

On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Response To Father O'Malley

Years ago I read that certain individuals act like an allergy to certain other individuals. I begin to feel like a hyped-up ragweed whose pollen causes a stuffiness in Jesuit Father O'Malley's head. In the Oct. 27, 1977, Courier-Journal he denounced me as a slanderer, but withal, a good priest. Now in the July 5 Courier-Journal he comes down on my poor skull as a priest "who



Fr. Cuddy

encourages guilt in those who honestly want to share in the couple's new life together."

His offensive is not really against me, but against the Church. He ridicules the Church's instructions. To illustrate his tactics, compare the four points of the Church's instructions with his four counterpoints of ridicule.

Dominican Father Austin Flannery has edited a useful book, Vatican II Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. Its special value is in publishing documents issued after the Council. For example, related to the Decree on Ecumenism, 1964, the Holy See promulgated instructions in 1972, "On Admitting

Other Christians to Eucharistic Communion in the Catholic Church." (cf. p. 554) This instruction was so distorted that in 1973 a further instruction was published, entitled Notes Interpreting the Instruction on Admitting Other Christians to Eucharistic Communion. (p. 560) Our Father Scoffer gives a prime example of abuse and inaccurate interpretations.

With clarity the 1973 document gives four rules, viz: Admission to Catholic Eucharistic Communion is confined to those Christians: 1-Who have faith in the sacrament in conformity with that of the Church; 2-Who experience a serious spiritual need for the Eucharistic sustenance; 3-Who for a prolonged period are unable to have recourse to a minister of their own community; 4-Who ask

for the Sacrament of their own accord . . . (p. 561)

Now compare our aggrieved Father's objections to the Church's rules:

Of No. 1 he suggests, "How can anyone know what is in the heart of a man?" He is not that naive. Of No. 2 and 3 he turns to ridicule. "Can we not assume that since the person is in fact in this church at this time (i.e., time of the wedding) that it would be somewhat inconvenient to run out to his own church to receive? Assuming, of course, that they were in fact holding service at this precise time . . ." Compare this inanity with the Church's instructions, Nos. 2 and 3 above.

Furthermore, he cheerfully blesses an invitation given by a priest to

all present— whether Mennonites or Methodists, High Church Episcopalians or Low Lutherans, Lapsed Catholics or Unitarians—to step forward and take the sacrament, that sign of unity within the very Church which they, albeit in good conscience, reject.

The blockbuster is No. 4. "How do people who do fulfill these four requirements know that they are welcome to receive at this wedding unless the priest invites them?" The answer is clear. No priest is a self-anointed teacher to the Church. No priest may in honesty issue any such blanket invitation to Eucharistic Communion. In fact, most of the guests at the wedding Mass would be more disappointed at being excluded from the bar at the reception than from the Eucharistic Table of the Church.

It is ironic that when the attack on the Church's instruction appeared on Page 4 of the C-J, on the opposite Page 5 was a picture of the great non-compromiser, St. Thomas More. Now that I think of it, would it not be good of Father O'Malley to produce with his gifted McQuaid students Robert Bolt's play about Thomas More, A Man for All Seasons. He would show their parents and others what genuine Catholic character and conscience really are. Maybe he would even send me a complimentary ticket!

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Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Conversion Eliminates The Evil

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 13:44-52. (R1) Kgs. 3:5, 7-12. (R2) Rom. 8:28-30.

Who has not been scandalized by the fact that God lets us sin still? Who has never cried out to God for some explanation of the evil still rampant in the world? Our Lord handled this mystery in the parable of the wheat and weeds. He repeated it in the parable of the dragnet (R3). "The reign of God," He said, "is like a dragnet thrown into the lake which gathers even the wicked into His Church and does not separate them from the good until the shores of eternity are reached."

"But why," we may continue to ask, "why does God tolerate evil in the Church? Isn't one rotten apple supposed to spoil the whole barrel?"

In the Old Testament God again and again did destroy the wicked lest they corrupt the good. Noah was saved, not so much by the ark as by the flood waters which drowned the wicked.

When Israel entered the Promised Land, God issued the law of the herem: the injunction to spare no one— man, woman, child or animal. Why this draconian measure? Because the inhabitants (Amorites, Amalites, Canaanites, et al.) were beyond redemption and could therefore corrupt His people, unless excised like a cancerous cell. In actual fact, when Israel disobeyed God in this matter, she did fall away from Him, like an adulterous wife.

Thus the Psalmist sang: "The sceptre of the wicked shall not remain upon the territory of the just." Why?

Lest the just put forth to wickedness their hands" (Ps. 125:3).

Why hasn't God protected us in the New Testament in the same way? Why does he leave us in a world neck-deep in sin, to rub elbows with all sorts of selfish people and organizations?

Every Sunday we recite the hymn "Glory to God." In the new order of the Mass, a slight change was made in this hymn that at first puzzled me. We used to say, "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world." We used the plural, sins. In the revision, we use the singular, "Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world." Why? The word sins refers to individual, personal acts. The word sin refers to a condition in which man finds himself— a state of sin, a sin-saturated environment that surrounds us like the cold and affects our liberty. (Piet Schoonerberg, Man and Sin, p. 105).

Now, when we say, "Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world," we are saying that Christ has broken the grip of sin on us. One rotten apple can spoil a whole barrel; but with Christ, the converse is now true: one good apple can make a barrel of rotten ones good. He conquered the world of sin; and He expects us to do what he did: not to be infected by sinners, but to convert them. He has gathered the good and the bad into one net so that we can carry on His work, the work of conversion. What a vocation is ours!

Lyman Coleman has popularized the word serendipity. Serendipity means a chance discovery. Our Lord said that anybody who finds a treasure in a field "goes off happy." We too can "go off happy" as soon as we discover that no matter how sinful we are or how surrounded by sin, God can turn everything into good for those who truly love Him. We don't need to get rid of the wicked—we destroy them by converting them!

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