

'That Didn't Used to Be a Sin'

By J. E. KOLLER

On a recent Sunday our pastor delivered a homily which, if advertised on a bill-board in front of the church, would probably have had the inviting title, "That's Not a Sin Any More."

The sermon was directed particularly toward Catholics still uneasy over changes in the Church. It was explained that restrictions on such activities as eating meat on Friday, and breaking Lenten and pre-communion fasts had been devised primarily as tests of obedience and that these actions had never been morally wrong in themselves.

In recent years the Church has moderated its own laws in

order to place greater emphasis on such matters as the true moral issues on the one hand and on the freedom of the individual Christian on the other.

All in all, the presentation may have been reassuring for some listeners and could have been thought-provoking for all. It seems to me to have been incomplete, however, without a sequel entitled "That Didn't Used to Be a Sin" or something of the sort.

Today the church-goer is faced with a new group of commandments with texts such as "Thou shalt not discriminate against thy less fortunate neighbor" and even "Thou shalt not participate in an unjust war." For many Catholics

these strictures seem as unfamiliar as sirloin on Friday.

The point which needs to be made is that these commandments are anything but new in the Church. References to brotherhood are so numerous in the teachings of Jesus as to need only a gentle reminder; and we must all remember an old catechism answer which ended "and love my neighbor as myself for love of God." As for our obligation to question the justice of a war, St. Augustine worked out the details in the fourth century and before that time most Christians were pacifists. Thus, these seemingly new commandments represent even less change in our Church than the abandoning of a few "membership rules."

Applying these guides to some current questions of conduct can lead to interesting conclusions.

A good example is the matter of transfers of pupils from public to parochial elementary schools. One gathers that many requests for such transfers this year are not wholly unrelated to plans for reorganizing the city schools in such a way as to achieve a more nearly uniform racial balance among the various schools in the Rochester system. This is not, of course, the only good reason for the proposed reorganization.

There is no test of morality which justifies either an urge on the part of parents to arrange such transfers for their children or the accepting of

transfers by parochial school principals or pastors when there is any question as to motive. Leaving the public schools to avoid association with children from other cultures does not by any stretch of the imagination observe Christ's teachings which summarize so neatly into "Love thy neighbor." And to leave no doubt whatsoever on this subject, Bishop Hogan has placed a strict ban on such transfers. Therefore, having a part in arranging them is an act of disobedience as well.

No matter what standard a Catholic uses as a guide, be it moral judgment or obedience, "old Church" or "new Church," any effort to escape public school integration is a "No-No."



Father Albert Gaelens, CSB, Principal of Aquinas, is presented with a Brazilian Flag by foreign exchange student Claudio Bonaparte of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

'I Like Aquinas, But - -'

A 16-year-old Brazilian studying at Aquinas has a tactful answer for people who wonder if he's eager to get back to Rio.

"Fifty per cent yes; fifty per cent no," says Claudio Bonaparte. And that's in English 100 per cent improved since his arrival in February, according to the principal, Father Albert Gaelens.

Claudio, here under the exchange student program, is living with Mr. and Mrs. James Chase of Augustine Street, whose son, James, is an Aquinas junior.

The visitor was "family sick" for awhile for his parents and

nine brothers and sisters in Rio de Janeiro, "but now everything is fine."

"I miss surfing, don't like your snow, but love to ski," Claudio added.

He hopes to become a civil engineer and return to the States for graduate work.

Schools in Rio offer neither sports nor social life, Claudio said. Here, he is on the varsity track team, running the 440. As for social life—

"I like Aquinas very much, Father," he assured the principal. "I only wish there were some girls here."



FR. ANDREW GREELEY

The Church 1971

I was discussing the Catholic lecture circuit with my good friend Father Gregory Baum. "There are," said Father Baum, "so many beautiful people out there."

By "out there" he meant the colleges, the parishes, the retreat centers, the adult education programs, the lecture series which abound in the grass roots of American Catholicism. One cannot encounter the people who staff these programs and those who participate in them without sensing the immense vitality still to be found in the American Catholic Church.

No, I must say more than that. Not only is there vitality in places like Phoenix, San Antonio, and Columbus and Little Rock and Scranton and Lafayette; there is, if anything, even more vitality, more enthusiasm than there was a few years ago. Despite all the crises, despite all the frustration, the disillusionment, the disappointments, one cannot be on the lecture circuit for very long and be oblivious to the energies and the enthusiasms that are pulsating in the American Church.

The clergy is caught in an identity crisis. The religious orders are experiencing a massive exodus. Communication between bishops and priests seems poor. The middle-aged are attracted by the mindblowers and the young by the crazies. The intellectuals seem to think that there is nothing worth saving in the Church.

And yet the energy and the vitality are still there. The Newman Clubs and college chapels and Catholic high schools are vibrant with enthusiastic experimental liturgy. That they are swarming with young people can be observed by anyone who cares to find them.

Whenever I am off on the lecture circuit, I come back with the same feeling I used to experience when coming back from a retreat. The battle is still worth fighting, the Spirit is still at work. There is no room for disillusionment and discouragement.

And then I am back home. I read the newspapers, I talk to priests, and I sense the great weariness and discouragement. I begin to think that the enthusiasm "out there" in the hinterlands was a figment of my imagination. I am almost afraid to venture forth again for fear that it isn't there anymore. But it still is, and if someone with a personality and background as

different from mine as Father Baum sees it too, then it's sure to be there.

"You're right, Gregory," I said leaning across the supper table, "and they deserve better. Better bishops, better priests, better intellectuals, better journalists. They deserve better leaders. They have a right to prophets and mystics, poets, and saints."

The American Catholic people do deserve better—better

than the journalists who write them off as hardhats, better than the poetic revolutionaries who denounce them as insane, better than the shallow social critics who dismiss them as racists, better than a leadership which is afraid to lead.

But if they deserve better, I think they are more than able to function with what they have. American Catholicism is too strong to destroy. And its best years are still ahead.

Mercy Sets Arts Day

John Menihan, Carl Zollo, Francesca Guli, Al Hasenauer, Ferdinand J. Thomas O'Brien, and Garth Fagas, all Rochester artists, are among those scheduled to conduct workshops at Our Lady of Mercy School's first Arts Day, Monday, May 24.

According to Joyce Kaminski, Student Council president and the originator of the day, Arts Day is being sponsored by the Student Council to spur student creativity in the arts. Regular classes will be canceled.

The Roger Eckers Quartet with soloist Joyce Love will play at the opening session.

Morning workshops will be conducted in painting, sculpture, poetry, cartooning, the media and several other fields.

Students from Nazareth College will conduct a drama workshop.

Tours of the Planetarium, Eastman House, Fairport Perception Center and the Third Ward are also offered.

Weekend Airwaves

Radio and TV

SATURDAY

Chan, 21-TV, Rochester 5:30 P.M. "INSIGHT", Drama by Paulist Prod.

WSAY, Rochester 7 P.M. Bishop Hogan talk on the Family Rosary.

SUNDAY

WROC, Rochester 7:45 A.M. Sacred Heart program

Chan 10-TV, Rochester 8:30 A.M. Sunday Mass: Bishop Hogan offers Mass and preaches on Diocesan Mission Appeal.

WEBO, Owego 9:25 A.M. Sunday Mass

Chan 10-TV, Rochester 1 P.M. "INSIGHT", Drama by Paulist Prod.

WHAM, Rochester 6:45 P.M. "God in the Headlines; Father Richard Tormey, interview on "Death — the patient and the family."

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