

The Wrong Way

There is a thread of similarity running through two recent events in Rochester which is self-defeating.

Destruction of draft records in the Federal Building, and the interruption of Sunday worship services have been "messages". But the way in which they have been delivered have generated more community ill will than enlightenment.

The invasion of the draft-files was an attempt to shout: "The system of conscripting men for war is as vicious as the destruction met by every casualty: these records are evil tools in the continuation of an evil war". But because some 250 other militant groups across the nation have said the same thing with similar disruptions of files and papers and furniture, our community thought the medium pretty trite and the message dull.

Demonstrations during Sunday worship touch nerve-ends in many people which can negate the entire message outsiders bring. It should be appropriate during man's communing with God to be reminded of the unhappiness of less fortunate members of His family. In place of the homily or the intercessory prayers it should be imperative occasionally to hear appeals intended to awaken a parish to a generous social response to the Gospel.

But the dignity and charity and selflessness of the message-bearers must be in keeping with the expectations of the congregation or denunciations and contempt spring up.

Reaction to these events has been painfully unfavorable to the causes they symbolize because their planners had only shallow pre-regard for the sensitivities of this community. The number of those moved to ponder the draft and poverty has been outnumbered by those who are turned off by disruptive conduct.

Having self-justified their cause as sacred they decided the city had to accept their message no matter how they sent it. They have been poor salesmen and wretched public-relations men. People shouldn't, but many will now regard the anti-war protesters in terms of "children who throw papers around" and the pro-poor advocates as "sacrilegious profaners of worship."

—Fr. Richard Tormey

Room for Hope

Although the state legislative makeup from the diocese is practically the same as in the past session when the abortion reform bill was passed, there is still room for optimism for those who believe in the right to life of unborn humans.

Of the 18 representatives elected from the diocese, 11 favor changes in the present law, 9 wanting reform of some sort and 2 favoring outright repeal, according to the Courier-Journal pre-election survey.

Most of those in favor of reforming the bill see residency requirements necessary and want the 24-week limit reduced.

A unique idea was proposed by Assemblyman Frank A. Carroll from Monroe County's 133rd District who voted against the bill. He feels a referendum should decide the issue.

Hope for public aid to private schools is even brighter with 13 of those elected favoring some sort of aid to private schools. Though there were four "no comments" no one actually said he is opposed to such aid.

This legislature also must vote on sending the Blaine Amendment to referendum. The last one voted in favor and since this one is very similar such action seems likely.

The bitterest pill, however, may have come with the defeat of Proposition 1 which would have provided increased funds to help local housing agencies finance new, low-rent housing.

The bishops of the state, as well as other religious groups, urged its passage and although it carried in the New York City area, a heavy negative vote upstate killed it.

It is shameful that the voters turned their backs on 500,000 families living in substandard dwellings in this state. It is plainly a Christian duty to care for each other as brothers.

It also is evident that such conditions breed the ills that rebound on society in other forms such as crime and disease. Anyone who voted against this bill to save a slight raise in taxes should realize that the costs they will be paying in other ways will be far higher.

—Carmen Viglucci

The Word for Sunday

Remember The End

By Father Albert Shamon



The Book of Daniel is one of the great, exciting books of the Old Testament. Like the books of Ezechiel and Tobit, it asserts the existence of angels. Its counterpart in the New Testament is St. John's Apocalypse. The two go together: both reveal the end of human history. Daniel reveals the end of Jewish salvation history; John of Christian salvation history.

The author of Daniel wrote during the terrible persecution of the Jews by Antiochus (170 B.C.) The question uppermost in the minds of the suffering Jews was when will this persecution end, when will God save His people?

In answer, the author first told stories of men and women who kept the faith in time of persecution: the three lads cast into the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and the chaste Susanna. God came to their rescue. The obvious message was, you too stand firm; God didn't let them down, nor will He you.

Then in the middle of the book, the author addresses himself to the on-going persecution. He switches to apocalyptic language; that is, he reveals what is going to happen but through visions and symbols, which are cryptic to enemies but clear to friends. Using the

riddle of the seventy weeks in chapter nine, he announces salvation is near. With the help of the Angel Gabriel, he calculates that the persecution would end about 163 B.C. As a matter of fact Antiochus did die that year. Peace would follow. And it did. First there came the Maccabean peace; then the Messianic peace brought by the Son of Man. The author's message again is, hold on — the end is close.

But the Jews objected. Actually God was not rescuing his faithful ones as He once did Daniel, Sidrach, Misach, Abednago, and Susanna. Instead, everyone who tried to keep His Law was horribly martyred by Antiochus. What about this? In answer the author of Daniel made the most audacious of Old Testament prophecies: the dead will rise again to glory (First Reading).

This was the first time that the resurrection of the dead was ever so clearly enunciated in the Old Testament. The dead will rise — the martyred "like the stars forever." So in reality they suffer no loss.

History repeats itself. What happened to Israel will happen to the new Israel, the Church. Israel's history of trial and

trouble, deliverance and reward is the model, the pattern, the type of the Church's history. In the Gospel Christ used the Danielic term "Son of Man" to remind us too of the message of the Book of Daniel, to see that Israel's history is our history too. Thus there will be trouble for His people — "trials of every sort." But then there will also be deliverance — the Son of Man will come a second time. This coming will be for a definitive deliverance; to reward His faithful ones with the eternal life spoken of by Daniel. "He will assemble his chosen ones from the four winds."

Time is not cyclic as with the pagans. We are not going around in circles. Time is linear, it has direction, it has purpose, it is going somewhere. And where is it heading? Toward the parousia, the second coming of Christ, when He will put His enemies under His feet and those who are being sanctified on thrones of glory. So the message of the readings is — the most foolish thing in the world, is to forget God and become immersed in this earth. The wise man remembers the end. If he lives in that memory, the end will not be terror, but eternal joy. "But you, go on to the end; you will rest and will arise for your reward" (Dan. 12:13).

The point is not that I happen to disagree with this particular stand; I would take exception to scholars pronouncing in favor of a matter I happen to support if they were not informed about it. I could not find at the "Concilium" meeting a single European theologian who had anything more than the most rudimentary notions about the Berrigan case. One of them observed to me that from what he personally knew of the matter he did not want to declare his solidarity with them, but that once the issue was proposed he felt he had no choice but to vote in favor of it lest the newspapers of the world proclaim the Congress had refused to declare its solidarity with those who were "fighting for freedom."

I do not think I am being harsh when I say that this is not exactly what one would call responsible behavior.

I am not suggesting that all a theologian should do is engage in theologizing. Quite the contrary. He ought to be as free as any man to engage in political criticism or be active in vigorous campaigns to restructure the Church. But in his political and reform activity he must not be permitted to plead the charisma of the theologian as a substitute for competency at political criticism or ecclesiastical reform. None of the great theological names of the last decade have succumbed to this temptation, but some of the lesser lights, I fear, have; in substantial part, I think, because so many of us have romanticized them.

The Church: 1970

Theologians Only Human

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



One of the results of the recent World Conference on the Future of the Church, sponsored by the journal "Concilium," is that it is now clear that theologians are not going to save the Church. For the last decade an extraordinary aura of romance has surrounded the theological profession within Roman Catholicism. Many of us permitted ourselves to be persuaded implicitly if not explicitly that theologians were a charismatic class, and that we could look to them for the ideas and the leadership that would see us through the awesome crisis in which the Church finds itself.

Nor were we lacking reasons for such enthusiasm. The Second Vatican Council was to a considerable extent a council of theologians. Even though they were not permitted to join the debate (as they were at the Council of Trent), it was nonetheless their ideas which shaped the principal conciliar texts. Furthermore, some of the world-famed theologians like Yves Congar and Hans Kung are unquestionably charismatic human beings (though Herr Kung insists with complete sincerity that he is not a prophet but only a scholar). Finally, since so many members of the hierarchy lack the capability of communicating enthusiasm or even credibility to their followers, it was natural that we should look to the theologians for vision.

The "Concilium" Congress came as something of a shock to the many Americans in attendance. The great heroes could make mistakes in organizing and running a meeting. Some of them lack skills in group discussions, and others

could get so involved in minute technical problems as to completely miss the point of the discussion. We discovered that the theologians were pretty much like everyone else. Within the theological profession — as within every profession — there are some prophets, some charismatic leaders, some towering intellectual giants, and some profoundly dedicated scholars. There are also, alas, others of modest abilities and still others who are only too willing to substitute naive and militant enthusiasm for competence and responsibility.

Thus, one resolution presented at the floor of the conference proposed that the conference declare its solidarity with (among others) the imprisoned Berrigan brothers. Even if one concedes, as I am not prepared to do, that meetings of professional groups of scholars ought to take stands on controversial political issues, one would still be forced to insist that if the scholars are going to take such stands they at least owe it to themselves to be adequately informed as to what they are supporting or condemning.

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ELMIRA OFFICE 317 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. RE 2-5688 or RE 2-3423

