

## Harmful Excuses

Rebellion among collegians was the theme of the Scranton Report on Campus Unrest published three weeks ago. Condemning all violence by students, the Commission was equally critical of the harsh counter-violence used by law officers to quell campus protests. It was sad to read there: "A nation driven to use the weapons of war upon its youth is a nation on the edge of chaos."

The Report made a further sickening point: there are increasing numbers of students and their elders, who would never turn to any violence themselves but are ready to condone arson and bombing on the one hand or the bullets and billy-clubs on the other.

When the National Guard shoots to kill, not everyone denounces them. "I'm opposed to police-violence," is a typical reaction, "but those troops were frightened and angry. A man can take only so much."

When collegians burn a building, ransack offices and bring academic work to a halt, their non-protesting friends excuse them: "This is a necessary reaction to the brutality of a society which will not end the Vietnam war nor heal the racial issues."

The nub of the problem is a moral issue: many Americans place extenuating circumstances above principle. Men so frequently and easily rationalize their own personal failings that some can formulate explanations even to excuse the actions which are leading our nation to more frightening violence.

An editorial in the Saturday Review said wisely last week: "The American people are in trouble not because of the severity of their problems, but because the yardsticks for measuring and dealing with change are breaking down . . . The main issue is that too few are willing to stand by any governing principles having to do with change."

Intensity of conviction, even, perhaps passion, are the ingredients of change. Even before they use imagination or cunning or talents to reform a wrong, men must care intensely. But when they detach earnestness from intelligence and place selfish accomplishment of a small goal ahead of the welfare of the greater community, they are pushing society back into the jungle. And when the life of an opponent becomes a mere pawn in the struggle, no individual or family is safe.

The murder of the kidnapped labor commissioner in Canada, the destruction of draft records in Rochester, the killings at Kent State were all "excesses" thought needed in a "good cause". The pursuit of "justice" will lead to multiplications of these excesses as long as "the grievances and dreams of the people" are unheeded and unsolved by legitimate, peaceful means.

—Fr. Richard Tormey

## An Intrinsic Evil

Even some Catholics complain that the Church is taking too unswerving a stand on the abortion issue.

Some feel that the Church is trying to impose its will on others.

The Church had better do just that because self-genocide even transcends the moral problem involved. It is surprising that at this time with so many fervently espousing the causes of ecology that more don't recognize that condoned abortion is a kind of reckless tinkering with the survival of the human race.

It is unfortunate that the question seems to have polarized with Catholics on one side of the argument. But other religions have also publicly opposed the permissive statute.

That the Catholic Church seems to stand alone against such atrocity is a credit to its moral steadfastness. If it also means that many characterize the Church as trying to force moral rectitude on others, it is too bad, but so be it.

It's amazing that Catholics and others who get up tight over the Church's action in this field take for granted the lobbying efforts of other groups, from soap sellers right through organizations actively pushing for laws limiting family size, as well as other birth control measures.

Another argument is that the Church has not been compassionate about the causes and anguish involved in many problem-pregnancies. If this is so then we all stand guilty. But it can be rectified if each and every Catholic starts pushing for more low-income housing, equitable rights for all and not just a so-called "war on poverty" but a sympathetic understanding of those ensnared in its plight.

But even if the Church or any organization or any other individual never did anything about these problems, abortion would still be intrinsically wrong.

—Carmen Viglucci

## Letters to the Editor

### RACL Position Criticized

Editor:

The 11 o'clock news Saturday evening, Oct. 10, carried a report that the RACL is opposing repeal of the Blaine Amendment of the N.Y. State Constitution. Two reasons were alleged: first, there is almost no chance for repeal; second, attempts to do so will damage the ecumenical movement. Uninformed statements of this kind from a supposedly Catholic organization will always receive the kind of man-bites-dog publicity which they deserve.

The latest Gallup poll shows that nationally 48% of all people favor aid to children in parochial schools, and 44% are opposed. Instead of taking a defeatist attitude, RACL should be following the mandate of Vatican II to secure a political system where distributive justice prevails. In the case of the school question, this means get-

ting out and working actively to see that parents who send their children to God-centered schools get their fair share of their educational tax money. RACL has shown no signs of doing this. In fact, all the evidence points to their not even believing it.

That a Catholic American should disregard the teachings of Vatican II with respect to the school question, and should forego his rights as an American citizen, is a preposterous suggestion.

Part of candidate Goldberg's smoke screen with respect to aid to children in God-centered schools has been to say that the Blaine Amendment does not need to be repealed. However, after the Court of Appeals decision on the textbook loan case, which many believe has effectively removed the prohibition of indirect aid to sectarian schools found in Art. XI, Sec. 3 of the State Constitution, there were two events which showed the necessity of repeal.

In the spring of 1968 Atty.

Gen. Lefkowitz ruled that the Board of Regents had violated Blaine in establishing a \$100,000-a-year chair at Fordham University. (Fordham intended to use these funds to attract the renowned scholar Marshall McLuhan from the University of Toronto to Fordham.)

In June 1969 both houses of our state legislature passed a measure providing the same kind of aid to church-related colleges which has been going to colleges which are not church-related (for example, UR and RIT) for about three years. Gov. Rockefeller vetoed this on the grounds that it violates XI, 3.

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### Voucher Plan For Schools

Editor:

Rising costs are increasing our school taxes. Strong economy measures by school administrators and schoolboards could stem to a certain extent this monstrous and seemingly never ending digging into the taxpayers' pocketbooks.

However, it must be remembered that private schools in our state have kept public school taxes lower, because of the fact that they do not share in the public school state aid formula.

Shall we force more Catholic schools to close or shall we repeal the Blaine Amendment? State aid could be given in the form of direct per pupil assistance by way of the voucher method . . . now!

Legislation is presently in committee in Albany which would aid a pupil in private schools as much as \$300 each. Some of our public school districts are paying as high as \$1,000 each to educate a student.

Is such a plan feasible and logical? I say yes. For the simple reason that it is more economical to keep these private schools open and thereby keep New York State school taxes down. For example, the difference, let us assume, \$300 per pupil and the approximate \$1,000 cost per pupil would bring about a \$700 savings to a school district.

Logically and economically the best solution would be to grant aid directly to the pupils by means of using the voucher system.

Write to your legislators right now! Ask them to support such legislation! Indifference and apathy will only lead to a greater pinch on your pocketbook . . . higher school taxes!

Francis J. Mastropietro  
Member, Board of  
Education, Auburn

### The Word for Sunday

## Sin Is Blindness

By Father Albert Shamon



One cannot read Sunday's Gospel without admiring the dramatic writing of Mark. Like Ernest Hemingway's, Mark's style is diamond hard, crisp, graphic, exciting.

Jesus is leaving Jericho for Jerusalem. A blind beggar is seated on the outskirts. He hears the tumult and the shouting, and seeing better than all the rest who it is that is passing by, he shouts, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" People try to hush him. He shouts the louder. Jesus stops and says, "Call him over." The blind man literally bounds toward Jesus. Jesus asks "What do you want?" — as if he didn't know. Bartimeus knew precisely what he wanted. "I want to see."

Again we have here a parable-miracle. The blind beggar is the human race seated in the darkness of sin by the highway of the world waiting for the Light of the World to pass by. For the worst blindness in the world is sin. We say passion blinds. So often the sinner does not see that the momentary pleasure that exploits self or another is in the end self-defeating. Like the cancerous tumor in the body that grows and thrives, ultimately hurting the whole, so the growth of sin leads to only one end—death. Hence Christ wept over Jerusalem and said "If only you knew the things that are for your peace." Centuries before, the prophet Jeremiah wept in similar fashion over the same city. So bitter were his tears that even today we speak of hopeless lamentations as a "jeremiad."

But God is a God of light and hope. So even before Christ, His prophet Jeremiah offered hope to his people. "I will gather them from the ends of the earth with the blind and lame in their midst" (First Reading). The caravan will be composed of the weak — the blind and the lame, mothers and those with child—to exemplify the miraculous nature of the event. And so great will be God's mercy that this time Israel will not have a hard time

of it as it had had in the Exodus—"I will lead them on a level road." And everything will be changed: sorrow will be turned into joy. "They went forth weeping . . . they come back rejoicing," (Ps. 126). They will say again and again, as in the Responsorial Psalm, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy."

What was done for the blind man in the Gospel, what happened to blind Israel in exile for its sins, the same hope is offered to all blinded by sin today.

Man persists in sin. Like a blind man who cannot see where he is going he falls into the same pit again and again. As a Kempis put it, "Today you confess your sins and tomorrow you again commit what you have confessed. You resolve to take care and an hour after, you act as if you had never resolved" (Bk. 1:22). Man just cannot seem to see that in God's will is his peace and joy. Mothlike he flits around the glowing flame and, like Israel, gets burned — ending in slavery to habits of sin, to drugs, to drink, to impurity. He weeps where he sought joy.

But all the readings of the Mass proclaim, "Have hope!" Israel's exile ended in restoration. Bartimeus regained his sight. So shall it be with every sinner who truly repents. For, as the author of Hebrews wrote, we have a priest who "is able to deal patiently with erring sinners" (2nd Reading).

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