

# Letters

## Recommends

### Prayer

Editor:

It's about time we began to say again the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, the one we used to say after High Mass on Sunday.

"St. Michael the Archangel defend us in battle, be our protection against the wiles and snares of the devil.

"Restrain him, O God, we humbly beseech thee; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by thy divine power thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who roam through the world seeking the ruin of souls."

If people would clip this out of the paper, put it in a conspicuous place in the home and say it when they can, some good might be done in this world, and the evil things come to naught.

Florence Epping Harper  
Wellesley Street  
Rochester

## No Compromise On Faith

Editor:

In a recent column William J. Buckley Jr., under the title "Catholic Power Is Declining," wrote: "The Catholic Church threw away fish on Friday, liturgical Latin, tough rules for priests and nuns, and for their pains got emptier and emptier churches."

How true. The Catholic Church as the bride of Christ taught for years that this life is a warfare, that the road to heaven is not an easy one, and that above all prayer and penance were necessary to persevere in God's grace.

In fact, this is what distinguished our church from others. Our church was founded by Christ, Who is God; the others by men. The great St. Augustine said a man without prayer is like a tree without roots. So it isn't love alone that will get us to heaven, but a combination of faith and good works.

Another Buckley quote: "It seems to say that the Catholic church is nowadays acting not only out of political confusion but out of moral uncertainty, in which case one wonders what force it will speak with ten years hence, and whether God will tolerate the withering vigor of what some have fancied all along as His church."

I have never fancied the Church to be His Church — I know by faith that our church is His church. Either Christ is God and He founded one church and that church was to teach all truth for all time, or Christ is misleading millions of souls for all time. The latter we know is not true.

If some in the Church believe that by singing hymns and eliminating some of our century-old practices that we are going to increase converts, I think they are sadly mistaken.

Devotion to God's saints is low at the present time. If God was displeased with devotion to His saints, why have so many favors been granted through their intercession?

As Christians we have to love our Jewish and Protestant and atheist neighbors, and to pray for them. But we cannot compromise on matters of faith and morals. It would be well for all of us to repeat every day the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "I believe everything the Son of God has said."

Leo F. Zeller  
Rochester

A few weeks ago Father Bob Kreckel and I attended a regional meeting in reference to the Campaign for Human Development. This past year the Bishops of the United States unanimously voted to give the highest priority toward an effort geared to overcome poverty in our country.

This effort is to begin with a collection on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. By means of this collection to raise \$50 million dollars over the next few years, hopefully there will be seed money to feed into self-development projects. Self-development or self-help will be the key whereby requests for monies will be honored. Such

an approach caters to the inherent dignity of the human person, and is an effort to move away from the patronizing and tokenistic approach to the poverty-stricken.

But the fund raising part of the program is only a part of the overall campaign. As necessary as this money is to the success of the venture, even more so is the educational and informational part that is meant to be an ongoing effort throughout the year. Through this part of the program, hopefully we will be able to regenerate a new concern for the poor in America. Film, print, radio, TV and every media possible will be used to mobilize the public

will, to reorder the priorities of our nation in its use of private and national resources. Every effort will be made to bring this message to the young and all spectrums of the adult world.

As we entered the sixties a national priority was set forth whereby it was determined that we would have a man on the moon within that decade. Manpower, expertise and inexhaustible resources were brought together to accomplish this seemingly impossible feat. By 1970 the "giant step" was taken for mankind — the decade dedi-

cated to technology had borne fruit.

As we enter the seventies we are being challenged once again to establish a priority — the defeat of poverty in our country. It does not have the glamour of space flight or the excitement of man's conquering his environment, but the Campaign for Human Development does deal with people caught in "the hellish circle of poverty." Breaking this circle will be neither easy, glamorous nor without much frustration — but it will be the right thing to do, the Christ-like thing to do. So "for God's sake" let's do it!

## Salting the Earth

# For God's Sake

By Father John Hempel

## RACL Viewpoints

# Legality of Viet-War

By PIETER SCHRAMM

Very often peace demonstrators are condemned by a large part of the general public, even if their action is completely nonviolent, because they violate "the law". Usually this public accusation is false and based on a lack of understanding of the right of dissent. But sometimes it is true, for instance in the case of a peaceful demonstration for which no permission was obtained from the authorities.

Apart from the question whether the law is the highest criterion by which Christians should judge the actions of their fellow men, the problem arises whether the American participation in the war in Southeast Asia itself is legal.

If the war is illegal then protest against it can hardly be repudiated as unlawful.

Before we can investigate the question of legality it is necessary to look at some relevant events in the history of the conflict. For details and interpretations of events from all sides, we refer to "The Vietnam Reader", edited by Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Fall.

The French-Indochina War started in November 1946, when French troops opened fire on civilian demonstrators at Hai Phong and killed 6,000 people. During eight years the French tried to re-establish their colonial regime in a war largely financed by the United States.

On May 8, 1954, the French were decisively defeated at Dien Bien Phu. The Geneva Conference on Indochina (May-July 1954) agreed on a plan for partition of Vietnam, prohibition of foreign military aid to either part and general elections in the North and South leading to reunification by July 20, 1956.

The United States issued a declaration stating the intention to "refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb" the Geneva Agreements and welcoming the idea of free elections.

In 1955 Premier Diem of South Vietnam, who had been appointed by Emperor Bao Dai under pressure of the United States, rejected a North Vietnamese proposal to negotiate the arrangements for the elections. The Eisenhower administration supported Diem's attitude, because, as Eisenhower writes in his book "Mandate for Change", in elections "possibly 80% of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader."

The opposition against the Diem dictatorship finally crystallized in the foundation of the National Liberation Front on 20 December 1960. The NLF consisted of Communists, Socialists, Buddhists, Catholics, liberal intellectuals, peasants and the mountain minority groups. A guerilla war of the military arm of the NLF, the Vietcong, against the Diem government which received American military aid including "advisors", developed.

In 1964 two U.S. destroyers operating in an area where a South Vietnamese naval force was shelling North Vietnamese islands, reported torpedo attacks. Later investigation by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee showed that the Johnson Administration did not present all the facts of the case to Congress, which adopted the Tonkin Bay Resolution giving full powers to the government. This resolution was recently repealed.

In 1965 the State Department published a second White Book on Vietnam accusing the North Vietnamese of aggression against the South. However almost all the prisoners of war listed in an appendix were born in the South. We all know the enormous escalation of the war in 1965, the bombings of North Vietnam and the "elections" in South Vietnam from which the opposition was skillfully excluded.

The Paris peace talks and the recent peace proposals of President Nixon are without result, because the minimum political demands of the other side, for which they have been fighting for 25 years, are still ignored.

We can conclude that the American intervention in Vietnam is in violation of international law because:

- The conflict was a result of U.S.-South Vietnamese rejection of general elections provided for by the 1954 Geneva Agreements.

- The United States imposed Premier Diem on South Vietnam and intervened in the ensuing civil war by providing military aid to the South Vietnamese government in violation of the Geneva Agreements.

- The war was never declared by Congress although that is required by the U.S. Constitution.

- The United States signed the United Nations Charter which prohibits military solutions to conflicts. The United Nations never authorized American intervention in Indochina.



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