

Women's  
Liberation



By Father Paul J. Cuddy

The Church: 1970

'Good News'  
Is Forgotten

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



In any kind of major organizational change two things must happen:

Goals and values must be reformulated and interaction patterns (or structures) must be modified. One of the more discouraging aspects of the contemporary renewal in the Catholic Church is that both on the left and on the right most of the emphasis is on structure and very little on goals and values.

I was recently at a superb meeting of scholars of many disciplines concerned with the development of co-responsibility in the Church. One of the ironies of the meeting, however, was that the theologians and canon lawyers tended to emphasize the need for structural change while some of the social scientists there (including one non-Catholic) were much more concerned about the reformulation of goals. One would have expected exactly the opposite. After all, it is the social scientist who is to be concerned with structures and the theologian who is to be concerned with theory.

Such a stereotype of the academic disciplines is not altogether valid. The social scientist knows — perhaps better than does the theologian and the canonist — that structural change in the absence of reformulation of goals and values is likely to be self-defeating.

The sociologist may be in complete sympathy with the popular election of bishops, modifications in ecclesiastical celibacy (and this sociologist is certainly for all such changes); but he also realizes that democratization of the Church structure is likely to make little difference if the Church does not have a clear idea of what its message ought to be.

Some time ago, my friend, Eugene Kennedy, wrote an article about the "non-issues" in current ecclesiastical controversy. It seems to me that the non-issues are still very much with us, that we are devoting so much time and energy to agonizing over institutional change that we have lost sight of that message which we call the Good News and in the need to state that Good News clearly, powerfully to the world which, curiously enough, is probably better disposed to receive now than it has been for many centuries.

Of course, the reformulation of the Good News and the preaching of it with vigor and confidence is a far more difficult and demanding task than merely tinkering with ecclesiastical structures. The campaign for popular election of bishops or for a change in celibacy is simplicity itself when compared with the preaching of the Gospel.

I am not advocating the abandonment of the battle for structural reform but I am contending that even when the battle for reform is won, it will be a very frustrating victory because we will discover that it has accomplished so very little when so very much remains to be done. We will have essentially cleared away the non-issues and we will be forced to face the real issues.

It is necessary, therefore, that all the weaknesses of the draft of the Fundamental Law of the Code of Canon Law be severely criticized. It is a serious disappointment; while it will probably drive no one out of the Church it is likely to weaken even more the already waning credibility of ecclesiastical authority. As one who believes in the necessity of both order and law in any reorganization, I can only deplore the harmful impact on both order and respect for law that the draft of the Fundamental Law is going to have.

But there are far more important tasks for us than either drafting Fundamental Law or criticizing inadequate drafts. The real tragedy of the slow pace of structural reform is that outmoded structures have become an obsession; we have not been able to take our minds off the obsession long enough to realize that the modern world is hungry for the Gospel and that we have a marvelous opportunity for bringing the Good News to millions of people.

1920  
Labor unions were endorsed by the National Catholic Welfare Council the week Cardinal Gibbons of Washington announced the construction of "a large church and a parochial school for colored Catholics." The final processes toward the canonization of Joan of Arc were completed in Rome; and a story on a Catholic catechetical practice in London called "Pulpit Dialogues" contained this intriguing line: "Some years ago Father Bernard Vaughan conducted a series of dialogue sermons in the East End, where objections were made in the vernacular of the dock-side laborers."

1945  
The famous "Human Rights" clause was being drafted for the U.N. Charter. The Birmingham Deanery of the National Council of Catholic Women protested any dissemination of sex education literature in Alabama schools. Mass was said at Dachau as the first public rite celebrated there since the construction of the camp 12 years previously; and Bing Crosby hailed the rosary as "the perfect prayer."

1960  
At its 33rd annual commencement, Nazareth College of Rochester conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters degree on Miss Alice Foley. Gail Bristol, of St. Agnes High School, and Thomas Trevett, of McQuaid, won the Bishop's Oratorical Contest; and Mrs. James Kendrick was named "Mother of the Year" in Ithaca.

The Morriss Plan

Deposit  
Of Truth

By Frank Morriss



Some, either honestly or dishonestly, are bound to see in the new regulations concerning mixed marriages an excuse for relaxed vigilance in transmitting the patrimony of faith. They should be reminded that the duty of a Catholic to present the faith to his or her children, both through Baptism and instruction, is a natural duty and cannot be dispensed from by any authority.

Circumstances may remove the guilt of a Catholic partner for not fulfilling that duty, but they cannot abrogate it or lessen its gravity. And that is what the new statement from the Church on the obligation means.

The Catholic religion is Christ's estate, left for all men. The children of a Catholic have the right to inherit it, and no Catholic has a right to put his own interests ahead of that duty to make his children heirs of the faith. Since Christ gave us this precious deposit of truth with a Church to safeguard it, no Catholic has the right to throw it away for himself or his children.

A related duty demands that Catholic parents not entrust their children to dubious teachers of Church doctrine, or else should do all in their power to counteract the bad effects of such teachers. This is why parent-directed schools of Catholic training are growing in popularity.

Why am I pessimistic about possible misunderstanding of the new regulations? For one thing, because there has already been considerable misunderstanding and misinterpretation in two related areas—religious liberty and ecumenism. In regard to the former principle, some Catholic educators have

blindly accepted it as approval of the current notion that the young have every right to accept or reject Catholicism, or portions of it, as they see fit and still be in good conscience. This ignores what the Second Vatican Council said in the matter: "Religious freedom... has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society. Therefore it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and the one Church of Christ."

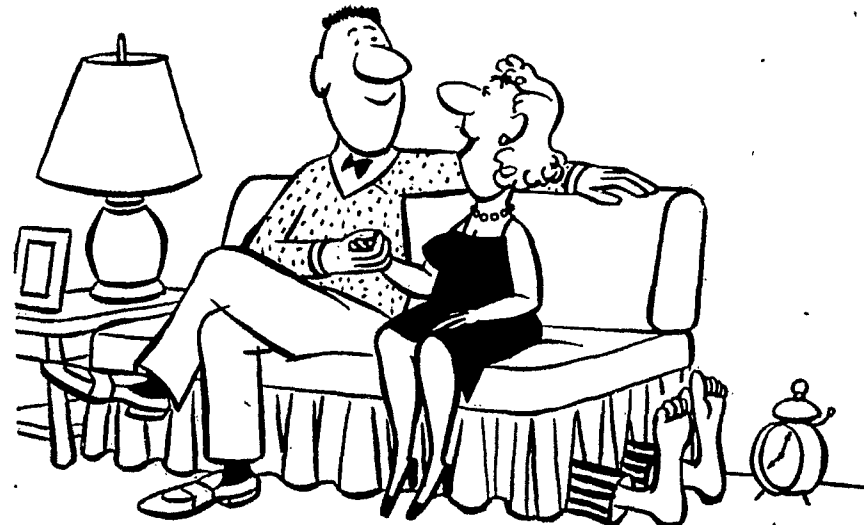
Part of that traditional doctrine is that men have the duty to seek the true religion, which is the Catholic faith, and having recognized it have the duty to embrace it, and obviously the duty to cling to it against all trials and vicissitudes. It is recognition of that duty that produces martyrs. It is neglect of that duty that today makes men unwilling even to inconvenience themselves to keep the faith.

A false sense of the demands of ecumenism, too, have weakened modern loyalty to the faith. It is eating at the very central part of our faith—the Eucharist. In some areas intercommunion is becoming common, and in many instances without any proper ecclesiastical approval but simply on the basis of priests not knowing or caring about what the Church says. Since it is obvious that many receiving the Eucharist under those circumstances do not recognize it as the real Presence, the inevitable result is to diminish respect for Catholic teaching concerning the Sacrament.

The Holy Father himself reminded early this year that intercommunion (except for

special, stated cases) is forbidden. He called this promiscuous use of giving the Eucharist to anyone a "deviation" and "not a good way" toward true ecumenism. Now if the Catholic teaching in such a grave matter is going to be either disregarded or distorted, it is certain that Catholic teaching regarding the duty of transmitting the faith to our children will be disregarded or distorted.

The modern mind finds indifference in regard to religious duty most comforting. Any understanding is repugnant that compels that mind to accept a solid and certain body of truths, that demands adherence of the modern man to a definite body of morality with certain restrictions and restraints. That is why some are certainly going to misuse the new regulations as an excuse not to fulfill a duty that can sometimes be difficult and embarrassing.



"My father said he was gonna make sure you left by eleven o'clock!"

About ten o'clock in the morning of May 1, Our Lady's Month, I was walking back from the barber shop, hatless and sporting the traditional haircut worn by order and stability "squares." The distance from the shop to St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell, which is the locale of my work, is only five blocks.

Two little redheaded boys, one about five and the other half as old, were playing in front of a house on the first corner. The five year old bounded forth to interrogate me. His little brother followed as is the wont of close-born brothers.

As a young priest I had an ambition to fill the sanctuary with redheaded altar boys. I always considered training boys for the service of the Lord a special privilege. My experience is that redheaded boys, and men too, seem to be blessed with some special grace. It is not a naive. It is just plain goodness. In fact, for twenty years I went to any movie which played Van Johnson, because he was the image of redheaded Father Ned O'Connor of Camden Diocese, a zealous and holy priest whom I revere.

So when the redheaded tots came bouncing toward me, I was especially pleased. Said the four year old: "What's your name?" Like John the Baptist, I confessed and did not deny, and replied: "Father Cuddy. I live at the hospital down the street. And what's your name?" "Bob." "Bob-what's your other name?" "Columbus." (It turned out to be Stoddard, but Columbus is what he said.)

After chatting a few minutes I said: "Well, I've got to go. See you later," and started off. Bob stepped forward, firmly seized my consecrated right hand in his own small hand, and said: "No. I want you to see my grandmother first!" His little brother took my other hand.

So these two cherubim, worthy of a Raphael painting, towed me to the open doorway. A young man about thirty; came out, smiling. I said: "These boys want me to meet their grandmother." He laughed and said: "They are attracted by your priest's uniform. We're from Dayton, Ohio, and the boys are fascinated by our young assistant pastor there."

The boys dragged me past the father through the living room, into the kitchen. A surprised older woman, but still young, and her golden-headed daughter-in-law were having coffee. Bobby bypassed his mother. He gestured with his little hand toward the older, but still young woman and said: "This is my grandmother!" His voice was a proclamation to all who have ears to hear. In that proclamation rang pride and joy, possession and affection — and utter security.

This encounter shot off a series of reflections on my return. They included:

1. The defeminizing Women's Liberation Movement. What man could equal a woman in her God-given spheres? As Phyllis McGinley wrote: "Men are not the equal to women. Women are not equal to men. They're different and complement one another."
2. Bobby's mother who radiated the loveliness of happy motherhood as I recalled her, hugging a third child, also a redhead, in her strong arms.
3. The thoroughly pleased grandmother, who enjoyed the affectionate possessiveness of her grandchildren.
4. The wholesomeness of the young father, who patently considered his fatherhood a gratifying vocation.

I think that God through nature does not intend men to walk on their hands, but to walk according to their nature. And I thank God for good mothers and fathers and grandparents who find true freedom and fulfillment in the joys of their natural vocations and in their dedication to their families and to their homes.