

Re-evaluate Indochina Policy, Trappists Ask U.S.

Father John Eudes Bamberger, abbot of the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, has called on the United States government to "re-evaluate its strategies and tactics in Indochina to assure their morality and humanity."

In a statement initiated by Father Bamberger, he and nine other abbots of the Order of Cistercians of Strict Observance (Trappists) note that the order's "monastic solitude includes a call to silence" and that "it is not, ordinarily, the role of the monk to raise his voice in the public forum."

The abbots then note that "the present situation, however, is no ordinary one. Our country continues to be embroiled in a war in Indochina that becomes daily more costly in terms of public morality, human dignity and human life itself."

The statement continues:

"Without minimizing the alleged atrocities of North Vietnamese troops and the Vietcong reported in the press, we believe our government should re-evaluate its strategies and tactics in Indochina to assure their morality and humanity."

The Trappist monks call for "our fellow citizens to join us in prayer and in fasting to beg our Father in heaven for his great gift of true peace."

Following is the statement released by Father Bamberger:

The call of the monk into the "desert" of his monastic solitude includes a call to silence — a silence in which he listens to and attempts to interpret the Word of God. It is not, ordinarily, the role of the monk to raise his voice in the public forum.

The present situation, however, is no ordinary one. Our country continues to be embroiled in a war in Indochina that becomes daily more costly in terms of public morality, human dignity and human life itself. Without minimizing the alleged atrocities of North Vietnamese troops and the Vietcong reported in the press, we believe our government should re-evaluate its strategies and tactics in Indochina to assure their morality and humanity.

We ask our government to make every effort to negotiate a speedy ceasefire in Vietnam and to pose only such conditions as are essential to our legitimate and stated aims in its demands for peace. These stated aims are to prevent the imposition of an undesired form of government upon the South Vietnamese people, and to protect the people who have supported the present government from reprisals.

We wish to repeat and make

our own the words of Pope Paul VI, spoken on July 9, 1972: "We make ours the voice of a population driven to exhaustion by massacre and calamity. We cry out . . . to beseech those who can and who ought to discuss and deliberate: enough!"

We invite all men to respond to Christ's invitation to be peacemakers. And we ask our fellow citizens to join us in prayer and in fasting to beg our Father in heaven for his great gift of true peace. We are confident that such united prayer will bring to

our country and our leaders the courage and wisdom necessary to achieve what many years of war and untold suffering have failed to produce: peace.

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LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Olympics Defended

Editor:

Your editorial "Olympics" (Courier-Journal 9/13/72) is typical of the sour grapes being issued by the press media. I like millions, enjoyed most of the Olympics. Bringing countless nations together under one roof is no easy task. We all know about the so-called amateur versus pros in the Olympics. Nobody forced the U.S. into the Olympics. So instead of knocking the Olympics let's work on the policy of improving our method of who can go to the Olympics.

You don't throw a baby out because it has a cold. You cure the cold. When you can get 80,000 people out into a stadium three times a day something must be right. And most important we must get out of the habit that the United States must win everything everytime and at every place. If we must lose so be it. After all, everybody seems to overlook the fact that if the basketball team played a better last game, if Ryan ran a better race, if the Doctor were on the ball in the DeMont case, if somebody had the right time

schedule, if two men had a little more respect for the flag no doubt the press would be smelling of sweet grapes rather than sour grapes.

On to Montreal in 1976.

Bernard H. Florack
169 Brookview Drive
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Fr. Appelby Misquoted

Editor:

I was contacted some time ago by Courier-Journal reporter Barbara Moynihan concerning my feelings about the proposed changes in priests' finances. A misquote resulted in the 9/13 article that I should like to rectify.

I told Barbara I was pleased with the care that the questionnaire had shown, but had not read the results carefully, and therefore could not comment intelligently. Barbara then said she would contact another "special worker."

Hence, I was surprised to see myself quoted at all. The surprise became dismay, when the fact that I had not read the report at the time of the call was

interpreted as my being "not interested enough to read the report." This simply was neither said nor implied. Nor could my remarks to Barbara be interpreted as my being, as she said, "satisfied" with diocesan policy in this matter — especially in the light of the obvious inequities that, I assume, prompted the study in the first place, and were mentioned by the other priests quoted in the article.

Fr. Gerald Appelby
Chaplain, R.I.T.



"HEY, I'D REALLY LIKE TO HELP YOU, POP, BUT IT'LL MAKE ME LATE FOR THE JESUS RALLY!"



FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Is. 53: 6-9. (R2) Phil. 1: 20-24, 27. (R3) Mt. 20: 1-16.

The first of next Sunday's readings comes from one of the most beautiful parts of Isaiah, "The Book of Consolation." This book was written during the exile in Babylon.

Before exile, Israel had tried to make God according to her image. She had sought to water down His strong commands to mere suggestions. His worship she had reduced to lip-service. All the while, she thought God would pay no heed.

But God is not mocked. Israel's indifference brought on seventy years of slavery. In the crucible of suffering she learned that God is not only merciful and forgiving, but also holy and not to be made to man's image. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways."

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard perfectly illustrates this point. Even in our own day, we tend to impose our ideas of God on God. Like pagan Greeks and Romans, we would shape

God to our own image. That is exactly what the early laborers in the parable tried to do with the master of the vineyard, who symbolized God. They cut him down to their size. They saw him as giving a reward only to those who had earned it — said, "I'm doing well. I'm on the right road. I'm working hard. I've done all I should. I deserve more than the lazy bums out there."

God answered, "Yes, it is well you are working. For works give witness to your faith. For this, I shall reward you, give you just wages. But don't get angry, if I want to give freely to others, too. Rewards are mine to give, aren't they? If my mercy exceeds my justice (I do you no wrong, for I reward you), should you be vexed? After all, in the course of justice not even you, with all your works, would see salvation, would you?"

God is not answerable to man for what He does. It is the other way around: man is answerable to God for what he himself does. If God wills to treat sinners with the same mercy that He shows to the good, if He wishes to give to the Gentiles as He had to Israel, who has borne the burdens of the Law, who has a right to gainsay His generosity? Rather we should imitate it!

In order to teach his people to love without seeking anything in return, St. Ivo told a story of a woman he met. She was carrying fire in one hand and water in the other. He asked her what these things were for. She answered, "The fire is to burn up Paradise and the water is to quench the fires of hell."

"Why?" asked the saint. "So that men may from now on serve their Maker, not from the selfish hope of the one, nor the selfish fear of the other, but for the love of Himself alone."

It is plain that the first laborers hired had no interest in their work but only in their wages. It was little satisfaction to them that they had been able to do twelve times as much as those last hired. How can one who truly loves Jesus envy another laborer who has done much less than himself?

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