sub-diaconate, one year before ordination. Humpf! Some mere boys!"

A third plea is: "I want to be happy." Who doesn't? In search for one's happiness Our Lord certainly demands that we be concerned about the happiness of others, including parents, relatives, parishioners—and fellow priests. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." I know of no happier group of men than priests who are cheerfully doing their work out of undramatic love of the Church, without feeling sorry for themselves.

Next week I should like to reflect upon the sorrow of priests and people who suffer from the loss of fellow-priests, of treated relatives, of former shepherds who have been described as "Shepherds in the Mist."

COMMENTARY

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

On Feeling at Home in Church

By Sarah Child

We are not supposed to be unduly concerned with the physical condition of the structure in which we worship. But, I find I am.

I have always felt that way about the churches I have attended, belonged to, or merely visited.

Churches are like homes. Some are stately, some are poor. Some are examples of great architecture. Others seem to be the result of throwing together in the most expedient way some wood and glass and a little stone.

Each, of course, is a House of God. And that should be enough to make them equal. But it isn't. Being human and a woman on top of that I find myself assessing each in terms of "feeling at home" and being comfortable.

Even though each is God's home, creatures of this earth have impressed their personalities upon the dwellings and consequently each church has a personality of its own made up not only of its physical properties but of its parishioners, the neighborhood in which it sits, and its pastor.

All this about "feeling comfortable" came to mind the other day as

I recalled with a nostalgic chuckle the chapel of the Catholic woman's college I attended as a freshman.

It was a small institution and connected to a Sisters of St. Joseph convent by a hallway. Then, when six or seven of us got up one morning at dawn to attend the first Mass of the day the chapel was already filled with a couple hundred nuns.

Taking the pews reserved for us at one side we followed the Mass uneventfully until it was time to go to the altar railing to receive Communion. We had to wait, however, respectfully until all of the Sisters had gone forward and returned to their seats. But upon re-entering forth we discovered we were directly in the paths of several nuns bearing down hard upon us. Their veils unpinned to cover their faces, their heads bowed low, they advanced hesitatingly like apparitions in the still semi-darkened chapel.

Collision in the narrow aisle seemed imminent when one of our coltish group had the foresight to duck into an already occupied pew squeezing already seated postulants into a small huddle. The rest of us followed suit sliding uneasily into spaces never meant to hold us. Com-

ing back from the altar at least two of us lost our way and ended up in the vestibule.

Even the sweet, round face of Mother Superior sitting in the very last row of the chapel must be drawn and disturbed, we thought.

And, Sister Doloretta, our dean and disciplinarian—what would she have to say to us after we had demonstrated that we were neither poised nor ladylike in front of the whole convent?

We had already had lectures on going into town without white gloves and whistling in the hallways. How much worse to create a commotion at the Sisters' Mass!

Mercifully we never heard a word. But, that night after lights out we huddled secretly toasting cheese over a candle in one of our rooms and decided that if we were going to be daily Communicants it had better not be in the chapel so conveniently located below.

Instead the vote was for St. Andrew's a half mile away, a parish church where even if we might not be lost in a weekly morning crowd, neither were we likely to bother anyone.



A LAYMAN'S VIEW

Talk About Communications Gap!

By Anthony Acciari

It has become increasingly apparent to me at any rate, that the Liberals or New Breeders within the Church today are suffering from words... a profusion of them.

They are very impressive words and once mastered one can meet most any situation, answer most any objection and all with that very complacent feeling of intellectual superiority.

The following will illustrate what I mean... Suppose you tried to dialogue with a group of the new-breeders and had to take all their clichés at one sitting:

Q. What is the matter with the Church today?
A. It is arrogant, irrelevant, overly-structured and unresponsive.

Q. Precisely now, what is missing?
A. Meaningful and interpersonal relationships.

Q. I see... I think now in dealing with this arrogant, irrelevant overly structured and unresponsive Church with no meaningful and interpersonal relationships, what happens?
A. A communications gap, of course.

Q. Of course, but what does this communication gap lead to?
A. The separation and alienation of the individual.

Q. What is the remedy for this?
A. A dialogue.

Q. I know that. But what kind of a dialogue?
A. A meaningful dialogue between the authentic people of God.

Q. How can this be achieved?
A. By radicalizing the moderates in

the Church in the spirit of renewal as proposed by Vatican II and to arrive at a participatory democracy within the institutional, monolithic and oppressive Church.

Q. Who participates in this participatory democracy?
A. Why everyone participates in this participatory democracy. It is the tribune of the working class, the foe of the imperialist machine, the scourge of the military-industrial complex, the nemesis of the capitalist war mongers, the enemy of...

Q. Wait a minute... You are confusing your clichés. Try again. Who participates in this participatory democracy? Be careful now.
A. (Sorry about that. I got my lines mixed up, that was for another group.) We do—the majority doesn't know any better.

Q. What happens if the moderates just go on as usual believing in Sin, Sacraments, the priesthood, the Pope etc.?
A. We will force them to change their minds and pay attention to us. We'll have a confrontation with the hierarchy and the established power structure.

Q. How do you do that?
A. We liberate and occupy the church buildings. We take over the Pastoral Office. We burn the old moral theology books, destroy the baptismal and marriage records and of course take the church treasury for reparations.

In short we will obliterate the infantile Ten Commandments and substitute ecumenical awareness, involvement and social concern.

Q. And then?
A. We will then have a meaningful

dialogue, a meaningful interpersonal relationship, an authentic relevant ecumenical awareness in the true spirit of renewal and involvement. It will show our commitment and concern for the incompetent power structure of the anachronistic, monolithic, oppressive, institutional Church.

Q. What happens after that?
A. We put forward our requests.

Q. What kind of requests?
A. Non-negotiable... What other kinds are there?

Q. You mean demands don't you? Could you explain?
A. Well... what we want is a positive approach to socio-religious problems, a meaningful dialogue where renewal, involvement, commitment, concern, freedom and relevant social economic awareness plays an important part for the authentic person.

Q. How are you going to accomplish all this?
A. We will achieve this by deliberate planned, peaceful, morally justified Christian violence in the spirit of love, commitment, renewal and...

Q. Excuse me... but I'm not sure I know what you mean?
A. Can't you see? The moderates are wrecking the Church but we will inherit it.

Q. What will you do when you inherit it?
A. Well... I don't know. We haven't given it much thought.

Q. I'm still not sure I understand all of what you said?
A. I'm sorry I don't have more time to answer any more questions. I promised my Mother I'd drive her to novena tonight.

FEEL GOOD TODAY

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

This column's happiest readers are the men, women and children who know they're needed. The days were busiest helping others are the happiest days of our lives... Who needs you most? Surprisingly, God needs you — for instance, to help an abandoned orphan become a God-loving, responsible adult. Lepers need you (there are still 15-million lepers in the world), blind children need you, and so do we... Here in New York we are your agents telling you where the Holy Father says your help is needed, and channeling your help promptly and safely to the people in need... Want to feel good right now? Do without something you want but do not need, and send the money instead for one of the needs below. You'll feel good, especially if your gift is big enough to mean a sacrifice to you. This is your chance to do something meaningful for the world — it's God's world — while you're still alive.

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