

Dissent and Love Can Act Together

Confrontation and protest used to result in a dialogue which opened disputed issues to rational discussion. Today even healthy and democratic dissent about the war, race, academic values, religious issues and family traditions quickly hardens into militance, or at least into a closed-mind polarization.

What can a Christian do about it all? It is obvious that we cannot condone dissenting thought when it is laced with hatred and malice, nor approve protests which are destructive of property, injurious to anyone's body or capable of erupting into violence.

Many sensitive people feel that in an era of rapid change our main responsibility is to resist change, to accept the status quo as though God Himself planned it and to believe that all authority is omniscient and infallible. They are frightened by dissent and sometimes would have it rebutted by discipline which does not ask the cause of the unrest.

Others believe that the Church must serve the world and therefore cannot idly stand along the sidelines of the social and political revolutions of our time. They urge the Church to have a voice and lend a hand judging the meaning and the goal of reasonable protests. Their convictions about 'Love thy neighbor' demand that the practicing Christian has a special obligation to participate in social change in atonement for the monstrous errors of the past which the Church too quietly tolerated.

A new book entitled "A Theology of Protest" by German theologian Father Bernard Haring, says with unique application to the troubles which disturb our America: "To be a Christian means to be on the move. Nothing is more repugnant to the biblical concept of Christianity than complacency or idle satisfaction with the status quo. The Christian today cannot be content with merely minor adjustments, for everything is measured by the highest ideal, by the ideal of God's love as measured in Jesus, Christ. Our hope of perfect brotherhood must express itself . . . in our seeking to bring about needed reforms in social conditions."

The real Christian, says Father Haring, seeks to overthrow or to reform only to open doors for men to find justice and harmony. Every step must be inspired by true love even though it seems that nonviolence will not be enough. As Christ is the prototype of all nonviolence, anyone who commits himself to a peaceful struggle for righteousness runs the same risk of having to suffer and, according to earthly standards, having to fail.

—Father Richard Tormey

Lest We Forget

Speaking at Gettysburg, President Lincoln said that "the world will little note nor long remember" what he said there that day but that the nation should never forget those who were killed there.

Of course that humble man was wrong and his Gettysburg Address lives on.

Have we remembered the men who died there? The bleached crosses still stand, as others in Flanders Field, Normandy, Arlington, all silent witness to the futility of war.

On Memorial Day, let us remember that men's lives long ago have been sacrificed in "wars to end all wars."

Now as nations still turn to battlefields to settle their differences, young men are still dying.

Now in the spring of 1970 Americans engage in ridiculous haggling over the merits of still another war and young men are still dying.

Americans engage in outbursts of violence and irrelevant vituperation on both sides and young men are still dying.

Are we doomed to an infinity of Normandys and Vietnams? Will we forever be adding crosses upon crosses?

The greatest man who ever lived said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Shall His cross also be forgotten?

This Memorial Day 1970 let's all take time to pray for our men in Vietnam and for ourselves. Enough crosses have been wasted.

—Carmen Viglucci

Letters to the Editor

What the Obit Didn't Say

Editor:

On Wednesday, May 6, 1970, Father Daniel B. O'Rourke died. The Courier-Journal carried an article on his death. The article stated he was pastor of Mother of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church in Greece for 33 years. This was a fact. But, the article did not state how he loved his parishioners, or the children of the school, or his beautiful 150-year-old church. This was also a fact. I know, because I was one of the first children to attend his first school.

In 1946 Father O'Rourke went to the people of his parish and asked them to let their children come to a school he wanted to start. He finally had enough to open a school in an old house on Latta Road. Later, through the generosity of his people, another school was built, "The Quonset Hut," on Mt. Read Boulevard. Some years later, the present school was built.

Many are the times Father O'Rourke would stay up late into the night taking the children of his school to and from a Valentine or St. Patrick's Day party because some of us didn't have transportation. Speaking of transportation, Father O'Rourke even took some of the kids to and from school in his car every day, making at least three or four trips each way because they were not allowed by the town, at that time, to ride the school bus. During the holidays, he always remembered each of us with a small gift.

Because of Father O'Rourke, my life has been enriched and my school days are memorable. To me he was a priest's priest; a person's person.

—Shirley Wallner O'Brien
37 Cosmos Drive, Rochester

Parish Councils Yes!

Editor:

The executive committee of the Southern Tier Association of Catholics (STAC) enthusiastically

endorses the recent statement of the Priests' Association with regard to the establishment of diocesan and parish councils. Eight years have lapsed since Vatican II's directives on the roles of laity and clergy in sharing the mission of the church.

Bishop Hogan, as stated by the Priest's Association, "has on several occasions stressed the theme of co-responsibility in the overall administration of the diocese." With such support by our church fathers we ask:

Why has so little progress been made in the institution of viable, co-responsible councils of laymen and clergy working together to democratically determine the future growth of our parish and diocesan communities? Does the problem lie with reactionary clergy clinging to their comfortable, if tiringly responsible bases of power? Does it lie with apathetic laymen, or laymen not yet aware of their responsibility to assume co-leadership in the Church of Christ?

STAC, in connection with RACL, and with the consent of Bishop Hogan, is currently conducting a survey of diocesan parishes to determine just how effectively Vatican II's call for lay-clergy leadership has been heeded.

Executive Committee of STAC
Raymond A. Defendorf,
member
Horseheads

On Our Clergy And the War

Editor:

I am disturbed that the Catholic Diocese of Rochester and some of the clergy have taken a definite stand regarding our presence in southeast Asia. It appears that many clergymen and religious are willing to sacrifice the Catholic population of southeast Asia to communism merely to satisfy the vocal demands of a well organized minority in this country.

I would like to see a similar official expression from the Catholic hierarchy regarding the Catholics in Eastern Europe. These people were turned over to the Soviet Union against their will by the United States and Great Britain towards the end of World War II (Yalta Conference), without any great outcry from the Catholic hierarchy. Despite this, the Catholics of Eastern Europe have adhered to their faith with a zeal known only by martyrs.

No one wants war. However, when we made certain commitments after World War II regarding southeast Asia, the people in that area had every right to believe that we would honor these commitments.

It is important that many American students reacted to the exhortations of the New Left in an emotional manner, but it is more important that those of us who have some perspective of history should not remain apathetic in speaking up for truth, justice and freedom (such archaic and now nearly meaningless words).

Richard J. Brzustowicz, M.D.
Rochester

The Word for Sunday Corpus Christi Source of Love

By Father Albert Shamon



Sunday is the feast of Corpus Christi (the body of Christ). The feast originated in the twelfth century, the century of the Blessed Sacrament. In the age of St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas, the great theological question of the day was, "How could Christ be present in the Blessed Sacrament?" After the Fourth Lateran Council (1214) had resolved the question and defined that Christ was really, truly, and substantially present in the Eucharist, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament escalated.

The tabernacle was introduced where the Blessed Sacrament could be publicly "visited," worshipped, prayed to. This was not at the altar, for at that time people went to Communion only a few times a year at the great feasts. Then the feast of Corpus Christi was instituted in 1264 to honor the Blessed Sacrament by festive processions.

Both St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure were commissioned by Pope Urban to compose independently the Mass and the Office for the feast. When both saints were summoned to submit their compositions to the Pope, Thomas read his first. The story goes that as St. Bonaventure listened to the beautiful poetry of the Angelic Doctor, he tore up his own work without having it read at all. Later in the church of St. Dominic in Orvieto, Our Lord spoke through the crucifix before which Thomas was praying and gave divine approval to the Office he had composed. "Thomas," our Lord said, "you have written well of Me; ask what you will, and I will give it." Thomas replied, "Grant, Lord, that I may only love you more."

Today there is so much hate, division, intolerance in the world. What the world needs now/Is Love sweet love/It's the only thing there's just too little of./What the world needs now/Is love sweet love/No, not just for some/But for everyone. Thomas' prayer, therefore, can well be ours. And the Body of Christ about which he wrote so brilliantly is the source and cause of that love.

There is a story of six men trapped in bleak and bitter cold. Each man possessed a stick of

wood. The fire that kept them warm and alive began to die for the need of logs. The first man held his back, because he noticed one of the faces around the fire was black. The next man looking across the way saw a man not of his own church. And he couldn't bring himself to give the fire his stick of birch. The third man sat in tattered clothes. He gave his coat a hitch, and thought, "Why should I use my log to warm the idle rich?" The rich man just sat back and thought of the wealth he had amassed and of how to keep what he had earned from the lazy shiftless poor. The black man's face bespoke revenge as the fire passed from his sight. For all he saw in his stick of wood was a chance to spite the white. The last man of this forlorn group did nothing but for gain. "You give and I'll give" was how he played the game. So they all froze to death with their logs held tight in their hands. Their death was proof of human sin. They didn't die from the cold without, they died from the cold within. (Adapted from James Kinney's "The Cold Within").

The trouble with the world today is heart trouble. Seldom in history has the Church been in more need of Corpus Christi. For Corpus Christi is the sign of the world's greatest loves. It signifies the parental love that nourishes—"Take and eat." And it symbolizes the marital love that makes one of two: "This is my body." Have it, hold it—for it nourishes life, but especially love, without which life would be but hell.

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