

Salting the Earth

Ethnicity

By Father John Hempel

The National Commission on the Causes of Violence (Koerner Report) indicated that the crisis of our cities has so escalated that we must move toward a reduction of inevitable group conflict between white urban ethnic middle-American working class and the minority poor, by paying new attention to the alienation of the white urban ethnic groups.

During the past week I spent considerable time at Catholic University attending a seminar to try to find some solutions to this problem.

Discussions centered around the validity of promoting ethnicity for its own sake or to promote it as a means of solving the disadvantage situation of deprived white ethnics.

It was determined that white ethnic groups so often felt that when they were in a deprived situation, such as deteriorating

housing, no monies were available to them but only to the Black or Puerto Rican community.

When this situation was found to be a reality, it was often due to a lack of organization, a lack of legislation or a lack of knowledge of legislation to meet these needs. Because of the almost absolute ghettoized and deprived situation of Blacks and Puerto Ricans a sense of organization and knowledge of existing programs makes it essential for them to search out every program that will alleviate their condition.

Conclusions resulting from this seminar indicated a need to organize around ethnicity, but above all, have the white ethnic groups coalesce with the minority groups in order to form a power structure great enough to bring about much needed change for all the poor,

regardless of color. The evil lies not in the minority groups nor the white middle class society, but in the system plagued by the inability to determine priorities and by a failure to attack those who are removing the cream from the milk.

White ethnic groups have gone far in becoming a part of a basic white Anglo-Saxon oriented society. Too often however they fail to realize that there are white ethnics left behind and others struggling to be a part of this society. But above all, there is a failure to understand that even though the chains of physical slavery were removed some years ago from the black man, he still suffers the indignity of psychological bondage to fear, ignorance, and prejudice of a white oriented society.

Our failure to resolve these problems will bring down upon us the judgment of history—the destruction of a great nation which held out a dream of a better life for all men living within her shores — the so called American dream. But worse than this, our individual failures to meet this issue as Catholic Christians will produce an even more serious judgment, for this last judgment is eternal.

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Holy Father Declares:

Church Must be Poor

Vatican City — (RNS) — Observing that the Church not only should be poor, but "should be seen as poor," Pope Paul VI announced that reforms were under way to give the Church "an image of poverty" more in keeping with the Gospel.

Speaking at his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Basilica, the Pope stressed the "immense importance" of Pope John's vision of the Church as "the Church of the poor."

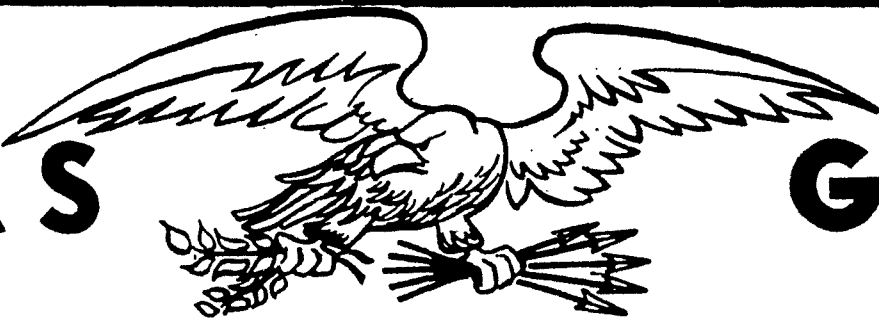
After recalling the value of evangelical poverty as a personal virtue demanded of Christians, Pope Paul underscored Vatican II's call for "another kind of poverty—ecclesial poverty—which should be practiced by the Church as a collective body meeting in Christ."

The pontiff frankly admitted that in the course of history the Church has presented different "aspects," such as that of "a great property owner" or "a civil power." She has also, he said, presented the "aspect" of great wealth, "by decorating her cult — her worship — with magnificent temples and rich

vestments," in an endeavor to express "its sacred character and spiritual inspiration."

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