

# Renewal: When Faith Opens Doors

(First of a series on "Basic Attitudes for a Year of Renewal.")

It was late Resurrection evening. Locked doors had made the apostles unsettled by recent events, helpless prisoners of their own fear. Suddenly a strange greeting echoed through the Upper Room: "Peace!" Still, neither prayer-greeting nor Presence could dispel the fear and confusion, the guilt and doubt which, like shadows from Calvary, hung over the disciples' hearts.

Pentecost morning dawned. A roar as of wind and crackling fire broke the morning stillness. Suddenly the Upper Room spilled its Secret into Jerusalem's marketplace. The Spirit-presence had transformed fear into boldness, confusion into purpose, guilt into freedom, doubt into a renewal of faith.

The difference? Locked doors yielding to the mystery of His approach.

For too long a time, we have looked to faith as commodity rather than challenge, as arrival at security rather than an exodus, a departure. We have been content to measure faith by exact formulas of belief (creed), liturgical uniformity (cult), and precise norms of behavior (code). In the last decade, however, Vatican II has summoned us to live faith as dynamic experience, rather than controlled expression, of the spirit. In outlining the goals of Vatican II, John XXIII spoke of

"... promoting the development of the Catholic faith, the moral renewal of the Christian life in the faithful, the adaptation of ecclesiastical discipline to the needs and methods of our time." (Ad Petri Cathedram)

In more recent perspective, then, faith is an open-door stance to life's fullest dimensions. Hence it is a growth process, a discovery of surprising and costly graces, each enlarging the anticipation of a Resurrection fullness of life.

Faith is an awareness that man is mystery challenged by Absolute Mystery, God. Hence he is called to liturgize sacraments of Word and Presence.

Faith is an acceptance of God's acceptance of man. Hence it rejoices in the Incarnation, not as a once-for-ever fact, but as ongoing mystery.

Faith is a celebration of the divine fatherliness. Hence it finds nurture in genuine prayer which, engaged in alone or with others, is the power to address God as "Abba, dear Father." (Rom 8: 15)

Faith is a commitment to love God supremely, and neighbor no less than self. Hence it provides motivation for a love without frontiers.

Faith is a dependency on God's strength which sustains our outreach towards others. Hence it is an experience of risk and involvement, trust and service.

Faith is an admission of human frailty. Hence it needs continual renewal through repentance and forgiving love.

Faith is an embodiment of the truest values man is capable of. Hence it is re-

sponse to the urgings of the Spirit to achieve authentic humanness.

Because faith is creative listening, it begins with the Word. Because faith is a vision of life, it begins with a Person who identified himself as Truth, Way and Life. (Jn 14:6) Because faith is a mission, it inevitably brings about a hallowing of God's name, a coming of His Kingdom, a doing of His will.

In short, faith is a positive, enthusiastic "Yes!" to God as supreme value in our life, as ultimate concern. As such, it must be a continual re-orientation. Faith is not faith unless it is constantly engaged in the process of renewal.

Because faith occurs where God calls and man responds, and this is a supremely free act, renewal must forever remain a matter of personal choice. On that premise our Year of Renewal will succeed — or, God forbid, fail!

Shortly after completing his masterpiece of the Savior, staff and lantern in hand, standing before the door of a way-side cottage, Holman Hunt asked a friend to share a critical comment or two. After reading the text from Apocalypse 3:20 "Behold I stand at the door and knock," the friend commented that the cottage door was minus a doorknob. The artist replied: "The door is the human heart. It can only be opened from the inside."

Renewal starts with an open door. The open door of your heart and mine. His entry is possible only if we choose to open from the inside. Will you?

## The Slot Man

Speaking journalistically this column really is too late. Jackie Robinson died more than a week ago and there have been millions of words written and spoken about the man.



Call it selfish, but I cannot resist getting into the act. It is too difficult to let such a great contemporary pass into history without commenting.

The heaping praise for Robinson, justified as it is, tends to obscure the memory of him as a player, when he came crashing into organized baseball. Black or not, he proved he belonged, a 27-year-old rookie of the year. He followed through, becoming the best of an outstanding array of Brooklyn Dodgers, who became collectively in many minds one of the outstanding three or four baseball teams of all time.

But at the time, if you were a Giant fan

or a Yankee fan, you resented Jackie Robinson. He was the principal threatener of dreams; he typified emotionally all the hatred one felt for the Dodgers, so beloved in their own bailiwick and so despised throughout much of the rest of baseball.

Possibly the highest tribute that can be paid Robinson is that he caused all this anguish, in fact shoved it down your throat, and still you tended to forget his color. He made you realize that not only hopping up and down crazily off first or off third to rattle your pitcher was part of the game but that there were many other, more important facets about the game of life.

For all his fortitude, tact and courage in carefully carving a niche for the black in baseball, Robinson still had the reputation of being something of a popoff in his later playing years.

I believe he considered Dodger catcher Roy Campanella something of an Uncle Tom. It is ironic that there would one

day be blacks who would think the same thing about Robinson because he voted for Richard Nixon or because he refused to endorse street violence.

I vaguely remember a discussion of racism, back during Robinson's playing days, when someone asked where he, a ballplayer, got off talking about a sociological problem.

Robinson retorted: "I consider myself an expert on the Negro because I've been one all my life."

The questioner suddenly loomed as the fair-haired second baseman, ball in hand, pivoting gracefully over second base, sure his relay to first will wrap up the double play.

As the second baseman nearly completes his pivot, the 225-pound black man barrels into him thigh-high, knocking him legs over teakettle, sending the ball skittering across the infield dirt. No double play this time.

We all, perhaps second basemen especially, owe a personal debt to Jackie Robinson.

## By Carmen Viglucci

# Debt to Jackie Robinson

## Editorial

# Our Voices Are Heard

Between the lines of the news in recent days there lay an important lesson for all of us — our voices can be heard and respected.

First a Courier-Journal poll of state legislative candidates showed a dramatic increase in the number of state candidates favoring repeal of the present liberalized abortion law, from about 25 per cent of the candidates in 1970 to 58 per cent in 1972.

There can be no question but that the tremendous grass roots opposition to abortion has finally seeped into the consciousness and consciences of candidates. This widespread opposition has been molded and sharpened by pro-life groups who have largely dropped emotional and vitriolic approaches and have concentrated instead on the medical, legal and educative aspects of the controversy.

Then came news from Albany that the governor had approved a fund of about \$300,000 for flood-stricken Catholic schools in the Southern Tier.

As of this writing the money had not actually been received and the prospect exists that it may get sidetracked somewhere in the state bureaucracy. Still its mere approval is significant. A diocesan schools official laid the credit squarely at the feet of all those who wrote their legislators and state executive officials requesting this just payment.

And third was the news of imminent cease-fire and the first solid hope for peace in Indochina. This development can be traced to the overwhelming desire for peace on the part of the populace.

So the people will be heard, especially when they campaign for a righteous

cause in a sane, skillful and organized manner.

Voters have many issues to consider as they go to the polls this year — the vital question of war and peace, domestic economy, nonpublic school aid, no fault insurance, environmental control, prison reform and housing to name a few.

Aware of all this, the Courier-Journal has concentrated on the abortion problem this year for we sense its life-death urgency as well as its long-range implications if respect for life is allowed to lose in the abortion arena.

We hope our annual survey has served that cause. We also hope that each voter takes the time to prepare himself well for the task of voting and then follows through next Tuesday, remembering that the voting booth is the most effective medium for voicing his opinion.