

A Call for Help

The evening President Nixon made his television announcement about sending U.S. troops into Cambodia he lost his place once in the reading of the address. There were a few seconds of confusion — his eyes and hands betrayed annoyance over his own blunder and the watching nation felt a sympathetic embarrassment. It was a prophetic error: Cambodia became the mistake which brought the most numbing anguish America ever has known in a single week.

The continuing contagion of university shutdowns, marches, petitions and laments divorced from any specific acts directed toward an understanding of the issues or a speeding of the war's end are almost self-defeating. In this vein the grieving president of Kent State University said last week: "I hear lunacy on one side. I see frightening repression on the other. I don't hear anyone in the center saying: 'Let's discuss, let us rationally investigate'."

The Christian viewpoint remains that crises of the times are signs of God's hand. Everything of sadness and evil that happens, whether by apparent perversion of man or absolute accident, is known and permitted by Divine Providence. And everything means something in terms of life's future. But the search for such meaning and the identification of the redemptive value in tragedy is very hard work.

The demonstrators who shout in anger are really calling for help, looking for direction. Deserving to be heard, they also need to be answered with words like "be patient", "trust", "forgive mistakes", "love". They say the Administration and society no longer deserve that response.

Would they hear a paraphrase of Our Lord's injunctions: "Do good to those whom you think reject you; pray for those who persecute your spirit. Those who hunger and thirst for justice shall be satisfied. But everyone who stays angry with his brother shall be held up for judgment. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you: this I order you, that you love one another."

—Fr. Richard Tormey

Mt. Carmel Closing

The tragedy of the closing of Mt. Carmel High School in Auburn is not simply that Catholic secondary education seems doomed in that very Catholic city. These are times when the loss of the spiritual and cultural facilities of Christian training which this school has offered for 15 years will seem more disastrous as the years go by.

The saddest overtone of the news is that Catholic families who have refused to enroll their children in Auburn's parochial schools and have sent their teenagers to the public high schools have been the cause of the demise of Mt. Carmel.

A school of this size and quality cannot function without solid annual enrollment no matter how enthusiastic its student body or how generous its friends. The prospect of steadily diminishing future entrance classes coming from a shrinking Catholic elementary school base made the Carmelite Fathers decide to withdraw from the community. Families who are not sold on Catholic education on either parochial or high school levels are strangling the hopes of those who are.

Auburn owes thanks to the families who built the school, the parishes who sustained it in financial need several times and the parents who have worked with energy and sacrifice to clear its annual deficits. And no one can fault the Carmelites and the Sisters of St. Joseph for the love, zeal and talent they have given to thousands of young Auburnians.

But without families pressing to give their children a full Catholic education, religious schools will fail. Part of the cause for family-indifference to Mt. Carmel may have been failure of promotion of secondary Catholic education by the clergy. Another partial cause may have been the school's inability to challenge the community with such salesmanship and excitement of program that its public image would steadily be growing more popular. It seems too late to correct either.

Auburn's regrets over Mt. Carmel and its confusion about the future may be a warning to other communities. If our children need the values of full Catholic education, how must we reshape it to keep our schools both alive and ever-improving in their work? Finances and enrollment may be helped by consolidation but broad parental approval of Catholic schools is even more important.

—R. T.

Now Hear This Drug Abuse: Where State Needs Church

By Alex McDonald

State and Church usually watch each other warily over a traditional wall that says: "Keep out of my business." But last week Gov. Rockefeller waved a distress flag and asked church people to come over the wall and study a problem the state cannot control: drug abuse.

Nearly 400 ministers, priests, rabbis, Sisters, and lay people representing the whole religious family in New York State met in Albany last Tuesday for a one-day convocation with state narcotic authorities. The purpose: to discuss how moral values should be communicated for the prevention of drug abuse as well as for the rehabilitation of the addict.

This observer, admitting ignorance of the size of the statewide drug-use epidemic and the terrors of its destructiveness, was alternately awed and depressed and excited all through that wordy day.

Statistics about users ranging from 12-year-olds to tough crim-

inals, evidence that high schools are "inundated with illicit drug use," testimony from New York City priests fighting addiction in their parishes, challenges to devise media for implanting religious motivation — filled my notebook and churned my mind.

The governor said, with impressive earnestness, much more like a father than a politician, "There are dimensions to this problem that government cannot solve alone. We have no answers which go to the heart of the matter. We need religious people, and we need the whole community of the state to help us."

Drug abuse poses a legal and a health problem which we have to leave to the state. But because drugs can destroy both the mind and the spirit of those who become "hooked," religion must come forward to help young people hold a moral defense against the deadly attraction of drugs.

The Catholic Church is uniquely structured to enter

any community's war on drug abuse. With our school system, pulpits, social service institutions, child care centers and pastoral contact with youth we can be teachers and warners, counsellors and guardians, detectors and healers while the drug trade swirls around us.

But religion's underlying role must be to meet the question of why our youth take drugs. What can the Church offer them to substitute for narcotics? Their values are twisted or futile: can religion fill the vacuum and redirect their lives?

If the Church—and that's the whole Family of God, not just the Bishop or Chancery or pastor or a parish—would become a "pusher" to help youth "find life," it must find out what the potential drug user is looking for in the troubling circumstances of his life and why he thinks drugs will satisfy him.

Man lives or dies by his values: they give him direction for what he pursues. Can religion teach a life-style with life-values which will meet the loneliness, fear, hopelessness, failure, boredom or appetite for adventure which sends the teenagers as well as collegians to some form of narcotic escape? Horror talk won't frighten them: ideals must be positive, believable, practical.

The Church's communication of spiritual values which give strength to the soul have surely not touched those already pleased with their drug use. Dare we admit a hopelessness to keep other clean or bring the addicts back?

Letters

Missioner Seeks Rosaries, Medals

Editor:

Vayala is a newly erected mission of converts from hill tribes. Their faith is very poor; so are their living conditions.

Religious articles will be of immense help to get them to such duties. Hence, may I request your good readers to send me their spare rosaries, medals, statues, pictures, scapulars, calendars, used Easter and Christmas cards for my mission. God bless you. Mail them to:

Father Paul Cruz
Vayala, P.O., via
PAROKODE; Kerala, India

The Mouths Of Babes

The pharaohs wanted to be mummies. It usually killed them.

Such sage sayings have been culled from the work of children in a Detroit grade school and distributed via "The Michigan Catholic" and NC News Service.

(To be continued next week)

The Word for Sunday

The Gift Of Tongues

By Father Albert Shamon



Of all the phenomena that happened on the first Pentecost, the one singled out for most attention these days seems to be the gift of tongues. This gift is called glossolalia (tongue babbling). And the sect emphasizing its use is called Pentecostal.

There are only three instances of speaking in tongues in the entire book of Acts (2:4-6; 10:46; 19:6). The precise nature of this gift remains obscure.

The Pentecostal glossolalia most probably was not a gift to speak foreign languages not previously learned. There was no need for such a miracle: everybody in Jerusalem knew Aramaic or Greek. Moreover, if such a gift had been given, why has it not been repeated anywhere else in Church History? Then, too, the Pentecostal tongues given to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10) and in Ephesus (Acts 19) were obviously not the power to speak a foreign tongue.

"The interpretation of the Pentecostal glossolalia in terms of an intelligible apostolic speech 'in other tongues' is judged by many to be the innovation of the author of Acts in the interest of his universalist mission theology. . . . If Luke shared Paul's dim view of glossolalia, it is understandable that he would interpret ecstatic speech as speaking in 'other' tongues, thus giving the first Pentecostal experience lasting significance: the inauguration of a mission to all the world, which would overcome every division of mankind" (St. Jerome Commentary, 45.17).

Many Scripture scholars think that the gift of tongues consisted in incoherent shouting of words and phrases in one's own or in a foreign language, but without logical sequence or meaning. St. Paul compared glossolalia to sounds produced haphazardly by musical instruments without melody or rhythm (1 Co. 14:7).

Since the only other mention of gift of tongues is in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, some scholars see in it a condescen-

sion on the part of God to the mentality and cultural world of the primitive Christian converts. The Corinthians were used to the emotional excitement and religious enthusiasm of pagan cults like that of Dionysos or Bacchus. By using a similar phenomenon, God manifested the Spirit's presence in the Christian community and stirred up the bystanders to praise and glorify God.

Now Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, not to encourage the use of tongues, but to correct the abuse of this gift. It is a startling fact that the church that placed greatest emphasis on this much-abused and misunderstood gift was the weakest, most worldly, carnal, and immature of all the churches Paul had founded — the church of Corinth. It was a divided church — split, sectarian, and proud. Most of Paul's letter to the Corinthians is occupied with correcting abuses, confusion, and disorder in these childish believers.

In his first letter to them Paul speaks of the gifts of the Spirit in chapters twelve and fourteen. These two chapters could follow one another almost uninterruptedly. Yet between them Paul has inserted chapter thirteen on love. He wanted to teach that no spiritual gift without love is worth anything. "If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not charity, I am only a noise-maker."

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