

NOW HEAR THIS ... Revolutions Destroy Good Intentions

By Father Richard Torrey

The conviction that radical change requires revolution is as strong in some levels of the Church today as it is among campus activists, black militants and war-protesters.

There are religious revolutionaries of many styles — attendees at underground Masses, celibacy-rejecting priests, religious who want a secular lifestyle, laymen who walk in picket lines — criticizing their Bishop.

Our Bishops at the Vatican Council voted quite deliberately to authorize many changes in the long-honored traditions of Catholic thought and practice. No dogmas — items of faith and morals — were touched in the four years' deliberations of Vatican II. But reforms aimed at a radical renewal of ecclesiastical life were proclaimed and the Bishops promised progressive change in the church from top to bottom.

How little they realized that once a chance to reshape a few inches of the established order of things is sighted, revolutionaries soon demand a mile.

The Bishops wrote out sweeping changes in the Mass ceremonies but that did not satisfy the impetuous. Now we have Masses celebrated by priests in sports clothes, using a cocktail glass for a chalice, abolishing the prayers to suit the congregation, letting participants distribute consecrated rye bread from a picnic basket.

The Council authorized the updating of religious orders and suggested that Sisters meet for democratic discussion about their rules—customs and purposes in the light of modern times. That much concession to renewal escalated into totally unpredictable patterns for Sisters' prayer life, costume, occupation, recreation and government. As the rules changed, the communities began to lose their members in droves. Outsiders predicted the collapse of the whole spirit of religious life in the Church.

Vatican II believed that communication was needed between priests and bishops, clergy and laity. Dialogue became the in-word because, after all, we are a family and ought to be able to talk to each other with

trusting love and kindly correction.

But, again, once the spirit of change was allowed there was no stopping the revolution. Confrontations in which anyone with a gripe talked back to his ecclesiastical elder, church demonstrations, pickets around rectories and printed abuse hurled at bishops became weekly news-items.

Recently James Hitchcock, a frequent commentator on "the new left," wrote in the New York Times Sunday Magazine about the flaws in the cultural revolution being pushed today by young social radicals. His words could be applied to revolutionists in the Church.

He says radicals will not face facts of history: "How can their revolution succeed without a discipline and an eagerness for self-sacrifice far exceeding the demands of the System itself? Faith in cultural revolution seems a form of half-play, half-magic

— the revolutionary is persuaded that if he merely engages in a sufficient number of bizarre, self-indulgent activities (like smoking marijuana, unrepressed sensuality, support of avant-garde art) the revolution will automatically come.

Historically, of course, revolutions can be shown to have occurred as a result of discipline, hard work, great patience and privation; — and finally, luck."

How much like the conduct of religious revolutionists, clerical and lay, is the style of social radicals, as Hitchcock describes them: "Despite the alleged concern of the New Left with human values and their fierce antagonism toward the dehumanizing aspects of the System, they persist in a profoundly inhumane ideology, with its readiness to toss older people (those over 30) on the scrap heap . . . and the belief that men do not learn and mature as

they grow older but merely degenerate."

One misfortune we must all endure in these times of revolt is that many institutions in our Church (liturgy, priesthood, papacy, vocation, authority and marriage — to name the most commonly under fire) cannot be separated from the traditional framework in which they all blend together. Because of a rush for renewal the radicals do not coolly judge whether these have lost their original value, whether the needs they served have disappeared, whether we will be losers if we indiscriminately scrap patterns of life simply for the sake of change.

Could it be that the results of the current national vote on the holiday changes is first evidence that the people are yearning for stability that changes have become too overwhelming, that the revolution will from now on recede?



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

On Celibacy: Part III

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Of the priests who have abandoned their priesthood and their people this past decade, not all have left because of a blossomed romance. However, the evidence remains that most of them have.

A few have left because of some psychological kink, especially an inability to adjust to the societal structure of the historic Church. This fixation often derives from an exaggerated personalism.

I do think that most departures from the priesthood in this past decade have had their beginnings with laudable intentions to help others. But soon these men found themselves so enmeshed in a romance they became unwilling or unable to disavow it.

Consequently, they left their priesthood and their people through the tunnel of love, and Christ in His Body suffers.

It is said that dreams are like pictures emerging from the subconscious. I dream frequently, sometimes cheerfully, sometimes sadly. The saddest dream of my life was recent. This is it.

I saw myself on an Aer Lingus plane with a group of pilgrims flying to Jerusalem. All were laymen dressed in casual clothes, excepting myself. I was dressed in Mass vestments with a rosary for a cincture.

The next picture found me in the Upper Room — but all alone. Our Lord had just ordained me to the priesthood. I stood solemnly repeating: "Another Christ to do Christ's work."

Through a small window I could see Calvary, with people crowding around Our Lord. It was a mixed crowd: some weeping, some hating, many just curious. Jesus was stretched on a wooden cross. Our Blessed Mother was close, helpless and sobbing. John and Mary Magdalene supported her.

Two soldiers were busy nailing the Body. Like a man hypnotized I watched one soldier as he slapped the right arm of Christ against the right cross beam. He took a spike from between his teeth, and drove it through the wrist of the Saviour. The soldier worked with professional precision, utterly detached from the agony of Christ or of His Mother. He was busily indifferent. This was his way of life, and he was content.

Then my heart stopped with horror. The soldier had turned his face to full view, and I saw the face of my own brother! I screamed through the window: "Brother, brother, how can YOU do this to your Lord!" I woke up perspiring.

Some consider me hard about departing priests? The opposite is the truth. But that dream does put reality into focus.

The Church is Christ, Vatican II says: "By communicating His Spirit to His brothers called together from all peoples, Christ made them mysteriously His own body. . . . He is the Head of that body which is the Church. . . . He continually distributes in His body, that is, in the Church, gifts of ministries through which we serve each other unto salvation so that, carrying out the truths in love, we may through all things, grow up into Him who is our Head." (cf. Eph. iv)—(Const. On the Church, par. 7.)

Every priest is my special brother. As with families some members are closer than others, so it is with the priesthood. The agony of the crucified Christ is awful to contemplate. The anguish is worse when the crucifixion is done, sometimes in calm detachment, by my brothers in the priesthood.

Do I hold coldness toward departed priests? God knows my passion is quite the opposite, viz. an unquenchable hope and continuing grief shared with their parents, their friends, their abandoned people. We are all united in prayer, not only for the priests' reconciliation, but also for their spouses and those others so hurt by their departure.

Next week we shall consider the effects of defections on the Church and the people.



Anglican Bishop Edward Roberts finds the best way to reach his parishioners is by boat. Many of his parishes on the Isle of Ely are on the edge of rivers so the bishop began a 120-mile journey into his diocese by boat. The Bishop of Ely commented: "This is a delightful way of combining business and pleasure. I can escape from the telephone for a week and meet informally many interesting people I might not otherwise see." (RNS).

COMMENTARY 13

Courier-Journal—Friday, August 22, 1969

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Colonial... It Kind of Grows on You

By Sarah Child

There are times when I think that Colonial or Early American is not so much a furniture period as it is a creeping disease. And I most certainly have been afflicted.

Should anyone ever ask me what period furnishings I prefer I would tell them "quite frankly, that I lean towards the eclectic style."

Give me a gleaming white Eero Saarinen pedestal table here, a couple of Louis XVI chairs there, a Mexican credenza for the foyer, the contemporary look of a Lawson sofa in the living room balanced by a couple of Queen Anne wing backs. Throw in an Oriental ginger-jar, a Buffet print or two and some varnished wicker as accessories and that, I'd tell them, is the real me.

Somehow the real me and the furniture that actually fills (and overfills) our house have never quite jelled.

Certainly I never meant to have a house filled with reproductions of early Americana. But, almost certainly, I do.

It began with the lovely pine trestle table my uncle made for us as a wedding gift. It was so sturdy and simple and it made the early Salvation Army furniture I'd collected during my bachelor days look like the disgrace that it was. My place in the kitchen, a fine place for strong

colonial styles I said. We would lean toward more elegance for the other rooms.

Since we had no bed nor dressers we set out to purchase one. The simple, handsome lines of the white ash bedstead sold us. Not until it was settled in the bedroom did I exclaim in surprise, "You know I think you could classify this as Colonial."

Our daughter was born and after her father had walked the floor with her for three nights straight, he surprised me with a rocker. I suppose there are wicker rockers or Thonet bentwoods available if you scour around but for the most part you'll find that a Boston is easier to find. I treasure our Cherry Salem Rocker.

Company started arriving to see the new baby and our trestle table would barely seat four. We would use it as a desk, I thought, and I went looking for a round table with extension leaves.

I had two choices in our price range, Colonial and Danish modern. I like Danish modern in other people's houses. I chose Colonial.

A couple of years later we moved. The house had a dining ell. But we had no dining room furniture. The trestle table came out of the spare bedroom-study and back into the kitchen. The round table went into the dining ell. But we had nothing to sit on. Then I saw a sale on some

Hitchcock chairs. What else to go with a Colonial table? We discovered the lighting fixture over the table let out practically no light. When we were able, we replaced it. You guess which style.

It was time for our daughter to leave her crib. Our budget would not permit new furniture so I antiqued the single bedstead I'd picked up at the Opportunity Shop. It was a maple four poster with pineapple finials. At a garage sale for the magnificent sum of \$4, I found a small mahogany dresser with a bow front and spoon feet. With a sprigged flower bedspread and white ruffled curtains the room had a certain ante-bellum look even I couldn't deny.

"That's it," I declared firmly. "The dough bins, the brass candlesticks and the captain's chairs have had it." It would be a long, long while before we could replace them, but there'd be no more additions in that particular vein.

"Surprise," said my mother as she and Dad presented us with our Christmas gift. It was the most comfortable reclining rocker I'd ever sat in.

"Colonial," said Mom, "to go with your other things." My bachelor brother had also asked her to pick out something for him to give us. We really love the pine mounted barometer but there are times when I think I can see the ornamental eagle winking at us.



A LAYMAN'S VIEW

The Just War and Theologians

It is obvious that I am not going to exhaust the subject of The Just War in one newspaper article. One reason is that the subject is much too vast, and a second is that I am not a theologian although I have been exposed to the teachings of eminent theologians in this field such as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and a certain Father John Hugo, author of a beautiful pamphlet titled "The Gospel of Peace."

My purpose is not to set the limits of discussion but merely to initiate it. My aim is not to undermine authority but rather, in recognizing it, to plead with it to assume its proper role in the formation of our Christian consciences on a matter that certainly qualifies to be called one of life and death.

I don't believe I have been alone in noticing that as soon as a country becomes involved in war, all discussion of the theology of the just war seems to get shelved for the duration. Why this is so is something of a mystery. Perhaps there are fears of taking unpopular stands or hangups over patriotism.

In a short war this silence may go unrecognition. However, in a long, drawn-out affair such as the war in Vietnam, people do begin to question the validity of the continuing slaughter. It is here that the sheep look for leadership.

In a large Eastern city a young man, acting in the spirit of Vatican II and of the recent statement by the nation's Catholic bishops that conscientious objectors must be taken seriously, recently tried to get an appointment with his bishop to discuss his claim for conscientious objection and to obtain backing for his right to take this stand. The most charitable interpretation of the handling of his request is that he got a run-around.

Each time he returned to the chantry office, he was given a different reason for not being permitted to see the bishop. Finally he was told that all Catholics should know the just war theology and that there was no need for the bishop to get involved in his case in a particular way.

This is a very interesting development. I wonder if we can expect that we will also hear no more about other articles of faith and of the moral law since most of them are well documented and Catholics should know them.

We hear a great deal about the generation gap but not about that application of it which sends our young men off to die in an apparently endless and futile war while the major part of our population actually thrives on the business which results from the same war. Resistance usually results only in court action which has little to do with justice.

And while this process is going on, where are the hierarchy and the clergy who have preached the doctrine of the just war for so long? A just war theology implies that there can be such a thing as an unjust war. In practice, as soon as a bugle blows our spiritual leaders often become the best-recruiting sergeants, and attempts to reach them for advice or dialogue seem to be warded off as if they were an advancing plague.

I dare to suggest that if a young man seriously asking for moral guidance and backing in this tremendously important area of his life is turned away without a hearing, there need be no surprise when the same young man doesn't seem to hear the flood of unsolicited advice on less important subjects which is aimed at his ears. It is simply a psychological impossibility for him to do so.

In World War II, supposedly a just war, at least in motivation, it has been estimated that eighty per cent of our infantrymen refused to fire their rifles. They faced death bravely but were so naturally opposed to violence that they could not perform this ultimate act for which they had been trained.

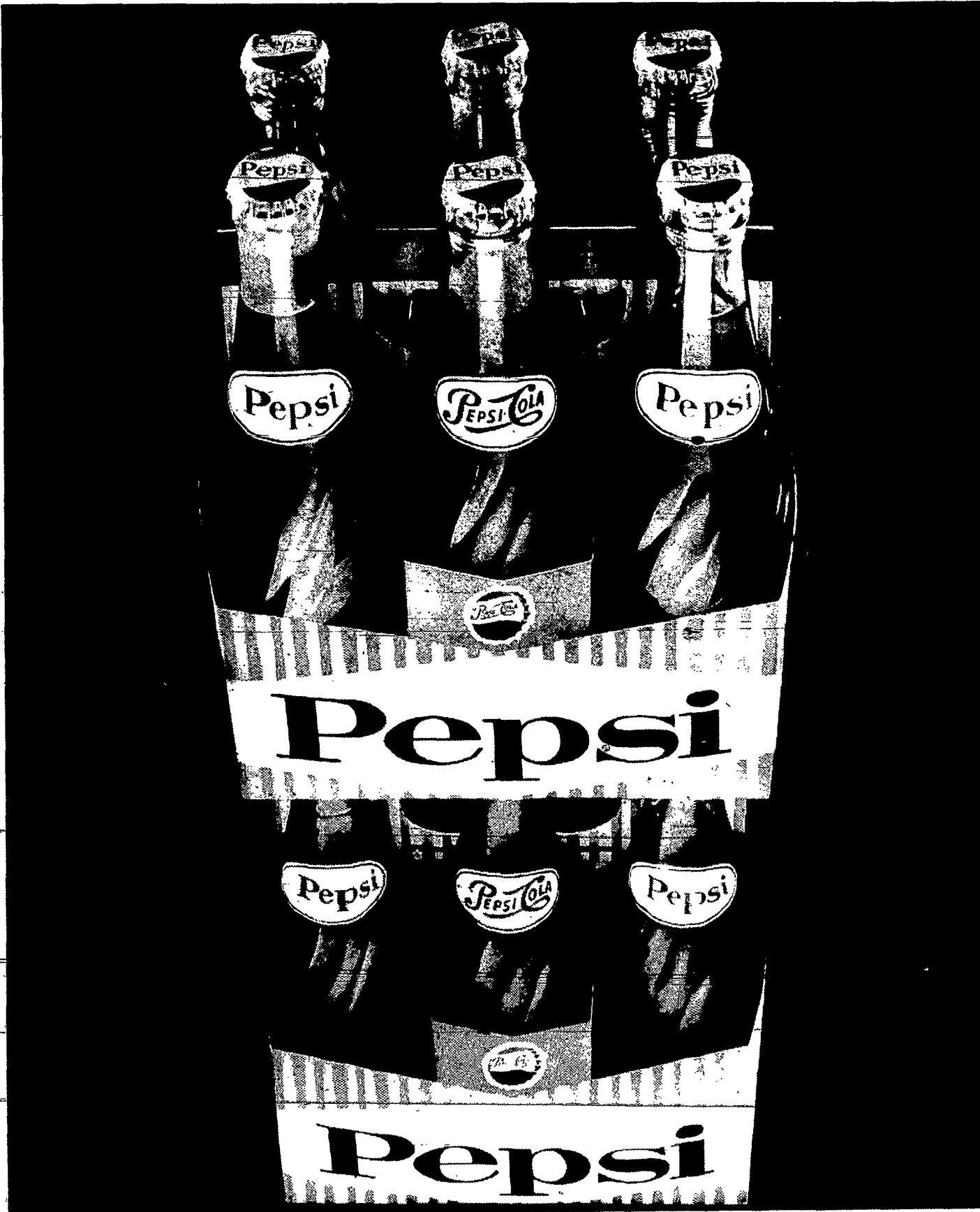
Father Hugo points out that most of the theology of the just war involves only abstractions. But in the concrete we must expect that war will take a terrible toll in personal immorality as well as in human lives. This prospect doesn't seem to bother many spiritual leaders.

Father Hugo observes that in the days of the Old Testament, supposedly a more earthly phase of mankind's existence, it was considered that even for a nation to be at war was a judgment from God. There were words inspired by God to the effect that if the Israelites had only carried out His commandments, He would have taken care of their enemies.

If this idea has any validity, could it not be that we are at war, not because we are defending the weak against the strong, but because in our idolatry of the material things of life we have forfeited God's particular protection in this area?

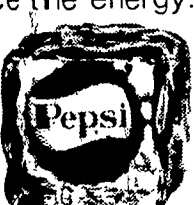
Although I feel strongly about these things, my purpose again is not to make the final decision but merely to ask those whose authority I uphold to assert that authority, even though it may result in serious risks for them. Conscientious objectors are willing to risk imprisonment for three to five years by upholding openly the principles in which they believe. I think their cause demands the best consideration, our hierarchy, our clergy and our theologians can give them.

— George L. Jost.



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