

ON THE RIGHT SIDE



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

G. K. Chesterton wrote: "We are all in the same boat, and we are all seasick." How aptly this applies to the Barque of Peter this past decade. Here is a letter written a few years ago, to a friend who left the priesthood. It may give some light to The People.

"This letter was written one month ago. Because I am so blunt I thought it best to write it long-hand, let it rest a while, then revise, reform and omit words and expressions which might be too strong for emotions to accept. Now, even after the revisions, I find the letter seems hard, but I hope not harsh. It may offend you, but you did write: 'A penny for your thoughts'.

"I have been pondering over my mental and emotional reactions for a long time, and find my thoughts and emotional reactions too intertwined to be entirely clear. A curious immediate reaction was this, viz. that as soon as I read of your marriage, I felt a door close tight, and you had completely left the family of priests! It was like the departure of a very dear friend who had undergone a metamorphosis. But these points sum up my thoughts and feelings:

1. A pity and anxiety for The People, who are scandalized. More and more we hear: "If priests can walk out on their priesthood, why can't I walk out on my wife?" We both know enough sacramental theology to understand the dif-

ference. But The People don't, and even if they did I think they would be little impressed. They still think that a commitment is a commitment, whether in marriage or at ordination. I am always jolted to read: "Father Omega has resigned from the active priesthood." And always think of the parallel: "Mr. James Alpha has resigned from his active marriage" and stare stupefied to find an answer that makes much sense.

2. A helpless concern for other priests who might find encouragement to turn their hand from the plough. Example, good and bad, is still the strongest teacher.

3. A concern at suspicion toward the clergy by The People, from a weakening confidence in a group of men whom they have always felt they could rely upon, at least in this country.

4. A kind of resentment at the rejection of the counsel to priests and religious Brothers by A Kempis: "Be familiar with no woman; but recommend all good women to God" (Imitation of Christ, Book I, ch. 8.) I truly believe priests start out in sincere charity with the intention of helping some woman who needs help. But the net spreads, prudence dissipates in their zeal for charity, and they sometimes end up enmeshed in an emotional net they would have avoided had they observed the counsel of the Imitation.

"As for yourself personally, you know that I do wish you happiness. And I am grateful that you had the sensitivity to move out of the diocese and wait for laicization rather than hang around as a witness to the sorrows of the Church and of The People. And if I can be of service to you, you know that I will be. My sorrow does not mean lack of friendship.

"As I read this over, it does sound harsh, doesn't it? But I know you will interpret it as you know me, with my passionate love for the Catholic Church which I have never been able to identify otherwise than as Christ's Body. So if I seem too blunt, please do find a decent amalgam of friendship and regard intertwined with my sorrow."

IN THIS CORNER



George Beahon

Hockey superstar Bobby Hull staged a one-game strike during this World Hockey Association season. Hull, the former Chicago Black Hawk great, was protesting increased violence in pro hockey.

An attorney general in Toronto ordered three Philadelphia Flyers arrested following a beef that saw fans and a policeman hit with hockey sticks.

The beat goes on. Violence in hockey this season has exceeded any previous action. And now some people are beginning to take note.

The coach of the Winnipeg Jets of the aforementioned WHA has a suggestion for eliminating or at least curtailing some of the new violence.

Bobby Kromm's idea is so simple you wonder why it wasn't publicized long before this.

Kromm recommends that when a player is charged with a minor penalty, he must serve the entire two minutes.

Under existing rules, a player pops out of the penalty box and back into action whenever the other team scores a power play goal.

Kromm would make the player stay in the slammer, and possibly see the opposition score more than one goal. Considering the incidence of scoring in power-play situations, there's no question this would discourage violence and reduce penalties. There is also the likelihood that referees would be less inclined to call borderline penalties.

The suggestion by the WHA coach is not anything new. It merely would be a return to the regulations of 20 years ago. That's when the Montreal Canadiens were playing dynasty hockey, behind the firepower of a handful of superstars. Montreal was scoring in multiples in power play situations, because the penalty was served in full at that time.

"The only reason the rule was changed then," claims Kromm, "was to break up Montreal's domination, because Canadiens filled the nets when they had an advantage."

If hockey people really want to halt the trend of violence, they couldn't find an easier way.

And it's not restricted to the pros.

The coach of a team in a youth program in Long Island posted this message on a sign in his kids' dressing room:

"They Can't Score If You Break Their Legs."

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'Creative Listening' Described

A group of cancer patients, their friends and relatives took a two-hour course in "creative listening" at the May meeting of the Wayne County Chapter of Make Today Count at St. Patrick's in Macedon. The instructor, Sister Mary Gratia, told the group that many problems individuals face result from a failure to listen and understand.

Sister Gratia, who is in the Field Education Department at St. Bernard's Seminary, said that knowing how to listen is important to the patient and to those caring for the patient. She said the spoken word often does not articulate basic concerns, but merely provides a symptom and the listener must probe further to get at the speaker's true feelings.

At the next meeting, June 1, the organization will hear a brief report on efforts to establish a home-care service in Wayne County.

St. Bernard's Library Plans 'Sheen Room'

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen will be in Rochester Sept. 27 and will dedicate the Sheen Special Collections Room at St. Bernard's Seminary library.

The archbishop has donated a "considerable" collection of books, radio and television recordings, tapes of retreats, lectures, sermons and other material on his public life to the library, according to librarian Rev. Jasper Pennington.

The dedication of the Sheen Room also will mark the beginning of a major renovation to house the library's 80,000 volume book and periodical collection, to provide new study areas and more adequate staff rooms.

The library is seeking correspondence, news articles, books, photographs, recordings and other memorabilia for the Sheen collection. The library should be contacted for further information.

Cenacle Sets Fr. Walchars

Father John Walchars, SJ, an internationally known lecturer and retreat master will give a lecture on Inner Stillness at the Cenacle Retreat House on May 8 at 7:45 p.m.

Father Walchars will discuss the theology, philosophy and place of inner stillness in Christianity and Buddhism. He will close the lecture with a celebration of Mass.

Now based at the Campion Retreat Center in Weston, Mass., Father Walchars was for many years based on China.

CYO DAY CAMP

The Catholic Youth Organization has begun accepting registrations for the day camp season that opens July 6. Boys and girls aged 6 through 13 are eligible. Bus transportation is provided. Details may be obtained by calling 454-2030 or writing to CYO Day Camp, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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