



THE CHURCH 1973
Fr. Andrew Greeley

The press and TV news types are making more out of the Watergate mess than it merits. We are not in the midst of a "constitutional crisis" — whatever in the world that is.

The President of the United States may have surrounded himself with a bunch of cheap crooks and may have given some sort of tacit support (and maybe not so tacit) to their fun and games. He is not the first president to do so and will not be the last. His Disneyland public relations types may be the dumbest of all White House crooks in history, though on the basis of Mr. Nixon's past performances that ought to come as no great surprise. (Someone could write a sequel to David Halberstram's book and call it **The Worst and the Dumbest.**)

The point is that the American public has never had a great deal of confidence in its elected political leadership and is not all that shocked by scandal. With the exception of the short Kennedy years, there has not been an administration without a major scandal of one sort or another since 1945. Corruption is part of the human condition and political corruption is universal.

Patrick Gray's burning evidence is not all that different from the CIA or the IRS holding themselves immune from investigation by the dogged sleuths of the General Accounting Office (one of the few intelligent and honest agencies left in the government). When federal bureaucrats are not busy covering up their mistakes (which for some agencies is a full time job), they are mostly concerned with fighting for power with other agencies. Occasionally, an agency manages to find some time to serve the people who are supposed to be its clients but that is definitely a low priority matter.

So we have government that is either dishonest or incompetent and frequently — as in the case

of the present White House staff — both. Such a discovery may be news to Howard K. Smith or Eric Sevareid (though I doubt it) but it hardly is news to those of us who are hounded constantly by bureaucrats. The only surprise is that there are still some people left who call themselves liberals who think that the lot of humankind is going to be improved by more government intervention.

The institutions that have fouled up our educational system are now to be given charge of our health care. The dunderheads who deliver mail two weeks late are going to tell us whom we have to hire. The clods who are not able to do anything about Lake Michigan erosion are to take charge of the protection of natural resources. The crooks who approved Watergate (or their successors) are to decide how much money is too much for anyone to have. The incompetents who can't turn Wounded Knee back to the Indians who rightly belong there are to solve our minority problems. More government intervention is all we need.

The late Paddy Bauler, one of Chicago's more colorful aldermen, once remarked that "Chicago isn't ready for reform." It is now, I think, and so is the rest of the country. But reform will mean more than just eliminating the crooks (though that has to be done) and establishing strict procedures for monitoring the use of power by those in public office. It will also mean finding a way to make public administration intelligent and responsive, concerned more about serving the people who pay the bills and less about protecting and expanding its own power.

Political leaders who can find ways to accomplish this sort of reform will have no trouble winning elections.

But don't expect anyone like that in this administration.

Catholic Charities Backs Chavez Farm Union

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Msgr. Lawrence J. Corcoran, secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, has announced the support of his agency's 1,600 affiliates for the United Farm Workers Union, and has expressed concern over proposed federal welfare regulations.

He sent a telegram to United Farm Workers leader Cesar Chavez stating that "Catholic Charities affiliates around the U.S. support the United Farm Workers." Chavez was given the telegram during a question period following his talk before the National Press Club here, and said that such support was important to his people.

Before sending the wire, Msgr. Corcoran wrote to the 1,600

Day Care Center To Observe 24th

The Day Care Training Center for Handicapped Children of Monroe County, located at the Al Sigl Center, will celebrate its 24th anniversary with a dinner-dance at the Mapledale Party House, Wednesday, May 23, 7:30 p.m.

At the dinner, the center's highest award will be presented to Dr. Harold C. Miles, MD, "for his outstanding and unselfish dedication to the exceptional children at the center." A scholarship award will also be given to Miss Dianne M. Gallagher.

affiliated agencies of Catholic Charities to urge whatever support they could bring to farm workers.

In his letter, Msgr. Corcoran pointed that the UFW grape contracts that were negotiated a few years ago are coming up for renewal. "As this has been happening, the Western Conference of the Teamster's Union has been signing sweetheart contracts with the cartel of growers," he wrote.

According to Msgr. Corcoran, the dispute between the Teamsters and United Farm Workers is not a typical representational dispute, but rather "it goes to the heart of the principles of Rerum Novarum (Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical) — That workers have a national-right to organize and bargain collectively in unions of their own choice."

He recalled that in November 1968, the National Conference of Catholic Charities urged that farm workers be given minimum wage coverage and included in the National Employment Insurance Program and urged that the protection of the National Labor Relations Act be extended to the farm worker.

Msgr. Corcoran expressed concern over proposed federal regulations regarding public assistance programs in a letter to Francis D. DeGeorge, acting administrator of the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Extend Textbook Loans, State Legislature Urged By Head of Parents Unit

"Children in kindergarten to sixth grade will be the losers," said Dr. Thomas R. Curran of Elmira, president of the New York State Federation of Catholic School Parents, in strong criticism of mounting reports that proposals for the loan of textbooks to pupils in the early grades will again be bypassed in the legislature.

"The extension of the textbook loan law for public and nonpublic school pupils so that it will cover the lower grades has been an obvious need since the passage of the original aid legislation in 1965. It's too long overdue," he said. Under present provisions, special state aid and the loan of books to all children is restricted to grades seven through twelve.

"I am vehemently opposed to discriminating against the needs of younger children in this way," Curran stated. "As I pointed out in testimony earlier this year before the Assembly Education Committee, there's no valid reason that such a distinction of preference be continued. The need of a young child for adequate and current learning resources is as great, if not greater, as that of the teen-ager."

The successful textbook loan program has been particularly helpful in low income areas, in cities, and for the hard-pressed poorer school districts, reports have indicated. The program assists districts with special aid toward the costs of textbooks for all resident children, whether attending a public or nonpublic school. The law was declared constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in its Allen decision of 1968.

"There is no question of its constitutionality," said the Elmira dentist. "There's no question of its need."

"What is most galling," the representative of over a million parents across the state said, "is the fact that the discussions are not focusing on educational priorities or programs that need assistance. The talk is just about the limited dollars. It is shameful that the recently announced limit of \$25 million in additional educational aid in the supplemental budget may well become a source of contention on how it should be spent. The kids could certainly get lost in that shuffle."

Post Office Tries New Hours

Rochester William E. Finn has announced that three post office branches will begin to have evening hours on Fridays as an extra convenience to local customers.

Finn said this will be an experiment to ascertain if the additional costs of operation will be compensated by sufficient postal transactions and convenience to the public.

"This operation will considerable changes in truck schedules, manpower, and some costs; and we want to find out if it will serve the public with real convenience and be used enough to warrant the extra cost," Finn said.

The units are Irondequoit (525 Titus), Twelve Corners (Monroe at Elmwood), and Westgate (Chili Avenue). These Branches will be open until 8 p.m. on Fridays.

"We call upon the Governor, legislative leadership, and all our legislators to recognize this children's need and respond positively. We want financial help to underwrite extending the

textbook loan law to the lower grades now. We don't want to be cornered into fighting over how the \$25 million is to be used. We want textbook aid, and by itself," Dr. Curran concluded.

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