



"AFTER THE LECTURE A FEW OF US ARE GOING OVER TO AL'S PLACE TO HEAR HIS NEW 'BIG BANDS OF THE FORTIES' ALBUM! PASS IT ON."

The Church: 1970

A Long Way To Go

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



For all the railing against it, "the balanced ticket" seems to be alive and well in American politics. Those who were so vigorous in condemning "ethnic politics" are licking their wounds while those who realize that America is still very much a multi-ethnic society are busy counting up the patronage jobs they have to dispense.

Thus Democrats in New York, having forced the Irish and the Italians off the state ticket (and to some extent out of the party) are trying to figure why they lost the support of these two ethnic groups. Whereas in Chicago — the capital of the Liberal Heartland — a Protestant Democratic liberal led a multi-ethnic ticket that was a masterpiece of "balancing" to a resounding triumph.

But if the balanced ticket makes a great deal of sense in politics, it makes much less sense in scholarly or quasi-scholarly meetings. To invite someone to such a meeting not because of their professional competence but because of their color or their age or their sex or region is a subtle but ugly form of bigotry.

When some simpleminded liberal arises at such a meeting to say that there are not enough blacks or women, or young people or "third world" people, I have now committed myself to rising up in response to demand 30 per cent of the votes at the meeting for members of the white ethnic working-class — or if it be appropriate I trim my sails somewhat and speak only for my own demographic group with a demand for appropriate representation for Irish Catholics from Cook County. People think I'm kidding.

In the midst of such nonsense there is one valid point. Those who organize such meetings and conferences frequently have rather narrow views of reality. Competent participants may be missed because they are young or female or black. All of us must be alert to the possibility that our own particular form of narrowness may cause us to overlook participants who could make an important contribution.

But when someone is invited to such a meeting not because of professional competence but because of some attribute which came with birth, he is converted into a stereotype. He has not been asked because of what he

is as a person but because of his color or his age or her sex. Under such circumstances he has no choice but to play the stereotypical role, especially since he realizes that this is what he is expected to do, and, given his lack of professional equality, all that he is able to do.

The recent Concilium meeting in Brussels suffered from this sort of stereotyping. We were treated to the rather unedifying spectacle of a series of speakers approaching the microphone to announce that they spoke for the 80 millions of Indonesia who had no other representation, or the 200 millions of Japan, or the two billions of the third world, or the half the human race which is female (rather more than half, actually).

Now the point is that they did not; no one had elected them, they had no credentials, there was no reason to think that what they said represented anything but their own opinions. It is tragic to see men and women so unsure of their own opinions that they have to appeal to mythical constituencies to validate these opinions. But that's what happens to people when we turn them into stereotypes.

The "third world" is the most farcical stereotype of all. To put in one category Argentina and El Salvador, Tunisia and Zambia, Jamaica and Thailand is socially, culturally, historically, and geographically absurd. But once you've embarked on a path of stereotyping it's pretty hard to turn back.

One woman I knew at the conference was particularly offended. She had the naive notion that she might be taken seriously as a professional student of theology; but no, it was insisted that what she said be interpreted as the contribution of a woman or a wife or a mother. You haven't come such a long way at all!

There was a time in the Church when everyone in the progressive movements insisted on competence. How narrow and dull of them! It isn't what you know, it's what you are that counts — provided what you are is fashionable. (And if you're a middle-aged, white, Western male cleric, you're not worth a damn, particularly if you had excellent professional training.)

Father Joseph F. Hogan has made a special apostolate of prodding the consciousness of Rochester-based Curia priests, religious and laity that the Diocese embraces 12 counties not just Rochester and Monroe County. At an early Priests' Council Meeting he said: "Historically Rochester has taken for granted that the diocese ends at the edge of the Barge Canal. The Southern Tier is part of the diocese, too!"

Within the past ten days I have received letters of concern representing the geographic whole of the diocese. The concern is about the proposed rate hikes by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. One reason for the cash hikes to subscribers is to finance child-killing, professionally called abortion.

Mr. John McGorray is a friend since Sampson days. A Buffalonian by birth he was an officer of our Sampson College Newman Club in the late forties. He now lives in Rochester. He sent a statistical analysis of abortion in the Rochester area: "some 93% of abortions in the Rochester area are for non-medical reasons." Awed at the callousness of mothers who bring their unborn to be killed he wrote: "Maybe you could include some of the data in your Christmas letter. Letters to save the Holy Innocents would make dandy Christmas presents for the Holiest of Infants!"

A layman from Elmira wrote:

On The Right Side

A Question For Blue Cross

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



"I think there will have to be a show-down with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield. They want to increase their rates because of increased benefits. 'Benefits' include the butchering of unborn babies, and I have heard the latest 'benefit' is vasectomy on request. Talk about adding injury to insult."

The day after Thanksgiving I had dinner at Holy Family Rectory, Auburn. There were seven priests there. One was young Father Lewis Brown recently of Fairport, now at St. Alphonsus, Auburn. Father Brown has the energy of youth, the zeal of St. Paul and the compassion of Don Bosco. He elucidated his concern at the insurances paying for baby slaughter. Then he said: "I wrote to the State Superintendent of Insurance (Mr. Richard Stewart 324 State Street, Albany, N.Y. 12210) on November 25." This is his letter:

"It has come to my attention that Blue Cross and Blue Shield are paying for abortions 'on demand'. It seems to me that medical insurance programs are designed to cover medical costs. Moreover, since I hold a Blue Cross/Blue Shield policy, this makes me an involuntary subsidiary to murder. It also seems to me that since the new law leaves the decision of abortion up to the individual, the resultant costs should be up to the individual, not to a group of policy holders. I strongly urge you to re-examine this situa-

tion and take the necessary steps to eliminate it . . ."

The question up for decision is: Are Blue Cross-Blue Shield subscribers to be forced to shell out more cash to meet payments to pay for the killing of the unborn "on demand"? Blue Shield is requesting permission from the State Insurance Department to increase rates on an average of 45.9%; Blue Cross for an average of 14.2. The Rochester Right to Life Committee went on record opposing the policy of payment for abortions on demand. Most "on demand" abortions are non-medical.

I asked our Hospital business office: "What does Blue Cross pay for the birth of a baby?" The answer is: "Syracuse Blue Cross pay \$150.00, Rochester pays \$80.00, Buffalo pays the total bill." I asked: "What are the usual maternity costs?" "They usually come to about \$300.00 here." "Do you know how much an abortion costs?" "Most places about the same as for the birth of a baby."

If the "liberal" abortion law is proving such a Pandora's box in less than five months, imagine the future. But immediately, Rochester and "Beyond the Barge Canal," namely Elmira and Auburn, have spoken simultaneously. And I think the men who speak for the sacredness of human life, also speak for decent Jews, decent Protestants, decent humanists and for most Catholics.

On the Line

Also the Season For Thieves

By Bob Considine



A Washington, D.C., department store director predicted the other day that the dollar value of merchandise stolen between now and Christmas will just about wipe out the store's profits obtained through legitimate sales.

New York Atty. Gen. Louis Lefkowitz made an appeal to shoppers to pause — before throwing a coin or a buck on the tambourine or into the Christmas pot — to check the name of the charity involved. "Charities" with names and approaches similar to the familiar Christmas drives of old are springing up in increasing numbers. Their intent, of course, is to prey on the wave of generosity that seizes most shoppers at this time of year.

The National Retail Merchants Association estimates that store thefts amount to \$3 billion a year. That total is disturbing enough; but in recent years youngsters have been accounting for half of that figure. There is an increasing incidence of drug addiction among young shoplifters. Some who have been caught have stated that such robberies were the only way by which they could buy their fixes — supporting addictions that might amount to \$150 a day.

It's that season again the time to mock the meaning of

Christmas once more. Only more so apparently.

"Today's Health," published by the American Medical Association, carries a sobering study of stealing-kids in its current issue under the byline of Ted J. Rakstis.

Some of the reasons given by youngsters who are caught red-handed confound security guards and police. Samples from the article:

"In Baltimore, a college freshman went to a large department store to buy his fall wardrobe. After he had spent all his money on fancy suits and other apparel he calmly lifted half a dozen sets of underwear and socks. The light-fingered student was enraged when police arrested him. 'After all the money I've spent in this store, I had these things coming!' he screamed.

"In San Diego, a store detective noticed that a 15-year-old girl seemed to be much heavier on her way out of the store. She was wearing 12 bikini bathing suits under her clothes. 'I liked them all, so I took them all,' she said blithely."

Mr. Rakstis marches in some impressive psychiatrists to explain the phenomenon.

Dr. Leon Eisenberg, psychiatrist-in-chief at Massachusetts General Hospital and professor of psychiatry at Harvard:

"Many middle-class high school and college students rationalize stealing by arguing that business exploits people and that they simply are acting in retaliation. It's their way of not participating in the commercial life of the country."

Dr. Ralph D. Rabinovitch, director of Hawthorn Center in the Detroit suburb of Northville, supervises the nation's largest comprehensive health clinic program for children and adolescents His diagnosis:

"Their (young shoplifters) behavioral attitudes are being established by other teens, and by television and movies, rather than by adults. While their parents are involved elsewhere, they develop their own standards, one of which is to romanticize delinquency."

Goofiest caper:

"A group of wealthy Philadelphia youngsters devised a 'stealing sweepstakes.' Each stole a car, and the one whose larceny was first reported on the radio took the ante."

Goofiest comment on the rising crime rate from Jerry Rubin, one of the Chicago Seven:

"All money represents theft. To steal from the rich is a sacred and religious act. To take what you need is an act of self-love, self-liberation. While looting, a man to his own self is true."