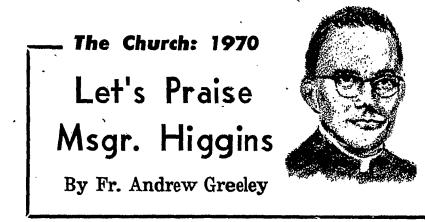


"I MARVEL AT THE WAY HE'S BEEN ABLE TO PLEASE EVERYBODY."



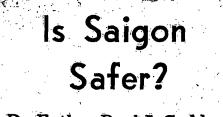
It is necessary occasionally that we praise men, and now, for no other reason than that I happen to feel like it, I propose to praise one man: Monsignor George Higgins,

I propose to praise him (though heaven knows he will be upset by such praise) as a man, perhaps not for all sea-sons, but certainly for this season in the American Church. George Higgins is not, alas, a . man for this season because he represents the principal forces at work in the American Church. Quite the contrary, the sort of person he is and has been for the last thirty years stands as a powerful and symbolic judgment against many of the current trends in the Church. George Higgins is a man of reason in a time of rampant romanticism, a man of competency in a time of arrogant and flagrant incompetency. a man who, as Monsignor John Tracy Elllis points out, may be the best informed priest in the American Ohurch at a time when being uninformed is considered high virtue.

labor movement, as they have. He does not publicly bare difficulties he finds remaining in the priesthood as their heroes must (even if he did have such problems, which one doubts, he would not be given to exhibitionism). He is obviously re-spected in Washington by business, labor, government, and the press because of his compe-tency and his intellectual sophistication.

And, oh, yes, George Hig-gins' ultimate crime is wit --the somber, middle-class Catholic rebels can abide just about anything but a priest with a sense of humor.

I remember at a press conference during the Vatican Council, a very distinguished journalist turned to me and said, "You know, of all the men up there Higgins is the only one who understands what a newspaperman has to look for."



On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Marj Snow is my statistician friend whom I got to know in 1956 in Morocco. She has worked and lived in the East and Far East continually for over fifteen years. Her roots are in Massachusetts, but her adult life has been pretty much in the Far East, with an occasion-al return to the United States. On September 10, she wrote from Saigon. The letter came in 5 days. Her letter is surprising.

"Dear Father,

"... Yes. I'm still in Saigon and would actually bid on another assignment if one pre-sented itself, but overseas slots are becoming more and more scarce and I still maintain that old wanderlust, Then too, the . situation in the cities at home is so frightening these days I hesitate to cope with it unless I have to. I made a trip back home last Fall and was im-pressed with how fearful people are of going out at night. Strange to tell even with the recent epidemic of purse snatching and pilfering (I had a small kit containing two rings and my watch taken from my purse while swimming). I still feel far safer on Saigon streets than I would at home. The Vietnamese simply don't go in for rape, mugging and violence in general."

Just where Marj Snow went

when she was home (the USA) last year I don't recall. The East and Ohio, for sure. Wash-ington and New York, probably. But wherever she was she did experience that terrible insecurity suffered by law abiding citizens.

In our 13,000 population of Hornell where law and order are reasonably observed, breakdown of order seems hardly real. In the big cities, it must be very real. For example, this morning's Buffalo COURLER EXPRESS (Sept. 18) gives these cheerless captions, all on page one:

1. Off-Campus Incident Triggers UB Tussle. Two Cops Stabbed. Pair Held; 2. Bomb Calls, Nude Mark UB Opener; 3. Two Pull Ruse, Grab \$50,000; 4. Gangs Injure Six In 2 High Schools (in Buffalo).

I suppose it depends on one's point of view about death as a blessed event or a fearsome event, but the front page also lists the Buffalo dead. I think the paper needs a psychologist who might at least supplant the death notices with the birth notices, which are an occasion for joy for most people, abor-tionists excepted. The one cheerful note on the whole front page was: Orchestra Con-tract Approved, an amicable

agreement between the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Musicians Union.

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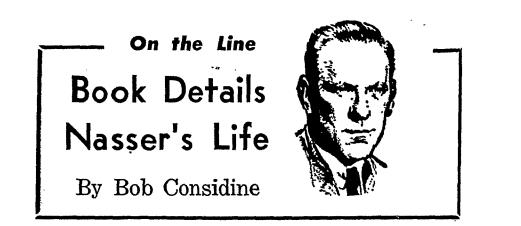
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Marj Snow has lived wider experiences for more years than most of our people who violently oppose practical steps needed to restore security and order in the country. I wrote back to her.

"Yes. We do have a partial breakdown in law and order, and the rights of the good citizen are jeopardized and im-paired. The avowed anarchists and those who openly declare their intent to destroy the government I can understand. But another group are a mystery. They proclaim a queer gospel that we must preserve freedom, but we must have policemen without self-protection; Na-tional Guardsmen called to protect persons and property and to control mobs, but without arms; police under surveillance of suspicious groups.

"Libertarian groups are too often more zealous for protection of thugs, murderers, mobs and bomb-throwers than they are about the rights of the law-abiding. I am sending you THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, by the French historian, Henri Daniel-Rops. There are many parallels, Let me know when you return home. We must recall old times, and discuss today."



No American reporter ever pro-British premier. Capt. Nas- thesis at Oxford concerned the made a more determined study ser, outraged, called together origins or the Egyptian tionalist movement and the of the late Gamal Abdel Nasser several other young officers and British occupation. And from than Dan Kurzman, the awardformed a Free Officers' secret that, came the talks. winning foreign correspondent society with the purpose of The two were to meet many whose latest book "Genesis eventually seizing power. times after that, drawn togeth-1948" (World Publishing Co.) Nasser was wounded in July. er by their hatred of Egyptian offers us views of the Egyptian politics and British rule. They 1948, while taking part in an leader not mentioned in the became prisoner-of-war auattack against an Israeli posistandard obits. thorities, distributed food, attion. He was shot in the chest tended religious ceremonies and, while in the hospital, see-Nasser's emergence as a pubover their buried dead, deploring many others needlessly ed war. Nasser hoped that lic figure, for instance: Cohen would be named first Iswounded, swore that if he ever "Nasser was born in a dusty, raeli ambassador to Egypt, came to power in Egypt "I when all was done and forgotmud-hut village of upper Egypt. shall think a thousand times ten. The son of a postal clerk, he before dragging my men into had from an early age despised Kuizman writes: war . . ." the king and the pashas who In February, 1950, Gamal lived in gaudy palaces and Major Nasser and Capt. Abdel Nasser and Yeroham played in Cairo's lavish gamb-Yeroham Cohen, aide to the Cohen met in El Auja and drove great Israeli Commander Gen. ling establishments with the together to Faluja so that Nas-Yigal Allon, became friends ser could point out the locaprofits squeezed from some of near the end of the war of tion of Israeli graves. As they the world's most exploited 1948. Cohen advanced towards walked among the graves, Naspeasants. But he detested them Nasser's position in an armorser asked, "Do you remember, ed car flying a white flag. He most of all for their role as Yeroham, when we sat on the was a Yemenite Jew, and had 'tools' of British imperialism. grass and I told you I didn't served Allied intelligence in think I would ever see my wife World War II disguised as an and daughters again?" "In his burning revolution-

A young priest from his own archdiocese once remarked to me, "We young priests" (which is usually an introduction to an arrogant statement) "respect the things that men like Higgins stood for, but we feel that we have absolutely nothing to learn from him."

Good heavens, yes! George Higgins does not have a beard, or even sideburns, and cuts his hair short; he does not smoke pot, but only long black cigars; he is not self-righteous or moralistic; he has a passion for facts and for clarity; he is incapable of taking himself seriously (and probably has stopped reading this column long before this paragraph).

He does not engage in broad, sweeping generalizations; he does not seek to have others condemned without due process; he does not play games of cops and robbers with the FBI; he does not imagine that he is Dietrich Bonhoeffer reincarnate; he does not think that society can be persuaded, much less remade, by liturgical gestures. Good Lord, no! Of course the young clergy have nothing to learn from George Higgins.

Nor are the middle aged Catholic liberals particularly happy with the Monsignor from Chicago. He has not deserted the

Courier-Journal

I have used George Higgins as a symbol of intelligence, sophistication, balance, and competence, all of which are desperately needed in the American Church, and I have used this symbol to belabor the romantic left, which is conspicuously lacking in all such qualities. But one could just as readily use the symbol to belabor the right. In any Church that was properly run a man possessing all these qualities (in addition to piety, and I absolutely refuse to embarrass the Monsignor further by discussing that subject) would be a bishop, an archbishop, even a cardinal. The chances of George Higgins becoming any of these in the present order of reality are very thin indeed; and I think that this fact is a terrible judgment on the inability of the American hierarchy to permit outstanding men to rise to leadership positions. It is not so much, I think. that the kingmakers doubt Higgins' orthodoxy; rather they are afraid of him. He is much too bright and you really can't run the risk of putting someone with his intelligence and his competence in a position of major authority and responsibility.

It is no small feat to be simultaneously irrelevant to the romantic left and terrifying to the timid right. One suspects that George Higgins will be remembered long after those who find him either irrelevant or frightening have vanished from the scene.

ary fervor, Nasser joined as a youth the Young Egypt Party, an ultra-nationalist, green-shirted group with close links to Mussolini's fascism. And he regarded as a badge of honor the bandage he wore on his head after being clubbed by policemen in a student riot against the government and British imperialism."

In February, 1942, the Nazis took Benghazi and took dead aim at Cairo, The British, taking charge, made a prisoner of Farouk until he appointed a

Wednesday, October 14, 1970

Arab. He spoke faultless Arabic.

They faced each other, unarmed, at 15 yards. "Why have you come here?" Nasser demanded coldly.

"I have come as the personal representative of the commander of the front," Cohen said. "I wish to arrange a meeting between our two sides."

"You wish to demand our surrender?' Nasser asked. "We will never surrender. We are here to defend the honor of our army."

Cohen, a tough swarthy man, smiled and changed the subject. It developed that Cohen's

"Yes, Gamal. And I told you that you would not only see your daughters but would have a son as well."

"Well, I've got a son."

That night, Cohen, on returning to Tel Aviv, sent a package of baby clothes to his Egyptian friend. It was too bad, he reflected, that a man like Gamal Abdel Nasser was not running Egypt.

Three years later, Nasser was running Egypt, and he became Israel's most dangerous foe in the Middle East. Now death silences his reason.

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