



"I THINK WE CAN LOOK FOR A BIG UPSWING IN MORALITY, FRANK!"

A Seminary Professor Views

...the Vietnam War

By FR. PATRICK LOGAN
(Last of a Series)

In an earlier article it was maintained that the desire to get out of Vietnam was shared by both the silent majority and the more vociferous minority. Subsequently we reviewed some of the moral reasons that make the case so compelling. But a final obstacle remains — how does one withdraw "responsibly"? In keeping with the level of discourse of the previous articles political alternatives will not be discussed here; rather the need for deeper reflection on the meaning of "responsibility" itself will be explored — what are our "responsibilities"?

"Responsibility" is a complex phenomenon in any given situation; as one becomes more involved one incurs greater responsibilities; as one incurs greater responsibilities it becomes more likely that conflicting responsibilities may soon arise. This is surely what has happened in Vietnam. What we must attempt to do is remind ourselves of our most fundamental responsibility.

First of all "responsibility" may mean keeping one's word, specifically sticking to our promise to aid the government of South Vietnam. It should be remembered, however, that promises given on an international level, particularly promises concerning the giving of vast sums of aid, are by their nature conditional promises, and are understood as such by all parties.

Thus we did not consider it particularly "irresponsible" to announce to South Vietnam that we were going to pull out our ground troops and let the natives "Vietnamize" the war! Would it be any more irresponsible to do this at a quicker pace — or even to give fullest priority to a negotiated peace? Is it any less irresponsible to let the war continue, to encourage the South to build up its forces, to let the daily "blood-bath" not begin but continue?

And let us push the question of responsibility back to a prior stage — why did we make such promises in the first place, what made us feel "responsible" for Vietnam at all?

Two answers are generally

accepted: we felt a responsibility to halt the spread of communism, and we felt a responsibility towards world order not to permit one country to commit aggression against another.

When we consider these two grounds of responsibility not only theoretically, but also in terms of our nation's endorsement of them we find these concerns far from being viewed as absolutes. In fact, we find our own attitudes changing not only toward the various forms of communism across the world, but also toward our own responsibility for policing the globe.

Thus in Asia we are tending to leave Asia's fate to be decided by the Asians (I am not naive enough to believe our policy as expressed by President Nixon really means this to the degree that it seems superficially); we have even stated our willingness to acknowledge a Communist government in Vietnam, provided it is legitimately elected (and this certainly represents a change in our government's thinking). Nor have we felt obliged to police the globe, to intervene against every act of aggression that has been committed. Thus our underlying assumption is of limited responsibility for peace in the world. In fact we are moving to the opposite pole of irresponsibility if anything!

Can we then attempt to put together a positive concept of "responsibility" towards Vietnam (and other Vietnams)? If we are to do so we have to accept Vietnam as a lesson in national humility: not humiliation, but humility. If our experience of powerlessness in Vietnam only offends but does not correct our excessive national pride, we are in danger of pulling back in bitterness to a position of defeatist isolationism.

A truly chastised America would gain a deeper insight into our responsibility for world peace as a result of Vietnam; first that our responsibility has limits, second that we must act multilaterally, not just on our own initiative, and must accept a new but nonetheless active role in truly international affairs.

On The Right Side

Radio Dialogue

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



Kevin P. Doran, manager of Hornell radio station WLEA, has initiated a daily program, Dialogue, to discuss sundry issues. On Jan. 19 he taped a program, Confusion in the Catholic Church, with himself as inquisitor and myself as expositor. Here is a section.

Mr. Doran: Father, we read and hear a lot about a possibility that the Catholic Church will allow a married priesthood. We read of priests who abandon their priesthood for marriage; of lay and clerical groups agitating for a married clergy. First, what do you think about a married clergy, and second, what are the prospects of a married clergy in the Catholic Church?

Father Cuddy: When you say the Catholic Church, consider what that embraces. To some here the Catholic Church means the Church in Hornell. To others the Church in the United States. But consider what Catholicism means! It embraces the whole world.

Mr. Doran: You're not dodging the question are you, Father?

Father Cuddy: Not at all. It's clarifying a necessary point. Since the Church is Catholic, the question is: what would be best everywhere? Is celibacy best for South America? I don't know. Would a married clergy be good for Ireland? I think it would be terrible.

But to get back to the States. St. Paul certainly commended celibacy as an ascetical principle but he did not insist on it. Do you remember what he said in I Corinthians? He told the people that he wished they were as he, that is, celibate. But he recognized that this is a special grace. And he further commented that a man who is married is anxious about the

things of the world, how he might please his wife; while a man who is unmarried is free from the responsibilities of wife and family, and is, therefore, more free to do the work of the Lord.

Actually, obligatory celibacy developed gradually in the Church. The Council of Elvira in Spain, about 300 A.D. was one of the earliest to demand a celibate clergy. Two things are involved: one is the ascetical principle from which flows total commitment to Our Lord; the second is a fuller freedom to serve the people. A wife and family have the right to the time and care and love from a husband and father. The celibate priest is free of this grave responsibility, and can give himself and his time unhindered to the service of the Church and the people.

Now don't take me wrong. I've known many ministers and their wives, especially through the military service, and have the highest regard for their dedication. In fact I think many ministers' wives deserve a martyr's crown because some congregations make the most butlandish demands on them. However, I do think that celibacy is best both for the priest and the people, at least in the cold climates. There is no likelihood that the Church is going to make any change in this in our lifetime.

Mr. Doran: To turn to another subject, we read in the papers about nuns going to Selma, to Washington, to protests all over the country. We read of nuns involved in all kinds of social work, racial work. It's a far cry from the days when nuns spent their lives quietly teaching children. What do you think of these changes in religious life?

Father Cuddy: Well, you

have to remember that the whole world has changed these past twenty-five years. The social, racial, economic conditions have changed. That religious Sisters should be involved in more kinds of work is to be expected, and is commendable if primary services are not destroyed by impractical extension. I might say that my enthusiasm for nuns who traipse the country, enjoying the excitement and notoriety is not very great. And I think that if you will follow the spiritual evolution of these women you will find that many leave the religious life. I'm afraid that it is the parable of the good seed which fell among thorns, and the good is choked.

The mother who does her job and takes care of her family may not have the excitement of group protesting mothers. But my homage is to the mother who does her primary job. So with the Sisters, Good heavens! Consider those wonderful women who served the people of this area for half a century. Our 91-year-old Sister DeSales, the only survivor of a noble group; Sisters Aid and Grace and Aquinas and others whom I know only by history. Why, they worked and worked and were happy and dedicated. They were too busy in the hospital to be extensively and thinly involved over half of creation. Our present Sisters work hard, too. But it is their own sorrow that they are so bogged down by interminable meetings that they cannot do the work they should do: personal care of our sick. The Sisters who retain the gratitude and reverence of the people are those same Sisters who carry on in their vocations, calmly and cheerfully, not diverted from their primary work: to serve the people for the love of God and Our Lady.

The Church: 1971

Harrisburg Thoughts

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



I would just as soon not have to comment on the indictment of a number of priests and religious for allegedly hatching a bizarre conspiracy to destroy government property and kidnap a governmental official. I have made my position on these radicals clear in the past, and I think nothing need be said on that subject again. Nevertheless, it would be cowardly to ignore the affair in a column allegedly devoted to commentary on American Catholicism, especially since for weal or woe the trial of the alleged conspirators is going to have a substantial impact on American Catholics.

The first and most important thing to be said is that the American judicial system assumes that a man is innocent until proven guilty; and I think that this is the only stance that the supporters and the critics of the Catholic radicals can take. The burden of proof is entirely on the government.

Second, I think we must believe that they will get a fair trial, and that if perhaps injustice is done, it will be reversed at a higher judicial level. There have been rather few convictions in the trials of the radicals (Brian Flanagan was acquitted, for example, and the Chicago 7 were convicted on only one of the charges.

brought against them), and the review process has freed Spock and Coffin, while others are free pending appellate decisions.

The radicals have sought to destroy confidence in the judicial process—William Kuntzler's rushing into the case leads us to suspect that the Catholic radicals are going to use their trial to try to discredit the judicial system; but the system still has kept most of them out of jail. Everyone agrees, for example, that the New Haven Panther trial was a fair one—even though Yale's president has not yet gotten around to withdrawing his foolish statement about the American judicial system.

Third, I think many of us will have some initial questions about the indictment, at least until the evidence on which it is based becomes public. The power to indict, as Alexander Bickel points out in the current issue of "Commentary," is a very dangerous weapon and can be misused. I am inclined to agree with Bickel that the power was not misused in the Chicago case and am willing to give the presumption to the indicting agency under most circumstances.

But in this particular set of circumstances, the unfortunate

charges leveled by a federal police official before a congressional committee must certainly raise some questions about the background which went into this indictment. These questions are not unanswerable, but they must be raised.

Fourth, I don't suppose that there is any way to avoid turning the trial into another spectacular. Such shows serve too many needs. Lawyers can dramatize themselves and their pieties. Radicals can continue their efforts to discredit the American "system"; the self-righteous can parade their virtue. Journalists like J. Anthony Lukas, Jason Epstein, and Catherine Gray can get their thrills from rubbing shoulders with the brave and virtuous radicals and writing apocalyptic articles about how the trial is a turning point in American history (which it won't be).

One can just hope that the judge will not be trapped into playing the defendants' game. For all these reasons, one surely hopes that the Justice Department knows what it is doing. If it doesn't have convincing evidence to substantiate its charges, it is really playing into the hands of the radicals; it is giving them exactly what they want — a stage on which to perform.