

# A BISHOP'S VIEW

...Love the Church as a Mother She's Very Human, Too

By Bishop Lawrence B. Casey  
Of Paterson

Our attitude has a lot to do with our happiness and success. We serve ourselves and others better if we are always looking for the fine things in people and in the world around us. St. Paul advised the Philippians, "Fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous and worthy of praise."

How much better this approach than the one which constantly hunts out the meanness and weaknesses of others and dwells on them with secret joy. It is a pathetic character who takes a kind of unholy glee in discovering the weak things in the best of people, in finding low motives in the noblest of actions.

Paul said, "Fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble." Here the Apostle does not ask us to shut our eyes to reality or to unpleasant facts. But he does imply that there is a great deal of difference according to whether we dwell on one set of facts or another.

The happiest life and the life which carries most happiness to others is that of the person who is thoroughly alert to the fine things — "the noble" — as they occur.

We can, for example, regard today's Church in two ways:

We can observe her magnificent efforts in many countries, including our own, toward authentic renewal. If we look for it, we can see in her solid evidence of Christian vitality, even genuine sanctity.

Or we can concentrate on the negative side — joining those who take pot shots at the Church who find nothing much to praise, and almost everything to condemn.

Is there nothing in the Church to criticize, either the institution itself or the people in it? There's plenty. Thank God that the triumphal air of self-satisfaction is disappearing. We're realizing more and more that we are a pilgrim Church which is always in need of reform. Our common task is to help the Church to bring the human and divine elements into better balance.

We do disservice to the Church, however, if we develop what Pope Paul has called "the acid spirit of negative and habitual criticism." The "negative" critic tells us that it is because they love the Church that they are so harsh with her failings, that



they would not care so much about her faults did they not love her so intensely.

When these people criticize the Church, of which they are a part, they also criticize themselves. It almost seems as if they dissociate themselves from the Church, that they are apart from it, that they feel superior to it.

These negative critics are the "wise" ones, the specialists who know the Church better than it knows itself. With absolute assurance, they tell the Pope what he is to do. They would make the Church an academy for the clever.

But the Church has never been a

club limited to the wise. Christ said, "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to mere children."

If a Catholic gets the notion he is made of superior clay, St. Paul cuts him down to size: "At the time when you were called, brothers, how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks are common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen — those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything."

The Church embraces all kinds of men. She is not an exclusive coterie of chosen souls. She is at once the refuge of the elite, of philosophers, of thinkers, of the wretched, of the simple and the mediocre. All find a welcome in her home. The Church does not exist for men who are already good, but for those who desire goodness. Her sacraments are not prizes for the perfect but rather remedies for the spiritually sick or weak.

Ours then is a pilgrim Church, a refuge of sinners. She does not live in the highly rarified atmosphere of pure ideas, but in the concrete reality of men as they are: mostly simple people who are trying to rise

above their earthiness. The Church has been called a Mother because she gives us life.

A good son loves his mother. Her honor is his. Her very shortcomings can in some ways even be lovable. A good son is inclined to accept the deficiencies of his mother because they are usually minimal when seen in the total concept of her love for him — a love that gave him life, matured him and patiently bore with his faults. She molded him into a man. By experiencing her love, he himself learned to love. Would a true son then ever insult her love or point out her defects in public, even exposing them to strangers?

Should we do less for our Mother, the Church, to whom we owe our su-

pernatural life? "A man never hates his own body," said St. Paul, "but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church because it is his body — and we are its living parts."

We must love the Church within the context of her human elements, understanding her failings and honestly facing up to them, but loving her nevertheless. She is truly a mother, very human in some of her ways but always loving us — and that's the way we want her to remain forever.

(Reprinted from Bishop Casey's weekly column in "The Beacon," newspaper of the Paterson Diocese, for Sept. 11, 1969.)

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### A Reply To a Priest - Correspondent

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



As a result of the series on celibacy printed recently in this space, many readers expressed accord or disagreement in letters and in conversation. A priest friend to whom I am devoted for his abiding charity wrote a letter which comprehended most of the ideas of the others. The following is my reply to him:

Recently I said to our Sisters, "It is a usual experience for me to meet young priests and Sisters who know of me. Many of them freeze in a sort of reflexive rejection."

"The reason is, I think, that they think they know what I think, whereas they don't know what I really think at all."

"These have prejudged that I am superlatively a retrograde Father Status Quo. They cannot comprehend that much of true renewal, including vernacular, dialogue sermons, participation of the laity, I had put into practice before they were in the fourth grade."

So much for what I said to our Sisters. Since you have known me for many years, and understand my real thinking better than most, I appreciate your observations. Let's discuss them.

You say, "It's not that you are wrong, but you come through so righteous and sure (to me) that you seem to lack sympathy for those who come to great turning points of their lives."

Let me comment on "It's not that you are wrong . . ."

Evidently you read the first three articles on clerical departures with understanding. The articles were not about the theory of celibacy; they were about the responsibility of those who freely accepted celibacy.

"You come through so righteous . . ." God help us, you probably are right! This is a weakness of the pen, rather than of the heart and mind. Since I can write only within my personal limitations, I am sorry about this.

"So sure . . ." Not to have convictions is a wrinkle I have never understood. Granting that there are gray areas as well as black and white, I do have an intolerance for wishy-washiness.

Certainly gave us the martyrs, and the outstanding saints of God. A man must have confidence in his judgments, even while realizing that he may be wrong.

"Lack of sympathy for those who come to great turning points . . ." Turning points, i.e., turning away from commitments made at ordination.

Is it that simple? I have suffered too great personal anguish at the departure of my priest-brothers to buy that. Some of them are closer to me than the nails on my fingers. The

more remote a person is in our affections, the less the grief.

"Especially when you consider celibacy as a rule, a law, and not primarily as a freely given grace . . ." Here you lose me. I bow before your theological profundity, but I am incapable of shrugging my shoulders at the authority of the church. (What you bind on earth is bound in heaven — Mt. 16:19.)

So here we are. You sympathize with priests who abandon their priesthood and their people; so do I.

But do share with me a sympathy for the church that needs our priests, and for the flocks who long for their shepherds.

We have a mutual reverence for Vatican II, so let us consider this thought, quoted from the Decree on Priests, par. 1 —

"By vocation and ordination, priests of the New Testament are indeed set apart in a certain sense within the midst of God's people."

"But this is so, not that they may be separated from this people or from any man, but that they may be totally dedicated to the work for which the Lord has raised them up . . ."

"Their ministry itself by a special title forbids them to be conformed to this world. Yet at the same time this ministry requires that they live in this world among men, and that as good shepherds they know their sheep."

# COMMENTARY

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## ALL IN THE FAMILY

### Just What Makes Kids That Way?

By Sarah Child

A couple of friends and I were having a heart to heart the other day on that subject of limitless possibilities: bringing up children.

"I took the baby's pacifier away last week," Jeanie said with a wave of her hand which seemingly was to emphasize her feelings on the infant staples but actually was to blow her smoke away from where I was sitting.

"Can you imagine," she continued between puffs of her new extra long super recessed filtered cigarette, "that child is almost a year old and she still wants to suck incessantly on that awful thing. Always putting it down and then picking it up."

"Honestly," moaned Jeanie stopping only to rub out her half-finished cigarette and light a new one, "it embarrassed me to take her anywhere. I was sure everyone was looking at us and wondering what kind of mother I was."

"Don't tell me about kids," interrupted Myra, the slim, willowy one of our bunch.

"Pacifiers, ha! The trouble doesn't start until they get old enough to

talk back to you. My Harry is 8 and all he wants to do is watch the worst stuff on television. Violence, violence, violence. The more there is the better he likes it. And after big Harry and I spent all that money on the art gallery membership, subscribed to the concert series and pledged our lives away to the museum fund. And you know what that kid wants to do on Saturdays — watch television."

"Well, Myra," I started to say soothingly.

"Later, Hon," she yelped and started loping across the lawn to her house.

"I forgot the time," she yelled, "just 30 seconds until 'Love Aloof' starts and today they're going to reveal whether Martha's second husband is in hiding because he hates her or because he is the victim of amnesia."

"Poor Myra and her soap operas," smiled Beverly smugly. "If she had a more meaningful life she wouldn't have to live vicariously through that garbage."

"Well," said Harriet as she helped herself to her third cinnamon roll,

"some people just can't help deluding themselves. Any coffee left?" she said to Bev at whose house we were.

At that time conversation stopped as we all tried to help Harriet decide which little plastic bottle had her diet pills and which one contained her saccharin. The effort she goes to trying to slim down is really inspiring.

It was Bev that pulled us all back to the topic of self-delusion.

"It just isn't healthy," she lectured. "And it's especially bad to deal in fantasy when children are involved."

"I can tell you that at our house there is no talk of elves and good fairies that exchange old teeth for money. And, as for Santa Claus, well you can bet our children know who it is that puts the presents under the tree. None of this believing in pretend figures."

She stopped then to shout upstairs at her noisy 2-year-old who was supposed to be napping.

"Billy," she threatened, "you get yourself back in bed or the bogeyman will get you."



## September is the 180th anniversary of the birth of Bourbon.

Happy Birthday  
Mr. Harper,  
Mr. Taylor,  
Mr. Crow,  
Mr. Beam,  
Mr. Fitzgerald,  
Mr. Dant  
and all the  
other  
Bourbon kin.



From the head of the family.

Old Grand-Dad  
Head of the Bourbon Family

## ROME COMMENT

### Does Pope Paul Show Uncertainty?

By Patrick Riley  
(NC News Service)

Castel Gandolfo, Italy — Is Pope Paul VI timid and uncertain rather than forthright and resolute?

The Pope himself put this question publicly, saying that it echoed criticism made about and even to him. He answered that since he is only human "there would be nothing strange in that."

Yet he gave assurance of his own "inner assurance," and pointed out that lack of confidence is one thing, grief another.

"The bitterness that we can and must feel at certain present trials of the Church does not lessen our confidence in it," he declared (Sept. 10) at a general audience.

As trials he cited "indolence and infidelity" among clergy and Religious, and attempts to "sit up problems and make them complicated and irritating."

Yet, he had a good word for the thirst for truth, for justice and for

authenticity that motivates some acts of contestation, "even when these are excessive and unjustified and therefore blameworthy."

He began: "Much is said of the commotion that is disturbing the Church's life from within. It comes after the (Second Vatican) council, and in an unforeseen manner. Certainly it is not derived by any faithful logic from the council itself. Sometimes it is even contrary to the spirit, to the hopes and to the norms of the council."

"A temptation to mistrust," he said "is running through the sods of not a few ecclesiastical circles: mistrust in teaching and in tradition; and that becomes a crisis of faith. Mistrust in structures and methods; and that becomes corrosive criticism and an itch for false freedom. Mistrust in men; and that becomes tension and polemic and disobedience. Mistrust in the Church's very acts of renewal; and that becomes, in some, resistance, in others, indifference. Mistrust in the Church as such; and that becomes a crisis of charity and a turning, often naive and servile, to the ersatz offerings of inimical ideologies and worldly ways."

Some persons, Pope Paul said, have recourse "to arbitrary theories or to gratuitous charismatic suppositions in order to fill the inner void of lost confidence in God, in the guidance of the Church, in the goodness of men and even in themselves."

Here Pope Paul raised the question of whether he himself lacks confidence.

"Some days ago, a great-souled churchman confided to us his impression which he said was shared by others who were solicitous for the present phase of the Church's life, an impression that the Church at its center, even the Pope himself, was in the grip of a certain lack of confidence over the general progress of the post-conciliar period, and showed himself timid and uncertain rather than forthright and resolute."

"This observation has made us reflect. Are we ourselves in the grip of a lack of confidence? I am a man, and there would be nothing strange were it so. Even Peter, or rather Simon, was weak and fickle, shifting between enthusiasm and fear."