



From One Cardinal to Another

St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Curt Flood, right, presents a portrait of Pope Paul VI to John Cardinal Carberry, Archbishop of St. Louis. The star baseball player used a photo of the Pope as a model for the portrait. Cardinal Carberry joked about his long-abandoned desire to be a ball player and said he would offer "special prayers that the baseball Cardinals keep winning." (Religious News Service)

Review Mideast Roles, Major Powers Urged By American Bishops

(NC News Service)

Washington — The Department of International Affairs of the U.S. Bishops' Conference said in a statement released here that the intrusion of the major world powers into the Middle East has been one of the most "pervasive" factors contributing to the increase of tensions between the region's Arabs and Israelis.

It called on the major powers — notably the United States and the Soviet Union — to "consider the implications of their presence in the region and particularly to seek multilateral arms reduction agreements."

The statement also called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and "respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area."

The statement, entitled "Tensions and Conflict in the Middle East," acknowledged "it is not possible . . . to eliminate totally the involvement of great powers" in the Middle East region.

But it suggested that a distinction be made between "those aspects of foreign governmental policies which contribute toward development, peace and stability . . . and those which tend to produce only frustration and conflict."

The dispute "has been exacerbated by the rivalry of revolutionary and monarchical governments; by the animosities between traditional religious elements and secular modernizing forces; by the invidious comparisons of the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' . . . by the struggle between military and civilian components; and by the conflict of ideologies . . . Moreover, abundant oil reserves within the Middle East have inevitably attracted the intervention . . . of alien corporations and governments."

"Within the last few years, the convergence of U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean has added a new dimension to the danger that the Middle East conflict might be symbolically escalated into a most serious East-West confrontation," the statement said.

Saying that "external assistance" is also essential to resolve the conflict, the statement urged:

• That the United States and other major powers continue to explore ways of promoting agreement between the parties and of strengthening United Nations' efforts to secure

Israeli-Arab negotiations. A negotiated settlement is vital to the region, the statement asserted.

• That the major powers . . . consider the implications of their presence in the region, notably their sale of arms to the combatants, and seek multilateral arms reduction agreements.

• That substantial increase of resources be made available to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to ensure adequate education and vocational training for refugees, the establishment of a United Nations Resettlement Fund and the cooperation of immigration services of all countries in opening resettlement opportunities.

Social Workers Needed in Hurricane Area

Washington — (NC) — There is an urgent need for social workers in Mississippi, which was torn apart by Hurricane Camille last month.

The U.S. bishops' National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee announced that all Catholic Charities' directors in the nation have been requested to furnish social workers to the Natchez-Jackson diocese to assist in rebuilding the area. Their help was requested "for a period of one week or more between now and Dec. 1."

In the meantime, according to Msgr. Leo J. Coady, chairman of the bishops' relief committee, there is a continuing great need for contributions of money to aid hurricane victims in Mississippi and in Louisiana's Plaquemines Parish (County).

"There is no longer an immediate need for food, medical supplies or bedding to be sent to Mississippi's hurricane destroyed areas," Msgr. Coady said, "but much money is needed to assist victims in both Mississippi and Louisiana."

He also said there is a pressing need for cleaning implements, including mops, rakes, brooms, and shovels.

"People have really been generous in giving," he said, "but there is a serious continuing need for money to aid the poor and unfortunate victims of this terrible disaster."

Pope Appeals For Peace In Mideast

Castel Gandolfo — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, addressing pilgrims here, made his first public reference to the recent fire in Jerusalem's El Aqsa Mosque and appealed for an easing of tensions in the Middle East.

Echoing Pope Pius XII, he asked "all peoples and governments . . . to do all in their power to avoid, while there is still time, any incautious step that could lead to a new war and new ruin."

"A recent event that we fully deplore and which has added to the sorrowful events in that troubled region was the burning of the mosque of El Aqsa in the holy city of Jerusalem, where there are the holy places of the three great monotheistic religions," the Pope said.

"This hurt the religious feelings of Moslems, who were shocked by the destruction of a place jealously guarded and dear to the veneration of millions of men."

"We understand their bitterness, but we hope they will not aggravate conditions in the Middle East which are already so tense and delicate and we hope that the situation will not degenerate into more violence and fierce hatreds which would prejudice our hopes for justice and peace."

Since the outbreak of the El Aqsa fire, a number of Arab spokesmen have criticized the Pope for his "silence" on the subject, with the implication that they hoped the Pope would blame the Israeli government for the incident.

Political leaders and some religious leaders throughout the Arab world have been making statements on the mosque fire which include frequent calls for a jihad (holy war) against Israel. Some efforts have been made to involve Christians as well as Moslems in such an effort, on the grounds that there are both Christian and Moslem holy places in Jerusalem.

The subject of the Temple has been a matter of intense concern to many Arabs since the El Aqsa fire. The mosque occupies part of the site of the ancient Temple and many Moslems fear that there are plans to destroy it in order to rebuild the Temple. According to some reports, this was the reason given by the suspected arsonist who will be tried for setting the fire.

ESSAYS IN THEOLOGY

By Fr. Richard McBrien

Earlier Catholic theology assumed that there are two separate and distinct orders of existence: the natural and the supernatural. Just about everything of importance can be divided along these lines: There is a natural revelation and a supernatural revelation, a natural faith and a supernatural faith, naturally good acts and supernaturally good acts, natural worship and supernatural worship, natural obedience and supernatural obedience, natural love and supernatural love, and on and on.

I cannot emphasize enough how deeply ingrained this distinction has become in ("over-30?") Catholic thinking today. I should argue, in fact, that this concept must bear a heavy responsibility for the general reluctance of many Catholics to admit the relevance of the Gospel to the world of politics, economics, social organizations, and so forth.

If the Church's task is "supernatural" (i.e. concerned primarily and directly with the salvation of souls after death), then it follows that its involvement in matters of civil rights, poverty, education, or peace (affairs of the "natural" order) must always be regarded as simply an aid or preparation for the achievement of this higher salvific goal.

The sharp natural-supernatural distinction has given rise not only to a spirit of diffidence towards prob-

lems of socio-political import, but also to an implicit attitude of superiority, if not smugness, with relation to humanistically-inclined people outside the Church. We have too often in the past characterized their activities as "merely humanitarian."

Because of our own explicit "supernatural" motivation (i.e., we did certain things "for the love of God" rather than for the sake of man alone), our deeds, however halting and ineffective, were per se better than theirs, however timely and successful.

There is a long and complex history beneath the emergence of this natural-versus-supernatural way of thinking, and it would be wrong to try and encapsulate that history in the space of a single essay. But what is clear beyond much question today is that this sharp distinction is no longer accepted uncritically in contemporary Catholic theology. And no one is more directly responsible for this change of outlook than the great Austrian theologian, Karl Rahner, S.J., although several other distinguished theologians must share some of the credit, especially Henri de Lubac, S.J., whose classic work on the problem has recently been translated in revised form (*The Mystery of the Supernatural*, Herder and Herder, 1967).

It is not that theologians are now denying the real truth that lay behind the terms "natural" and "supernatural." On the one hand, all

creation has been renewed and elevated in Christ. Its destiny is truly a gift of God, a grace in the literal sense of the word. We cannot hope for the coming of the Kingdom of God as the crowning of our collective human effort, but as the final gift of God himself. What man "realizes" of the Kingdom on earth, he "realizes" under God's grace.

And there is, indeed, a segment of creation which has been set against the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin exists. It places man and created reality outside the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is this central Biblical idea of the Kingdom of God rather than the nonbiblical, medieval notions of nature and supernature which should be our principal point of reference.

Mankind and his history are either placed under the judgment of the Kingdom of God, or they are not. Everything is called to the perfection of the Kingdom, but God's designs have not yet been fulfilled.

These are the nuclear truths which theology cannot dislodge. But some of the medieval and postmedieval encasements of these truths have tended to obscure rather than to clarify and enhance them. These encasements have been dismantled now by contemporary Catholic theology, and this dismantling process has had an important influence on our understanding of revelation and faith. This discussion continues in next week's essay.

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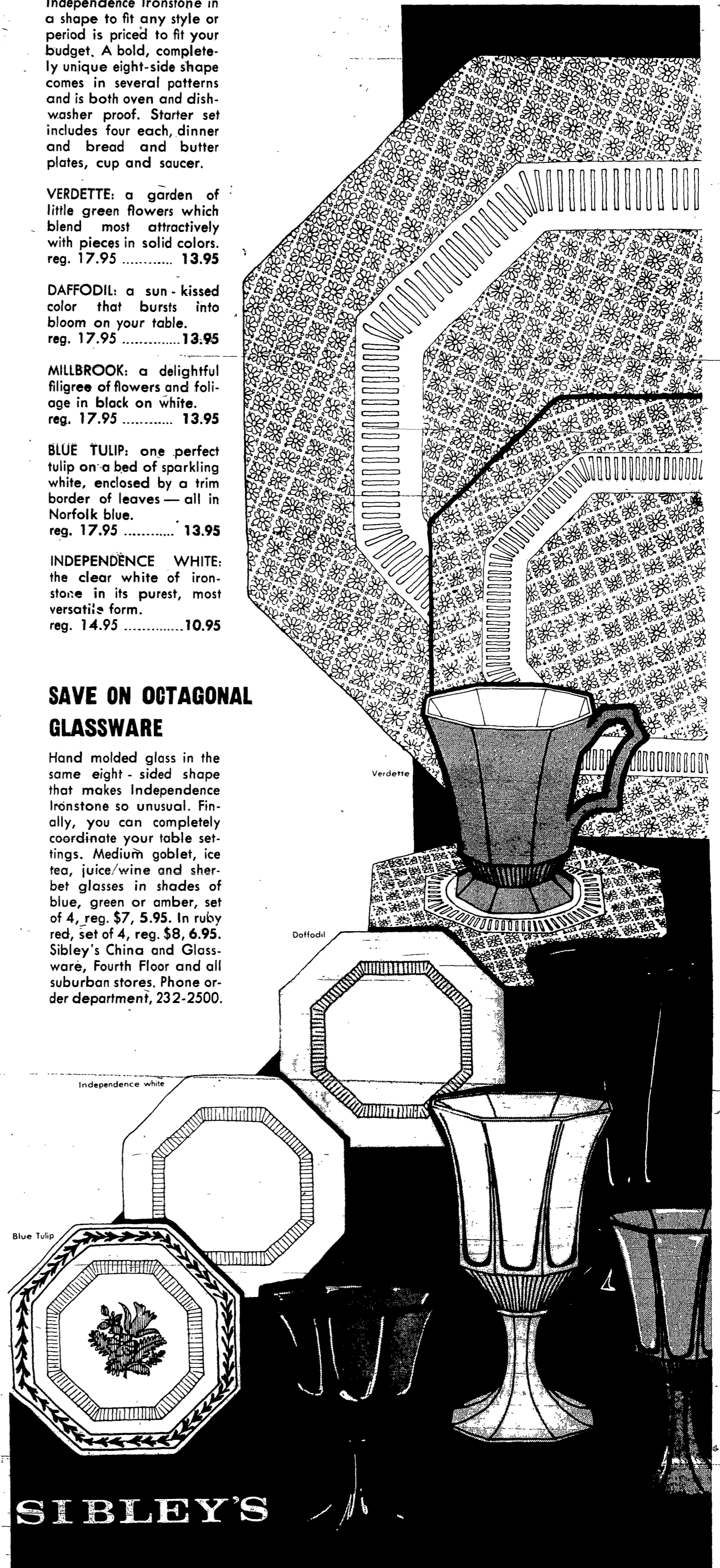
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