

Play Entitled:
'1980'

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



On the Line
People
And Places

By Bob Considine



Fellow writes in suggesting that President Nixon play it safe the next time and nominate Judge Crater for the Supreme Court. Fellow says:

"Nobody in the Senate could put a knock on him. Moreover, he's not available for interviews. He hasn't handed down a controversial decision since August 6, 1930. He'd be a cinch."

Rube Goldberg, the greatest, has been spending a little time at Doctors Hospital, explaining to them what's wrong with them. The other day he looked across East End Avenue into the gardens of Gracie Mansion, traditional home of New York's mayors. He spotted a familiar looking figure, wielding a watering can.

Rube phoned his friend Joe Willicombe.

"I see Mayor Lindsay with a watering can," Rube said.

"What's he raising?" Joe, a prominent horticulturist, asked.

"Taxes," Rube said.

Hard to believe Merriman Smith, dean of the White House correspondents, did away with himself. Smitty was as eager a reporter as you could ever know. He never tired, always possessed in great quantities that special repertorial ingredient which Lincoln Steffens called a "studied ignorance," meaning the discipline to face each day's assignment with the zestful curiosity of a cub.

Millions knew him from his good clean writing, his crisp and exquisitely timed "Thank you, Mr. President," which ended countless White House news conferences (and sometimes got fluttering Chief Executives off the hook), and his appearances on the Merv Griffin show. Smitty was always full of fun and wry wisdom. His knowledge of his regular beat — covering Presidents from Roosevelt to Nixon — was without compare.

I'll miss my friend Smitty. We saw a lot of the world together, he with UP and I with INS . . . Korea, Guam, Iwo, Wake, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, North Africa, South America . . . Lord knows. He was a tough competitor, but as honest a reporter as ever lived.

Sen. George Murphy's Senate Resolution calling for an hour of prayer for the safe return of the Apollo 13 astronauts passed without a dissenting vote.

One hopes that impeachment charges are not brought against him.

Ford Frick, the former commissioner of baseball who was recently voted into the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y., cannot for the life of him un-

derstand why anybody should knock the old game.

"Maybe I'm getting overly sensitive in my old age," Ford said, lighting the filter end of his cigaret, "but I've never read or heard as much criticism of baseball as we now have. Nothing seems right: the decision on Denny McLain, the reserve clause that Curt Flood is taking to the Supreme Court, the new franchises, and so forth.

"Shouldn't somebody get around to recall that baseball is keeping countless millions of American kids on the straight and narrow, that it was the first big league sport except perhaps boxing that really opened its arms and opportunities to the Negro athlete, and that it's still a game that doesn't penalize a man because of his size or strength? You don't have to stand a mile tall, as in basketball, or be a yard wide, as in football.

"Burns me up, which is more than I can say about this cigaret. I've lighted it six times and it keeps going out."

Headlines this week shouted: "Parochial Schools Are Saving States Many Millions." "Educating 17 Million Children in U.S.," the subhead said. The City of Rochester took over the old Nazareth Academy and Convent to make way for School No. 5. A Washington Catholic girl won every prize in a national contest, writing an essay on "The Benefits of Enlistment in the United States Army", and Archbishop Edward Hanna of San Francisco visited Rochester.

One week before the convocation that gave birth to the U.N., Msgr. Fulton Sheen remarked: "This is probably the last chance Western Civilization will have to make the peace of the world. There will not be another chance in generations and generations. We are now at the twilight of the Western World and it is time to light our lamps." The semi-finals of the Bishop's Oratorical Contest were held in Elmira; and St. Anthony's church began a novena for peace and the success of the U.N. parley.

Syngman Rhee was toppled from the Presidency of South Korea the week Catholic educators, gathered in Chicago, charged the U.S. with anti-Catholic bias in granting federal funds to college students. The Diocesan Catholic Charities fund drive was launched. Floyd Patterson was the featured guest at Immaculate Conception Church's children's boxing bouts; and the Holy Name bowling tourney opened.

The Morriss Plan

A Basic Law
At Stake

By Frank Morriss



The dismay being expressed by some canonists and other assorted progressive thinkers at the preliminary text of a "Proposal for a Fundamental Law of the Church" should not be taken at face value. I don't mean the dismay isn't genuine. It is the instinctive reaction of those who wish Catholic fundamentals to remain as nebulous and unasserted as possible, in the mistaken theory that men will thus be more "free."

But beneath the surface of this dismay is the political current in which the progressive always swims — and most adroitly, I must confess. The newspaper "leak" is used by the progressives in somewhat the same way as a general, well schooled in tactics, always attempts to seize the ground for any confrontation of arms.

It is no accident that such documents as "Schema Legis Ecclesiae Fundamentalis" find themselves illegitimately in the hands of progressive scholars and editors. It allows the progressive wing to take the initiative. One exercise of this initiative in the present case is to exert pressure (I am even tempted to use the word black-mail) for changes the progressives wish. The threat by these people is that the document will not be accepted unless these changes are made. In other words they ask that progressive changes to the ransom for a favorable outcome of the "captured" document which has fallen into their hands illicitly and

for which they pretend the most solicitude.

Thus the cries that the enactment of this so-called written constitution for the Church would precipitate a new crisis of authority and the warning that "it is not a proclamation to stir the hearts and minds of those who believe in freedom."

Now if one were really to want a crisis of authority and yet not be blamed for it, one thing to do would be loudly to insist that a crisis is inevitable if such and such is not done. The Mercutios of the world, quick to predict bloodshed, are generally clever enough to be blamed when it comes; and only occasionally is the blood theirs.

There is ample evidence that the opposition to this proposed document is not on the basis of its inadequacies and weaknesses, but rather on the basis of its strength. In other words it is a philosophic opposition. This is the fact that is beneath the surface, and it should not be allowed to remain there.

The progressives wish a code shaped in the image of Existential, that is, subjective and relativistic, jurisprudence. They wish nothing that demands strict construction, no certainties or principles that even smack of objective and immutable truth.

What the proposed constitution does is reassert in a truly juridical fashion all of the parts of the Second Vatican Council

that the progressives have tried to ignore into oblivion. Thus, it recognizes the Pope as full, free and supreme head of the Church, against whom there is no appeal; it properly subjects ecumenical councils and the college of Bishops to the approval of the pontiff; it recognizes the dignity and freedom of all men, but it subjects Catholics to the authority of the Church, which indeed is essential if authority is to be meaningful and fruitful.

For these assertions, the document has earned the condemnation of those thinkers who feel that the new age has made such a profound modification in the very nature of things as actually to create a new type of Church—a democracy of equals, a kind of charismatic association which has no shape or institutional habitation. When the progressives say the proposed constitution is juridical, they really mean that it deals in objective and inescapable realities. It does not make the concessions they hope to bring about through the installation of a philosophy compounded of subjectivism, relativism, empiricism, positivism, and pragmatism.

But those who know and appreciate that there is an unchanging and inviolable core of reality to the Catholic Church will welcome such a document. And if in its essence and essentials it should be changed, conservatives will have evidence that progressive pressure can indeed be the vital danger they have all along suspected.

Honey: (smiling graciously) May I help you?

Tranquilla: I do hope so. I have a child I want to dispose of.

Honey: Of course, We have three splendid departments specializing in fetal control. Is yours two, four or six months?

Tranquilla: I beg your pardon?

Honey: We have to assign you to the medical specialist in your category. Are you two, four or six months pregnant? The law does not allow us to accept anyone beyond six months.

Tranquilla: (irritably) Why, I'm not pregnant! It's my 10-months-old baby that's the problem. Her name is Snooky, blonde and runny nosed. She's had colic for two months. I haven't had a decent night's sleep in weeks. She's making a wreck out of me with her whimpering and strangling. If I don't get rid of her I'll go out of my mind. My nerves are shot.

Honey: Oh, dear! This is a problem. The disposal of a born baby is not allowed by the law, yet.

Tranquilla: (indignant) I don't see why not. I'm a taxpayer. Surely if we have humane societies to do away with unwanted puppies and kittens, I don't see why the government can't take care of unwanted babies! That's a pretty kettle of fish!

Honey: (thoughtfully) I hadn't thought of that. Perhaps the Humane Society could take care of your Snooky . . . Really, there should be more communication among the government departments. But the law does not permit the State Social Service Department to give this service, yet.

Tranquilla: Oh, dear. I've already talked to the people at the Pound. They refused. My husband said I was silly even to call them.

Honey: Is your husband agreeable to the disposal of Snooky?

Tranquilla: He wasn't at first. You know how men are. But I explained to him what the law is. Before Snooky was born, I as the mother, and my doctor, had exclusive right over the life of the child. I really wanted her then. I thought she'd be such fun. Instead she is a threat to my emotional and physical health. So I said to Ducky — my husband, you know—"Dear, if the State gave me the right to dispose of the baby before its birth, then the State must give me the right after birth. And I'm going to exercise my right." Now, you tell me the State doesn't give me that right at all. After all, I am a taxpayer.

Honey: No, not yet. But this is only 1980. We have a well organized group who are working on the legislation. It should pass in 1984. It's getting opposition from some religious groups, especially the Catholics, the Orthodox, and some backward Protestants and Jews. They are almost our only obstacle. (Pausing thoughtfully) But I suppose it would be hard to wait for four years to dispose of Snooky.

Tranquilla: Good gracious! Four years! Oh my, no. Think of the emotional problems I'd develop. I suppose I'll have to leave candied aspirin around for Snooky to get into. But I don't see why the State can't dispose of her. After all, I am a taxpayer.