

Too Many Zealots Obscure the Issue

According to President Nixon, the Vietnam conflict is being prolonged by the Hanoi government because it believes the United States is so deeply split over the war we will soon become weary of the whole affair and get out of it. Every public demonstration or Congressman's speech criticizing the war and the President should, therefore, be veiled from the enemy because it convinces him that we want to give up the whole cause.

Many who anticipated the Oct. 15 Moratorium with indecision agreed with the President. But they were impressed by the sobriety of that turnout and the breadth of its appeal. It spoke the inescapable verdict: millions of our people have made a moral judgment that the government must hasten the end of all conflict and accelerate the withdrawal of our troops.

The October moratorium awakened vast numbers of citizens whose concerns about Vietnam had previously been private and vague and undecided. These people started asking for answers to old questions. The dynamics of demagoguery responded. So this weekend as we stand watching the streets of Washington for the next act of the war protest, we realize that zealots on both sides have driven us into warring camps. What were criticisms and suspicions of ineptness or ill will or ignorance or unconcern a month ago have now hardened into open antagonisms.

Reason has again become the victim as usually happens when democracy is distorted into a shouting match. Demagoguery and demonstrations are symptoms of the same disease, a wise political scholar once wrote. And when they appear simultaneously in a self-righteous demonstration that one side alone has all the truth, prudent men must take to the sidelines demanding the freedom to think for themselves.

You are not required to believe that immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops will quickly resolve the entire Vietnam conflict and restore peace the day after the last transport sails home. This is an impractical, nonsensical and emotional solution to a complex problem even though thousands of demonstrators march and shout for three days claiming it should be done.

The logistics of moving so many men and supplies is so slow that it is dishonest and shameful to build the hopes of service men or their families that a presidential order for withdrawal will have everyone home for Christmas this year, or even 1970. This demand has no concern for anything political or psychological: it simply reflects selfish greed.

Conversely you are also not required to believe that our military presence is "the last hope of peace and freedom for millions of people in the Orient" who will allegedly be engulfed by the wrath of bloody Communists.

The Reds would certainly be expected to gobble up the countryside piece by piece and slowly destroy every last area of resistance. Would it be a blood bath?

Heartless as it may sound the question here is: "Do you subscribe to the underlying philosophy that the U.S. has the destiny to serve as the world's policeman? How long must we stand guard over freedom; how many dead and how many billions can be equated with 'police duty'?"

Much of the rationale for making a stand in Vietnam was to curb Communist China's aggression and to give nations bordering on Vietnam a chance to grow big enough to resist its aggression. Partly because of our firm presence the expansion has been halted for five years and China's threat to south-east Asia has been decidedly weakened. Our time in Vietnam has given border states the chance they needed to become more resistant to subversion because of their increased internal cohesion.

Very few who march or gather to listen to harangues against the administration have any solution for the conflict except the easy cry of "Get out: bring the boys home". The silent majority wants total disengagement too. But it believes this must come with an honorable solution which will bring an end to fighting. We hope for a negotiated peace which protects those we leave behind and imposes commitments about a free election. We must do what the world community, whom we cannot disregard, will accept as proof we honored our pledge, have done as much as we could and can be trusted when we make valid promises again.

Pleading Two Causes

Two exciting developments offering new vitality in the U.S. Church were born in the opening days of the national meeting of our Bishops in Washington this week.

Representatives of diocesan priests and of black Catholics separately addressed the 250 prelates asking for greater recognition of "their impatience, their frustrations, their fears, but more especially of their hopes."

A Chicago priest, the elected spokesman of thousands of priests in the U.S. who have organized diocesan priests' councils, urged the bishops to reach out for the help of their clergy in diocesan decision making. He was listened to respectfully as he added that even the best wisdom of the laity as well as the lower clergy should be consulted in setting national policy for the Church.

"Sharing authority," Father Patrick O'Malley told the Bishops, "in no way diminishes the authority of the Church. It enhances it. We can overcome the trust gap between priests and bishops by an open expression of our mutual need for one another."

A black Detroit priest, Father Don Clark, speaking for 800,000 black Catholics asked the Bishops to help black Americans "rebuild ourselves out of the legacy of powerlessness and self-negation and self-hatred which has so long been ours." He prodded the prelates to authorize the founding of a national Office for Black Catholics to help black members of the Church "fashion from among our number a strong and honorable people who can be constructive in freedom."

There are minds in the Church who believe that the modern movement of young priests toward self-identification and appreciated usefulness is as dangerous as the surge of black people reaching for dignity in their new-found pride. They say it "will rock the boat" of Peter as recklessly as the growth of black power has disturbed the complacent white community.

There is a strange similarity between the priests asking for collaboration with the bishops in decision-making and the black Catholics asking for recognition of their value to the Church. Both groups want to move from postures of awakened self-affirmation to non-traditional positions.

These are radical changes. Acceptance of them must come simultaneously at the grass roots level of the parish and at the top of the authority structure of the Bishops' conference. If it does not, we may run the risk, as prophesied in Washington this week, of revolution instead of evolution.



"I LOVED THAT LITTLE JOKE ABOUT THE WHOLE PARISH ENDING UP IN HELL!"

LETTERS to the editor



Farren Stand Wins Approval

Sincere congratulations on the feature column "Draft Trial Aims Moral Issue" in the "Courier-Journal" (Nov. 7, 1969). It's good to find, within the pages of our diocesan paper, an open, frank acknowledgement of young men's right — and at times their duty — to claim exemption from military service as conscientious objectors.

It is regrettable, it seems to me, that the voice of the Catholic Church in the United States — its Bishops, its Press, its educated Catholics — for the most part — has been silent for so many years on moral issues of war and peace.

We have remained so silent that some draft boards do not recognize the right of Catholic young men to form decisions in conscience. So silent that many Catholics are dismayed, shocked, scandalized as they read news accounts of resistance to the war in Vietnam, draft trials, etc.

This vacuum in knowledge and awareness is most saddening. I think, when we recall the social teaching of our Church alerting us to our role as peacemakers in the modern world.

We need only allude to the teaching of Vatican II regarding our responsibility to further peace in our world. Pope Paul's encyclical "On the Development of Peoples" and Pope John's "Pacem in Terris."

Have we forgotten so soon the cry of Pope Paul when he addressed the U.N. General Assembly in New York October 1965 — "Never Again War"?

Most of all, have we forgotten — or never been exposed to — the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas regarding conditions to be present in determining the justice of a war in which we are involved?

Perhaps, we Catholics of a somewhat older generation could join forces with them (the young) — at least to the extent of attempting to meet the challenges directed toward us by Vatican II — a challenge to become in our way, Pope Paul's "Christians earnestly endeavoring to become alert and responsive to the urgent social needs of the modern world, sincerely attempting to form a Christian social conscience on the many perplexing issues of our day."

—Lucy Sheehan, Rochester.

Thank Pat Farren For Airing Issue

When we as a nation take up the sword of St. Michael the Archangel, we involve ourselves with Justice — yet we are not automatically given the wisdom to use that sword justly. Some will argue that only "history" can reveal the rightness of our zeal. But must we wait for the verdict of history? If we don't examine, now, our course and its consequences, we cannot gain wisdom from the present. Without any restraint, zeal becomes the grinding juggernaut of zealotry.

And so it is that we, individuals who do not have the knowledge to evaluate our involvement in the world or the training to guide it, can in good conscience be grateful to the Pat Farrens for questioning those who do. Our strength lies in our electoral power to throw out those who do not listen.

—H. Lou Gibson, Eileen Gibson, Rochester.

Prayers Urged For Viet Peace

A little over 50 years ago our Blessed Lady appeared to the children at Fatima. Among other things she told the children that if the

people did not pray and do penance evil would spread over the world and we would be punished. Is our memory so short, and are we really so confused that we do not really know the reason for Vietnam?

Why do our young people feel by reading the names of the honored dead peace will come? Why is crime and immorality growing in our country? Why are we, as Catholics afraid to tell it like it is: That if we do not change our way of living peace will never come?

Why don't we have public prayers on every street corner for peace, on the days of War Memorials such as we had and will have again?

I think Catholics have the duty to lead the way and show the world that peace will come only when we go back to prayer and penance. Let our Church leaders be heard. We have the answer. Why are we reluctant to stand up and be counted?

—Mrs. H. Piquet, Rochester, N.Y.

Three Parishes Thanked for Aid

Recently our Community received a generous contribution from the people of three parishes in the Rochester Diocese — St. John the Baptist in Elmira, St. Mary's in Watkins Glen and St. Benedict's in Odesa.

The contribution was in answer to our appeal for our mission in Brazil. It came through the Propagation of the Faith Society's Missionary Cooperation Plan.

Word for Sunday

The Church is the World's Leaven

By Father Albert Shamon

Baking bread was common in the days of our Lord. And I can remember my own mother baking bread. One of the most important steps in the production was putting the yeast into the dough. The yeast caused the bread to rise, to become light and wholesome. Christ said the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven (yeast) which a woman took and hid in three measures of dough until it was all leavened.

There are three points to note about this parable.

First, the leaven was put in from the outside. The power that raises man must come from without. Man cannot lift himself. He needs a power outside himself.

Christianity is an importation. It is the story of God coming into our world — to leaven it — coming from the high halls of heaven. When He returned to heaven, He left the leaven of His Church with His word and the Eucharist. Without these how long would society be evil?

Secondly, the leaven was hidden. Reform begins from within, not from without. For man needs raising. There is as much sin in any one of us as in the sinners we seek to convert.

When Christ was asked to judge the adulteress, He said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." No one did.

The soul of reform is to reform the soul," said St. Peter of Alcantara. That is why the Church should never be a water boy to world revolution. For world revolution misses the heart of the problem, which is the problem of the heart.

Lastly, leaven is dynamic. Yeast is not the dead, inoperative thing it seems. Rather it is a living plant of

Abp. Sheen Delivers Peace Mass Homily

(Continued from Page 1)

ror or coercion, but a violence which makes us intransigent to ourselves that others may see what it means to be Christian. This kind of love does not come naturally; it is rather a kind of anti-nature.

Gathered in Our Lady's Shrine let us not forget that it was Mary who composed the most revolutionary document that was ever penned. The Magnificat included mention of three revolutions, both the economic and social as with Marx, and the political as with our own students today; but it goes a step further: it was also about a moral, spiritual and personal revolution.

The revolution Mary recommended was first, personal — and — moral — or "the raising of the proud of heart" ("dispersit superbos"). Second it was political — "He pulled down princes from their thrones" ("deposuit potentes"). Third it was economic: "The rich He sent empty away" ("divites dimisit").

Both the Church and the world have failed to some extent to teach a trinitarian revolution. The Church has restricted herself too much in the past to the first revolution, concentrating on the moral, the spiritual, the personal and the supernatural; She sometimes forgot that soul salva-

tion is inseparable from world salvation.

Because the Church neglected the political and economic revolution, the world picked them up, but completely ignored the remaking of man. It is easy for man to complain against social injustices if his individual corruption is left unprobed.

A few in the Church have reacted to hell in isolation from the other two revolutions, by going to the other extreme of abandoning the Divine for the secular, converting theology into sociology, and ending up by doing the same thing the secular order is doing, but doing it less well. The hope for a new age emigrated from the Church to the world which fostered new revolution, but which left corrupt man untouched.

The Christian revolution affirms that it is indecent to fight against economic alienation, as do the Marxists, or against political alienation, as do the activists of today, unless both also struggle against spiritual alienation which makes these other forms of slavery possible.

The Church cannot be in the forefront for spiritual liberty, unless it is also conscious that man has a body as well as a spirit, and while feeding the hungry multitudes, the Church is always God's instrument for the preservation of the political and social liberties of all men. The mission of the Church is to give the life to those who contend that what you grant God, you take away from man, and what you grant man, you take away from God.

The revolution of the Magnificat was a proclamation for unburdening. Unless there is a spiritual unburdening of guilt and egotism in the heart of man, all that an economic revolution will do will be to transfer money from one man's pocket to another; and all that a political revolution will do will be to transfer power from the shaved to the hirsute.

The point I am making is that just as the dissolute pagan Romans became the center of the Church in the early days; just as the barbarians were the raw material for Christian Europe; just as the despised Moors who brought Aristotle to Paris became the foundation of scholasticism, so our violent men, our angry men, our revolutionists and our persecutors will be our defenders.

God does not speak to us personally. He speaks by us through events, and right now He addresses us through those who burn. Presently they are burning down injustice, but they will burn upwards in evangelization. It will not be the first time that those who used a club will use the Cross.

Peace is impossible without war, and if we are not at war with ourselves we are at war with others. God takes pleasure in those who are disciplined for war.

All that I have said can be summarized in terms of the divorce of Christ and His cross. Here on one side, is the cross without Christ; on the other side, is Christ without the cross.

Who picks up the cross without Christ? Communism, totalitarianism, Russia and China. They turn the cross into discipline, order, commitment to a national purpose, a secular philosophy of life, and slavery to a class and a party.

Who picks up Christ without the cross? Our Western Christian civilization which has abandoned discipline in favor of permissiveness, broadmindedness and indifference, turns freedom into license, and utters moral mouthings, found on church lawns without any reference to hell and judgement.

Our foundation was started in 1962 in Sao Paulo, by five Sisters. There now are 50 novices and professed Sisters working in 12 mission centers, reaching some 500,000 souls.

You good people of the Rochester Diocese, by your heart-warming response to the annual appeals, have shared in safeguarding and strengthening the faith in poor areas of the world. The prayers and thanks of a grateful Community are extended to all who participated in your contributions. God bless you!

—Religious Teachers Filippini Villa Walsh Morristown, N.J.

Courier Article Wins Praise

Father Robert McNamara's "Roman, not Latin: Our Eastern Catholic Churches" (Courier-Journal, 10/17/69) is the simplest introduction to a very complicated subject I have read in any diocesan newspaper.

I congratulate Father McNamara and the Courier-Journal.

The Catholic-Near East Welfare Association assists Catholics of the Eastern Rites in 18 countries where the Church is not self-supporting. We would be very pleased to send information about the Church in these Middle Eastern countries to anyone who writes.

—Msgr. John Nolan, National Secretary, Near East Welfare Association 330 Madison Ave., New York City

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CC NEWS

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