

Brody: Zaniness Turns Sour

Idealism blended with nuttiness seemed to shine in the early days of the saga of Michael James Brody Jr. last weekend. When the name and gestures of the self-described millionaire landed on the front pages the young man's actions spoke rather virtuously. The long-haired young idealist seemed to be saying: "Money piled up in millions is meaningless — wealth is only good when it is shared with those in need."

The image of a rich man feverishly pressing checks and large cash gifts into the hands of everyone who told him a story of need was a pointed satire against the wealthy who sit on their millions until they spend it sensuously on themselves for parties, jewels and endless vacations.

Then every successive news-report enlarged the unpleasant image of a sick-minded man gripped by a fantasy, exhilarated by drugs and flushed by publicity. The story that had seemed ludicrous and made us smile with its incongruity became a bit nasty. Brody was put down as a mixed-up rich kid, flying the skies in chartered jets, posing and declaiming like an idiot.

Most people pitied his mental processes and regretted that the full glare of the news-media had turned a kooky story into an ugly travesty. Because not just Brody was being turned inside out. Hundreds of poor people who waited for him in the bitter cold or tried to speak to him by phone were being abused. However unrealistic or irrational or even dishonest the beggars may have been, Brody was tampering with their lives.

Reporters said hundreds lined up in freezing weather at Brody's home and office. They were described as the shabby and sad, tenement-dwellers and under-privileged, but all people with well-rehearsed words of desperation. Observers who questioned them discovered a common strain in their stories: they believed that something miraculous was going to happen to sweeten the bitterness of their hopeless lives. They were convinced that if the money held out until their turn came to meet the rich man they would be blessed with sheer charity. Too many other times when they needed help before, they said, they had been humiliated by questions and confused by welfare forms and browbeaten by social workers.

Only a few made it to Brody's hand before he started to abuse the defenseless strangers. He accused the crowds of greed, allegedly shouted obscenities at them and ran away from their clutches, as one New York City reporter described it, "because he began to see these begging people as a rabble instead of a convention of the lost."

It could be argued that Brody did no lasting harm by arousing hopes and presumptions that a \$500 bill could turn a man's life around. Men long for many things in a lifetime and no matter what they acquire or achieve the ache of wanting more is never completely eased. Psychologists say that men do not really hurt themselves deeply when they face the disillusionment of grasping at mirages which float across their entire journey through life.

But for the poor man, as for the crippled and the incurable sick and the victim of deep prejudice and the endless non-achiever, the disappointment of never getting all that he thought necessary for happiness makes a man feel that he is never quite all there either. Even if he grasps at the shadows of superficial values never-ending disappointments erode spirit and smother hope.

It is a paradox of our Christian faith that we have so little to say to the disappointed poor man and the hopelessly sick and the brutally discouraged. Our Lord told us that he who loses his life shall find it and that in doing without we shall find lasting possession. But selfishness and being ready to "suffer" without the material things we long for are not popular virtues today: our flight toward fulfillment is in the other direction from pain and poverty and want. The flight becomes more disastrous when hopes are raised by the unattainable promises of a Michael Brody-type.

—Father Richard Tormey



PRESIDENT LINCOLN



GEN. GOWON

Needed: A Lincoln

It might be foolhardy to draw the comparison too fine, still there are enough similarities between the just-ended Nigerian war and our own War between the States to supply an historical lesson.

Both were civil wars with neighbors battling neighbors, both involved a secessionist area, both had undertones of bigotry, both were won by the status quo governments and both were settled largely by the enforcement of economic blockades which drew contrary European reactions.

Despite enduring a great deal of unpopularity in his own time, Abraham Lincoln proved himself a humane man by trying to set the stage for amnesty and restoration of dignity to the reeling South. Had it not been for his assassination, Lincoln might have been able to bring his ideals to fruition, thus avoiding the division that still exists in this country 100 years later.

Gen. Yakuba Gowon, commander of the victorious Nigerian army, has promised humane treatment for the secessionists. On Page 1 today, John Sullivan says this is not all necessarily altruistic because Nigeria will need the skill and intelligence of the Ibo tribesmen of Biafra.

All ulterior motives aside, here's hoping that Gen. Gowon will espouse the Lincoln-esque attitude and then follow through not only to protect the helpless Biafrans but also so that his nation may not suffer the protracted enmity that has tortured the United States for a century.

—Carmen Viglucci

Be Uncompromising

Compromise is the essence of politics but when it involves two disparate issues then the public had better be alert.

Though there is no evidence of any agreement, still the groundwork is laid for those state legislators seeking a way out on two thorny issues — abortion reform and public aid for private schools.

Gov. Rockefeller provided the premise in his State of the State message when he endorsed parochial and also called for abortion reform.

Not to be cynical, but isn't it conceivable that a state legislator feeling the enormous pressure on both sides on these two problems may, for instance, vote for abortion reform and then to assuage his Catholic constituents, wage a strong battle for private school aid?

Compromise must be built on common grounds; there is none in these two issues, unless it be morality and there is little room for adjustment with that.

—Carmen Viglucci

Mideast: An Abuse of Scripture

The accompanying article has significance in itself—it is believed to be the first joint editorial to be published in two major religious journals, one Protestant, the other Catholic.

It was written jointly by Father Charles Angell, editor of "The Lamp of Christian Unity Magazine" and the Rev. J. Martin Bailey, editor of "United Church Herald," national publication of the 2-million-member United Church of Christ.

basis for a systematic reign of terror unleashed on Jews stranded in Arab lands.

In the same document, the Rev. Abdallah Sayegh quoted John 1:11 as proof that Jews are no longer the chosen people: "He came to his own home and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name he gave power to become children of God."

This use of Scripture ignores the circumstances in which the Bible was written and the purpose of its original writers. Both Jewish and Christian scholars today agree that the basis for biblical understanding

rests upon its historical context; these scholars are careful not to infer more from the actual text than the context will support.

There is, to be sure, a distinction between Christian conviction and Jewish belief. But no traditional or contemporary distinction can justify religious prejudice, arbitrary punitive actions or anything less than brotherhood at the level of our common humanity. The teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the documents of the World Council of Churches make this clear.

Indeed, there is a unique relationship between Christians and Jews due to our common Old Testament heritage, Christian theology and ethics stand on the foundation of the monotheism of the ancient Hebrews and on the utterances of Old Testament prophets. The message of Jesus adds to, rather than subtracts from, basic Jewish teachings.

As the Sermon on the Mount makes clear, Jesus came not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. A characteristic of his preaching was: "You have heard it was said 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies . . ."

Similarly we were distressed to hear the Bible quoted as a justification for the modern State of Israel. While we recognize that there is a historic link between the Jews and the land, we cannot accept this fact as the warrant for the unilateral seizure of property by military action or by legislative decree.

Modern Jews in Israel properly affirm their continuing religious relationship to the Lord of history. But few Jewish scholars would assert that the concept of a "chosen people" au-

ly involved in studying the environmental crisis.

This crisis, he said, "knows no boundaries," and thus is truly an international problem, affecting his department. As an example, he asked:

"By what right can Cleveland pollute Lake Erie when its other side touches upon Canada?"

Msgr. Bordonol also said his department will have to deal with the population question, which will involve extensive study before any conclusions are reached.

He explained that there are new miracle seeds being developed that will be able to produce food to feed the world's growing population. But one of the problems involved is that the fertilizer needed to produce this abundance might cause further pollution and harm the very people who are being fed.

Msgr. Bordonol said the United States "is creating a drain on national resources as a result of being a consumer nation."

Selfishness is being expressed, he declared, when no due regard is shown for preserving resources. Msgr. Bordonol said there seems to be a lack of concern for future generations on the part of many present day consumers.

A big task facing Msgr. Bordonol in his new position is the review of the structure and objectives of the department. The USCC Committee on International Affairs is studying these items.

Objectives of the department are to express concern for the social and economic development of peoples overseas; to expand the outreach of the Church overseas in missionary and relief endeavors; and to minister to the needs of foreign visitors, travelers, and migrants.

"Through the Department of International Affairs," he said, "the Church in the United States is assigning priority to international affairs, as befits the national Church in a world superpower like the United States."

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Will Earth Be Cesspool of Universe?

Washington — (NC) — The new director of the Department of International Affairs, United States Catholic Conference, is "convinced the Earth might become the cesspool of the universe" if the environmental crisis is not stopped.

Msgr. Marvin Bordonol, who assumes his new post while continuing as director of the Division of World Justice and Peace, said the Department of International Affairs will be greatly concerned with such deterioration during the 1970s.

"I don't want to give the impression that we will be dropping all else," he said, "but we will be deeply involved in studying the environmental crisis."

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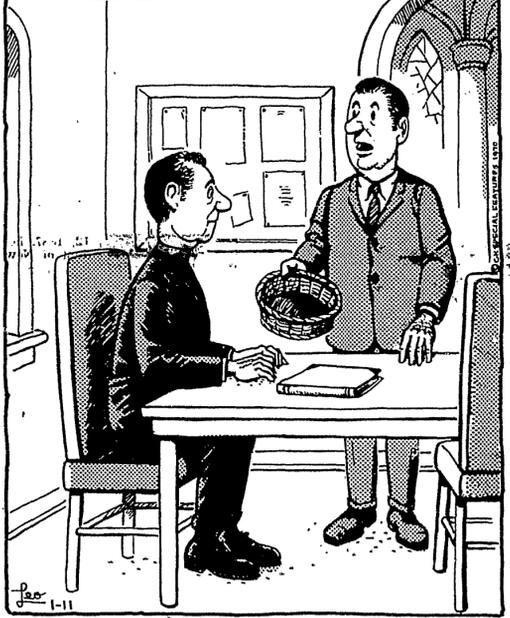
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CHURCH HUMOR



"It was a 'silent' collection, all right . . . Nobody gave a thing!"

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

For His Sake, Bear With Each Other

The art of medicine did not develop among the Hebrews. Law forbade them to touch a dead body and the science of pathology and the art of surgery alike depend upon the examination and dissection of the body. Furthermore, disease was regarded as sent by God as a sign of His displeasure. Since, this was so, it was impious to try to combat it. If healing occurred, that too was sent by God as a sign of His forgiveness.

Thus a close association arose of the priest with the physician. The priests alone, by reason of the sacrificial technique, had any knowledge of anatomy. But such knowledge was very deficient. Thus the bowels were credited with being the organs of sympathy and the heart as the seat of understanding. For a sickness, generic names covered a multitude of diseases. Leprosy, for example, included such skin diseases as eczema and psoriasis, as well as external moles. We know that the man in Sunday's Gospel had leprosy in the worst possible way. For Luke, the physician, speaks of him as "full of leprosy."

The leper, alone of all the sick, was shut out from the camp of Israel. That is why the leper of the Gospel must have been a man of great faith. He dared to race into the town where Jesus was and hoped against hope that Jesus would cure him before the angry crowd could recover itself. So he came, and so earnest was his plea that he knelt, then fell on his face, and begged, "Lord, if you will to do so, you can make me clean." Yet there was some misgiving here in his "if"; he feared Jesus might see some reason in him for not granting his request. His fear gravitated around his sense of his own unworthiness; he entertained no

doubts about Jesus' power — "if you will, you can."

And the great heart of Christ was moved to compassion. The leper had come, worshipped and pleaded; Christ stretched out his hand, touched him and spoke. Christ worked miracles in all kinds of ways; some were worked at a distance as in the case of the centurion's son; but some by a word or touch. By His miracles of touch, Christ illustrated the incarnational principle — namely, that God always accommodates Himself to man's weakness; man is dependent on his senses; nothing is in his mind that does not first pass through one of those five gates. Thus man believes in light he cannot see. So God vehicles His spiritual power even today through sensible channels called sacraments.

The true cause of Christ's miracles of touch was in every case, not in the touch of His hand, but in His own bare will. The main point of His an-

swers to the leper is, not His power, but His will — "I will to do so. Be clean." Here again, Christ reveals a great secret of God; namely, His love and willingness to save man — "I will to do so."

In the movie *Ben Hur*, the frightful plight of lepers is graphically portrayed. Even the name and the wealth of the family of Hur could not win social acceptance for Hur's leprosy mother and sister. Perhaps in those days of medical ignorance, there may have been some excuse for the terrible ostracism of lepers.

But what excuse before God shall modern man have for avoiding man simply because of the color of skin, of their creed or their culture? Has not Christ given us an example, "If I can love you and bear with you, so full of the leprosy of sin, surely ought you not for My sake bear with one another, no matter who or what one may be?"

Teachers are Father Robert O'Halloran, C.S.B., of Afiuna Institute; Father Giovanni Montanari of St. Bernard Seminary; and the Rev. Francis Pemberton, professor of social ethics and the sociol of religion at Colgate-Bexley Divinity School.

A similar series, just completed under the sponsorship of the Greece Pastors' Association, attracted an average attendance of 65 to 75. Participating were Father O'Halloran, the Rev. John Wynn of Colgate-Bexley, Dr. Gerald Guerinet, RIT professor Thomas O'Brien and attorney Dennis Livadi.

Sessions, sponsored by the Greece Central School District, will be held Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. through Mar. 26. Assisting in planning the course were Father William Amann, assistant at Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

King

In light of Bishop Hogan's proposal last week for "new dimensions" at King's Prep and because of some apparent public misunderstanding on the school's nature and purposes, Franklin L. Kamp, dean of studies, has written the following article on the school and its aims.

Last week at a meeting of Catholic secondary school principals, Bishop Hogan strongly affirmed his belief in the cause of Catholic education in the diocese and suggested that King's Prep "take on new dimensions for pioneering in educational experimentation." In effect, the school might serve as an innovative center for testing new ideas and projects in cooperative ventures with other sectors of the diocesan educational community.

Attention was thus called to an institution with both a short and long-term history.

In May of 1967, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen decided to close St. Andrew's Seminary, which had been the high school department of the diocese's seminary system. The school, on Buffalo Road in Gates, was to be transformed into King's Prep, a co-educational college preparatory school with the goal of training young men and women for dedicated service to God, humanity, and the Church, whether it be in the religious or lay apostolate.

In the past 2½ years — in a

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Bishop Greet

Bishop Hogan greets the Chemung County Family following Mass Jan. 1 Elmira. The Bishop has preaching in various dioceses the last

Blessed Sacrament

Blessed Sacrament of Rochester has elected 12 members of its parish to its first parish council. It was announced by Father John P. Norris, pastor.

Following 8 months of preparation by a steering committee, parishioners received their ballots by mail and returned them at Masses last Sunday. An organizational meeting is scheduled for Feb. 9.

Elected to three-year terms were Dr. John Abbott; Arthur

Moral Aspects Of Social Ills To Be Topic

Moral aspects of social problems are being examined in a 10-week adult education program which began Thursday night, Jan. 22, in Greece Olympia High School, Maider Lane.

Sessions, sponsored by the Greece Central School District, will be held Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. through Mar. 26. Assisting in planning the course were Father William Amann, assistant at Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

COURIER-JOURNAL Bishop Joseph L. Hogan President Msgr. John S. Randall Managing Editor Carmen J. Viglucci Editor Rev. Richard Tormey Executive Editor Anthony J. Castello Advertising Director Arthur P. Farren Associate Editor