



Anniversary

The School Sisters of Notre Dame celebrated the 125th anniversary of their community at a Mass Sunday at St. Peter and Paul in Rochester. At left, Sister Clare Fitzgerald, Wilton Province director, chats with other Sisters; above, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan who celebrated the Mass spots a friend in the congregation; and, right, Sister Ann Habershaw and Sister Roberta Tierney, diocesan director of education, during the Mass.



Forum

Discussion of Money-theism

To Work or... What?

By William F. Willoughby
Religion Today

Washington — Probably the biggest mistake English-speaking people ever made in spelling was when they stopped spelling "human" with an "e" at the end. Down through the 17th Century the word was spelled "humane" and the whole concept — whether practiced or not — of humaneness and humanity was wrapped up in the single word.

Then came the smart guys, those who ushered in the Age of Enlightenment, and developed the philosophy of humanism — the adoration of homo sapiens. It has been the dominant philosophy in the Western World since.

Humanism's essential genius is that it can tell a big, slobbering Humanity, fresh off an orgiastic drunk and obviously about to suffer from an even bigger hangover than he had the night before, to stand up there in front of the mirror, look himself squarely in the fact and repeat with conviction, "Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better."

It would have been better for Humanity had he decided to stay in bed and sleep it off.

In one way or another, Protestantism got attracted to some of the elements of this philosophy and has carried on an illicit affair ever since. One of the offsprings of the affair is what we call the "Protestant Ethic."

The Protestant Ethic has given many people an unsavory attitude toward work. Many have developed the notion that work is to be done so they can build their own little gingerbread world with a bit more spice than the next guy.

In the context of the Industrial Revolution, the so-called Protestant Ethic was a handy tool for the aggrandizement of industrialists. The working man cottoned to the notion in the ethic that the good, the respectable, the worthy man is the man who is a good provider — the man who "has God on his side."

The industrialist was deeply touched by such devotion as it produced in his hirelings. He cried all the way to the bank.

William James used a lot more, virile language in describing the phenomenon. He called it the "bitch-goddess, Success."

During the last decade, it was the gingerbread world which allegedly turned much of the counterculture off. The self-styled young revolutionaries looked with disdain on work — something many of them had very little acquaintance with.

Maybe that bunch was right. Before they got work down to a frazzle, they were asking the question every man or woman who is head of a household asks every week there's not enough money to meet the legitimate needs of life. "A person works hard for what? Only to die, the same as the person who worked not at all."

It was during that time that my friend, Dr. Carl F.H. Henry, the leading theologian of the evangelical wing of Christendom, called together at his Institute for Advanced Studies in Des Plaines, Ill., scholars from 40 colleges and universities to discuss the counterculture phenomenon. They discussed the essential elements of the revolt and put them through the prisms of Christian thought.

The paper which captured my fancy most, as I now recall it, was Dr. John Scanzoni's of Indiana University. It explored the problem everyone — not just revolting revolutionaries — has with work.

The paper has one flaw. A basic one. What I mean is that I tried in vain to find a way out of work. Scanzoni apparently hadn't found the answer either.

Work in its pristine form, Scanzoni said, as God intended it, "is the exercise of God-given talents to create ideas and objects. Work is a blend of obedience to God and yet full freedom to be as creative, as expansive and as individualistic as possible."

After man's fall in sin from the pristine state, work, too, took on a mean barb. "Work became a necessity to stave off death — at least temporarily," Scanzoni said.

Christianity was introduced into a world which had as much as half its numbers bound in slavery. Nonetheless, under such abject conditions, the admonition was even for the slave to serve "as unto the Lord."

That kind of attitude eventually had to induce a bit of humaneness back into the human situation. It had principles with it that inevitably would lead to a breakup of slavery in all its forms.

Christianity's message to those who would escape the gingerbread-world of the workday world and to Christians alike is that work, rightly understood, can bring out the best in people who seek reality in life. And the best doesn't necessarily have to be in driving a more expensive Mercedes than the guy next door.

A second mistake in spelling has crept into the English-speaking world, where many place emphasis on monotheism — the notion that God is one, or at least a unity.

Too many have been spelling it money-theism.

'Speak English Only' Rule on Way Out

Washington (RNS) — The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has proposed guidelines that would ban "speak English only" rules in jobs except in limited instances justified by business needs.

The federal agency said that blanket bans against the use of non-English languages in workplaces violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

About 13 percent of the U.S. population could be affected by the guidelines.

According to 1976 census figures, 28 million people in the U.S. speak languages other than English as their primary language. The 1980 census is expected to find a larger number of such people.

The proposed guidelines were announced in conjunction with the observance of Hispanic American Week.

The guidelines also state that employers have an "affirmative duty" to protect their workers from ethnic slurs.

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