



Photo by Sister Mary Camille, RSM, Brooklyn Tablet

**Mother and Son**

Connie Salamida of Rochester gives a welcoming hug to her new son Thomas More, who arrived recently, not via stork, but via jet at New York's JFK Airport. Tommy is a Vietnamese orphan, and now Dominic and Connie Salamida's seventh child. His father says he likes pizza. The adoption was arranged by Friends for All Children, whose sister agency, Friends of Children in Vietnam, provides funds for Vietnamese orphans. Contributions for this non-profit group may be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Harley Orr, 1014 Bay Rd., Webster, 14580.

**THE SLOT MAN**

It is obvious that President Nixon badly misjudged the American people when he released what he regarded as transcript evidence of his innocence.

How he made this poor judgment is an open question. Many feel that he banked on what he felt was the cynical nature of the American people. Others think he hoped that the abridged, edited and otherwise tarnished truth would set him free.

I have my own theory. It has to do with identity. We have a tendency to put ourselves in the other guy's shoes, to see how they feel. And in the case of the four principles in the White House scenario, none of us want to admit that the footwear fits.

To wit:

**Richard M. Nixon.** Not many of us really feel qualified to be President of the United States. Not many of us would want the endless labor and paralyzing responsibility. But still in the recesses of our quiet thoughts we like to identify with our ideas of the qualities of the presidency — moral sensibilities, fairness, love of country and its people, etc., etc.

The president of the transcripts lacks these qualities. He spends hours upon hours of mean talk with some clever pushy and frightening underlings trying to camouflage the effects of a crime. He deals in vindictiveness. He sees the agencies of government as a means of persecuting citizens. He throws his friends overboard to save his own skin.

President of the United States? Sure. Yep. But not in this plot.

**H.R. Haldeman.** Successful in a highly competitive field (advertising). Well off. Top adviser to the President. All admirable qualities on the surface, much as H.R. looks like a "good guy." But the transcripts belie all of this. We are left wondering: Here is a man hardly known to the American people before Watergate who sometimes tells the President what to do. And we learn he sees the tragedy as basically a public relations problem, somewhat like Mr. Wimple caught squeezing the toilet tissue. He seems to think a quick spray of perfume while guests are present. He doesn't

seem to mind the stench himself. The character is frightening. We are not sure where it would lead us.

**John Erlichman:** A man who lives by his wits. Glib. Powerful. Sarcastic. Cold. Who would rather use the slicing edge of verbal sharpness to win an argument than work for fair and equitable solutions.

Merely impressions? true. But they are important in the judgments of Watergate through the administration's bible — the transcripts.

**John Dean.** The plot thickens. Mike Royko characterizes the Dean of the transcripts as the "sneaky, pretty boy." He is patronizing, amoral, ruthless. But he also is the young man who suddenly finds himself among the three most powerful men in the government and who has all the answers. He surprises his seniors with his intelligence. He makes it big — he tells the President what to do. For the rest of us, this is Walter Mitty stuff.

Then, too, we all feel that to some degree Dean has reformed. The sinner has repented. Dean provides some qualities we recognize in ourselves. Presidential advisers may be making a further mistake by trying to cast the President man-on-man against Dean in a morality play.

So a queasy feeling persists. We are unable to feel for any of the characters. That is why many were so quick to embrace Archibald Cox and Elliott Richardson. We identified with their seemingly high moral qualities. When the President fired them, he kind of dismissed the rest of us too.

We feel uneasy. We are helpless bit players in a script we don't like. That is why a change in directors seems to offer the only saving hope for us.

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**Masses Continue at St. Luke's**

The Thursday noontime Masses at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., are continuing despite the illness of Father Henry Atwell, who had been celebrating them before his recent heart attack.

The Masses begin at 12:15 p.m. every Thursday and downtowners are reminded that this will provide the opportunity to fulfill Ascension Thursday obligations this week.

A spokesman said that the Mass has proved so popular that it will be continued.

Father Atwell, meanwhile, has been released from Genesee Hospital and has returned to his parish, St. Agnes, in Avon. "Feeling fine" last week, Father Atwell nonetheless is under doctor's orders to rest for some weeks.

**Catholics, Baptists Meet On Abortion Differences**

Washington, D.C. (RNS)—American Baptists and Roman Catholics "conversed" on the thorny issues of abortion and a pro-life amendment here and emerged from the meeting more positively attuned to each others' positions, both sides have confirmed.

While the American Baptists were assured that the Catholic position on abortion is based primarily on concern for human rights, the Baptists essentially made it clear to Catholics that members of their Church would overwhelmingly reject abortion on demand.

In statements concerning the "private, informal" meeting May 8 both Bishop James S. Rausch, spokesman for the U.S. Catholic bishops, and the Rev. Robert C. Campbell, general secretary of the American Baptist Church, said they were encouraged by the openness and willingness of both sides to discuss their points of view in a very charitable fashion.

Held at the invitation of Archbishop William W. Baum of Washington, who is also head of the U.S. Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, the meeting was seen as a move to ease tensions which had developed between the two Christian churches.

Last Feb. 24, the general board of the American Baptist Church adopted a resolution sharply critical of Catholic Church support of a constitutional amendment to reverse the Supreme Court's 1973 abortion decisions and restore legal protection to unborn children.

Bishop Rausch said the discussions were "positive and constructive." Declaring that no consensus was sought or reached, the general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) said what was significant was "the willingness on both sides... to discuss their respective points of view candidly and charitably."

"Furthermore," Bishop Rausch pointed out, "there was agreement that while the Churches may have differing points of view on aspects of the abortion question they hold the same position on many other issues facing America. I think all the participants felt that there is a need for the Churches in our country to join forces in restoring and revitalizing a sense of moral values in our society."

**HOLY DAY**

Tomorrow, Ascension Thursday, is a Holy Day and all Catholics are reminded that Mass is obligatory.

Dr. Campbell said the discussion was "very open and honest interchange" which was significant in clarifying potential areas of disagreement and finding in many cases, there was no disagreement.

Observing that "there are disagreements" between the two Churches, he said it would seem that a continuing dialogue has begun on abortion, one that could include other Protestants and Jewish participants.

The American Baptist leader described the meeting as "very helpful to us," likening it to "that same fresh wind of Vatican II that brought an openness and willingness to discuss and possibly modify positions on both sides."

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