

The Flower City 8

It didn't seem that there could be any doubt that the Flower City Conspiracy 8 would be found guilty in the ransacking of the Federal Building. They had broken the law, admitted it and left little choice to the judge and jury at their trial.

The Flower City 8 and their supporters, who made up the gallery almost completely each day, did score some points for their side. By their pleasant and courteous demeanor in the court and its environs, the gallery showed that young persons, even those of a radical patch in the context of our society, can be involved in a highly charged atmosphere and still conduct themselves impeccably.

The defendants themselves were impressive in their obvious sincerity and made a surprising effect on members of the jury, one of whom, according to news reports, said his life had been very changed by the trial.

When Father Daniel Berrigan, SJ, read the Beatitudes during his testimony, some of the jury seemed visibly moved, one even swiping at his eye as he tried to appear nonchalant.

But perhaps the most impressive personage throughout was Judge Harold P. Burke himself, giving the youthful defendants, only one of whom had counsel, wide latitude during the hearing but still dispensing justice as was necessary.

The fact that such young people face prison terms and their effects throughout life should indeed engender sympathy for them if not necessarily for their cause. But in no way can society condone the deliberate breaking of a law no matter how insignificant that law may appear to some.

As U.S. Atty. Michael R. Wolford said in his summation: "A society that actually wishes to destroy itself can find no easier or more expedient way to do so than to allow each of its members to obey those laws it wishes to obey and violate those laws that it deems necessary to violate as a matter of conscience."

That we cannot use bad means to secure good ends is a fact that still holds and may indeed represent the sum and substance of the meaning of the Flower City Conspiracy trial.

—Carmen Viglucci

Task Force Report

The Diocesan Educational Task Force is in the final stages of writing its initial report to Bishop Hogan on the future of our parochial schools. Having studied stacks of statistics, met in argumentative sessions every two weeks since late September, consulted with our religious communities, listened to parishioners and clergy of 92 parishes having schools, they are nearly ready to disclose advisory guidelines for facing current crises in parochial education.

The Task Force had the specific goal of analyzing three realities threatening the school system: the squeeze of rising costs for parochial schools, declining registration and a crucial shortage of teaching-Sisters.

They were to estimate the chances of slow dissolution of many schools if the trends continued, or their survival if medication and therapy could be devised.

Figures available were ominous and testimony of realistic experts pessimistic. The few options conceivable for parochial and diocesan action were shaky. A prognosis of the slow attrition of the whole system, school by school, unless regionalism, consolidations and retrenching were adopted, seemed infallible.

But the searching committee has found parish boards and the testifying laity and clergy almost universally hopeful for the future health of their respective schools. The parishes have taken on an optimistic desire and brave determination to keep their schools. Parochial autonomy has warned: "We'll listen to advice, but let nobody close us down."

The preliminary report from the Task Force, expected by the Bishop before Christmas, will undoubtedly outline avenues for translating this determination into action. Organization of schools into regional groupings, respecting the integrity of each parish but urging collective planning for the welfare of all the children of that area, is a likely recommendation. The continuation of the Task Force, or the creation of a new body of consultants, to meet parish groups frequently in continuing search for solutions to specific problems seems demanded.

—Father Richard Tormey

N. Y. Bishops Condemn Abortion

Full text of statement by Catholic Bishops of New York State read at all parish Masses in the state on December 5-6, 1970.

Dear Friends in Christ:

We find ourselves once more in the season of Advent, looking forward to Christmas and the coming of the Christ child. As we prepare our minds and hearts to welcome Him, we cannot fail to wonder at the glory of new life. For every child is fashioned in God's image, and as Christians we believe that he is destined to be a son of God.

Tragically, our age has seen the growth of a movement that belittles human life and urges the destruction of unborn children. This ruthless assault on human beings in the first stages of life has now been written into the law of New York State.

The appeals that we have

made in behalf of unborn babies year after year and especially last Spring, went unheeded by a majority of our lawmakers this year. In April a law was enacted which now makes it legal, at any time from conception to six months later, to destroy the baby cradled in his mother's womb.

Once this law was passed the abortionists lost no time in plying their death-dealing trade. Each day they grow wealthier from the killing of unborn children — some of whom have been heard to cry as they were dropped into surgical trash cans. They even advertise their monstrous commerce beyond the confines of the State, thus making New York the abortion capital of America.

Once more we denounce this outrage against humanity. Together with all the Bishops of

the world we hold and teach that "abortion is an unspeakable crime".

We urge you, our fellow Catholics — and through you all men of good will — not to be deceived because a civil law permits abortion. God's law comes first, and God's law says: "Thou shalt not kill". No civil law can ever displace God's Commandment.

Indeed we remind you that lawmakers of another generation and in another land once claimed the right to decree the extinction of innocent human beings for so-called social and eugenic reasons. It happened under the Nazi regime; who is to say it cannot happen here?

We plead with you to recognize the terrible consequences of legalized abortion. Once innocent life at any stage is placed at the mercy of others, a vicious principle has been legalized. Thereafter, a simple majority may decide that life is to be denied the defective, the aged, the incorrigible, and granted only to the strong, the beautiful and the intelligent.

The day may come when lawmakers could set standards which people must meet if they are to remain alive. Already one standard has been set; who can say what others will come next? For, once respect for human life has been undermined, the murderous possibilities are limitless.

We urge you, as strongly as we can, to oppose and reject abortion.

Lest anyone take our words lightly, we must also remind you that the Church invokes a severe sanction against any Catholic who raises his unfeeling hand to destroy this most defenseless of all human beings — the unborn baby. The Church disowns by immediate excommunication any Catholic who deliberately procures an abortion or helps someone else to do so.

It is our prayer and hope that, with God's help, the people of our day will come to a true understanding of the sacredness of each human life.

Letters

Unity In Diversity

Editor:

Re the protest of Mr. J. Overlander against public subsidy of church-related schools: there is a long history of such subsidy in other countries, and there have been no problems of undesirable, unmanageable proliferation of schools or a deterioration of education.

Failure to encourage alternatives through freedom of choice in education results in a state monopoly of education. Then what about the competition and diversity so essential to quality education and individual freedom? Is it in the best interest of the individual and society to have a single state-dominated system of education? Is it not the genius of a free society to achieve unity without uniformity?

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The Word for Sunday

God Bless America

By Father Albert Shamon



Scanning next Sunday's readings, I halted at the Gospel words, "Soldiers likewise asked him, 'What about us?' He told them, 'Do not bully anyone. Denounce no one falsely. Be content with your pay.'"

We hear so much propaganda against the military today. Yet it was soldiers who came to John the Baptist seeking what they must do to be saved. The Baptist did not denounce the military. "Be good soldiers!" he said.

The soldier, ready to lay down his life, is indeed vulnerable to the Gospel. The "Lord I am not worthy" is a soldier's prayer — the centurion's, who compared faith to obeying a military command. The cry on Calvary "Truly this is the Son of God" burst from the lips of a soldier. The Church's decisive breakthrough from its Judaic exclusivism to its universal inclusiveness of the Gentile world came through the prayers of a soldier, Cornelius.

Of course most wars are evil, but so are men. And so long as men are evil, we shall need good soldiers, as well as good judges, good lawyers, good policemen, and so on.

The "in thing" today is to blame the Establishment for everything. Hence the irrational attack on the military. I hear militant minorities keep urging, "Change the structure. The Establishment must go." They never say, "Change people. Change hearts." Yet Christ said, "Out of the heart come evils." And after Him, St. James asked, "What causes wars?" He answered, "Is it not your passions?" (4:1).

Changing structures cures nothing. Cuba changed the Establishment. So did Russia and Red China. And what did they do with people? They liquidated them. Forty million in Russia. Twenty million in Red China. At least half a million in Cuba.

I know of only two kinds of social structure: one that treats men like men — a government of the people, by the people, and for the people (the American way); and the other that treats men like things — the Cuban, Soviet, and Red Chinese way. So long as men are evil, no social system can be perfect. Yet with all its "evils" what fool would exchange the American way for the other way? Where men are still free men, they can rectify the evils of the system; but where men are things, what chance do they

have — what chance did Dubcek have?

The evils in America focus neither in the Establishment nor in the military, but in small islands of evil men. In the movie-makers, who, like Judases, put money before the good of our youth and country. In the hypocrisy of front organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union which defends only anti-American, uncivil, disrupting license. In those newspaper reporters, those news commentators, those few, few Rhodes scholar Senators, who are always giving headlines, exposure, and encouragement to the avowed enemies of our country. In that coterie of leftwing pseudo-intellectuals who subvert academic freedom to destroy the academic rights of the majority. In those bleeding-hearts who teach soldiering is evil and equate draft counseling with draft evasion and not with acquainting youth of its responsibility to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

May God bless America and its elected leaders.

May God bless our soldiers, first in flight to disaster areas and first in might to fight for the rights of the defenseless.

May God bless our national guardsmen, our only dikes against monster mobs lashed into fury by Castro-trained anarchists.

May God bless our policemen for courage beyond the call of duty in the face of unwarranted vilification, for not resorting to Gestapo and OGPU-like tactics when prodded, pushed, and provoked almost beyond human endurance.

May God bless America that safeguards our freedom to practice Christian justice and charity which will stem the coming wrath gathering on the horizons of America.

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