

Vatican Nixes Authority

(Undated) -- The Vatican has suspended the School Sisters of St. Francis' authority over its European province and has appointed Auxiliary Bishop Wolfgang Kirchgassner of Freiburg, West Germany, to oversee the province. According to the president of the Milwaukee-based order, Sister Frances Cunningham, the action of the Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes had come "in answer to questions pertaining to provincial leadership in the European province." She said she expected the action to be temporary. One source in Rome said the problem allegedly stemmed from the superior of the European province using the sisters' vow of obedience to command them "to do insignificant acts."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Moral Law Set by God

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 18/15-20. (R1) Ez. 33/7-9. (R2) Rom. 13/8-10.

God said to Ezekiel, "I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel... you shall warn them for me... if you do not speak out... I will hold you responsible."

Last June the prophetic Archbishop of New York, John J. O'Connor, at a TV conference remarked, "I don't see how a Catholic in good conscience can vote for a candidate who explicitly supports abortion."

That remark has unleashed a storm. "Pulpit Politics," *Time* magazine branded it. "Politics and Religion," the *Finger Lakes Times* called it. "I cannot impose my morality on others," Catholic politicians are saying. I think a little straight thinking is in order on the subject.

First of all, morality is religion. Religion is a matter of creed, cult and code. Morality is a code of behavior: **What I believe and how I worship is my business. What I do is everybody else's business,** because no man is an island and because every immoral act has a ripple effect that affects all society (Cp. Jos. 7). And so we have laws. Law is the imposition of a code of morality on society.

But trouble starts when secularists think law is a law unto itself, that human law is the ultimate determinant of morality. The Supreme Court may be the last court of appeals, but it is by no means the determinant of right or wrong. It may declare abortion legal, but that does not make it right.

Morality is determined ultimately by the Master of the universe, not by nine men. Nine men didn't make the world -- God did!

God has a mind, and so a plan for the universe. God has a will, and so a purpose for the universe. God's eternal plan and purpose constitute His Eternal Law. When human actions correspond to this purposeful plan, they are moral or good; when they do not, they are immoral or evil. Secularists deny God and so a purposeful plan for the world; in consequence, human law becomes -- and wrongly so -- the norm of morality.

Our founding fathers did not think like this. William H. Seward, secretary of state for Abraham Lincoln, echoed the American tradition when he said in speaking of slavery, "There is a Law higher than the Constitution. All just laws must

be re-enactments of the Law of God." Up to 1948 most American jurists subscribed to this belief. Else why the Nuremberg trials. Nazis murdered six million Jews according to the Law. They were condemned for this and for abortions. Christ was put to death according to the law. As no man is above the Law, so no human law is above the higher Law: God's!

Every law is to be judged in the light of God's Law. Long ago the Psalmist condemned iniquitous judges: "Can judges who do evil be your friends? They do injustice under cover of law; they attack the life of the just and condemn innocent blood" (Ps. 94/20-21).

Thirdly, does Archbishop O'Connor's speaking out against abortion constitute the intrusion of religion into politics? Morality is not religion. To enunciate or defend civil rights is not to advocate a republican form of government. Likewise to enunciate moral principles is not to impose a religion. Archbishop asked no one to espouse the Catholic credo or cult. Rather he enunciated a moral principle: abortion is evil. If some brand this religion or a Catholic teaching, then they are at fault. If everyone said two and two make five and a Catholic prelate said no, two and two make four; two and two would not be four because the Church says so. The Church says so because two and two are four.

So abortion is wrong not because the Catholic Church says so, but she says so because abortion is wrong, wrong for everybody: Catholic, Protestant, Jew and atheist. As mathematical truth binds everyone, regardless of creed, so the natural law binds all peoples regardless of creed.

Fourthly, the liberal U.S. Supreme Court denied federal aid to Catholic schools on the grounds that "the ideology of the teacher cannot be separated from the teaching." Yet now, in regard to abortion, liberals are insisting that there can be a dichotomy between personal morality and public policy. Such a dichotomy is not only logically untenable, but also as impossible as it was for Shylock to get his pound of flesh without drawing a single drop of blood.

"If your brother should commit some wrong... go and point out his fault." And then pray that he harden not his heart. "If you do not speak out, I will hold you responsible."

DSW Slates Harvest Picnic

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate Mass 7 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 8 at St. Christopher's Church in North Chili for diocesans who are divorced, separated, widowed or remarried and their families.

A family picnic beginning at 3 p.m. and a reception and bonfire starting at 8 p.m. at the nearby home of Angela Gallo, ministry director, will complete the day.

Participants are asked to bring a dish to pass, one's own supper needs, and a dessert to share. Further information is available by calling the Family Life Office, 436-5450 (days); 248-8034 (evenings).

Ms. Gallo lives at 104 McLain Dr., Spencerport; 594-9255.

Deadline

The editorial deadline for the Courier-Journal is Thursday noon, preceding Wednesday publication.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

A Case of Mistaken Bureaucracy

From Louise, in response to a recent *On the Right Side* article on why people do not go to Mass. Her concern is bureaucracy.

"Today you hit the nail on the head -- bureaucracy. I'm in the midst of reading Yallop's book. I just spent a week with a college classmate and three nuns from college. Yes, I need spiritual nourishment... I wish you could come to our parish and walk up and down the middle aisle and preach a homily to see how many people are paying attention.

"At least half of my Catholic friends have left the Church. I probably won't. There's enough to keep me going, but not enough to keep me spiritually mature... All you did tell your correspondent who was concerned about the Roman Curia and its bureaucracy was about other stuff to read. Well, at least you did acknowledge bureaucracy as a cancer, but how is one to deal with it? Please give me some common sense suggestions and not 'Just obey the Pope.'"

To Louise: Remember the catechism? Q. "What are the effects of original sin?" A. "The effects of original sin are a darkening of the intellect, a weakening of the will, and an inclination of man toward evil."

Obviously in a complicated society we must have bureaus or departments, e.g. the city must have bureaus. Otherwise the garbage would not be collected, the schools open, the roads repaired. The Church must have bureaus. In fact the Courier has given great details about our many departments: education, finance, matrimonial,

Channel 21 Re-Showing Merton Film Biography

Channel 21, WXXI, is re-broadcasting "Merton: A Film Biography of Thomas Merton," the first documentary ever produced on the 20th Century spiritual figure, at 9 p.m., Friday, Sept. 7.

The channel previously ran the film twice in June during daytime hours, making it impossible for many to view it, thus it is being re-run at prime time.

In his lifetime, Merton was hailed as a prophet and condemned as a blasphemer. During his 27 years as a Trappist monk, he became an eloquent spiritual writer and mystic, as well as an outspoken social critic.

In the course of his 53 years, Merton wrote some 60 books and hundreds of articles and essays on a wide range of subjects. He reportedly corresponded with more than 1,800 persons,

writing more than 21,000 letters.

His critiques of national and international issues -- from the civil rights struggle to the Vietnam war -- were so scathing that he was censored by his religious superiors and for a time was not allowed to publish.

The Merton film crew traveled more than 50,000 miles to interview people who knew Merton, including the Dalai Lama, Joan Baez, Archbishops Jean Jadot and Rembert Weakland and Piffard Abbot John Eudes Bamberger.

The interviews are blended with scenes of the significant places in Merton's life -- his birthplace in Prades, France, Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky, Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka and Bangkok, where he died from accidental electrocution in 1968 while attending a conference for monks.

The film is narrated by Alexander Scourby with Gregory Abels as the voice of Merton.

Director, writer and co-producer Paul Wilkes was the associate producer, writer and host for the PBS series, "Six American Families," which won the DuPont-Columbia Award.

A national production of WNET-New York, the program was made possible by grants from the Catholic



THOMAS MERTON

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ATTENTION SENIOR CITIZENS

The Rochester Housing Authority currently has vacancies in some of its senior citizen developments. All complexes are conveniently located to shopping, public transportation and other services. All provide a safe and secure environment. In most cases, the utilities, stove and refrigerator are included in the rent. Tenants pay only 30% of their adjusted monthly income for rent. For more information or to request an application, contact our Tenant Certification Office at 328-7890.



COMING OCTOBER 28



Founders Present Cosby

The Founders Club of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester will sponsor comedian Bill Cosby in two performances on Sunday, Oct. 28 at the Eastman Theatre. Sister Nancy Whitley, above met with Cosby on May 19 at the Samuel L. Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira. Co-chairpersons for the October show are Sister Nancy and Dr. Gerard Guerinot, president of the Founders Club, a fund-raising group for the continuing education of Mercy Sisters.

CALL 288-4817 FOR INFORMATION