



THE OPEN WINDOW
Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

It is gratifying to see that both you and Father Cuddy are faithful soldiers of the Church. However there are many Father Hohmans and Father Cuddys who think they hold "opposite points of view" — when really the only difference is in the methods of battle. One need not be a great thinker to reach this simple conclusion.

Your articles tend to teach a philosophy of man's duty to humanity and God [since there is so much suffering in the world] while Father Cuddy's philosophy tends more toward God and humanity.

I would think that the latter should have preference. I can't see how anyone could disagree with this conclusion. Someone must do the suffering to atone for this sinful world [as so many saints have done]. Someone must fast to atone for a gluttonous portion of this planet. This is the tragedy. Christ himself proved it on the Cross.

Dear friend,

I am delighted to have you "reconcile" me with Father Cuddy but I do somewhat disagree with the basis you propose for the reconciliation. I am assuming all along that we are not arguing about the primacy of man over God or vice versa. I don't know of anyone in the Church who does not accept the idea that we must first go to God, be in the possession of the Spirit, before we carry the healing Good News to our fellow man. One cannot give what he does not possess. The Christian is not simply a humanitarian, caring about his fellow man and trying to help him. Rather he is an instrument of the redemptive power of Jesus Christ and it is only by living in union with Jesus that we can partake of that power. Just as Jesus referred the passage from Isaiah to himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor," so the Spirit must be upon the Christian in his work with the poor.

The real issue in this whole matter is simply one of emphasis. Along with many others I am saying that a Christian cannot be saved while neglecting to care in a practical way for those in need. One cannot simply rely on prayer and the Sacraments while remaining isolated from the needs and suffering of his fellow man. The other extreme, as I have pointed out is mere humanitarianism — helping one's fellow man while being isolated

from God. To state it more simply, it's like love and marriage; you can't have one without the other. I think that if you and Father Cuddy and I were all together at this moment we would agree.

If there is a problem between Father Cuddy and myself, I would state it this way: Father Cuddy thinks that in the modern Church union with God as the base of the apostolate is being neglected. I, on the other hand, feel that too many people like merely the security of their prayers and relationship with God and could care less about the needy of this world. Both of us are right and both of us are wrong. Where do you put the emphasis? How do you balance it exactly?

Just a word now on your attitude toward suffering. Christ taught that to achieve a higher level of life there must always be death to a lower level. This is basic Christianity. But for heaven's sake, don't be caught in the trap of thinking that suffering atones for sin because in some way God is pleased by it in itself. Suffering for its own sake is evil. It is only good when it opens the door to a new life, a resurrection. If someone fasts to atone for the "gluttonous portion of the planet" he makes atonement in the sense that he becomes more fully human, by dying to his animal appetite. He replaces a lower form of life with a higher one.

Pope Praises Press Role

Castel Gandolfo [RNS] — Pope Paul assured a group of executives and directors of the (British) Reuters News Agency that he was "well aware" of the "influence and renown" of their organization.

"Such an important function," the pontiff went on, "arouses our greatest interest, for we are convinced that the integral development and above all the spiritual development of man requires information that is full, consistent, accurate, and true."

The Pope received the Reuters' officials in private audience at his Summer residence here on Sept. 10. They were in Italy, for a special meeting in Rome.

"By the speedy and accurate dissemination of news," he said, "you not only assist men in exercising their right to information about affairs which affect them, but you also actively help people to help one another."

Convent Put to New Use

St. Michael's convent, a "family home" to School Sisters of Notre Dame for nearly a century, will come to life again after a Summer of disuse.

Before September is over, the Monroe County Department of Social Services expects to be operating there in the service of some 4,000 area families.

The School Sisters departed in June, when the parish grammar school their order always had staffed was changed to a junior high serving a broader neighborhood.

The convent, at 124 Evergreen St., has 25 rooms, 23 of which will be used by the county. Director James Reed said the department would assign 32 social service workers, seven certification

workers and a human relations representative to this North Clinton-Clifford Avenue "satellite" office. The department has a one-to-three-years lease.

Father Benedict Ehmann, pastor of St. Michael's, explained that one of the rooms retained for parish use is a living room or lounge where youth activities are centered. The other is the

convent chapel, where he will be celebrating weekday Masses.

The area to be served by the new office extends from East Main north to East Ridge Road, and from the Genesee River East to North Goodman. Social Services maintains similar offices on Mt. Carmel parish property and in Immaculate Conception School.

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