

On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Dublin Street Encounter

How much can be accomplished in two days and three evenings in Dublin. Our Courier-Tour group arrived at the elegant Shelbourne Hotel on St. Stephen's Green about 5 p.m. Rooms were given. Hot baths/showers taken. Dinner eaten. And everyone but myself went off together at 8 to Jury's Cabaret. This is a "must for visitors." It combines traditional Irish dancing, singing, harp and other instrumental music; and 40 minutes of the funniest humor possible from Hal Roach, who looks like Woody Allen. All this is performed with a modesty which startles us as we compare this clean program with our murky daily TV fare back home. Not going was not a matter of virtue with me, but I had seen the show four times before. So waving the busload off I caught up with some correspondence.

About 9 p.m. the bus took me to O'Connell Street, Dublin's main street, which has the historic Post Office where the noble but abortive uprising of 1916 took place. I headed for the Post Office, and a block away on a corner was a group of some dozen men and women in their early twenties, one blaring away raucously over a loud speaker system. I stopped. "What's this all about?" A young woman, no beauty, replied, "We are Born Again Christians," and she rattled off Bible texts to persuade me to give up my

false ways and accept Christ and be saved. The presumption was that these religious notions—Jesus, The Blood of the Lamb, salvation—were unknown to my benighted soul.

Listening to her taught me the technique: talk loud, keep repeating memorized Bible verses, overpower the listener by loud repetitions, and do not let him speak. On the edge was an intelligent looking young man, about 22 or 23, a member of the group. I stopped. "What's with you?" With a soft brogue he replied, "I follow Jesus." "Well, that's all to the good. I work at that myself. Weren't you a Catholic?" "Yes, up to four years ago. Then I read a book, and found Jesus." "I certainly don't know why you hadn't discovered Jesus as a Catholic. He founded your Church!"

He said, "I have a brother who is a Jesuit, and I used to have dinner with the Jesuits. But they never talked about Jesus." "Of course not. If they were red-blooded Irishmen they talked at meals about soccer and football. It keeps men's minds healthy." Then I seized his thumb, and using the group's technique, raised my voice:

"You should be ashamed of yourself! You know perfectly well that Jesus said to Peter, 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.' This is the promise to Peter of the headship of the Church which is acknowledged even by the rationalist Bultman; and you cannot dodge the fact honestly by distorting syntax. And you know that Jesus gave the commission to His Church, 'Make disciples of all

nations. Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you.' If you want to be a genuine follower of Jesus, you will do what he commands—and return to the Church."

He tried to wriggle his thumb free, but I held him firm. He said, "Thousands of Catholics in Ireland go to Mass every Sunday, but do not lead good lives." "Don't think you have a monopoly on them. We have them in the states. But what does that have to do with the commands of Jesus? Over a hundred years ago the English Cardinal John Henry Newman said that if a doctor prescribed a remedy for curing a patient, and the patient tossed it down the drain, you do not blame the doctor. Do you blame the Church for bad Catholics who are bad because they do not follow what the Church teaches? Where do you think people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Father Damien the Leper and Dr. Tom Dooley and all the saints of the centuries came from, except from living what the Church teaches them to do." Finally, I let his thumb go, and left, saying with a smile, "I pray you will return home where you belong."

Our cabaret people came back in high humor, but I have smiled many times visualizing my friend, entrapped by thumb, enduring the technique which his fellows inflicted on others.

The Dublin program was quite open. Women shopped and shopped. Many went to coffee shops, restaurants, places of entertainment. I have not heard of any who looked up the churches and pieties near by, but suppose the daily Mass which we had in the hotel meeting room quite sufficed.

an erratic course around the altar to make sure that he gave communion to all the priest participants before the Lord's body was shared with any of the laity. But you give in on small things for larger goals.

Then, with no consultation a committee was established to direct the future of the group. There are no social scientists on the committee, only one lay person and no women. One member had never even attended a meeting.

Obviously it is the end of the dialogue, at least under NCCB's sponsorship. Most of the scholars will withdraw. Why was such a promising enterprise so devastatingly and gratuitously destroyed? Perhaps there was too much friendliness between the hierarchs and the younger scholars for the comfort of the NCCB staff members. Perhaps the NCCB staff thinks that ours is an age when you can treat scholars (and everyone else) like children, and that because you have the ecclesiastical power you can do what you want without consulting. Maybe they think it's the time of "No Nono."

The Church 1978

By Father Andrew Greeley

'Vatican III'—Is There A Future?

Among the bright spots of the disastrous "Vatican III" symposium at Notre Dame last year was the easy and profitable dialogue between American theologians and American social scientists. One of the staff members of the NCCB lamented to me that this dialogue would not continue. I responded by proposing that it might well continue under the auspices of his committee.

Rather to my surprise, he got the proper authorization and two colloquia occurred last year, involving social scientists, bishops and theologians. They were to be informal and off-the-record, and I write about them now because they have clearly come to an end. The first meeting was

a modest success and the second was one of the more graced 24 hours that most of us have ever experienced. Sympathy and understanding between the bishops and the scholars were almost instantaneous. In particular, the younger scholars and the bishops ended the meeting with feelings of warm respect and affection for one another. The subject matter—"human intimacy"—was obviously of critical importance for the church, and everyone left the meeting confident that a graced beginning had been made on which substantial future developments could be based.

There were some minor reservations. Participants appeared at the meeting, most of them of dubious caliber, about whom there had been no consultation with the two conveners. Staff work in preparation left something to be desired. There was one particularly sour incident at the mass when the NCCB liturgical group

Parrish To Speak At CDC Dinner

The Citizens for a Decent Community annual fund-raising dinner will take place at 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 6 at the Mapledale Party House.

Larry E. Parrish, the attorney who successfully prosecuted the movie, "Deep Throat," will be the main speaker.

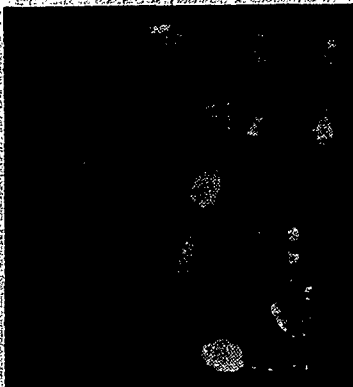
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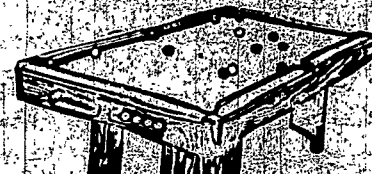


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