Status Quo - A Living Death

"Stay just as you are" is usually intended and interpreted as a compliment. In reality, it is the worst advice and encouragement



we could ever accept. For we are all by vocation called to constant personal growth and restlessness with our imperfections. And this means that a holy dissatisfaction with our status quo is virtuous at any given moment of our life.

All growth is painful and involves the risk of making free decisions within the context of past

promises, ongoing love, and new commitments. The New Testament speaks of this growth process in terms of the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying to bring forth new life.

Tomorrow's vitality of our person depends on our open response to today's inner urgings and external events. To be a person is to accept a loving call to be more than we are at this moment.

Jesus Christ is the new man leading and inspiring us to new life. Through free and obedient response to His Father and total service to people, Jesus grew in a way that answered and expanded the deepest de-

sires of human nature. The full potential of His life was accomplished only through personal struggle.

For us, then, who are called to pattern our life after the manner of His, there is always more to know, more to love, more to do, and more to become. Yet, no one makes this long journey of growth alone. We fashion our history with others in the relationships, structures and institutions which comprise a society. All social orders are, at best, incomplete expressions of what is possible for man and will ever be in need of reform until all men are liberated to seek their full potential as persons.

Just as Christ's redemptive work embraced the role of prophet denouncing a society with its institutions that enslaved man and denied him the liberty in which he could reach the fullness of his human dignity, so, too, the Church which continues His presence in the world has a prophetic mission of liberation.

There are obvious forms of human enslavement to be openly denounced — eroding poverty, illiteracy and powerlessness — all born from unfair social orders. But there are other forms of enslavement not so readily recognized. There is a pov-

erty, too, that afflicts the materially affluent. The II Vatican Council (Gaudium et Spes — 31) warned against this erosion of the human person: "But while human freedom is often crippled when a man falls into extreme poverty, it also withers when he indulges in too many of life's comforts and imprisons himself in a kind of splendid isolation." Insensitive affluence is the reverse side of abject poverty. In fact, this manifestation of avarice is the most evident form of moral underdevelopment (Populorum Progressio — pp. 18-19).

For affluence is a form of poverty that deadens our ability to share our gifts. It spawns self-sufficiency — a disease fatal to the development of our person.

The Office of Human Development will be offering special programs this coming year which will be vital to our diocesan renewal. Its mission to the prophetic role of the Church is to liberate us to the freedom of the Sons of God, wherein lies our sole hope for development to our full stature as a person. There is no challenge for improvement in saying to people or institutions, "Stay just as you are." But there is a challenge in saying, "Be alive—shed your self-seeking, be sensitive to the needs of others."

The Slot Man

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By Carmen Viglucci

The Good Old Days?

You know how it is when you hear an old song or see a movie from bygone years and the nostalgia zaps open the whole mood of

the time past.



This happened to me recently when we took the kids to see "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944) and "Singing in the Rain" (1952).

At best my psyche is about as safe as a soap bubble in a hail storm, but while watching these movies my personality

split — three ways. For a while, there I was, back in Lake Placid, feeling a 12-year-old boy crush for Judy Garland as she sang "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Scarcely an hour later, there was Gene Kelley reminding me that "he's way better than Fred Astaire."

Lest you fear that these will be vague, sentimental ramblings, let me assure you

it will all tie together. Part of the string was provided a couple of days later when I read in the New York Times that a disc jockey plays only "oldies" because his listeners yearn to be transported back to happier, peaceful times.

With these two movies and the past they evoked fresh in my mind, I disagree with such palaver. "Meet Me in St. Louis" appeared in 1944, in the midst of the most extensive war of history. So it hardly recalled pleasant times.

"Singing in the Rain" came out in 1952, the Korean War in full swing. Those miserable and harrowing years are nothing to relish, except in the fact they are gone.

To be honest both movies depicted still earlier times but nonetheless there we were last week in the middle of our latest war, watching two movies, each made in still another war. Talk about psychoses!

All of which leads to my idea that any movie made when our country was not at war within the last 30 years should receive

some kind of Oscar. Then it should be played and replayed to take us all back to that mythical time when we all were happy, whenever that was.

How about the chill feeling when driving along you suddenly find yourself being waved to the side of the road by a state trooper?

That recently happened to a Chicago couple, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Micholowicz, on Route 17 in Waverly. But far from being in trouble, they instead received the royal treatment that goes along with a new Finger Lakes Association promotion to encourage tourism.

They were invited to stay overnight as guests at O'Brien's Inn with dinner at the Elba Kitchen along with a visit to the Fraley Amusement Center.

Sound interesting? Well it's going to happen to another couple later this summer in the Owego area. Beat you there.

Editorial

A Ridiculous Extreme

Those people who use the separation of Church and state theory as an argument against federal aid to nonpublic schools have now stretched their premise so far that it may snap back to their detriment.

Parochial school officials in the Southern Tier have been told that no federal aid will be available for them to repair damages wrought by the recent floods even though public schools will be replenished according to their needs.

Diocesan officials rightly have taken umbrage at this slight and have let the world know. Immediately certain camps of our society, with seeming historic clairvoyance, say the nation's Founding Fathers would have said no, no to providing assistance to Americans battered by the Flood of '72 because they are Catholics.

Catholics in Elmira and Corning, more than anyplace in the diocese, have worked diligently, imaginatively and with a great deal of sacrifice to save their schools through consolidations and sound business procedures. Their efforts became a criterion for similar efforts throughout this diocese and in other parts of the country. They persevered with or without the prospect of governmental aid.

Then came the flood. It is difficult to comprehend that the government of the United States would compound the misery and grief already dealt people by ignoring them and their plight during such extraordinary circumstances.

In 1965 Elmirans asked an amendment to the federal emergency planning law seeking aid to Catholic schools in the event of a natural disaster. Apparently then such an idea seemed too hypothetical and the amendment was refused.

The flood of '72 has taken the situation out of the realm of supposition. Amendments to the present emergency planning law are being studied by Congress. All Catholics interested in justice should write to our senators, Jacob Javits and James Buckley, at the U.S. Senate in Washington, and to your local members of the House. Ask that the bill be amended to include Catholic schools in emergency spending for flood relief.

Applying "separation of Church and state" to such a situation strains the logic of the idea itself. Such argumentation, could support the refusal of a municipal fire department to put out a blaze in a Catholic school.

Ridiculous? We agree.