

ALL IN THE FAMILY

On Realizing We Are Conformists

By Sarah Child

Sometimes we discover that we are not at all the person we thought we were.

I, for example, once believed myself to be the original individualist.

Trouble was, I was just the opposite. The complete conformist.

I was thinking of this the other day as I was twiddling the diamond engagement ring about on my finger. I laughed remembering how I had once told myself that I didn't care for diamonds.

But when the time came and my husband-to-be asked what I preferred, the conventional side of me responded without a moment's hesitation. I requested what probably 999 out of 1,000 girls who get an engagement stone get — a diamond.

Likewise for the wedding dress. Mine was long and white even though I'd often hooted slightly at the brides who doted on all the hoopla that often goes with a wedding day.

Then, there was the matter of where to live. No housing development for me, I asserted. I wanted a

house that was not like every other house up and down the block, where only the color of the paint distinguished one ranch type dwelling from the other, where architectural interest was limited to whether or not the back door was at the back of the house or the side.

So we bought a house in an older neighborhood. New houses mingled with old houses and apartment complexes were sandwiched in between.

There were other young mothers with young babies bound to the confines of their homes by diapers, dishes and dirty floors, but I seldom saw them. They, wisely, lived in apartments. We, who each had had enough of apartments during our bachelor days, had wanted a house. But neither of us had guessed just how lonely it was to be for me as my husband worked a late-night newspaper trick. Many of the couples in our neighborhood were childless and worked by day and disappeared inside at night.

Where the other women with babies were able to run to the next apartment for company, I had six

large and lonely rooms to wander through.

Finally, even I realized enough was enough. We began again to look for houses, this time in a more compatible neighborhood.

The development we now live in is I think about 15 years old and no one calls it a development anymore.

On all sides of me there are women with small children who at this point in my life form the major part of my social activity.

We have coffee together, discuss kids together and take turns busying each other to the doctor's office when our active children require emergency treatment.

I live precisely the kind of life I always said I didn't want. And, I'm enjoying it — indeed, am immensely grateful for the companionship, the easy give-and-take of development living.

Cliches are cliches for good reason. And the older I get the more I realize it is because they work for so many people.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

What Is Being Taught?

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

On Sunday evening, March 22, I attended a lecture at the K. of C. in Corning. It was under the auspices of the Christian Formation Committee. There were 77 persons present. The lecturer was Father Albert Shamon, Vicar of Religious Education, who spoke on the Mass. Since many in the diocese know him as the superb Christlike priest he is, they may wish to share this letter to him:

Since I was present at the previous Christian Formation lecture for updating Christian living, and which I think did not represent either the Catholic Church or Christian living, I was glad to hear your lecture on the Mass.

I was sorry to miss the film on the Liturgy, which I heard is quite good. I am greatly concerned about some CCD texts and films, and consider

many misleading or flaccid. A CCD teacher in Elmira who teaches high school CCD said to me: "The kids just aren't buying a lot of the stuff that's being peddled to them. They despise the text book as vacuous, and they dislike the art."

Would you like a brief critique of your talk?

1. You speak so furiously and fast that it has a double effect. First, you are hard to follow. Second, your enthusiasm and earnestness are contagious, which is all to the good.

2. Since people commonly understand lectures according to their own preconceptions, I wondered how they reacted. . . . My concern was that some might mix up your explanations of what were irrelevant additions in the course of centuries, e.g.

the Lavabo prayer, with your explanations of additions and developments which are relevant and good, e.g. the reservation and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Some Catholics have become infected with a peculiar, and I think unconscious, resentment toward the Real Presence outside of Mass. During your lecture I was concerned lest any in the audience might equate the irrelevance of the Lavabo psalm with e.g. the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for private adoration.

I have often thought of the CCD Sisters in California who did not want the Blessed Sacrament in their convent. And I remember a thesis of a far-out priest friend who wanted the Blessed Sacrament removed from convents under the theory that if the Divine Presence was not in the convent the Sisters would find Jesus in one another. Quixotic, but hardly real. I said to the priest: "Pope Paul's encyclical, The Mystery of Faith, proclaimed the honored position of the Blessed Sacrament." He replied: "Mysterium Fidei was a harmful encyclical. It was retrogressive theology."

With these memories, I was glad to have the 77 persons present hear your quotation from Karl Rahner: that even if a devotion or a practice was not in the Church for the first thousand years of the Church's life, it does not mean that the devotion or practice is not good. In future lectures I hope you will stress this, since it seems to be part of the root of hostility toward reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, to the rosary, to Benediction, to the Stations of the Cross, to private non-liturgical prayer.

And I hope you will add what Rahner also said in the same matter. "Just because a devotion wasn't in the Church for the first thousand years does not mean it should be rejected. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to the Church, and new devotions and practices developed within the Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

The reason I posed the question regarding the Mass at the question period was really two-fold. First, with the many options in celebrating the Eucharistic Liturgy, there is grave danger of historicism and cheapness instead of real devotion and holiness. I have a horror of cuteness in the Mass. Second, your own devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Lady I know, and wanted it reflected to the audience. This you did magnificently — and furiously, and fast which is contagious.

So for the good you did Sunday, including your praise of "The Imitation of Christ," many thanks. Your lecture was real Christian formation. May others match it.



COMMENT FROM ROME

Jesuits Split on Freedom of View

By Father Leo McFadden

Rome — The question of freedom to express a personal opinion has split the Jesuit community at the 400-year-old Pontifical Gregorian University.

Jesuit faculty members have been told they must get permission from the university president before giving any press interviews. Their religious superior, Father Herve Carrier, who is also the president, issued the edict after three professors had objected, in print, to what they considered Vatican "meddling" in the Italian divorce issue.

The "Gregorian Three" — Fathers Emile Pin, Jose Diez-Alegria and Paolo Tufari — took on the Vatican, the 1929 Lateran Pact and the influential Italian Jesuit fortnightly "La Civiltà Cattolica" (Catholic Civilization) in an interview which the daily newspaper Il Messaggero carried on March 8.

The three professors said they felt the Church's duty was to help form correct consciences about divorce, not to exert pressures on Italian civic life to defeat the divorce bill.

Father Carrier's order left him with a house divided between cool admiration and candid shock.

"He did it to gain peace for the whole community," said a Jesuit superior who is a close friend of Father Carrier.

Another commented: "If I have joined a community, then every action of mine as a Jesuit is inextricably woven into the inseparable seam of that community."

Those who were stunned by the new regulation generally felt they had a right to act independently as persons.

A surprising calm reigns at the international headquarters of the Jesuit order. Father Pedro Arrupe, the general, held what has been described as a hearty, good-natured conference with the three professors and then issued to the press a communique scolding the three.

At the Greg itself, students distributed leaflets praising the three professors. At other theological colleges in Rome, some students began gathering signatures in support of the three Jesuits.

"I am very glad to see this," said one of Father Arrupe's advisors, "because it proves the Gregorian is act-

ing like a university and not as a major seminary. This is all a normal type of behavior for university students."

One of the professors, saying he was speaking as well for the other two, clarified some points:

"It was not what we said, for we have said these things many times before, or that we chose to say them in the public media.

"What offended many people was our choice of language. There is in the language of Rome a chance to be vague, to employ the linguistics of opportunism, to keep up a studied ambivalence in which you can profit by any change of events.

"No matter what happens later you can always insist that you were misunderstood."

The Jesuit professor said he and the others acted as professionals and private citizens.

"We chose not to go through our superiors in order to leave them totally free to come to their own conclusions about what we were to say," he explained.

COMMENTARY

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13

Who is A Jew?

Law Passed, Debate Continues

Jerusalem — (RNS) — For the first time since the 1948 Proclamation of Independence, Israel's Knesset has enacted a bill, which establishes the legal definition of a Jew as "one born of a Jewish mother or a convert."

The definition is similar to the rabbinical interpretation and implicitly rejects the secular contention that Jewish religion and nationality are divisible. The law says, in effect, that a Jew who has converted to another faith has not only changed his religion but his nationality.

However, the measure provides immigrant privileges to Gentile spouses and offspring of Jews for three generations, provided they do not voluntarily convert to another faith. Privileges include automatic Israeli citizenship.

The adopted legislation is not expected to close the debate on "Who is a Jew?" The measure has provided no satisfactory solution to the problem of those who want to belong to the Jewish nation without participat-

ing in the religious rituals they say they do not believe in.

On the other hand, the Orthodox rabbinate is not bound to recognize registration in a state document as evidence that a person is Jewish. The group has exclusive competence in matters of marriage, divorce, and burial.

The stormy debate over "Who is a Jew?" reached a high point during the reading of the bill when Rabbi Menahem Poruch of the Agudat Israel party, an ultra-Orthodox group, spat on a prayer book of the Reform Movement and threw it on the floor.

The rabbi later apologized and said he "lost his temper." He had complained that the definition of a Jew in the bill failed to specify that conversion must follow strictly Orthodox ritual.

The rabbi charged that many "key parts of the sacred traditional liturgy" had been omitted from the Reform prayerbook. The missing passages, he said, referred to the return to Zion and the coming of the Messiah.

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