



THE CHURCH 1973
Fr. Andrew Greeley

I remember a prominent psychiatrist who told me, with obvious confusion, of a conference composed of theologians and biologists to discuss some of the ethical problems of recent biological developments. The conference quickly broke down into two groups — one arguing that man was fundamentally different from the rest of the biological world and one contending that there was no basic discontinuity between man and the rest of creation.

It would be natural enough to assume that the theologians took the former position and the biologists the latter. In fact, the exact opposite was the case: the biologists saw man as different; the theologians saw him as the same.

My friend admitted that he was surprised, though as a specialist in abnormal behaviour he is never very surprised at anything. But he said the biologists were astonished. They had been prepared to argue on the grounds of their biology that man was essentially different from other animals. The theologians were asserting on the grounds of their theology that the biologists were wrong. The battle had been waged countless times before, of course; but this time the contestants were playing for exactly the opposite teams than those they had previously played on.

But I think I know how the biologists felt. As a sociologist, I never cease to be amazed by how theologians, professional and amateur, casually use our categories without caring whether they are using them precisely, and confidently assert on the basis of what they claim is sociology, propositions about which most sociologists have grave reservations.

I gather that economists, politicians, lawyers, city planners, and political scientists all have had the same reaction. They spend a lifetime learning and practicing their professional skills and bright young theologians arrive on the scene with the claim that their theology provides them with quick and easy answers to what other professionals think are complicated, and difficult questions.

**Carmelites
To Honor
St. Therese**

On Monday, Oct. 1, the feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Bishop James E. Kearney will preside and preach at a special Mass in her honor at the Carmelite Monastery, 1931 W. Jefferson Rd.

The celebrant of the 9 a.m. Mass will be Father William Gordinier, co-pastor of St. Joseph Church, Penfield.

This is the centenary year of the birth of Therese Martin, St. Therese, often called The Little Flower.

She died a Carmelite nun at the age of 24, in great pain and uttering the words "My God, I love you."

Celebrations in her honor are being held all over the world this year.

EVENSONG

Ithaca — On Sept. 28 at 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel of Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, the Catholic chaplains will inaugurate a formal liturgical "Even-song," i.e. the official night Prayer of the Church.

Theology used to claim to be the queen of the sciences. Some of the new theologians of the left may not make quite that claim. But they act like the claim were valid.

I suppose this kind of development is inevitable. When theologians become convinced either that they can say nothing about God or that no one wants to hear anything about God, they've got to do something. And the easiest thing to do is to pontificate about society, polity, economy and ecology. It would take time to acquire the skills of these various disciplines and even more time to acquire the skills of all of them. If you're a "concerned" young theologian who wants to be relevant, you simply don't have enough time. So you pontificate; and if other professionals tell you that you don't know what you're talking about, you dismiss them as "conservative."

Obviously, I am speaking of a distinct minority. There is no question either that theologians have the right to be politically concerned and the right to their own political position. What they do not have a right to do is to endow their political stance with the mantle of "theology."

One may, I suppose, argue that what Latin America needs is more socialist revolutions (though there is ample evidence that socialism does not work in underdeveloped countries). But such an argument is political, social, and economic; the argument is as good as the social, economic and political evidence the proponent can bring to bear. To envelop the argument with a mystical claim that it is a "theology of revolution" is to deal dishonestly both with social issues and with theology.

Similarly, the so-called "political theology" which pompously pronounces on every political issue is not really theology at all but the art of substituting theological jargon and authority for political analysis and dialectic.

I have no doubt that theology has important contributions to make to human problems. But it has no right to assume that it can deduce by a priori methods from its own theoretical principles concrete solutions and programs for practical political issues. We unquestionably need some theologians who can bring the light of theological theory to the solution of practical political problems. But the men who engage in such activity should have the decency to learn what they are talking about and the humility to realize that making an input toward the resolution of the problem is about all theology can do. It has no right to claim a monopoly on answers.

And when it does claim such clear and simple answers to complex problems, it may get enthusiastic applause from students in divinity schools and admiring editorials from the National Catholic Reporter, and The Christian Century, it may feel very brave and very avant garde — and these may after all be the only things that count — but no one else will be listening.



Ludi Cruz, Pam Stevenson, Lynn Rene, Donnalee Your and Lura Macaluso make attractive models as they display the new uniform options at St. Agnes.

The New Looks at St. Agnes

The girls at St. Agnes High School are setting out to prove that you can wear a uniform and be stylish at the same time. This year there will be several options attached to the traditional maroon and white which for so long has characterized the school uniform.

In addition to the maroon jumper, a white, yellow, blue or pink blouse may be worn. The uniform may also consist of a gray plaid or herringbone skirt

worn with a blouse and either a vest or a blazer. And, if she wishes, the modern St. Agnes High School student may wear either gray or maroon slacks, in keeping with today's trends in women's fashions.

According to an administration spokesman, the new uniforms are a visible indication of the ongoing improvement in every aspect of the total program at St. Agnes, which now includes a

completely elective curriculum with more than 400 offerings.

**Americans United
File Aid Law Suit**

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Americans United for Separation of Church and State has filed suit here and in New Hampshire to prevent aid to Catholic schools.

The organization called on a federal court to block a grant of \$350,000 in federal funds to parochial elementary and high schools in the District of Columbia.

In Nashua, N.H. Americans United applied to a federal court for a restraining order that would bar provision of public school teachers to teach secular subjects in parochial schools.

The Washington grant was awarded under an emergency school aid act passed by Congress in 1972. An Americans United spokesman said the suit could have nationwide impact because it calls into question provisions of the act which permit federal aid to parochial schools.

The suit in New Hampshire involves assignment of public school teachers to Catholic

GOSPEL STUDY

Ithaca — Professor Jonathan Bishop of Cornell is offering a seminar credit course on the Gospels. It will meet Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

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