

The Church Must Be Built on Faith

Following is Pope Paul's weekly audience address on Wednesday, July 14.

We were saying, and, taking up again a subject that we consider fundamental, for Christian life especially in our times, we repeat: it is necessary to construct the Church. Yes, this edifice, which signifies the religious plan for mankind, the spiritual order both of the individual and of men socially considered, the organization of a society in which there is realized God's thought on the human world, his plan about our true and operating relations with Divinity, his loving project regarding our salvation, the Church, we repeat, must be constructed in the present century, in the history that we are living.

Construct the Church! Let us keep in mind some very important things. In the first place that it is a question of an operation that is actually not ours, but Christ's. He said: "I will build my Church" (Mt 16, 18). He is the Architect. He is the worker. He is, in certain sense, the only builder. It is an operation of which He himself is the real cause. The work we wish to see rising up depends on him, it is his work, it is divine work. We, called to the workyard of divine plans, are collaborators. "We are," St Paul says, "God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor 3, 9). We are second causes in the great execution of the work which has God, which has Christ, as its first cause. We are ministers, we are instruments, we are rather in the order of conditionality than in that of causality. This is a theological question that has fatigued the greatest thinkers, such as St. Augustine. Let it be enough for us now to recall St. Paul: "What have you that you did not

receive?" (1 Cor 4, 7). But this doctrine, let us remember, does not diminish our responsibility nor deprive our works of merit. And, in the subject we are now considering, it confers on our ministerial work great dignity, since it collaborates with divine work and does not do away with the necessity of human effort. On the contrary, effort is demanded, to the extent of total dedication, by the very commitment of its participation in the work of grace.

The second thing to note is that for us it is a question not of constructing the Church but of reconstructing it, unless we consider ourselves in the missionary field, where the implantation, the "plantatio" of the Church must begin with the first proclamation of the Gospel. But we, in countries of ancient Christian formation, must be carefully aware of an indispensable factor in the question of the construction of the Church. This is tradition, it is the work carried out down the centuries by those who have preceded us in the building-up of the Church.

We are heirs, we are continuers of a preceding work. We must have a sense of history, and form in ourselves the spirit of faithfulness, humble and fortunate, to the living and authentic elements that past centuries have handed down to us in the formation of the Mystical Body of Christ. We must beware of the irresponsibility of the revolutionary spirit, characteristic of so many people of our time. This ignores everything or wishes to ignore everything of the work carried out by preceding generations, and thinks it can begin the work of saving mankind by repudiating all that experience, confirmed by a consistent and authentic magisterium, has preserved for us, and by beginning all over again the making of a new civilization. We are wisely preservers and continuers, and we must not fear that this double qualification, rightly understood, will

deprive the present work of vivacity and brilliance. The work to be carried out, in the construction of the Church, especially in the spiritual and pastoral field, is always new, always at the beginning.

Finally a third thing, the most important one, to remember when we propose to construct the Church, is the foundation on which the construction rests and must rise up; and this foundation is faith, faith in Jesus Christ. "You are," St Paul writes again, "God's building. According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3, 10-12). The Apostle wrote this to the Corinthians; he then taught the Romans, opening the way to Christian theology: "It is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" He will live drawing from faith the principle of salvation, of justification; an objective principle, as God's gift, and a subjective principle, as acceptance of the gift of faith. The terms of this doctrine are thus clearly stated. But the ontological process of faith, that is, of the divine gift, and the moral and psychological, that is, human process, as a result of which faith takes possession of the soul, inspires its action, and informs its life, remains the great chapter of our religious doctrine: an immense, stupendous and dramatic chapter, on which the edifice that we want to build, the Church, is founded; or rather the edifice in which we will find the light, the peace, the strength to be Christians.

Faith, let us recall, is the basis; the faith of Peter, who by divine inspiration answered Jesus: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16, 16). Let us remember!

The U.S. of A.

American Philosophy: a Bicentennial Perspective

By HELENE DWYER

One of the ironies of the state of American philosophy today is that, two hundred years after our declaration of independence as a nation from Great Britain, we have come close, in our philosophy, to

falling under British domination again.

By "philosophy" I do not refer to our general viewpoint on life, but to "professional" philosophy, as it might be called — philosophy as it is done in our colleges and

universities, at least many of them. And one of the marks of the influence of British philosophical trends on us is the very fact that the philosophical terrain has become the private domain of "professionals" rather than an area in which the ordinary citizen feels at home.

Native-born American philosophy has always been in touch with the problems of everyday life. The best known and most characteristically American of our philosophers, among them John Dewey and William James, directed their writings to the general educated public rather than to a select group of professionals.

American philosophers have involved themselves in the controversies of the day and never lost confidence in the power of the human mind to make contact with reality and to understand it, even if this understanding must always be provisional and imperfect.

In contrast, the type of philosophizing current today in Great Britain and many English-speaking countries, including our own, holds a much less optimistic view of human knowing. "Linguistic analysis," as it is called, restricts itself to questions of the meaning and use of language. It feels uncomfortable with the "larger" questions asked by much of previous philosophy, suspecting that if these questions have not been or cannot be answered by science, they are perhaps unanswerable. Linguistic analysts feel more confident about their ability to answer the question "what is the meaning of meaning?" than the question "what is the meaning of life?"

No one could argue that philosophers (and that means all of us; in our capacity to wonder and reason) need perpetual reminding of the limits of the human mind and the need for tentativeness in our conclusions. In this sense, the philosophic movement called "linguistic analysis" is a needed

corrective to the occasional over-optimism of philosophers, who sometimes forget that no verbal formulation is final, that there is no "last word" when it comes to explaining reality. Wholesome uncertainty about the adequateness of the systems of ideas that we build is not the same as total skepticism about our power to know.

However, our own American tradition could well be reaffirmed. American "naturalism," with its vision of a dynamic, developing

nature, and American "pragmatism," with its emphasis on knowledge as problem-solving activity rather than a passive imprintation, crystallize what is most characteristically our own as a people. And a determination to "take on" the more difficult philosophic questions, the life-questions, would bring us back to our philosophic roots in this Bicentennial year.

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Pope Takes Action On 3 Trouble Spots

Pope Paul has upheld three important Vatican principles in actions taken this week in Rome.

He spoke out against the possibility of the government permitting abortions for women at Seveso, Italy, following contamination of the area with a dangerous chemical, TCDD or Dioxin.

Father Giovanni Franzoni, a dissident Roman priest, was defrocked after openly supporting Italian Communist candidates.

Conservative French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre was warned to end his planned schism based on a rejection of Vatican II goals meant to modernize the church.

On the issue of abortion, the Italian Constitution has long protected unborn fetuses, but a recent Court ruling would permit therapeutic abortions if the mother's life was endangered or if the pregnancy would result in a terribly deformed child.

A chemical factory explosion near Milan caused the release of a cloud of the chemical TCDD, hospitalizing about 40 persons and causing the evacuation of 800 from the nearby town of Seveso. About two dozen women have asked Milan health authorities for therapeutic abortions.

The Vatican daily newspaper reprinted an anti-abortion article which claimed that there was no guarantee that the fetuses had been

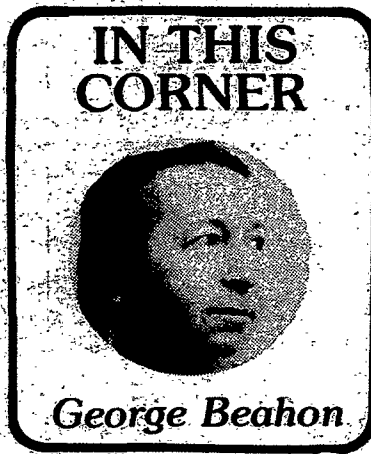
harmful, condemned the court ruling, and stated "here must be reaffirmed above all the sanctity and thus inviolability of every human life, and even those who might be handicapped remain human."

Dom Franzoni, former Benedictine abbot of the Roman basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, has been reduced to lay status. He has been suspended from the priesthood for two years.

Father Franzoni left the basilica two years ago to unite groups of social workers in the Roman slums, where he went to live. He openly declared himself a Communist party supporter before the June elections in defiance of the Vatican's support of the Christian Democrat party.

Archbishop Lefebvre, bishop of Tulle, France, has rejected many of the Vatican II modernizations, running a small seminary to train priests in the pre-conciliar traditions. In June, he was suspended from his episcopal functions, but went ahead with a dozen new ordinations, possibly creating a schismatic group of Catholic clergy.

He has announced his intention to say a Tridentine Mass despite the opposition of the local bishop. Pope Paul referred to Bishop Lefebvre speaking of "those of heretical opinion and of schismatic divisions who wound the very heart of Church unity."



Hopscotching The Sports Beat: If you took the Pittsburgh Steelers over the College All Stars, and gave 16 points or so, you won your friendly bet, right? Because the score was 24-20 when the rains and the kids covered the playing field before the third quarter had ended. (It was a merciful finish to a matchup that should be discontinued.) But you collected from your neighbor? Well, if you want to play according to Hoyle, you should give back your winnings. Las Vegas made a ruling, that had to be unpopular with the "winners" and equally popular with the "losers" in that game in Chicago. The wizards of odds ruled it "No Game" and refunded all monies. And went a couple of steps beyond that ruling. Henceforth football and basketball games will not be considered of-

ficial, for betting purposes, until certain playing times have elapsed, regardless of the reasons for abbreviations of competition. In college basketball 35 minutes; in the National Basketball Association 43 minutes; in the National Football League and college football 55 minutes. The "No Game" rule is in effect until only five minutes remain to be played.

Odds Without Ends: Olympic decathlon winner Bruce Jenner is a cinch to sweep America's "athlete of the year" honors next January. Let's hope he doesn't go the same route as Mark Spitz, the swimming hero of the '72 Olympics. Spitz fizzled in the movies, and his agents priced him out of the speakers' market. He wanted \$12,500 to accept his award in Buffalo, and demanded \$10,000 to appear at the Rochester dinner. (He didn't make either one). . . . At this writing the last major league manager to be axed was Dick Williams of California, the same man who won three straight championships in Oakland. Three days before he was bounced, this statement from Angels' owner Gene Autry: "I'm satisfied with manager Dick Williams, but I'm not satisfied with the way some of the players are playing." . . . And there's the tenth grade teacher who told his class to list the 11 most important men in history. One young man said he just couldn't decide on the fullback.