



"I told you — no calling for help!"

The Church: 1971 Thinking Ethnic Is a Bad Joke

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



Sometimes I am persuaded that the only way to keep one's sanity in the contemporary American Church is to view the enterprise as one of the greatest comedies that the world has ever produced, a comedy which has been served up for our entertainment and our enjoyment, and one that absolutely ought not to be taken seriously.

For example, the "National Catholic Reporter" has recently announced that the liberals have won the post-Vatican Council battle and it's time to be optimistic again. This announcement is followed by an article by Gabriel Moran reporting that religious orders are washed up and then by an appeal for money to keep the NCR from sinking. I'm all for responding to the appeal. Comedy like that ought not to be permitted to perish. (And the NCR really is much funnier than "The Register" or "The Wanderer," though they're pretty funny in their own way, too).

But the most hilarious of recent performances is the great non-debate raging between Msgr. George Higgins and "The Commonweal" over the slightly battered subject of white ethnic groups.

John Deedy, one of the wise men who dictates each week in the columns of "The Commonweal" what all good Catholic liberals must think, recently indicated that not everyone (including, apparently, himself) was upset by the Bishops' phase-out of the Task Force on Urban Affairs. According to Deedy, the concerns of the Task Force with the problems of white ethnic workers look "like shucking off the guilt of racism from the most actively racist."

Sure, Mr. Deedy, the Poles and the Italians and the Irish were the ones who brought slaves to the New World, who treated them as three fifths of a human, being in the United States Constitution, who agreed to the Jim Crow national compromise of the 1880s and who have grown wealthy and powerful by keeping blacks in their place.

Never mind the data which show that ethnics are less racist

than native Americans with the same social class background. Never mind that, even though it is their schools, their jobs, their neighborhoods, and their churches that the liberal elites have decreed must be surrendered, the reaction of ethnics has been astonishingly mild.

Never mind that despite all the fears of liberals like you, the white ethnics did not vote for George Wallace (though there is a strange liberal dogma that they did). It has been decided in the bastions of New York liberalism that white ethnics are hard-hats and hard-hats are racist. You can have a Panther supper and persuade yourself that you're not a racist. But those Poles, they certainly are.

Msgr. Higgins rose stoutly to the defense of his colleagues, quoting an earlier "Commonweal" editorial saying some kind things concerning the new concern about white ethnics (cautiously kind; "Commonweal" never gets really enthusiastic about anything the Church does). It turns out that Mr. Deedy also wrote the editorial, which shows how hard it is from week to week to keep the party line straight.

But the fun is only beginning. Msgr. Higgins approvingly quotes "Commonweal" approvingly quoting Msgr. Gino Baroni's remark that there may be "10,000 Imperiales" (an extremist white militant group). Mr. Deedy (in his earlier manifestation) notes that "this is no idle worry" and Msgr. Higgins adds, "You bet your life it isn't."

Nonsense, pure, unadulterated, high grade nonsense. Vastly amusing nonsense but nonsense nevertheless. Mr. Deedy and the two monsignors all share the assumption of the New York liberals: ethnics are hard-hats and racists. They are so hard-hat and racist that unless something is done for them or about them they are likely to start collecting guns in preparation for shooting. The specter of 10,000 Imperiales is pure and comic fiction. I suppose that from Mr. Deedy and Msgr. Baroni we can expect nothing else. But George Higgins ought to know better.

On The Right Side

Ecumenism Side Light

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



On the occasion of Msgr. Craugh's funeral at St. Margaret Mary's Church in Rochester, I used Father M. Conboy's room for vesting, and stole temporarily, his book by Cardinal Bea, entitled CHURCH UNITY. (Herder and Herder: \$4.95) As I read this good book I recalled my own ecumenical efforts while working the vineyard of the Lord in Wayne County. Because my conviction is that a priest is sent not merely to Catholics but to all in his own area, I had a custom to send a letter to non-Catholics of the vicinity. Its purpose was not to convert them to the Catholic Faith. It was simply an act of fraternal love. The letters were read with interest. They were also read with some puzzlement, so one day I wrote the following letter of explanation.

To Our Separated Brothers,
Greetings!

Have you wondered at times why you receive a letter from me, a priest in Clyde? Have you wondered even more when sometimes the letter that came to you didn't seem to have anything to do with your religious life, or your political ideas or economics? Have you not suspected that I was trying to corral you into the Catholic Church? Well, if you did it was a quite false suspicion. The following little joke will help you to understand what I really have in mind.

"Years ago a man had a large lawn. It was constantly afflicted with dandelion weeds. He tried

all kinds of weed killers, but to no avail. Finally he wrote to the State College of Agriculture and asked for advice. Ten days later he had a nice, neat note from the College: 'Dear Sir: Regarding your problem with the dandelions, we suggest that you learn to love them.' Sincerely yours."

We are all living together, forming one Community. I think it is important that you know and understand what makes Catholics tick. One thing you will note about us is this: whether we are good or bad, Church-goers or non-church-goers, devoted to the priests or hostile to them, loyal to the Church or undermining her — (Some Catholics do attack the Church, but won't leave her. They always remind me of that unpleasant adage: "It's a dirty bird which fouls its own nest.") — deep in their souls they do believe in the Catholic Faith, they do hold the priest as some one special, and in danger of death they want every grace that they know the Church can give. One day I visited a man in the hospital. He was away from the Church for 57 years, and very sick. I said: "You are a very sick man. Do you want to go to confession and Holy Communion, and return to the Church?" "Indeed I do." And he did. Thanks, be to God.

The enclosed letter to my own parishioners is interesting to Catholics. The account of the apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes will be a mere curios-

ity to you. But after all, it was written for my own people. I simply send it to you that you may know what we think, how we think, and why we think what we think. I do not expect you to believe in private revelations although I do hope you hold fast to the miracles of the Bible. Nor do I expect you to love Our Lord's Mother as we do. In any event, I do want you to be familiar with our thoughts.

Father Francis Burns, an old teacher of mine, said in 1933: "Know all you can about your people. The better you know them, the better you can serve them." Perhaps if you know us better, you'll love us better. I do hope so.

So there we are. Keep smiling and may the Good God of all of us bring grace to your souls and joy to your hearts.

Cardinal Bea wrote: "We stress one aspect which is of great importance for the priest in his work for unity, namely humility and the high esteem and respect we should bear towards our separated brethren. This springs from charity, according to the words of St. Paul: 'Charity is patient, is kind. Charity feels no envy, charity is never perverse or proud.' (1 Cor. 13)" (Unity of Christians: p. 76) The document on ECUMENISM in Vatican II is hardly a new creation. Rather it is Pope John's notion of aggiornamento, the renewal, updating and development of what the Church has always been saying.

On the Line

Some Viets Will Miss GIs

By Bob Considine



Everybody will be glad to see the GIs leave Vietnam except the thousands of orphans they befriended and helped keep alive.

The humanitarianism of Americans all over the war-riddled country has always been eclipsed by the fighting, the political wrangling, and the vast amount of publicity given to such calamities as the reported atrocities inflicted by a few troops at My Lai.

There has never been any consistent reporting about how places like An Luc or Phu My or other havens of bereft children have managed to survive. Both of these shelters and clinics are in Saigon. A dozen more are spread through the country, all pitifully understaffed.

Unless times have changed — which hardly seems possible — the Saigon government allots nothing for the care of its war orphans. It provides about 15 cents a day for old people who fill the wards of public and charity hospitals to the rafters.

The GIs will be sorely missed by the kids who will always remember that in many cases they owe their lives, humble as that might be, to the generosity of young Americans who built roofs over their heads in their spare time, scrounged food for their bellies, medicated for their many assorted diseases, taught them wonderful games to play, songs to sing, laughter and love.

And never asked for anything in return.

The Vatican assailed auto racing the other day, but the message didn't get as far as David B. Lockton, president of the Ontario (Calif.) Motor Speedway, Inc.

The deceptively youthful looking new impresario of the racing scene is a product of the law schools of Yale and the University of Virginia, Indianapolis-born and thus soaked from childhood in the lore of the track, he built the huge Ontario complex — 35 miles from Los Angeles — from the debris of other men's broken dreams. Half-a-dozen of them, all old hands at the game, had failed to put their deals together before Lockton moseyed by in August 1967.

He was known in racing by that time. His first clients when he opened his law office in Indianapolis, were some of the better known drivers who needed legal advice with their contracts and off-course businesses. With a good friend, Chuck Burns, he expanded that interest to form Sports Headliners, Inc. and now has among his clients Johnny Unitas and O. J. Simpson.

Lockton saw a great chance for big league Pacific Coast racing. He put his money where his dreams were, and won additional financial support from

the Wall Street firm of Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette, and Pioneer Lands, New York-based real estate people.

The Ontario layout has a 2.5-mile oval track, a bit faster than Indianapolis because of slightly banked straightaways, and a 3.2-mile 20-turn road course for Grand Prix racing. There are seats for 130,000 for oval races, about 100,000 for the winding, grinding road races. Two-and-a-half Disneylands could fit into the complex. Its parking lots have room for 58,000 cars.

The place, incredibly enough, makes money even when there is no racing. It has become a tourist attraction (for a price the rubbernecks take a bus ride around the courses), a backdrop for TV and fashions, a testing ground for engines, tires and other accessories, and a school for people who want to know how to drive a car safely at more than 100 miles an hour.

It makes more money, of course, when the races are on. Two big ones are scheduled for the next two months. They are the Miller High Life Stock Car 500, with prizes totaling \$225,000, and the 200-mile Questor Grand Prix, wherein the 20 best European Formula 1 drivers will compete against the 10 top Americans driving slightly more powerful Formula A cars. About a quarter of a million dollars will be up for grabs.