



"Ralph's simply terrible about talking shop at parties!"

Salting the Earth Reconciliation

By Father John Hempel

During the past few weeks we have been exposed to actions geared to focus our attention on the problems existing within our society, especially those of poor people. My office always has been and always will be sympathetic and hopefully empathetic to the cries of disadvantaged peoples. However we are not always in agreement with tactics used.

Some actions by their very nature, at least in relationship to those upon whom the action is performed, are most counterproductive; they produce the opposite to the effect desired. As a result, too often those who are meant to be helped find themselves more helpless, and their cause possibly suspect.

The type of approach made by the "Sunday Coalition" to other Christian churches prior to that of St. Thomas More was unacceptable by this office. That type of educational process was considered to be counterproductive at this period of time when so much of society has braced itself against violence, or that which is felt by many to border on violence.

I would like to think that the Rochester religious community at this point in time would be much more receptive and sympathetic to a milder approach. I am sure that most religious leaders would have welcomed the coalition being a scheduled part of the liturgy. In this manner not only would poor people demonstrate their acute need, but even more so they would have been able to bring to the attention of the churches the chronic needs that prompted this graphic demonstration for a Christian response.

The surprise interruption of the St. Thomas More liturgy was even more disturbing to me personally, not only because I am fully aware of how sacred we consider our liturgy, but even more so because I personally appealed to one in a liaison role for the coalition not to use

this tactic. Not only did I list the very serious reasons for my request but even agreed to further discuss the matter with the members of the coalition. Our office is not competent to determine what tactics the poor should use, but the office does feel that it has a responsibility to indicate the consequences of a tactic. Apparently the Office of Human Concern was not taken as a serious entity — as a result the parishioners of St. Thomas More were exposed to a most unexpected and unnerving experience.

As disturbed as I may have been with those who did not take the suggestion of our office seriously, I am most angered at those "well-meaning Catholics" who were supposed to have guided the coalition into this action.

I wonder if they realize the tremendous damage they have caused to the efforts our office has put into developing an ongoing program, whereby the poor would not only be helped but above all self-determined? I wonder if they attempted to investigate what our office is attempting to do in order to have our people better understand the why of poverty, thereby making it more possible for us as a Church to break the "vicious circle of poverty?" What a disservice they have done to the poor.

When all is said and done the experiences of the past few weeks have indicated that too often confrontations develop because misunderstandings exist on both sides. Now is the time for reconciliation. Hopefully the intrusion into the liturgical life of so many will not cause them to disassociate themselves from their concern for those who are disadvantaged. Hopefully they will question why the poor feel they must use such strong tactics to demonstrate their needs. Hopefully they will see the critical need to destroy the root causes of poverty.



'Open House' at Hospital Chapel

Father L. James Callan, chaplain at Rochester State Hospital, describes tabernacle in St. Jude Chapel on grounds there during "open house" inspection Nov. 1 marking first anniversary of chapel construction.

Courier-Journal

The Slot Man

Who Are The Poor?

By Carmen Viglucci



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen when he was here posed the intriguing question "Who are the poor?"

What the bishop hoped to draw out of his people was that that term did not always apply to those without money but that it also covered those of the well-heeled variety who fail to see their obligation to society.

Because American mores have always implied that to be poor is somehow to be sinful, it has been difficult for many to understand why they should help their fellow men in their time of need. A recent Courier-Journal story by John Sullivan told of a woman who died destitute when even her close relatives didn't know of her plight because she couldn't stand the degradation attached to being poor.

I grew up during the depression and my father put in a stint with the WPA. Although physical labor wasn't exactly Dad's bag, he nevertheless went at it, if not with gusto, at least with perseverance. As did many

others victimized by events not of their doing.

Nevertheless there were people who found ways to ridicule these men; they used to say, "Those lazy slobbers with the WPA, all they ever do is lean on their shovels."

Anyway part of Dad's pay was in the form of bags of corn meal, potatoes and apples we used to pick up at the "pogey house." I say "we" meaning my two older brothers and myself; my father couldn't bring himself to go there. He had been an immigrant very pleased with the way he had handled himself in the new country, and intensely proud of America... to the point that he would seldom use his native tongue so he could use English well, which he did without accent.

He used to say, "America is not the ghetto, it is chocolate cup cakes and plenty of milk and a chance to make something of yourself."

Still none of that meant much when he had to go to work with the WPA. He didn't stay there long but I can remember that for us to get to

the pogey house we had to cross the main line of the New York Central Railroad, which was done via a subway walk with kiosk-type entrances on either side of the tracks.

Going there wasn't too difficult but coming back through the subway with its long granite steps at either end was rough, especially with our weighted-down sleds ("How come they can afford sleds but are on welfare?"). I have the faint recollection that many a bag of corn meal never made it, particularly on the "up" steps.

Naturally none of this ever bothered us children, indeed it probably was a bit of fun. But in looking back I realize that it must have been degrading for Dad and I often think that the whole situation contributed to his early death.

And now 30 years later I write this with a bit of trepidation because if my mother sees it she will be hurt. She has surmounted many untoward events, including the early death of her husband, with pluck, humor, faith and optimism. But to this day she can't cope with the thought that at one time we were on welfare.

What manner of society scars innocent people in such a way?

Next Sunday we get a chance to do something about it — but even a financial contribution is not enough. We must all stop demeaning the poor, we must erase the stigma attached to being in need, and, above all, we must erase the concept that to be well-off is somehow virtuous.

Do something different this weekend.

The crisp, colorful days of autumn are tailor-made for pleasant family jaunts into the country. One you won't want to miss is the beautiful drive to Brookwood Science Information Center in a parklike setting on the shore of Lake Ontario. And, of course, there's no charge.

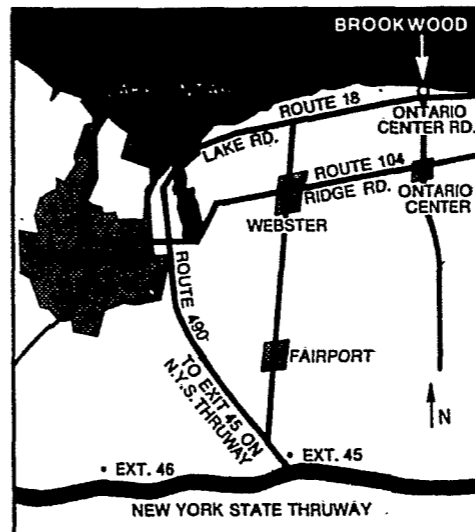
Here you and your family will enjoy the unique experience of seeing nuclear energy's place in the world of today and tomorrow. Through animated displays with audio descriptions you'll learn how man has harnessed this energy for the clean, efficient production of electric power.

- One display graphically demonstrates the generation of electricity.
- Another explains the structure of the atom and the occurrence of nuclear fission.
- One of the most exciting exhibits depicts the

operation of the nuclear reactor used in RG&E's nearby Ginna Plant. A narrated flow diagram shows how heat from the reactor produces steam to operate the turbine that drives the electric generator.

- Actual Geiger counters demonstrate the detection of radiation and the effects of various shielding materials on it.
- Other displays follow the story of uranium fuel from the mine to the final fuel element used in the Ginna Plant.
- In the Auditorium, slide illustrated lectures and movie presentations elaborate upon the nuclear energy story.
- The competent Brookwood staff is always on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Take the family to Brookwood Science Information Center this weekend. Open Wednesdays thru Sundays, 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Here's how to get there.



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