



By DR. MONIKA HELLWIG

By this time the Berrigan brothers have become nationally known figures. Fathers Daniel Berrigan, S.J., and Philip Berrigan, S.S.J., have presented Christians of our time, and Catholics more especially, with an agonizing dilemma. They have placed themselves over against the law of the land in a radical stance in the name of the law of God as Catholic priests and as religious men.

It is the stance of the prophets, which we recognize from the Hebrew scriptures. It is the stance of the Apostles who disobeyed rulers and were imprisoned and escaped from prison, and said in their own defense, "Obedience to God comes before obedience to men" (Acts 5:29).

We are used to hearing of martyrs and saints and heroes who challenged the great pagan

empires of ancient times, who refused to submit to laws of Islam, who have held out in modern times against Hitler and against Communist regimes. But it is difficult to imagine anyone disobeying the laws of a Christian country in the name of Christ and of the law of God.

It is very difficult to see that in our country where we are constantly invoking the name of God as the guarantee of our social and political structures, there could be any scope for challenging the law of the land in the name of the law of God. And then the Berrigans come along and make things uncomfortable for everyone by forcing us to re-examine our assumptions.

Somehow, ever since the time of the emperor Constantine of Byzantium in the fourth century, we have tended to suppose that the law of God could

be captured so fully in the law of a Christian country that a Christian would only have to obey the government in public matters and concern himself personally about morality in private matters and all would be well.

When we look back over history we know that the assumption was not justified. Christian countries had laws endorsing slavery and wars of colonial expansion. They have had laws imposing the death penalty for small thefts by poor people. Christian bishops preached obedience to Hitler's military aggression because Hitler was against Communism.

Clearly the laws of a Christian country cannot be taken as an absolute by a man who really has faith. Like everything else in his life they must be judged by God's revelation. But this means one has to reconsider

er what we know of the law of God.

For the Apostles the giving of the Spirit, the very breath of God, at Pentecost, was the outpouring of the true law of God in the hearts of Christians, setting them free from the necessity of external sanctions because the divine will had become an inner drive in their lives.

Being Jewish, the apostles observed Pentecost as the feast of weeks, the celebration of the giving of the law on Sinai. They recognized the law of God revealed on Sinai as the law that set Israel free — from Egypt, from sin, from oppression by the powerful among them, from boredom and absurdity. Being Jewish they knew that the sacred recital of the Ten Commandments was not like the listing of a code. It was more like a series of insights, hints as to

the directions to follow to build a just society.

For the Apostles, Jesus was not a new law giver. He was the Law. In him they heard God speaking to them — not only in his words, but first and foremost in all that he was. For them the person of Jesus was a clearer revelation of God's wisdom than any words spoken or written.

This is why faith is a quest. Men of faith are people who meditate the gospel not only with their minds but with their lives, in order to pursue the law and justice of God which are never fully realized in any code of laws or any government.

This is why we still have prophets who do strange and unpredictable things and do not fit comfortably within our categories — because faith and the law of God are like that.

To Believe Is to Get . . .

By FR. JOHN T. BYRNE

To confront Jesus in Faith is also to confront the radical demand that His life and His teaching make on us.

Obedience to Jesus in faith results in a style of life characterized by an imitation of Him. We don't just believe, we do something about it. We get involved. We give Christian Witness.

This is not to advocate a mere activism or do-good-ism. There is a vertical as well as a horizontal dimension to response to Faith that a Christian should make. The vertical unites man to God in prayer, meditation, liturgical worship, etc., and the horizontal extends into the world and is directed in love to all mankind. Neither one of these is to be lost sight of.

But because Christians have been somewhat remiss in their social obligations in the recent past a tremendous emphasis is being placed on this aspect of the Christian life at present. This is good as long as it does not result in a new loss of balance.

Christians from the very beginning of Christianity have had difficulty in establishing the correct stance toward the world.

In the life of the Christian there is necessarily a certain amount of tension between this world and the world to come. The primary purpose of Christianity of course is to direct man, incorporated into Christ by grace and faith, toward his eternal destiny.

But in the meantime the Christian is in the world and he must become involved in establishing justice and charity there. He has the critical function of discerning and discriminating between the nature of what ought to be and what, in fact, is the case. (This is what is meant by the prophetic office in the Church).

But, as such, Christianity is never a cultural structuring of society or an ethic alone. It is the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Involved!

The role of the Christian and the Church of which he is a member in the world today is presented to us in the document from Vatican II called the "Church in the Modern World" and by Pope Paul's encyclical "Progressio Populorum" (on the progress of peoples).

This role is one of service, humbly accepting all of earthly reality, refraining from condemning but rather doing all that is possible to understand and to help, looking on real progress with enthusiasm yet courageously pointing out evil too when it exists. This service to the world is a necessary part of Christian witness and the response to Faith that is demanded of a Christian.

All of this is very closely related to the theology of secularism which we hear a great deal about today. What kind of world is it that we are to serve?

We can imagine the people in the world 100 years from now laughing at us as we tend to take rather lightly the "Age of Enlightenment" or other periods which considered themselves rather important.

But it is a secularized world. It has been de-mythologized. The secular sciences have disclosed realities, made discoveries and shattered taboos and superstitious ideas which did hold back man's progress. Even his ideas about religion in some instances needed purification. But this does not mean that science has all the answers.

There are still unanswered questions and the Christian faith is challenged to become the advocate for questions which no laboratory or computer can solve. By posing these questions faith fulfills its role as the conscience of the secularized world.

The maintaining of a real distinction between Christian hope and hope for human progress through science and technology will pinpoint those things which human progress cannot touch, such as suffering, tra-

gedy, failure and death, as the existentialists are constantly pointing out. These are the things which form the ground for the dread and doubt that pervades the secularized world; these are the problems that Christian faith and hope alone has an answer to.

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**KNOW
YOUR
FAITH**

The Second Time Around

By FATHER JOSEPH M. CHAMPLIN

(The people mentioned in this column are real. However, at the doctor's request and for reasons which will become evident, their names have been changed.)

Mark Adams is a bright, competent and sensitive physician practicing internal medicine on the East coast. His warm, personal interest in patients matches the professional skill he possesses.

Several years ago deep sorrow entered the young doctor's life. His wife, Kathleen, a quite pretty and personable woman of 28, died under tragic circumstances leaving Mark alone and with responsibility for three young children.

It was a difficult time. Many came to share his tears, offer prayers or lend support. But, as in all crises of life, ultimately the burdened individual must stand on his own, reach deep down for strength and hope, courage and faith.

In the last analysis he must either face the challenge or crawl within a shell, move on or yield to self-pity. Dr. Adams' response to this tragedy can be gleaned from these portions of his letter to a friend some months after the funeral.

"Out of this tragedy have come many blessings . . . My friends have shown overwhelming kindness and charity; it is indescribable. I continue to be busy in practice and have mustered up unbelievable faith and

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courage and determination to go forward. God bless all of these folks.

"Mind you, I deeply miss my lovely Kathleen . . . But I am at peace in this regard and know that because of her goodness and love of God and her family, she is in eternal happiness with her creator.

"My hope for the future is to keep the family unit together and, if I'm lucky, I can once again love another woman and be happy as I was with Kathleen. I'm sure she would want this anyway, because she loved me so much. Pray for me that I find this love."

Three years later this someone appeared, a generous, attractive girl named Jennifer who grew to love him and his family, who came to be loved in return by the widowed doctor and his motherless children.

They were married in January with a ceremony which expressed the real joy of such an event.

Upon entering the church, guests received a specially prepared, stapled booklet (cost to the groom, \$30) containing words to the songs, responses for the congregation and an outline of the service.

Two nuns from the parish played guitars and led the sing-

ing of "All The Earth Proclaim The Lord," "Take Our Bread," and "They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love."

Jennifer read the first biblical excerpt (Colossians 3:12-17, "Above all have love, which is the bond of perfection.") and Mark the second. A gospel selection (John 15:9-12, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.") carried on the theme of love which pervades every nuptial ceremony and permeated theirs.

After the exchange of vows at offertory time Doctor Adams' children, now older and bigger, carried gifts to the altar, presented these to their father and new mother who passed them on to the celebrant.

Before Communion, bride and groom shared their love for one another by a Kiss of Peace, then went through the congregation conveying similar wishes to relatives and friends in the pews.

This was a beautiful wedding and an extremely happy occasion. Happy for Jennifer, radiant as any bride could be. Happy for Mark, who has discovered that his new love, while different, is, if possible, even deeper and more fulfilling than that wonderful one he knew with his first wife.

Happy also, I would think, for Kathleen, his "private little saint." People who love rejoice in the happiness of a beloved. And, as Dr. Adams said, "I'm sure she would want this anyway, because she loved me so much."

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