

Life, Liberty and Law

Nancy Murphy

Somehow it all ties together. The remembered words of a friend. The spoken words of my pastor just last month. The written words of a lady internist who has been nominated for the 1974 Nobel Peace Prize.

I can remember a look of pure horror on my friend's face, 25 years ago. She was across the tennis court from me but I could see her face pale as the jet screamed through that September sky, several seconds ahead of its own sound. I had never before seen her show fear. But Nick is French. She had lived through the devastation of Paris. She aided the English and American fliers, lost her mother, and had seen her family uprooted forever. Her resistance had been costly. Yet she had never mentioned the war until that afternoon when she came to the net, still pale.

"You do not know human death. Not until you smell it. That plane sounded like the bomb."

She spoke the words quietly and did not mention it again. The tennis game continued. But life meant more to me after that. I realized that my friend had a depth of humanity which I both envied and dreaded, and could never share. I was grateful to have learned it from her words, and not from having experienced the stench of wasted human flesh myself.

the Lord sayeth to Moses "Go down at once to your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, for they have become depraved. They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them." The familiar story of the golden calf. Sometimes on a Sunday morning, a man's words can drift softly onto a preoccupied mind, to be buried beneath thoughts of the evening menu. But these words spoken by my pastor refused to be interred, and I memorized chapter and verse. I thought of

Coordinator Employed

Auburn — W. Thomas Koch, formerly of Rochester, joined the staff of Sacred Heart Parish as religious education coordinator in September.

A religious studies major at St. John Fisher College, he is responsible for coordination and curriculum development of the CCD program.

Koch indicated he will be building on the well organized CCD program based on the Come to the Father Series which had been coordinated through parishioner efforts. The format will be continued with optional enrichment programs for families of children in the First Eucharist and Penance Programs offered. Scriptural lessons will be given at the fourth grade level.

Koch pointed out while the development of religious values is attitudinal, there is a need to provide for continuous development in historical perspective so students will have basics to relate to in later course work.

Initial teacher orientation has been completed. Classes open in October. Koch will provide individual teacher consultation and in-parish training opportunities along with guidelines to assure continuity of curriculum materials.

Koch and his wife, Juanita, a music teacher with the Auburn City School system, reside in Auburn.

Nick and the French resistance when I reread them that afternoon.

And today I have read them again. Not prodded this time by the memory of a friend. Not prodded by my pastor. But prodded by the printed words of German-born H. Margaret Zassenhaus M.D., a Towson, Md. internist, who grew up in the same war, though in the land of the aggressor. She recalled that after he had read the biblical story to her, her father concluded that she must always have the courage to form her own opinions, to follow her own convictions. And her convictions led her, ten years later, to active resistance.

I have read her words

"Relatively few (German citizens) participated by being actively evil but relatively few tried to offer active resistance. The vast majority were the non-committed citizens joining the ranks of the Nazis not because of their own convictions, but because they had none. And a nation which took freedom for granted lost it, and turned into a dehumanized faceless people."

"As long as their own interests were not at stake they closed their eyes and ears, pretending not to see or hear... and in the final outcome their going along (with the contemporary social pressures) brought death to millions, and reduced whole nations including their own to rubble and ashes."

"How (America today) reminds me of the past, bringing back the memory of Nazi Germany's non-committed citizen... his lack of integrity, his total void of inner resources to resist the pressures of authority... the fragility of conscience, which, by blindly following orders, eventually turned numb."

Yes. It all ties together.

Do we, like the great German people before us, close our eyes and ears to the onslaught of realities we prefer to know nothing about? Do we refuse to know about the extensive experimentation research at the Research Triangle (Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University) in quest of "safer" more effective IUDs, new methods of male and female sterilization, and comparisons between prostaglandin- and saline-induced abortions; the San Francisco Eye and Ear Hospital performing 600 abortions a month in order to maintain occupancy (and) to keep the hospital open; and the special abortion clinic in predominantly Catholic Boston for girls 11 to 17 years old?

Or do we have the strength to follow our convictions — to follow those few clergymen and political leaders who do speak out on behalf of the sanctity of human life, those who know full well that their words go against the currently popular permissiveness, those men of the churches and the government who neither belong to, accommodate, nor speak for organizations and agencies which call for the selective elimination of "unwanted" human life?

Have we the wisdom and the moral discipline to learn from the painful exposure of other memories, other days, and other nations?

Can we, will we, resist the onslaught of indifference? Or will we, faceless and non-committed, walk obediently and silently on toward our private destination of rubble and ashes?

I choose to speak for the sanctity of human life.



Body of Slain Priest Removed

The body of Father Francis A. English, 79, is removed by ambulance attendants from the rectory of St. Boniface Church in Patterson, N.J. The priest, who retired as pastor of the church in 1970 but stayed on as administrator, was beaten to death in the rectory by robbers seeking money raised by parish bingo. (RNS)

Pilot Program Begun on Confirmation

Weesport — A pilot program on the sacrament of Confirmation was begun last week at St. Joseph's Church here.

Father Robert Hammond is conducting the program in conjunction with Father Elmer Heindl, pastor.

Father Hammond addressed the congregation on the program on the opening day, Sunday, Oct. 26. A night of prayer and recollection for parents, students and teachers is scheduled for 8 to 9:15 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 7. On Saturday, Nov. 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the nature of Confirmation

will be the topic of a program for students and teachers.

After the initial programs, students and teachers will meet one night a week until the Confirmation date, March 9, at which time Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will administer the sacrament.

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