



Photo by Susan McKinney

New Infirmary

Sister Emerita RSM, seated, is ready to enjoy her first meal in the new Sisters of Mercy infirmary, Lourdes Hall. Sister Joyce DiMora pours her a glass of water. The sisters moved into the newly remodeled floor of the McAuley Building at the Motherhouse on Dec. 22.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 2:1-12. (R1) Is. 60: 1-6. (R2) Eph. 3:12-3, 5-6

Sunday is the feast of the Epiphany. Wise men visited Christ. When they did not return to Herod, he slaughtered all babies two years old and under. Our land today is filled with modern Herods, assassins in white, killing under the protection of law holy innocents.

What makes this slaughter so horrendous is the fact that we can get used to it, and shrug it off. When Hamlet heard a gravedigger singing, he said to his friend Horatio, "Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?"

Horatio replied, "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness."

So the longer an iniquitous law remains on the books, the greater the probability of our becoming insensitive to the iniquity. Alexander Pope long ago warned about this deadening effect of habit.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,

As to be hated, needs but to be seen;

Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,

At first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Pope states the three steps in the conditioning process. First we endure an evil; that is, we put up with it, even though protesting it as we do abortion. Then we pity those who have abortions. For certain cases, it is easy to rationalize: "Well, what else could she do?" "Oh, it can't be that bad; everybody's doing it. Why, it's even a law!" Finally, we embrace it, just as we all have embraced divorce laws. Habit hath made it a matter of easiness. Familiarity can breed contempt even for life. Thus permissive abortion laws can create the abortion mentality.

The abortion mentality spawned Hitler's horrific purges. Before he liquidated five million Jews, Hitler had destroyed 300,000 pure blood Germans, because they were "useless eaters." Ten years of permissive abortions in Germany had created a mentality that life was worth only so much pain or inconvenience—was cheap and expendable!

Permissive abortion is regressive legislation. There are two Latin words for "law": jus (juris), from which come jurisdiction, jury; lex (legis), from which come legislation, legal. Jus means "a right," lex means "something binding." The two words indicate that men saw law as protecting rights or as binding violent passions lest one man hurt another, especially the weak or poor.

It is significant that the Church uses the word jus for her Canon Law (Canonius Jus). She sees law not so much as a restraint, but as a safeguard of fundamental rights. Our Founding Fathers took the same view: they labeled the first ten amendments to the Constitution "The Bill of Rights."

In either sense, law is meant to protect the weak. The permissive abortion law

distorts the very nature of law. It safeguards nothing, but panders to man's passions by removing the sanction imposed on promiscuity. It encourages lust, selfishness and greed. It safeguards vice, not virtue; iniquity, not innocence; killing, not life.

Ironically, the U.S. is the only country in the world where social activists can achieve their goals not through legislative bodies responsible to the people, but through the courts.

Prayer was booted out of schools, not by legislatures, but by judicial fiat.

Bible reading was forbidden, not by legislatures, but by judicial fiat.

Pornography was unloosed upon the land, not by legislatures but by judicial fiat.

School aid is denied private schools that champion the moral and spiritual values that made America great, not by legislatures, but by judicial fiat.

Abortion has become the law of the land, not by legislatures, but by judicial fiat.

In a word, the tail is wagging the dog. The Supreme Court has fully justified Thomas Jefferson's fears. It has no checks or balances. It is about time some were imposed. Why not start with mandatory retirement of judges at 70?

We are so concerned about ecology, energy, our national resources, and yet we blithely destroy our most precious resource—life! "Judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts and men have lost their reason." Have we too?

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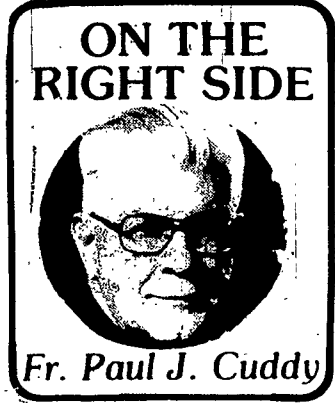
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Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

What is this debate with Father Atwell? Well, it came as a surprise when someone sent me a poster advertising "The Great Debate—between Father Atwell and Father Cuddy," St. Lawrence School Hall. Evidently there is a well-organized adult education committee, because in late September, Mr. William Naume phoned, saying that the committee was jelling an agenda, that Father Atwell had agreed to talk on "What do we really believe as Catholics?" on Nov. 29, and would I be willing to talk on the same subject on Tuesday, Dec. 8. The reply was, "I'd be glad to."

People smile when your name and Father Atwell's are mentioned together. Why?

With some reason. We became antagonists back in 1967 when he was the flaming-liberal editor of the Courier, and I, the simple pastor of Clyde-Savannah, I was outraged by his editorials and news selections. Far-out liberals were being given enthusiastic coverage. The Holy Father was practically suppressed. And so were most traditional Catholic spokesmen. Finally, the last straw came with a wretched article headlined "The Greeks Had a Name for It," lauding the Canadian philosopher Lesslie Dewart, with a snide comment on traditional Catholic philosophy. I exploded, and we entered into a hot controversy in the Courier. The clergy were amused. The laity were puzzled. But it did create some interest in current theological thinking.

Do you think it correct to use terms like "conservative" and "liberal"?

Of course. How else can we exchange and refine ideas and concepts without linguistic distinctions, which require generics and specifics? However, such terms require care in their existential use. Father Atwell is safely liberal. (I still shudder at a talk he gave our Auburn Legion of Mary Curia, in which he prophesied the Church of the future, including Mass with doughnuts and coffee instead of bread and wine.)

servative. But few people understand what either of us says or means.

Why do you say that?

There is a psychological mind-set on the part of many people, so that their minds are set about what they think we think, and do not heed what we really are saying. A fervent liberal interprets Fr. Atwell as the New John the Baptist announcing the New Church. An adamant conservative may suspect him of being a modern Herod, out to destroy the Christ-Church. Rigid conservatives frequently interpret my ideas as from a 20th century Leo the Great (452), withstanding Attila and his Huns out to destroy the Roman Catholic Church. Many liberals are convinced that my theological and biblical studies ceased with the Council of Nicea, 325 A.D.

This story may illustrate the mind-set idea: In 1967, I was at a Christmas party for 300 employees of St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell. I had been assigned chaplain only six weeks before, and knew very few people. So I sat at a table next to a girl employe and her boyfriend. The girl had that nice ease with the priest which is a grace in most Catholics. The young man was obviously not a Catholic and was uneasy at such intimate proximity to a priest. So to relax his tautness I began a bit of small talk. "Where are you from, friend?" "Rochester, sir." "Oh. Nice city. I went to school there years ago. What kind of work do you do?" "I'm a pipe fitter." "That's a good job. Do you belong to the union?" "Yes, sir." "Then you make good money when you have work. Are you full-fledged, or are you an apprentice?" "No, sir. I'm a Protestant."

He was a nice young man, but like so many people he had a mind-set on what he thought I would be saying.

How did the debate go?

God intervened. Fr. A. delivered his message Nov. 29, and I have heard it would not be "offensive to pious ears." Providence sent the snowstorm which cancelled my follow-up. Pastoral Assistant Sister Mary Jane Mitchell phoned, "I'm sorry that the storm has canceled your talk. Our next open date is Tuesday, Jan. 10. Does that fit your schedule?" "Yes, Sister. God has His reasons, so let's settle it for Tuesday, Jan. 10, 8 p.m., school hall of St. Lawrence. Fathers Murphy and Yasile have invited me for supper."

So, QTRS readers, friends and the loyal opposition are invited to the event. It should be a stimulating and

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