

# THE CHURCH 1974

## Father Andrew Greeley

Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, is not a man to mince words. In the past several years he has managed to tell off both the Pope and the President (and he managed to get the two of them angry in the same week, which is a unique performance even for someone of Father Hesburgh's capacities). His recent address at the National Press Association meeting in Denver indicates that, like the best wines, Ted Hesburgh improves with age.

His blunt statements about abortion, in particular, are bound to offend both the leaders of the pro-life movement and some very prominent princes of the Church. It is hard to believe he could have had anyone else in mind than the four cardinals testifying before Congress when he said, "Leaders will learn increasingly that to lead in the Church they will need for their personal credibility more than the simple fact of being appointed to an office by a distant authority. They will often have to establish personal credibility after their appointment by the continual moral stature of their lives, actions, judgments."

Those are tough, strong words. If ecclesiastical leaders were offended by them, one can be sure that the pro-life movement went into paroxysms of rage when Hesburgh told them, "Our moral indignation can no longer be selective either if moral credibility is to be established. We cannot be loud in condemning after being silent about napalming the Vietnamese children or seemingly unconscious of the horrible present fact that 60 per cent of the children already born in the poorest countries with more than a billion inhabitants dies before the age of five. We can and must do something about abortion, but it must be one of several equally horrendous problems that we are doing something about."

And just to make sure that the pro-life people didn't miss his point, he warned against "backing unworkable solutions calling the opposition murderers... and repeating our past ineffectiveness in dividing the forces for good" — particularly when these kinds of tactics were carried out by "mindless and crude zealots who have neither good judgment, sophistication of procedure nor the modicum of civility needed for the rational discussion of disagreements in a pluralistic democracy."

After blasting those who have appropriated the pro-life movement to themselves, he then served warning on the rest of the society that Catholics had been pushed around long enough. "They are beginning to feel set

upon, ignored, even badly used and unappreciated."

In the last year, he notes, Jews wanted two things: massive aid to Israel and a denial of trade to Russia until emigration was liberalized. They got both. Last year Catholics wanted two things: some help for parochial schools and no liberalization of laws on abortions. They got neither. As Hesburgh put it, a Catholic could today get a tax credit if he paid for an abortion but not for the considerable amount he pays for his child's attendance at Catholic schools.

In what can only be interpreted as a direct slap at some of the highly placed ecclesiastics who so easily gave their support to President Nixon, Hesburgh comments, "The next time I expect that Catholics will have better leadership, will be more highly politicized, more conscious of their inherent strength, less ready to be promised help by a president who, once he had their votes, hardly lifted a finger to help them or their two causes." There are a couple of East Coast chancery offices, I imagine, where there was a good deal of unhappiness about those words — if anybody there read them.

But as much as I admire Hesburgh's courage and bluntness, I am not sure that he's right. American Jews have been very successful at getting support for Israel and the Jews in Russia. They have identified both these causes with the cause of liberalism, freedom, progress. It would be difficult if not impossible for us, given our past performance and the burden of our past mistakes, to persuade anybody that aid to parochial schools, much less, some restriction on abortion, stands for dignity, freedom, justice, liberty.

Congressman Dellums can quote NORC data out of context to prove that the four cardinals don't have the support of the American laity (and ignore the fact that American Protestants, as well as American Catholics, are opposed to abortion on demand) and can get away with it with scarcely a word of protest because Dellums, along with most other politicians, knows that the leadership of the American Catholic Church simply does not have the credibility to deliver the support of the rank and file members. The leadership of the Jewish community does have the credibility to deliver rank and file support.

Father Hesburgh sees leadership emerging in the American Church that is "more decentralized, more collegial, less official." I hope he's right, but I certainly don't see it. We have become so used to leaning on official leaders, and they have become so used to having a monopoly on leadership, that it will be a long, long time before anything else emerges.

And as evidence, I cite the fact that there is probably no other American today besides Father Hesburgh who is not a bishop and who can claim to speak with any authenticity to and for 50 million American Catholics — or for that matter even for 10 million American Catholics. The non-Catholics in this country are more likely to listen to Hesburgh than they are to any of the four cardinals, but after him, who? The regrettable answer is no one.



### Congratulations!

Father Henry C. Manley, who resides at St. Patrick's in Aurora, receives congratulations at a reception in celebration of the 50th anniversary of his ordination. Left to right: Mrs. Roger Purcell, Roger Purcell, parish council president, Father Manley, and Mrs. Richard Kuenkler.

## Drop Attica Prosecution, GEM Agency Urges

In a statement sent to Gov. Wilson and Atty. Gen. Louis Lefkowitz, the Judicial Process Commission has asked that all indictments in the 1971 Attica prison uprising be dropped.

Virginia Mackey, chairman of the Judicial Process Commission under the auspices of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries, believes that "it is no longer possible to sort out the responsibilities for the riot or for the events which took place afterwards."

A background paper on the commission's statement said the defendants had been denied a speedy trial, adequate funds and aid for defense and an impartial jury.

The Judicial Process Commission noted that 15 months had elapsed between the uprising and the initial indictments and that an additional 18 months had passed since these indictments were brought. While the commission's effort has produced \$750,000 from the State Legislature for a defense fund, Mrs. Mackey believes this is inadequate to cover the costs for individual lawyers.

"There is also no adequate system to submit vouchers to cover expenses incurred during the pre-trial investigations," she said. The commission predicts that by March 1975, the state will have spent approximately \$4,546,000 for the prosecution. Public monies can be better used for public services and reform than for prosecution, the commission asserted.

It also opposed the seating of a second grand jury whose "impartiality we question." The commission believes that the fact that the guards, including the hostages, are known to the

### BOARD ELECTION

Auburn — Three newly-elected members of the Blessed Trinity School board will take office after the June board meeting.

Elected to three year terms were Mrs. John Bisgrove, Sacred Heart; Robert T. Welch, Holy Family; and Richard Boedicker, St. Alphonsus. St. Alphonsus parishioners also elected Robert W. Nagle to a vacancy as alternate to the school board.

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**TOYS SOUGHT**

Auburn — Toys in good repair are being collected by Father Ernesto Loera at Holy Family for migrant children in the area.

Outside toys such as trucks and tricycles are especially needed. Items must be in good condition and may be left at Holy Family. For pick-up in the city of Auburn, call 253-2176. Toys are being collected through July 24.

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