

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

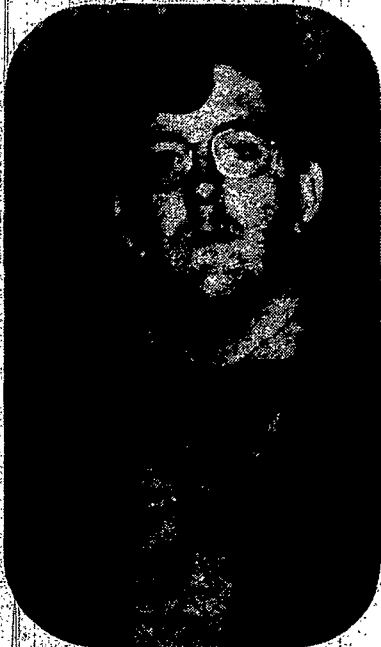
Father Paul J. Cuddy

Letters

To a Parish Councilman:

"Your description of the council meeting was hilarious. Thanks for the fun. Cheer up! Not all councils are so silly. The troublesome ones come when members get "the pontifical feel." Most councils I know of are helpful, although most are too time-consuming. The curse of many is the time they spend on things which the priest is most qualified, and sometimes the only qualified person present. When a pilot is needed, one doesn't get a council to direct his flying and navigation. Have you heard the joke going the rounds?

"The Parish Council debated vigorously about buying a chandelier for the sanctuary. The debate was acrimonious and long. Finally Councilman Tim Healy stood up, pounded on the table and said: 'Fellow Councilors, I have listened with patience to this long discussion about a new chandelier for the church. I wish to go on record of opposition for two reasons: 1) no one knows how to spell it; 2) there aren't over two or three persons in the parish who could play the damn thing. I move that we stop the discussion, and go



Oratorical Winner
Mark Aikins of Canandaigua took third place in the recent oratorical contest held by the NYS councils of the Knights of Columbus at Kiamesha Lake. Mark represented Canandaigua Council 1445.

Father Rohr Slated by Pentecostals

Father Richard Rohr, OFM, will conduct a day of renewal Sunday, June 9, at Our Lady of Mercy Church hall from 3 to 8 p.m.

Father Rohr is director of the New Jerusalem Catholic Charismatic Community in Cincinnati and is director of Teens Encounter Christ for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The day of renewal will feature shared prayer, talks by Father Rohr, and a Eucharistic Liturgy.

The event, which is open to the public, is sponsored by the Pentecostal Prayer Groups of Rochester.

ahead and spend the money on a new light fixture for the church."

To a Hospital Sister.

"Your letter and the \$20 for the Sheen conferences bother me. You write: 'My father just sent me \$10 and some one else gave me \$10, so I am enclosing the cost of the cassette tapes as I do not think the hospital budget warrants the purchase at this time. I will be happy to have them, and to loan them to others. Much good will come from them.'

"I am dismayed if the priorities of a Catholic hospital are such that \$20 for 15 conferences, lasting 40 minutes each, to be shared by hundreds of souls, should be considered a lesser investment. Perhaps your chaplain could find a sponsor for the tapes. Ascension Thursday night I phoned my friend, Father Joe Gaynor at Elmira Heights: 'The Elmira Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary would like the Sheen conferences. Would one of your church societies or the K of C or some group make a gift of a set to the Sisters?' Of course. Send them along at once. My check book shows I have sent \$1460.00 to Our Sunday Visitor, 3855 Broadway, Gary, Indiana 46409 for the Sheen tapes. Most were sold to priests and people who wrote for them; some were gifts. I do not like to take money from nuns who still practice the vow of poverty. So I hope you will find a donor."

To Mr. WDM of Ogden:

"Your enthusiasm for the Sheen conferences is contagious. Prosper! From reading the OTRSide column, so many people phone or write to ask for information I begin to feel like a male Ann Landers. Thank God for friends who are "my consultants." One is Mrs. Eleanor Johnson of Scramtom's book department. She gave me the information you want.

"What is the New English Bible Bishop Sheen recommends? The NEB with Apocrypha is a new translation by impressive scriptural scholars, published by Oxford University Press, selling for \$10.95. The translation is recommended for its clarity, accuracy and literary excellence. Its introduction to each book is superior. I wish the bishops would settle on one official text which has literary excellence and scriptural accuracy. One advantage of the old Douay Rheims was this: when a scripture passage was quoted, it was like the voice of an old friend. Canon Sheehan wrote: 'In a sermon the scriptures hover over the souls of the hearers like sacred perfume, raising their souls to God.'

"Who is Dr. William Barclay? He is a minister of the Church of Scotland, and a reputable scripture scholar. His best known books are THE DAILY BIBLE SERIES, a set of 17 small volumes, averaging 300 pages each, costing about \$3 each. Many priests and Sisters use his books for daily meditation. However, remember Dr. B. is not a Catholic, and has some things out of kilter, (e.g. The Virgin Birth, The Real Presence, divorce) but on the whole he is edifying, and I bless him every day. Since 1 Cor. 13 so thrills you, why not buy his Letters to the Corinthians? You can get it at Scramtom's."

Massive Research Project Offered as Aid to Unity

New York [RNS] — The publication of a major ecumenical study of Christian church membership in the U.S. by region, state and country the first such study in 18 years — has been offered as a "contribution to the study of long-range religious trends in America."

Documenting the fact that about half the U.S. population is "unchurched," at least from a Christian standpoint, the two-year study pinpoints where in the country the Christian religions are flourishing, holding their own, slowly declining or having little or no impact on the local populace.

The computerized 237-page report, entitled "A Study of Churches and Church Membership in the U.S. - 1971," encompasses 80.8 per cent of Christian church members in 50 states, just over 100 million persons. It includes a color fold-out map which delineates an almost complete Christian geography of the nation.

The study was published by the Glenmary Research Center, Washington, D.C., a Roman Catholic agency, and was compiled by Douglas W. Johnson, staff associate at the National Council of Churches' Office of Research, Evaluation and Planning, New York; Paul R. Picard, director of Research, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis; and Father Bernard Quinn, director of the Glenmary Research Center.

In a preface to the study, the authors expressed the hope that "this report, despite its limitations, will facilitate ecumenical and denominational planning, contribute to the study of long range religious trends in America, and stimulate a more sophisticated study of churches and church membership at the time of the 1980 census."

The study's statistics, based on 1971 figures, were provided by 53 Christian communions, with a combined membership of 100,812,489. This represents 49.6 per cent of the 1970 U.S. population and 80.8 per cent of the estimated 1971 Christian

church membership reported by the Yearbook of American Churches.

Participants in the study included 13 church denominations with over 1 million members, 17 communions with memberships between 100,000 and 999,999, and 23 communions with memberships of less than 100,000.

Among the significant omissions from the study are six major black Christian denominations, which "do not have national systems for reporting membership statistics." Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Churches of Christ, the Assemblies of God and a number of smaller denominations.

A total of 109 denominations participated in a 1956 National Council of Churches study — based on 1952 figures — but many of these no longer exist or have been involved in mergers. However, there were 16 communions participating in the 1971 study that did not participate in the earlier NCC study. A large addition was the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ with almost 1 million members.

Of the estimated 24 million Christian church members not accounted for in the current study, approximately 13 million are members of black denominations, some 4.2 million are Eastern Orthodox, and the Churches of Christ and the Assemblies of God each report about 2.4 million members. The remaining few million are from various small Churches.

The new study is broken down into three "tables" — a U.S. summary, a regional-state presentation, and a state-county elaboration.

The first table presents for each denomination the number of churches, communicants, confirmed or full members, and the total adherents for the entire country. It also shows what percentage of the total U.S. population comprises church members.

Table 2 presents nine census regions and state totals of

churches and members, while the third table provides the "detailed data" on which the total in the first two tables are based. For each county there is a grand total of churches and members reported, as well as the per cent of the county population the communion represents.

At a pre-release briefing on the study during the Catholic Press Association-Associated Church Press joint convention in Denver (April 25), Johnson described the study as the "most comprehensive" look at U.S. Church membership in 20 years and the answer to the need for data on the strengths and weaknesses of Christian Churches in the U.S.

The study reveals a variety of changes and trends, according to Johnson. He added that these changes and trends would have to be viewed with the qualification that the study figures are three years old.

Among the significant ramifications of the study are:

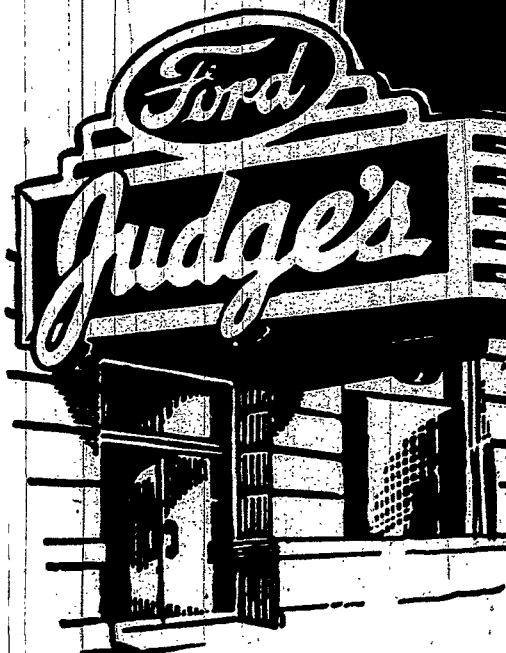
— The comparison with the 1952 NCC study shows that the percentage of church membership had grown from 45.8 per cent of the population in 1952 to 49.6 per cent in 1971. It is estimated that the over-all population growth was 34.9 per cent.

— A comparison of total losses and gains of theologically liberal, moderate and conservative Churches during that 20-year period indicated that membership losses were suffered by some conservative and liberal Churches.

The Catholic Church, with 36 per cent of total U.S. Christian membership is the largest communion, and in terms of the study Catholics represent 44.5 per cent of all church members included.

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