

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

### Letter From A Convert

A few years before Vatican II, I was an Air Force chaplain near Casablanca, Morocco. One of the finest persons I ever instructed for the Faith was a young sergeant — 22 years old, curly tow-head, fair complexion, Teutonic, and thoroughly good. He came to the chapel. "I want to take instructions to be a Catholic." "Why?" "Because as I look around, the Catholic Church is the one that's been around from the beginning." I instructed him thoroughly, and later had him instruct other GIs, including a huge Master Sergeant who was baptized at our Easter Vigil. After his return to civilian life, he wrote me of his coming marriage:

"Donna and I went to her instructions tonight and it isn't too difficult to see I will be marrying a Catholic bride. She is much less emotional about conversion than I was, and as far as the opposite sex is concerned, this seems to be the rule. My brother and I both seem to have shared the same emotional experiences while my sister-in-law (all three of us are converts) had little if any emotional experiences.

"Anyway, she has asked enough questions to make it quite necessary for me to brush up on my catechism. Father Horan has been helping in this field by handing out his college theology texts for me to read in my spare time. We have been attending CANA classes at the Newman Club and with but one notable exception the speakers have been interesting. The exception was a priest who gave a very dry lecture.

"One of the most difficult questions to answer (for me, at least) without stepping on

someone's toes was, 'Why don't you both choose a third religion?' I don't really know how one could do this and remain a Christian, though the 'third religion' would undoubtedly be just another of the so many denominations. Well, I suppose I did step on a toe or two but I tried to do so as lightly as possible in that bumbling way of mine, and I believe I got my point across. People's attitudes towards Catholics amaze me sometimes, although I suppose that if I were to think back to my former days, some of my attitudes would amaze me, too. My brother, Don, a very devout Catholic now, laughingly told me about the fright he felt the first time he saw my rosary lying on my dresser. He said that he was afraid to touch it — more a superstitious fear than a holy one. Many of my 40 days leave were spent in his and his wife's living room — and he still has the bulk of the pamphlets I brought back with me from overseas. Donna has also become attached to some of them. My stock is dwindling. I would say that her instructions are quite fruitful. Whenever there's a chance we say our rosary together after the instruction."

Since Vatican II many Catholics have belied both the letter and the spirit of the famous decree on Ecumenism. Rather than

proclaiming a vacuous indifferentism, Ecumenism specifies fidelity to the teachings of Christ handed down from the beginning. It was this persistent insistence on fidelity to God's firm revelation which brought the great Cardinal John Henry Newman into the Church in 1845. That same Newman is a perfect example of Christ's charity working in a great intellect and a great heart, in the spirit of authentic ecumenism, which reads: "Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false conciliatory approach which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its assured genuine meaning."

### St. Ambrose Seeks Area Craftsmen

Organizers of the first annual arts and crafts festival sponsored by the St. Ambrose Parish group, Mornings for Mothers and Others, are seeking craftsmen to display goods at the event slated for Friday, Nov. 27, in Dailey Hall, 31 Empire Blvd.

Interested persons have been asked to call Mrs. Polly Pace, 288-8395; Mrs. JoAnn Mentus, 288-2692; or Mrs. Nancy Chesterton, 482-1195.

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Some people believe that the viewing of the dead human body as a part of the funeral is only morbid entertainment for curiosity seekers. Most people who feel this way are unaware of the healing value involved in the viewing — or perhaps they are unusually uncomfortable in this situation.

However, for the bereaved — who are often attempting to deny the death of their loved one — confronting the fact of death by viewing the body is most important. Denial is a natural reaction to the death of someone close to us — but if this denial is continued, it can be mentally damaging. The viewing of the body is an important step toward accepting the fact of death.

There are no simple ways to work through the days and weeks after the death of a loved one. But there are steps that can be taken to help release grief and emotion — and, through our years of experience, we are familiar with many of them. If we can answer questions for you, at any time, please call any member of our staff.

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