

The Church 1978

By Father Andrew Greeley

Chicago Declaration Right On

The so-called "Chicago Declaration," it is now clear, is one of the "happenings" in recent American Catholic history. Despite all the attempts to write it off as the creature of "old timers" of American Catholic action, it turns out that the old timers (Barta, Marciniak, Crowley, Cantwell) touched an extraordinarily responsive nerve in young and old alike. I've got to take my hat off to them. My own attempt to raise similar issues in the "Towards Vatican III" dialogue at Notre Dame was an abysmal failure, doomed by the arrogance of European theologians (an arrogance I should have anticipated, God forgive me). The "Vatican III" fiasco emphasizes all the more powerfully, I think, the success of the "Chicago Declaration."

I think the group should follow the example set two decades ago by Father William Mooney and the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and commission in-depth analyses of several of the main issues which the Declaration seems to raise. The now-famous volumes by Ellis, Weigel and O'Dean that the CCICA

commissioned had profound influence on the Catholicism of their time.

There are, I think, at least four major areas in the Declaration which ought to be examined in much greater detail by professionally competent writers, themes which were very much a part of the old "Chicago school" of the 1940s and 1950s.

1) The role of the priest: Some of the reaction to the Chicago Declaration—most notably in the atrocious (save for John Coleman's article) Commonweal symposium—took a minimalist view of the clerical function in the church. One writer even suggested that the only difference between a priest and a layman is that a priest says mass. This is surely not the position of the old Chicago school and is not the position of the signatories of the Declaration. But there are ambiguities and dilemmas in the old Catholic action view of the clerical ministry. The view ought to be clarified, deepened and enriched, taking into account not only the theological theories of the priesthood (many of which today are pretty shallow) but also the sociological realities of lay expectation for clerical behavior—at least as important sources for determining the Holy Spirit's intent as the writings of academic theologians.

2) The importance of competency: In the old Chicago school the emphasis on professional competency in what one

did was insisted on with vigor. These days, incompetency is almost a boast. "We didn't do a 'professional' survey" is a way of saying, "What we did is better than a 'professional' survey." Many of the signatories of the Chicago Declaration, I gather, are appalled by the influence incompetent enthusiasm currently has in the church. It might be very helpful to commission a serious tract aimed at exorcising the demon of shallow enthusiasm.

3) The church in politics: In objecting to the "clericalization" of political and social action, the authors of the Chicago Declaration, I take it, are particularly upset by the propensity to invoke church authority to support the "right" (that is to say, liberally approved) side in contingent political controversy. The church should and can take stands on matters of social principle but ought to avoid, save in rare circumstances, formal pronouncements on highly contingent political subjects about which church authorities can safely be assumed to know little more than the average citizen.

4) Finally, I think implicit in the Chicago Declaration is the notion that Catholic social thinking ought to pay far greater attention than it has in the last decade to the American experience instead of searching for models in France, Germany, Holland or Latin America. I should like to see this theme made much more explicit and detailed.

Action Awaited On Busing

Whether Rochester students attending private and parochial schools outside the city limits will be paying transportation costs this September depends on the fate of Sen. Fred Eckert's, (R-Greece), bill 10431. The legislation which will be acted upon when the New York State Legislature convenes Aug. 8, proposes that the City School District be reimbursed 90 per cent of the transportation costs (for 1978-79) at the beginning of the school year rather than at the end.

Though Timothy Leahy, superintendent of Rochester Diocesan Schools, would be grateful for the bill's passage, he does wonder at the legislation's short span. With the bill just covering the 1978-79 school year, the busing problem will still be around at budget time next year.

Thomas Thrasher, administrative assistant to the senator, indicated optimism that the bill would be passed. As to its short term aid, he noted, "It is dealing with the present

crisis."

A long-term solution would be the Eckert-Assemblyman Gary Proud (D) bill which proposes mandating cities to transport students to private and parochial schools. This legislation, however, never moved out of committee and is lost at least until next year when according to Eckert

sources it will be resubmitted.

The busing crisis came to a head when the Rochester Board of Education cut 6 million from its budget in July. Funds for the Early Childhood Guided Observation programs, salary increases, jobs and transportation were eliminated.



Fr. Greeley

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All in the Family

By Sarah Child

What Makes Friendship Endure

The phone rang and when I answered it the voice on the other end said "This is Marilyn and the seven years since our last conversation dropped away as if they had been mere minutes.



Sarah Child

We spoke in half sentences, interrupting each other to catch up quickly — on our husbands, our children, our "careers" and a mutual friend whose bestseller has been in the headlines for a couple of years now.

When we hung up I thought about how we had got to the nitty gritty in about 30 seconds, leaving the amenities for other people, other phone calls.

And that, I suppose, is what friendship is — starting right where you left off, without having to go back and reestablish any groundwork.

We had shared an apartment for two years shortly after college.

And despite major differences in such areas as

religion, politics, and even social circles, we became fast friends.

I wondered about that many times and came to the conclusion that the friendship flourished because we did differ in so many respects and most of the time were able to see and respect the other's viewpoint.

In addition, she was fun, had a heightened sense for seeing the ridiculous and was always full of some new fascinating subject she had been reading up on.

Mostly, though, it was because she was so trustworthy with my confidences. I knew I could tell her anything and it would go no further. I knew because never once did she relate one gossipy item, one juicy tidbit, concerning other acquaintances or friends, no matter how long we talked into the night. In that sense, she existed in a vacuum.

I never told her what a rare quality she possessed and there is very small chance she will see what I've written now. But the friendship we've shared over the years has always been important to me, surviving as it has without benefit of frequent communication. I hope and trust she feels the same.

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