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ON THE RIGHT SIDE



Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

To: Archbishop Whealon Hartford, Conn.

Father Andrew Greeley seems to have a hangup on antagonisms toward bishops, although I notice in the Nov. 16 column he had kind words for Cardinal Manning, Cardinal Carberry and yourself at the Catechetical Synod in Rome. You must forgive me for being a bit annoyed at you for a reason other than a Greeley reason.

Over a year ago, a Father Cunningham, secretary to Bishop Head of Buffalo, sent me a copy of your little 130-page paperback, "Living the Catholic Faith Today." While I did send him a prompt note of thanks for the gift, it rested among the to-be-gotten-to-eventually books on a shelf in my study.

Six months ago I pulled the book out and read it in two leisurely sittings and was highly pleased with it. Why?

The lack of understanding of the Faith by our people has been a special concern of mine. Forty years ago Catholics did not know the Faith very well, but they reacted. "If the Church teaches this, then it is from God." And they accepted it with an Amen of complete conviction.

Today I think Catholics generally do not know the Faith any better than they did 40 years ago, but many in a kind of narcissistic nescience, react. "If the Church teaches what I do not like, I will contest it." Contestation seems to have become a religious way of life among many of our people, and among many Catholic publications.

When Father Hardon, SJ, came out with his learned "The Catholic Catechism" I recommended it to our people with the warning "It is not easy, it is quite academic, but it is a good reference." When Lawler-Wuerli-Lawler came out with "The Teaching of Christ" I recommended it even more strongly. "It covers the Hardon material, but is less difficult to understand, less technical, but nevertheless it is really for people who are willing to study and to dig, like religion teachers."

Then six months ago I found your "Living the Catholic Faith Today" and thought "This is THE book for the grass roots Catholic who wants to know his religion but who also does not aspire to be a theologian. Its easy style and non-technical language make it IDEAL. And it

covers material we can never cover in the pulpit."

The first chapter, Your Own Life, calls attention. The succeeding chapters, Attitudes, Roman Catholicism, Christ, Sunday, Mass Participation (What a wise sentence, "Going to Mass Sunday after Sunday simply from obligation — that is a pitiful state of affairs. It is better than not going at all, of course. But the solution is to adopt, etc." What a needed bit of counsel!), Confession, Prayer — are what people want to know about.

My dear Archbishop, with this enthusiasm for your book, why am I so respectfully annoyed with you? This is why. Some time ago I met several priests from Hartford diocese — very fine priests they are — and spoke of your book. It was the first they knew it even existed. I asked: "Good heavens. Didn't your diocesan paper push it? When our Bishop Casey published his "The Heart Remembers Too," the Paterson Beacon gave it great spread. Our own Courier-Journal gave it good coverage. What's the matter with your Bishop and your paper. Is there some over-modesty there?"

So you must accept my distress not as a personal matter, but as a concern to get a valuable book of instruction to deepen the Faith and devotion and loyalty of our Catholic people. I myself have bought 400 copies to be sure they are available. Several Catholic book stores are putting it in an enterprising Mrs. Smith of Bath, N.Y., order 10 copies "for our Adult Study Club."

May I respectfully request that you direct whatever satellites bishops have for holy promotions to get the machinery working for a wide distribution of that good paperback, "Living the Catholic Faith Today"? And please, give me your blessing.

LCWR MEETING

Sister Judith Heberle, RSM, Sister Jamesine Riley, SSI, and Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley attended the recent semi-annual meeting of Region II, Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The region comprises all of New York. The meeting was held in Christ the King Retreat House, Syracuse.

The Church 1977



Fr. Andrew Greeley

London — Everyone in this country is eager to point out that Britain's current racial conflict is nothing like the racial conflicts in America. British racism, they will tell you, is bad; of course, it's not as bad as America's.

The National Front, Britain's racist political party, receives 8 or 9 percent of the vote in some local elections — more than any quasifascist party would ever get in the United States. They tell you that England doesn't have race riots like the United States had in the 1960s. But they forget that those riots were almost entirely the work of young black people, sometimes protesting, other times merely looting, while England's disturbances involve whites, not blacks. No American political leader, not even George Wallace at his most racist, would dare to take the public stands that Mr. Enoch Powell, Conservative M. P. and Ulster loyalist, has taken — to say nothing of the leaders of the National Front.

Nor does the United States have a Trotskyite organization like the Socialist Workers' Party which seeks violent confrontation with the National Front as part of its explicit strategy of bringing down the British democratic order.

The day I write this column, the National Front is planning a mass march (perhaps 5,000 people) somewhere near Manchester, it won't say quite where. The Socialist Workers know where (though the police don't), and they will be there in equal numbers to counter-march.

It is not unfair, I think, to say that such confrontations involving perhaps 10,000 radicals and racists would be inconceivable in the United States.

Of course, England's racial problems are not nearly as bad as America's.

Who are the objects of this "civilized" racial hatred? Mostly Indian and Pakistani refugees (a substantial number of them tossed out of Uganda by Big Daddy Amin), for the most part, hard-working, respectable, middle-class folk who are no threat to anyone's neighborhood or job. They are, insofar as such things mean anything, part of the same race as are Englishmen.

What England clearly needs is Andrew Young to arrive upon the scene and make some of his usual modest and diplomatic comments — like maybe comparing some sections of London with Queens.

Comparisons are not fair. All societies have their problems, only the problems are different. One points out that Britain has acute racial problems presently not to embarrass the British but rather to embarrass those who dare to chortle about how superior morally England is to the United States. (Indeed, much of the chortling is done not by the British but by American Anglophiles.)

How is the British Labor Party responding to the crisis? Well, at its recent national conference (a tent show that makes the 1968 Democratic convention look moderate by comparison) the Labor Party voted to request the government to deny the National Front freedom of assembly.

Nobody suggested that the Socialist Workers also be denied the right to hold their parades and demonstrations.

That tells you a lot about the British left: freedom for left-wing extremists but not for right-wing extremists.

You might even forget that the Labor Party stays in power only with the support of Protestant M. P.'s from Ulster-like Ian Paisley. There are, times, you see, when right-wing bigots are not, after all, right-wing bigots.

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