

DAC Director Finds Drug Law 'Appalling'

By PAT PETRASKE

The new state drug control law is "appalling" to Father Enrique Rueda, director of the Drug and Alcohol Council (DAC).

Father Rueda, who "learned the ropes" of the drug problems from the ghettos of the Bronx, says of the law that took effect Sept. 1 that "all it does is increase the penalties for relatively small doses of drugs." What it doesn't change is the capability to prosecute people who are bringing drugs into the country, he noted.

Under the law, the sale of any amount of marijuana or the possession of only one ounce can bring a minimum sentence of one year and a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. In New York State, giving a joint to a friend is the same thing as selling it to him.

Class A felonies — for example, the sale of one ounce or more of a narcotic drug or the possession of more than two ounces — are punishable by life imprisonment. Parole is possible after a minimum of one to eight and

one-third years, but one convicted is on parole for life.

The youthful Cuban priest stressed that he favored a strong drug law but believed the present ruling "attacks the small people and not the people behind the scenes."

(A comment from a small-time "hustler" says simply "I'd quit pushing it tomorrow, baby, but the bread is so long. I couldn't make this kind of bread anyplace else." He pulls in \$1,500 some weeks — From "Nickel Bags of the Mighty Horse," one of the 200,000 DAC pamphlets that are distributed annually.)

It is those "small people" numbering 150 each month, who flock to Father Rueda's office at 9 Lawrence St. where counseling is available from the three-person staff.

The Council's roots go back 40 years, to the time when Rochesterians called Allied Forces banded together to combat the problems of alcohol consumption. In 1970 the name of the organization was changed to Drug

and Alcohol Council in order to expand its activities to include not only alcohol but other drugs.

Dressed in a modern plaid jacket and a bright striped shirt, Father Rueda is known as "Mr. He explained that the Council has no Church affiliation but is a nonprofit agency funded primarily through the New York State Narcotic Addiction Control Commission. Father Rueda was ordained in New York City and has been in the United States for 12 years. He is a weekend assistant at St. Louis Parish in Pittsford.

"Drug use is a response to stress and has become a central and common factor in our society," Father Rueda began. He views alcohol as the "most important, the most dangerous and the most easily available" drug on the market today. Surrounding the issue of drugs, alcohol and the law is a blanket of what he terms "hypocrisy." "The air waves which belong to the people convince people that the way to be happy is through drinking. More people die from alcohol directly or indirectly than from all other uses of drugs put together," he said.

He favors an aggressive campaign against drinking and smoking but added that it will probably never occur since the government "can't afford not to collect the excise taxes from liquor and cigarette sales."

An easing of the drug situation will occur not only after a crackdown on drug suppliers but after a more honest and credible approach is taken toward enforcement and penalties for drug use, he said.

"People are laughing at the law now. You wouldn't believe the places I've seen marijuana growing in Rochester; the new law doesn't increase the chances of being caught, all it does is increase the amount of time spent in jail."

When asked if the longer jail sentences would act as a deterrent, Father Rueda exclaimed, "No!"



THE CHURCH 1973
Fr. Andrew Greeley

I must confess I was surprised by the reaction to my column about how bad most Sunday sermons are. I expected an outpouring of mail and I got it. But I also expected that most of it would be hostile and the exact opposite was the case.

There were a number of nasty letters from priests wondering how good my homilies are (a subject that I'll have to leave to those who hear them; but hardly to the point). One newspaper observed that in its diocese a study has been done and a majority rejected the proposition that they rarely got anything out of the sermons (not exactly what I would call a ringing vote of confidence).

But most correspondents enthusiastically endorsed my notion that many priests have forgotten about their clients. What's more, most of the letters I received from priests said exactly the same thing.

There is, I suspect, in the American priesthood a perception that we are not doing a professional job, at least not as professional as we might be doing. Surely the evidence in the study that NORC did a few years ago for the Bishops (anyone remember that study?) was the priests felt the need for more advanced professional training.

But there are many other problems besides better training — and better homiletic training in particular. To begin with, the clientele is much more diversified than it used to be. Select at random any upper middle class suburban parish. Within its boundaries one can find Catholics United for the Faith, the Opus Dei, the Pentecostals, the Cursilloists, the Sensitizers, the Berriganites, and the nuts that write the Chancery Office every week — generally over something they misunderstood.

The true believers of each of these groups are convinced beyond any slightest self-doubt that they have a unique and absolute monopoly on Christianity. No matter what one says in the Sunday sermon, one will certainly offend most of the groups — and quite possibly all of them.

The "ordinary" laity — those who have not yet selected a faction to identify with — are confused by all the change and, while in basic sympathy with much of the New Church, still puzzled. They wish someone would take time to explain to them what in the world is going

on. Only rarely does anyone bother.

Furthermore, the personal identity crises of many priests are real enough. Some of them may be a pretext for a cop-out. Others may be a sign of great emotional immaturity. Still others may be a subtle form of aggression towards those who expect them to work for a living.

But still many good men have had a rough time of it adjusting to a traumatic change in their lives; and with all the good will in the world, they are just not sure what they ought to be doing. Some of those who leave the priesthood do so, I believe, more out of confusion than for any other reason. It is hard to give a good Sunday sermon when you're not sure what you believe or even what Christianity is supposed to stand for.

Finally, there exists nowhere in the country a center of theory, research, and experimentation where solid scholarship combines with practical testing to work out new techniques for pastoral ministry. There are of course more "pastoral institutes" than one can shake a stick at. There are even some of them which are something more than centers for dating and mating for religious and priests who are going through an adolescent sexual crisis in the middle years of life.

But the ones I am aware of are long on enthusiasm, a priori certainties, and fashionable cliché and short on solid scholarship, careful research and controlled experimentation.

Before a priest can preach a good Sunday sermon, he needs some sort of pastoral theory that gives him a context in which to work. To tell him that he must preach "revolution" or "identification with the victim" or "secular relevance" or "ecumenism" or "honesty and authenticity" is really to tell him nothing at all. And to suggest that he look to Future Shock for a serious analysis of the problems of his congregation is to give him the worst possible advice.

Some day the powers that be in the American Church — bishops, priests' senates, college presidents — are going to discover that there is no substitute for thought, particularly for solid, sober, nuanced, documented thought. Until then, there isn't much reason to expect that sermons are going to get any better.



MR. AND MRS. EDWARD J. HAHN SR.

Hahns Celebrate 50th Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Hahn Sr. of Barbary Terrace celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sept. 18.

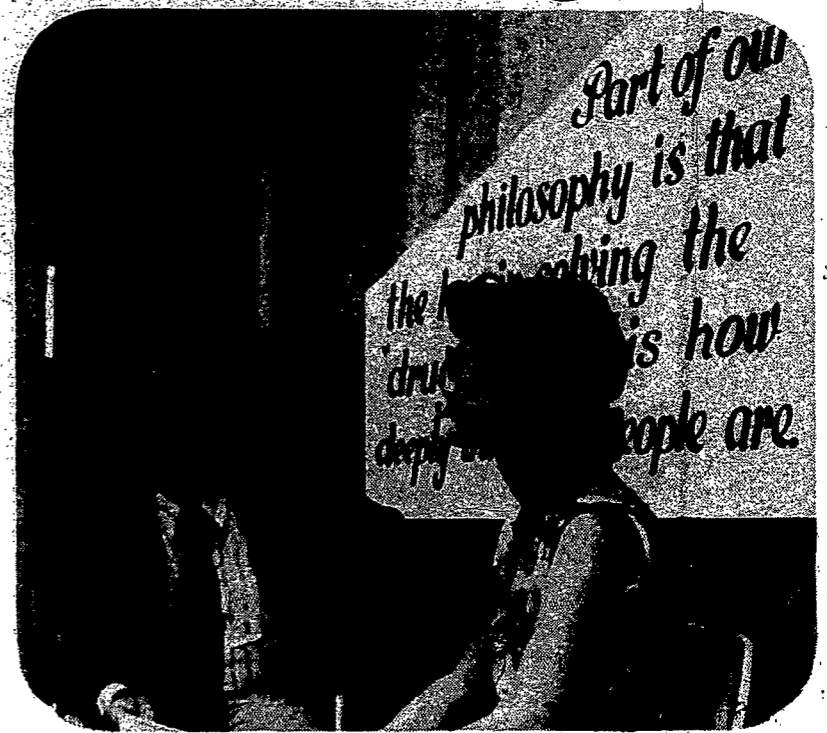
The Hahns were married in Holy Redeemer Church in 1923 by Father Albert Geiger.

They have seven children, Edward, Robert, Gerard, Herbert, James, Mrs. Donald Mosher and Lorraine; and 23 grandchildren.

The Hahns were honored at a Sept. 15 Mass at St. Andrew's Church, celebrated by Father Frederick Walz, Mrs. Hahn's brother. An evening party at the Newport House was attended by some 200 relatives and friends.

CONFIRMATION

Bath — Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mary's, Tuesday, Oct. 30 at 7:45 p.m.



Father Rueda discusses the new state drug law with Eugenia Fore, assistant director at the drug center.

"People aren't going to change their habits because of the law. Some of my friends on drugs are just moving out of the state. Many on drugs don't think; they'll take the risk," he said.

and goes against the highest faculty that a person has," Father Rueda maintained, his voice rising in excitement. In many of his seminars he condemns drug use because "it alters one's mind and one's relation to reality"

Legalizing marijuana is still a debatable issue with Father Rueda. He thinks that "it is not physically dangerous when used in moderate amounts" but believes there are serious moral questions involved in the use of drugs or alcohol.

"The Church says getting drunk is a grave matter not because it makes you sick or because it is unsafe but because it makes you lose your reason. It debases you

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