



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY
**On The
Right Side**

Our St. James Mercy Hospital sent me to a conference on The Patient, Death and the Family at Xerox Towers in Rochester April 29 and 30. It was under the aegis of the U. of R. Medical School and Rochester General Hospital. The lecturers were illustrious men; illustrious in their professions, in their humanity and dedication. At the Council of Trent, when there were too many bishops deficient in dedication and virtue, the saintly Archbishop Batholemew of Braza said tartly: "It is my opinion that their illustrious Lordships are in sore need of an illustrious reform." During the conference I kept thinking, sadly: "The illustrious Lecturers' lectures need an illustrious shot of Faith and Hope."

The conference was thoroughly secular. I thought: "This is the tender, compassionate care one might give a pet dog, easing its last days before extinction."

The only suggestion of religion came from Father Dan Tormey and Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, who were panel reactors to a cheerful lecturer, Prof. Robert Williams, M.D. of Seattle. Dr. W. advocated selective euthanasia, selective abortion, and a litany of many things; some good, some dreadful. Father Tormey reacted: "When doctors lay down guide lines on who will die and who will live, that's frightening. Dr. W. made as many theological errors as I would make giving a lecture on medicine." A woman back of me called out in disdain: "Oh, come on!"

Rabbi Bronstein said: "Dr. W. has highlighted grave problems. New conditions do require continuous study. But we are in a bind because of society: a society which lacks reverence for life, for the sacredness of life. . . . There is also the extreme of depersonalization. Not just intelligent people, but the poor idiot has a soul. . . . Regarding selectivity of who will be allowed to live or die, a physician has to stand FOR life."

It might be said: "But the

conference was not a theological dialogue." However, a conference which deals with the dying, with their families, with

the fact of death would be enriched by Revelation and by human aspiration toward eternal life.

Sadder still is this: that many Catholics and other believers look upon death as an unmitigated evil. Only Sister Death can open the door to Heaven.

It is said that the Spanish have a mind toward death, of courage and confidence. Few Spaniards have passed my scan! The opposite has been my experience. Yet the Scriptures are clear. "He who believes in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And anyone who believes in me shall never die." (Jn. 11). "We have not here a lasting

city, but we seek one that is to come." (Heb. 13:14) "Though I should walk in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." (Ps. 22:4) In the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass we pray: "We hope to enjoy forever the vision of your glory, through Christ Our Lord." Why all this looking upon deaths as an evil?

The speaker who surpassed all was a motherly Swiss psychiatrist, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Father Bruce Ammering of Monroe Community Hospital told me: "She spoke at the Catholic chaplains' convention and was an inspiration." The American Ecclesiastical Review

wrote of her book, On Death and Dying (MacMillan Co. — paper back — \$1.95): "For those who take seriously the gospel message to heal the sick and bury the dead, this book is a must." While Dr. K-R. did not go into the specifics of Eternal Life, she did come the closest to giving hope.

And my own hope is that parents will not bring up their children with a terror of death, but rather with the expectation that death is the normal gateway to heaven and eternal happiness. Wasn't it Saint Francis of Assisi, that saint who loved life and living, who spoke with affection and expectation of Sister Death?

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Fire Fighters Elect Officers

Daniel Cauffield was elected president of the Rochester Fire Fighters Holy Name Society at their annual Communion Breakfast last Sunday in the Holiday Inn following Mass at St. Joseph's Church.

D.A. Jack Lazarus was the principal speaker.

Retired Capt. Edward Wandke was chairman and James Butler, former commissioner of public safety, was toastmaster.

Fire Commissioner John F. Hurley and Chief Joseph Naloro were guests of honor.

Rabbis Approve "Voucher" Aid

Miami Beach —(RNS)— The Rabbinical Council of America unanimously approved here a "voucher" system of public aid to private education.

Rabbi Bernard L. Borzon, who was re-elected president, said the proposed experimental system would save "thousands of private schools."