

USCC Official Rebuts Columnist's Charges

Washington — An official of the U.S. Catholic Conference, responding to criticism of the Catholic Bishops' bicentennial program, said the "hearing" process employed in the program has "proved its usefulness beyond any reasonable doubt."

The evaluation, made by Msgr. George G. Higgins, USCC Secretary for Research, was directed to criticisms made by Father Andrew Greeley of Chicago.

A subcommittee of the

Bishops' Committee for the Bicentennial is sponsoring a series of six hearings across the country on the theme of "Liberty and Justice for All." The first hearing was in Washington, D.C., in February and the second in San Antonio early this month, with others planned for St. Paul, Atlanta, Sacramento and Newark. They are intended to provide input for a National Conference on Justice in Detroit in October, 1976.

Father Greeley attacked the hearing process and a study guide

liberation theology.

I asked Moynihan recently if ever in his career he had been asked by the Catholic Church to do anything save throw in a Sunday collection envelope. His answer: not once.

We had a hint of an explanation in a comment from Prof. David O'Brien, whose long list of scholarly contributions entitled him to write the first section of the bicentennial discussion guide. How much, he demanded, have the "Public Interest"—"Commentary" crowd (which includes Moynihan) done for the poor? One could point to the remission of the rupee debt to India and the fight for a guaranteed annual wage, of course, but that would not be to the point. O'Brien's argument is that virtue is what counts, not intelligence. So the bishops bring in virtuous non-entities to write papers that are to be discussed in every parish in America and ignore Moynihan.

Or take the case of a less famous man, my colleague Kevin Ryan. In his own discipline, Ryan is known as one of the best teacher-trainers in America, and more recently, one of the two or three outstanding experts on moral education. He wanders all over the land lecturing on the subject—but never to Catholic audiences. As far as Catholic education is concerned, Ryan doesn't exist. Well, he did manage to get on his parish school board.

The list could go on. Official Catholicism is deliberately turning its back on its own best minds.

There are a number of reasons. Administrators and bureaucrats are threatened by smart people, since by and large they are men of very modest intelligence themselves. They prefer the virtuous to the intelligent. They will pay for excellence in printing publications are superb in those respects, but they don't want to have to cope with people who know more than they do. Furthermore, clerical envy is more powerful, I think, than most kinds of envy. You not only fear your own who make it, you resent them. The third-rate virtuous amateur is not worth resenting.

A priest-scholar or expert is preferable to a lay person. Pleasure at being asked to make a contribution to the Church, flattery at the attention of the hierarchs, respect for Church leadership, the norms of clerical culture and the sanctions of clerical envy which demand that you sink to the lowest common denominator—all these tend to keep most priests in line. The bureaucrats have no such control over the laity. Better not take any chances with them. The last thing in the world the Church needs just now is someone who not only knows that he is talking about but will say what he knows.

Such people will hurt the feelings of the administrators and the pious amateurs who do their thinking for them.

Besides, isn't the book a fabulous design job?

issued under the auspices of the subcommittee in a lengthy article in the Feb. 7 issue of the National Catholic Reporter.

Msgr. Higgins said there was validity to Father Greeley's criticisms of the program "but only up to a point."

"I agree," Msgr. Higgins said, "that some of the contributors to the subcommittee's study guide and some of the participants in the Washington hearing, for fear of indulging in an orgy of patriotic self-congratulation tended to veer dangerously close to an orgy of self-flagellation."

"I hasten to add," Msgr. Higgins continued, "that Father Greeley, who has subsequently repeated his criticism in his syndicated column and in other forums, is now beginning to indulge in 'polemical' over-kill. The tone of his criticism has become increasingly shrill and abusive and, worse than that, extremely intolerant of other legitimate points of view. Moreover he is violating his own commendably high professional standards as a social scientist (by) making apologetic statements about a process which he has never personally examined and, so far as I can tell, knows about only on the basis of second or third hand information."

Msgr. Higgins, who, served on the panel for the San Antonio hearings, said the new social action types, whom Father Greeley calls "romantics," were not in charge, and added:

"The San Antonio hearings were one of the best sets of meetings I have attended in recent years. I learned a great deal that I never knew before by listening for three solid days (and nights) to a fairly representative cross section of scholars, social activists, and rank and file citizens.

"I wish Father Greeley could have been with us in San Antonio," Msgr. Higgins wrote. "While he undoubtedly knows a lot about conditions in the Southwest, I dare say that he would have benefitted from the experience and, like the rest of us on the panel would have learned certain things that cannot be learned from books or even from public opinion surveys."

Msgr. Higgins said the San Antonio hearings also invalidated Father Greeley's allegation that the subcommittee is not interested in hearing from the ethnic groups in American society. "Articulate spokesmen for several ethnic groups made very effective presentations to the panel," he said.

Father Greeley "owes it to the subcommittee and to his own extensive reading audience to be as objective in his assessment of the process as he rightly expects the rest of the Catholic community to be in its assessment of his own professional work as a respected social scientist and one of the nation's most prolific authors," Msgr. Higgins said.

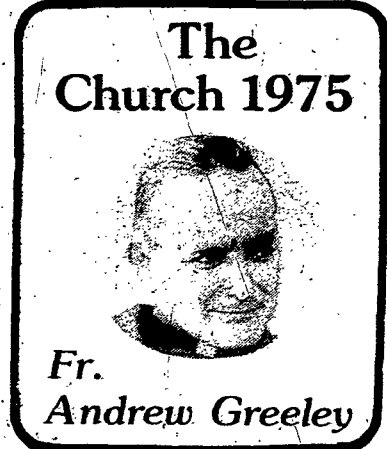
HOW TO USE TAX REBATES

The human development committee of Our Lady of Mercy Parish has had an idea for spending those expected tax rebates from the Internal Revenue Service. They have suggested that 10 per cent or more of this money be given to help the "real poor" of the nation. The committee has recommended that the money be sent to the Campaign for Human Development or to Catholic Charities, with specific designation for emergency food or prescription drug needs.



Unique Ceremony

Vatican City — A bride kisses Pope Paul's hand after he personally performed the marriages for 13 couples in a unique ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica. (RNS)



The Church 1975
Fr. Andrew Greeley

When it comes to ideas, the leadership and bureaucratic administration of the American Church shows an extraordinary predilection for the third-rate, the shoddy, the amateurish, the derivative: The report of the NCCB to the synod of bishops in Rome, the bicentennial discussion guide, the book, "Poverty in American Democracy," which purports to discuss the economics of poverty in the United States, and "A Question of Values" are all publications of the USCC-NCCB staff. All purport to speak in the name of the American Church, all are paid for by the ordinary Catholic laity, and all are vigorous exercises in non-excellence.

We would not turn over the church architecture to someone who went to a library and looked it up in a few books, we would not hire as legal counsel a man who had spent one year in law school, we would not entrust boiler repairs to someone who once took a course in engineering, and we would not (with some lamentable exceptions) seek investment advice from a press agent or a pious nun who felt strongly about General Motors.

But when it comes to ideas we are perfectly content with press agents, enthusiasts, "educational directors," and sincere amateurs who have read a book, taken a course, spent a year in Latin America or may some day finish a dissertation.

There was a time when it was argued that only excellence was worthy of the Church of Jesus Christ. Now it seems to be just the opposite: excellence is a threat to the Church, and we avoid it as though it were infectious.

And we want nothing to do with those of our own who display excellence. Take the case of Daniel P. Moynihan, one of the most brilliant and creative men in the American republic. The Commission on Critical Choices could afford to fly him home from India, but the committee which prepared for the Catholic bicentennial was apparently unaware of his existence. When you have the experts from the Center for Concern, who needs Moynihan? His recent foreign policy paper in "Commentary" magazine received just about universal acclaim—save for the hard-line "Third Worlders" in the Jesuit magazine, "America" who thought it was "oversimplified"—as though there has been nuance, qualification, or self-doubt in "America" since it sold out to the socialist chic of

Hicks

Home Heating Inc.

271-7414 271-4650

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO
DEWEY AVE. PHARMACY
Prescription Specialists
COSMETICS — TOILETRIES
PHOTO FINISHING
2918 Dewey Avenue 885-2218

COURIER-JOURNAL
CLASSIFIED AD SALES

Part-time telephone salesperson needed. Can be done from your own home. Selling experience desirable. Must be self-starter.

Salary plus commission.
FOR INTERVIEW CALL
Ms. Bonnie Bishop
454-7050

Replace Worn out, Old Wood Drafty, Hard to Work, Hard to Paint, House Windows with

Thermal-Barrier

Total Insulated Replacement Windows



Tilts in for Safe Easy Cleaning

Imagine the ease, convenience and safety of washing your windows from the inside. Simply depress the catches on each sash and tilt the window. Sash cannot tilt in accidentally. All Thermal-Barrier windows have a built-in burglar-proof interlocking sash and security latch. Self-storing screens available, full or half. Decorative grids shown above are optional. **BUILT FOR LASTING COMFORT**

LOCKS WEATHER OUT — LOCKS COMFORT IN

THERMAL-BARRIER IS LIKE TWO WINDOWS IN ONE HEAVY ALUMINUM FRAME ON THE OUTSIDE, RIGID WHITE VINYL FRAME ON THE INSIDE. INTERLOCKED TOGETHER FOR GREATER STRENGTH PLUS COMPLETE INSULATION AGAINST WEATHER CONDITIONS. THERMAL-BARRIER INTERLOCKED FRAMES COMBINED WITH INSULATION GLASS GIVE YOU THE ONLY TOTAL INSULATED REPLACEMENT WINDOW ON THE MARKET.

N.C. Freed Co.
WINDOW DIVISION

INSTALLER BY FACTORY TRAINED EXPERTS. NO MESS, NO FUSS, TERMS TO FIT YOUR BUDGET. SEE THEM ON DISPLAY IN OUR SHOWROOM OR CALL FOR FREE HOME DEMONSTRATION.

**39 Jefferson Rd.
at Ballantyne Bridge**
"Serving The Rochester Area For Over A Quarter Century"

LET THE PROFESSIONALS DO IT THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE

(716) 235-0600
out of town call collect