

# Does Anti-Zionism Equal Anti-Semitism?

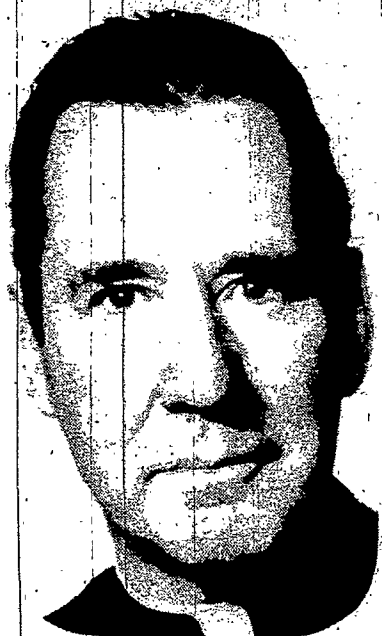
By JOHN DASH

Father Edward H. Flannery is a puzzled man. What he cannot understand is "the depth and spread of anti-Zionism among Christians."

Father Flannery has "actually, concluded... that much of our anti-Zionism stems from traditional, very old and very deep anti-semitism."

The executive secretary for Catholic-Jewish relations of the U.S. Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and a consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, probed Christian anti-Zionism and its roots last week before a group of more than 100 members of the Rochester Interfaith Committee on Israel.

"Anti-Semitism," he said, "is not only an endemic part of Christian history, but is itself an integral part of the Christian psyche. The difficulty is that, today, our anti-Semitism, as widespread and deep as it is, is



FATHER FLANNERY

unconscious for the greatest part. This means that it is always unrecognized and therefore always denied."

He thinks that it is "a legitimate thesis that anti-Zionism is rooted

in anti-Semitism." He also feels "The very word Zionism has to be rehabilitated in our community for many Jews a very sacred word for Christians and many non-Jews, a term of opprobrium."

Father Flannery, who has also served as editor of the Providence, R.I., diocesan paper, noted that while engaging in any Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is necessary to accept that "Zionism and the State of Israel are integral to Judaism itself, which not only makes it more political but also religious and ecumenical." He says he is convinced that the modern day State of Israel is nothing but a political manifestation of the deep messianic core of Judaism.

And, "Zionism to the Jew is not a political matter, it is of the very essence of his faith."

An Orthodox rabbi, when recently asked by the priest-author of the widely-acclaimed book "The Anguish of the Jews," "What do you want of us Christians?" replied, "Respect our bond with the land of Israel."

Father Flannery, who has been to Israel twice in the past six years, believes "it is one of the most magnificent achievements of modern times, to build a vibrant, viable and strong democratic state in so short a period of time, almost from nothing." He said such a feat should "merit the admiration of everybody," that, "every human being should celebrate an accomplishment such as that."

He says he can sympathize with the Arab cause in the Mideast, but he will not accentuate it because "there are, simply, for me, too many Christian tears so copiously shed for Arab refugees that it would seem to me they would like to wash the State of Israel into the Mediterranean Sea."

He calls it a myth that an alien people went to the Mideast, expelled the indigenous population and plotted further expansion. "Jews were always in the land of Israel." The problem is, he says, is that Western Christians know nothing of post-Biblical Judaism.

"The State of Israel is morally and juridically as well-founded as any other state in the world," Father Flannery asserts. "Several times after the foundation, the Arab nations, in the United Nations, tried to have it challenged to be brought before the World Court at The Hague and they failed each time, so sure was the United Nations that it had done the proper thing in creating the state of Israel as well as the Palestinian Arab state."

Father Flannery scores the idea

### SENIORS INVITED

The Monroe-Pinnacle Senior Club invites senior citizens of the southeast area to attend its meetings on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Mt. Hor Community Hall. Mrs. Robert C. Cook will present a book review at the Feb. 11 meeting. Further information may be obtained from Don Crewe, 473-6064, or Dorothy Stillwell, 271-5382.

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that "Zionism is a secret conspiracy, a sinister thing." He says that the history of Zionism is an open book.

"Humans and historians should rejoice that a people, which was the most heavily persecuted in the history of the world, at any rate, the most oppressed people in the history of Christendom, finally received a small parcel of land... that a great historic wrong had been righted," he says.

Father Flannery is asked if he feels guilt about the 6 million Jews who died in Hitler's holocaust. He says that he feels more guilt about the "7 to 10 million" who died at the hands of Christians following 1096, the date of the first Crusade.

The priest says that Christians should rejoice in Israel for the "state is a new source of identity essential to Jewish survival," a guarantor of the future.

Father Flannery turned his attention to the theological background of Christian support for Israel. "There is hardly a concept," he says, "in Christianity that does not have Jewish roots."

"I consider Judaism as the Mother Faith, in a way, of my own Faith," he notes. "It is a matter of historical fact that Christianity emerged from the womb of the synagogue, that the offspring was an ungrateful child. Very soon did it turn on its mother; and that people has become the most oppressed in the history of the world."

Father Flannery insists contrary to his own early religious training, that the Jewish Covenant still lives. "Jews have their promise and covenant still," he says. He asks whether there is truly a New Testament or a Renewed Testament. He states that "Jews have a role to play with their covenant until the end of time." The Christian covenant is, "spiritually speaking, the same."

He notes that "Jews have a function, as some have said, to

keep us Christians honest, to keep us from going constantly into paganism, which we have tended to do since we left it many centuries ago."

He avers that "anything that happens to Israel happens in a way to my own Faith, and to me, too."

He believes that if Israel were to disappear it would be one of the greatest catastrophes in the history of the world.

He is leery of the United State's "tepid" affection for Israel at the present time and feels that with the present oil crisis, U.S. Christians "must keep an eye open to fight any manifestation of anti-Semitism." He says the fight against anti-Semitism must "begin with ourselves."

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## OUR PARISH COUNCIL

In all of the reams of copy that came out of the U.S. Bishops' national meeting last November, too little attention has been paid to a forward-looking and much-needed document, "The Reform of Correctional Institutions in the 1970's."

In their conclusion to the statement, the U.S. Bishops reminded us that Christ Himself was a prisoner, "and according to His living Gospel is still present in the person of those who are prisoners today."

"Of course, the bishops were referring to Matthew (25:36): 'I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me. Then the just will ask him, 'Lord when did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?' The King will answer them, 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one

of my least brothers, you did it for me.'"

The awareness-building statement that Christ was a prisoner (and still is a prisoner) puts reform of the correctional system at the heart of Christian concern. And the bishops did not leave this concern to national bodies alone, but asked that as many independent agencies, parishes, priests, religious and laity participate in the reform.

Here are some actions councils and parishioners can take in this reform movement:

\*Get copies of the statement. Bulk copies are available, at 25c each (2 to 49 copies), or 12 1/2c each (1,000 or more), from the USCC Publications Office, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

\*Set up discussion groups to study and prayerfully consider their own role in prison reform as outlined in the bishops' statement.

\*Identify and make contact with all correctional institutions in your community.

\*Support prison chaplains or provide chaplain service if none now exists.

\*Visit those in prison. People may be sent two-by-two on a regular schedule of visits and report back to the council or a parish society.

\*Ask prison chaplains and wardens what the needs are. This will make a beginning, but prison visitors should be encouraged to keep their eyes and minds open to further opportunities for service.

\*Examine whether we may not have a "poor man's" system of criminal justice. Visit the courts and bail bondsmen.

\*Consider whether our penal system should not seek to deal with all except dangerous offenders outside of correctional institutions.

\*Pray not only for the prisoners, but with them. Prison bars are not as hard as some hearts in and out of prison who bar us from creating a Christian and forgiving society based on justice.

## Chorale Seeks New Musicians

The Concert Chorale, Rochester's singing Sisters of Saint Joseph, is seeking volunteer musicians for a community string orchestra.

The group will perform Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, in the Chorale's annual spring concert the first week of April.

The Chorale has been performing for eight years in live concerts and broadcast appearances. In 1972, they performed at the White House in the annual Pageant of Peace.

This year's concert performances and rehearsals will be held in the auditorium at Saint Agnes High School. The orchestra will be conducted by Sister Virginia Hogan, director of the Chorale. Interested persons can contact her at 442-6780.

## McQuaid BASH To Raise Funds

A combination cocktail party, dinner party, and auction to raise funds for McQuaid Jesuit High School will be held Saturday, March 30, beginning at 4:30 p.m., at McQuaid.

Money raised from the evening, entitled BASH (Building a Scholastic Heritage), will go toward expansion of McQuaid programs.

Donation is \$100 per couple. McQuaid hopes to attract 250 couples, and raise \$80,000 from the donations and auction.

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