

The Crisis of Authority (Part 3)

I recently offered the Police Holy Name Society of Rochester a "Mutual Examination of Conscience" for us who have been called to exercise authority. The following remarks are in conclusion to my column of last week:

"Those of us in authority are people not of privileged position but of responsibility. The ultimate and most effective protection of authority is not power —



but freedom. Ours is the duty to promote a climate of responsible freedom. It is this recognition of freedom which alone sustains the healthy tension in all vital society.

"Authority and freedom are vested in men and not in angels. Unhealthy tensions develop when there is a lack of mutual respect — when there is a mutual suspicion developed.

"The crisis of authority arises when there develops a failure in interpersonal relationships — when those in authority fail to enable others to grow — to be open to the possibility of change and growth — and when

authority relies on an impersonal and cold position of power.

"Authority that is looked upon as dominion and power over others becomes caught up, often in formality and pretense. Real authority is not threatened — it is responsive — and conceives of itself as a mission of service with and to others — to develop responsible and creative initiative.

"If we look for Divine direction in our analysis, we find it in St. Luke's Gospel:

"The same Christ who could say 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (Luke 22/7), could also say 'I have come not to be ministered to, but to minister'.

"There is in the mature person the ability to strike a balance between principles, laws, obedience to authority on one side — and freedom, spontaneity, initiative, creativity on the other side. Immature people resolve the complexity in favor of one side only.

"One-sided insistence on absolute authority is not only a sign of immature people but produces immature people in its turn. The opposite quality — so called 'unprincipled' love produces the same effect.

I concluded my remarks with these words:

"I will never accept or sponsor an advisory board for our police — for who can operate effectively with the responsible mission of authority in such a climate of prejudice and 'a priori' suspicion. This does not mean that I suggest your candidacy for canonization — we who are a little less than the angels should always be introspective about our fidelity to the responsibility of our mission of service."

As a follow-up of this speech, the local news reports left the public with the impression that I had devoted the entire talk to the Police Advisory Board. I have since spoken or written to many who have protested my statement — and have asked them to consider my remarks in the light of the context of the theme of the entire speech.

My stance on an advisory board is a personal judgment. I am, I believe, still entitled to an opinion.

When I speak as the head of the diocese it is always in consultation with my elected advisors.

I hope my words have served to clarify my position. I have made no attempt to gloss over the human inadequacies of authority — ever in need of becoming more worthy of its responsibilities; nor have I made accusations.

By Father Thomas Erdle

Guest Columnist

Gathering Insight on Deafness

What is it like to be profoundly and congenitally deaf? It's rather difficult for hearing people to comprehend the experience of a person who is deaf.



We can stuff our ears with cotton or turn off the sound of the television set and get some experience of the physical side of deafness. But, it seems to me we haven't come even near to what it's like to be deaf.

For some insight into the quiet world we have to exercise our imaginations.

Suppose for a moment, you found yourself alone in Israel and for some reason or other you suffered complete loss of hearing. Suppose further that there is no one who understands English and this is your cultural milieu for the remaining year of your life: some challenge you face!

How soon do you think you will master enough Hebrew to read and write it? How is anyone going to teach you? Do you think you will ever be able to pronounce Hebrew clearly enough to be understood when you speak it? Remember there are some sounds in this language without any English equivalent.

Father Erdle is chaplain for The Rochester School for The Deaf

lent. How are you going to read this language on the lips of other people with whom you try to communicate? A good number of the sounds in this language really don't show on the lips. They are lodged way back in the throat or, at least, not clearly perceptible on the lips. Besides, you would first have to have some vocabulary in the language. Next, you would have to understand the Hebrew grammatical structure, which is considerably different from English. This knowledge would be necessary just to put together in a meaningful sense the words you might catch visibly on the lips of the speaker.

Such is the challenge of our hypothetical situation. Yet, as impossible as it may sound to you, the challenge to the congenitally deaf child to learn English is greater still.

I say that chiefly because to have had the command of one language enables you to articulate your life experiences at least to yourself. It enables you to think more efficiently and more abstractly. It's a definite asset in learning another language. Certainly, too, the previous knowledge of sounds would be an asset in pronunciation of a new language.

I believe the problem of learning a verbal language highlights, perhaps, more than anything else the greatest challenge to the deaf in society. Verbal language is the main communications system for any culture.

It is to the credit of our schools for the deaf that this seemingly impossible challenge is being met with remarkable success. The average American adult deaf person is a responsible member of American society. He is independent, hard working. Statistically it has been shown that he has greater job stability than his hearing counterpart.

Recently, there was a movement afoot in our legislature to seek an additional \$600 deduction on income tax for the deaf on the basis of their handicap. The official organization representing the deaf voted against this. The deaf felt that it would detract from their image as independent, self-reliant citizens, contributing their fair share to American society.

There is a lesson here, I believe, for us hearing people who are considering what it's like to be deaf. It's not simply an admiration for the self reliance the deaf have gained in coping with the challenge of their handicap but rather that we do not allow artificial limits to be set to the possibilities of what the deaf are capable.

Editorial

Police Say More Women are Becoming Criminals

Sociologists have long said that crime reflects conditions in society as well as anything else. Criminal arrest records across the country confirmed last week that woman's ascendancy has found a new outlet: the female crime rate is rising much faster than the male rate.

FBI records from '60 to '69 indicate that arrests of men for major crimes rose 61 percent, but for women the increase was a whopping 152 percent. And the ratios were even more startling among juveniles: the increases in arrest were 78 percent for boys and 211 percent for girls!

Women are said to be improving not only in the number of crimes they attempt but in the quality of their illegal work. They are excellent in larceny and embezzlement, narcotics violations and crimes involving alcohol. They are also committing

more robberies and assaults year after year, the police figures show.

Students of society and of crime attribute the soaring increase in female arrests to three broad causes: society accepts women in a wider variety of roles today, thus giving her a wider chance to commit crime; women are changing their views of themselves, putting aside the traditional passive role for the aggressive; and finally, broadening use of narcotics has forced women into crime to support their drug habit and brought them new unsavory associations.

The women's liberation movement may be partially blamed for the excessive self-determination and rejection of traditions which have helped many women dabble in crime. Seeking equality with men in the political and business fields formerly dom-

inated by males is no crime in itself. But forgery, fraud, embezzlement and stealing have evidently captured a strong proportion of the women after they found their way into the man's business world. Simply getting into the area where the money is has given the fair sex stronger temptations than it knew before.

The women's crime rate rise should furnish new concern for parents and schools and parish clergy. The arrest trend proves that lawbreaking because of widened opportunity, associations or alleged need has become as tempting for women as for men. Female resistance to temptation is declining earlier and faster than moralists have ever known. The larger and freer a role both the family and society allow its young women, the graver will be our obligation to train them in disciplined virtue and supervise them with counsel!