

The Church: 1970

## Are Universities Doing Anything?

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



In a previous column we argued that colleges and universities were "unreal" places. The whole idea behind the college is that it is a place secluded from the rest of the world where thought, study, and learning can take place.

The idea may be basically sound, though the seclusion, if it is too rigid, produces unreal people—and, if the truth is known, a lot of our faculty members are very unreal people. Hence, they are completely unaware of the political impact of their own behavior and quite innocent of the fact that that behavior might even destroy the university and indeed the whole academic world of which they are a part.

They are so swept along by the power and magnificence of their own rhetoric that they are quite unaware of the need for consensus, coalition, and compromise to effect political change. In fact, they would spurn such activities with lordly disdain.

Some of the unrealities of the academic world have purpose, or at least had purpose. Thus, the custom of tenure—by which a man cannot be fired from his job save if grave misconduct is proved against him—was originally designed to provide the security necessary for a thoughtful and frequently unpopular scientific research.

But, increasingly, tenure has become something that is not so much earned but which is demanded as a matter of right. If a faculty member has not engaged in enough scholarship to justify promotion he can promptly charge he is being denied it because of his political stance and, in some instances, blackmail and browbeat his colleagues into giving him a permanent appointment and once permanency is obtained he can, if he wishes, ignore students completely; very considerable numbers of academics do just that.

Equally unreal is the fact that higher education is, generally speaking, innocent of evaluation. A professor is promoted not because he is an effective teacher of students, not because it has been clearly demonstrated that students learn something from him, but because of his colleagues' evaluation of his professional publications.

Larry H. Litten, one of my colleagues at the National Opinion Research Center, argues that higher education is irre-

sponsible precisely because it does not engage in evaluation of its own activities and is not at all concerned to begin such an evaluation. Colleges and universities, in other words, do pretty much what's always been done (since the Middle Ages, in fact) and just assume with blind faith that it has educational impact. Of course the students are evaluated. Tests, term papers, examinations, grade point averages, credit hours, degree requirements, etc., etc., etc.

Most of this evaluation has absolutely nothing to do with the student's ability to think and express himself—which one presumes is supposed to be the principal capacity to be acquired in college. It is a well-known research fact that the grade point average correlates with practically nothing in life save further grade point averages. It is a totally unreal, economic exchange in which a student provides certain specified works and the professor provides the student with certain specified grades in exchange for the work.

In the process, anw communication of thought between the student and professor is accidental and any evaluation of the student's increasing capacities for thought and expression is minimal. Having amassed the proper number of grades and the required number of courses, the student is presented with a degree which is his visa to suburbia, to a job, or to a graduate school, but which means absolutely nothing in terms of skill in thought and expression, and which has probably been obtained by a process which has required him to neglect his powers of skill and expression.

I have a hunch that if the unrealities of grade point average and degree were removed from the student, faculty, administrator relationship, there would be a good deal less anger and frustration on the campus. If students are tired, restless and rebellious by the time May rolls around, one can hardly blame them for they have come to the unreality of the college campus, allegedly because that unreality creates an environment in which they are to learn how to think and to express themselves, and instead they study for tests and write term papers.

Burning down buildings is a bit of an extreme response (though one that dates back to the Middle Ages, too) but one can understand it. The kids are being cheated and they know it.

On The Right Side

## Absorbing Grass Roots

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



On Thursday, June 19, I was scheduled to speak to the Men's Club of St. John of Rochester, in Perinton, a Rochester suburb. The subject: Communications and Their Impact.

Because I have a strong sense of the fraternity of the priesthood, I make it a point not to isolate myself from my brother priests. In a real sense, they are my family. Therefore, if my destination is Auburn or Elmira or Rochester I drop in for a brief visit—or longer if it is meal time—at one or several rectories en route.

Arrival at Perinton was to be 7:45 p.m. I thought: "Haven't seen Fr. Henry Atwell in three months. I'll go by way of Avon." At 8:30 Fr. Atwell opened the door in welcome. "Glad to see you. I do have a dinner appointment and must leave at 7:00. But come in!"

Father Atwell has one of the best developed senses of humor—and of timing—in the diocese. He chuckled in describing a convention he attended recently in Chicago, where diversity of interests and demands were almost infinite.

"I sat next to an earnest Women's Liberation Movement delegate at the banquet," he recounted. "She explained feverishly the WLM demands. For example, if industry, yes, even

the church, employs 50 men in their work, we want an equal number of 50 women. This goes for all organizations."

With a disguised twinkle Father Henry queried: "Does this include the Buffalo Bills?" The WLM delegate looked at him darkly and returned to her soup.

At 7:30 I got to St. John's rectory. The housekeeper said: "Father Collins is on Retreat. Father Reif is at the meeting place. A man from the Club will pick you up." I was glad the priests were not there, because my host turned out to be Bob Steinorth, an old student friend of Sampson College days. He is unusual. He was a firm Protestant, and one of the "wheels" of the Protestant Program at the College. Since we shared the same chapel, we became good friends. He is still a good Protestant married to a devout Catholic; but in this age of ecumenism he is also an usher at St. John's and active in the Men's Club. We had a great half-hour chat, then off to the meeting.

An interesting, cheerful group of solid male parishioners, neither stagnant nor revolutionary in ideas or ideals were there.

I was interested in the genetic and personality similarity of

the president, Dick Delmonte of RIT, with his brother, Father Albert of Hornell. Father Albert's earnestness in the pulpit sometimes brings a clenched fist lightly on the pulpit and a stern glare at the congregation. They love it. Brother Dick's own earnestness manifested itself in an occasional verbal staccato to emphasize a special point. I knew their grandfather, Dave Fitzpatrick, whose goodness and integrity make the yelping of the denigrators of pre-Vatican II Catholicism a great foolishness. Anyway, the club men were real: sincere in faith and charity, uncomplicated in their personalities, and happy men.

Opinion polls are supposed to give the pulse of grass roots thinking. I like my own method, a cordial mixing with priests of varied enthusiasms, people of diverse education and vocations, periodicals and papers of antipodal opinions, TV with its awful impact.

And through this system I find three kinds of Catholic feeling: one, a love of the Church and our Holy Father; a second, an uneasiness and unhappiness at ideas in press and pulpits; a third, a vehement anger because the Church isn't being renewed according to the erratic lights of impositionists.

Where do you think you fit?

The Morriss Plan

## Jesuits Found Wanting

By Frank Morriss



Res Ipsa Loquitur is a legal axiom meaning "the thing speaks for itself." It is also the name of the quarterly publication of the Georgetown University Law Center, which is at least nominally a Jesuit institution.

The spring issue of Res Ipsa Loquitur should really be entitled "The Abominable Thing Speaks For Itself," for it contains two pleadings in favor of abortion, one as an editorial and the other in what the publication calls "a comprehensive and scholarly study of present and proposed abortion laws," the gist of which is that the state has no right to interfere in any way when a woman wishes to get rid of her unborn child.

The magazine lets the law center administration and faculty play Pilate by printing on its inside cover a disavowal of responsibility for views expressed therein. Nevertheless, the publication is put out and copyrighted in the name of the law center itself, and I dare say the printed warning would not rescue the administration from a law suit if libel were involved; it should not rescue the administration from guilt for something that is far worse—the advocacy of sin that cries to heaven for vengeance.

I write this sadly, for not only am I a graduate of Georgetown's law school (forerunner of the law center), but also of another Jesuit institution, Regis College of Denver. But I would be unfaithful to the respect—yes, even love—of what the Society of Jesus once

was if I did not raise the question of what it has become. It seems to me the Jesuits are in the process of being betrayed by 1) their commitment to excellence, and 2) a false understanding of the tradition of obedience and loyalty.

Georgetown law center is an excellent example of what has happened in regard to point number one. Except for Harvard, Georgetown has probably given more graduates to the bench, to political office, and to government service than any other law school. By all measurements of professionalism Georgetown law center is a huge success, so much so that the issue of Res Ipsa Loquitur in question, immediately under its editorial plea that we should curb population growth by throwing off all curbs on abortion, could report that Georgetown's president (Very Rev. Robert Henle, S.J.) had announced a one-million dollar gift to the law center's building fund.

In this successful pursuit of excellence something unfortunately has been lost. Georgetown lawyers come out no worse, but certainly no better, than any others from a moral, ethical or philosophic viewpoint. And the only valid reason for the Society of Jesus to conduct a law school is to produce not professionally competent lawyers but lawyers dedicated to the highest ideals. For Georgetown to produce lawyers who think like the authors of the articles in question is bad enough. But to sponsor publication of their views as part of their professional training is directly antithetical to what the

Society of Jesus should represent.

I have written mostly about the Jesuits in regard to this fiasco because the Society of Jesus is what is most important. But the two young pleaders for abortion should not get off scot free.

A. Michael Knapp of Maryland makes two points: Unwanted children are often abused; too many children threaten our environment. His way of solving both points is to make sure children don't survive either to be abused or to pollute our environment.

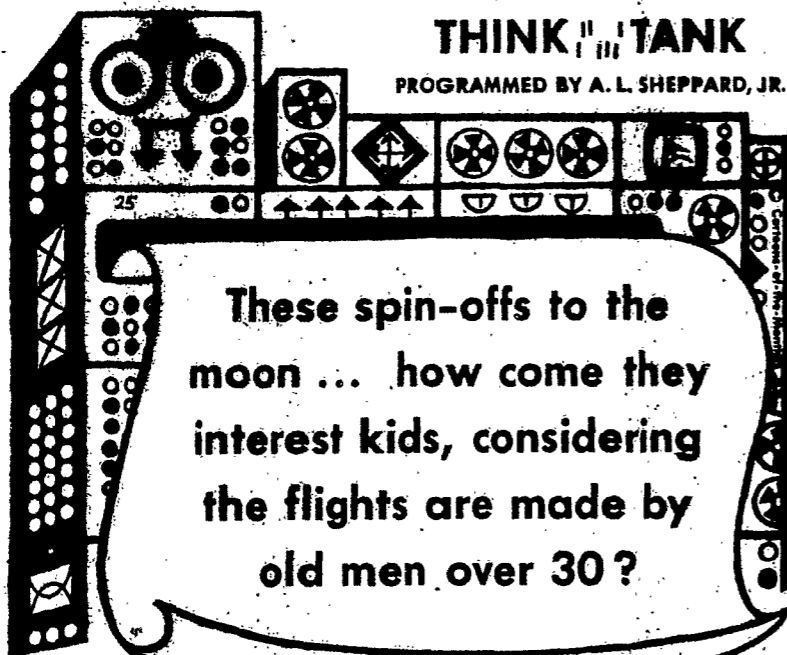
Robert D. Krause of Rhode Island, a federal law clerk, tries to dress it all up in legal language. His points are: abortion laws deny equal protection because they make it difficult for poor persons to get abortions; abortion laws reflect religious thinking and pressure and therefore violate the First Amendment; they impose upon physicians, and further they intrude into the privacy of husband, wife and physician.

Most of these points could be made against any law. That against murder discriminates, for the rich can hire a killer more easily than the poor; it reflects one of the Ten Commandments, and further it intrudes into the privacy of those wishing, for example, to get rid of an unwanted neighbor.

I submit that rather than teaching Mr. Krause law, the Jesuits should have taught him about the inalienable nature of rights—especially those of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

### THINK TANK

PROGRAMMED BY A. L. SHEPPARD, JR.



These spin-offs to the moon ... how come they interest kids, considering the flights are made by old men over 30?

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