

On the Right Side

with Father Paul J. Cuddy



Father Murphy's Puzzle

To: Father Kevin P. Murphy
St. John's Church, Humbolt St.,
Rochester

Thanks for your gracious welcome back to the Courier-Journal (Opinion: "Welcome and a Puzzle for Father Cuddy," May 22). Your quotation from sociologist Robert Bellah about American society makes me suspect that you are secretly reading William F. Buckley's National Review, collecting esoteric verbiage. The Bellah quote includes: 1) "A hankering for the past which finds the present time lacking" and 2) "A widespread privatism" fixation. I suppose "privatism" means the wish not to be swallowed up into a communal melange, but to develop in one's own individuality while sharing with others a common society.

You suggest that my young man who paid for my lunch had abandoned the Catholic Church to join one of multitudinous sects because he was impelled to do so for two reasons: 1) a hankering for the past, and 2) holding too great a value on privatism. Who knows? However, I do have some thoughts on both counts.

Does a hankering for the past mean that appreciating treasures that we have inherited concludes in a lack of appreciation of what is good in the present? Why, Dr. Craugh at St. Bernard's would have flunked you for such a peculiar syllogism. That's the kind of bead woolly liberals draw on my poor conservative head.

The hostility toward the past has brought intellectual, cultural and moral chaos. For example, Aristotle and Aquinas give us the principle of contradiction: "A thing cannot be true and not true under the same aspect and at the same time." Thus Christ cannot be God and not God; Mary a virgin and a non-virgin; the Blessed Sacrament the true Body of Christ and yet only a symbol. Now we have the pluralists who would pervert the Mystical Body of Christ into a Mystical Body of Contradictions. In a gentle letter to me a few years ago, Father Charles Curran admonished me: "In certainty, unity. In doubtful things, liberty. In all things, charity." There is no charity in weaseling about certainties, and some of our certainties are undermined by

Catholic pluralists. We do not debate the certainty that two and two make four. We do not debate the certainty that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, or any revealed doctrine of the Church.

Culturally, I shudder to see on the television thousands of men and women hysterically applauding the screechings, grimaces, girations and erotic twistings of punk rock performers, with air acrid from dope. I mourn for the great religious music of the past, suppressed by the "Now" people, as our congregations are afflicted with musical trivia in our missalettes. Imagine supplanting Dobuci's "Soul of My Saviour" or the majestic Solesmes "Salve, Regina" with "Kumbaya," or "Joy, Joy, Joy!"

Hankering for our inheritance of beauty and devotion is quite a good hankering.

Let me applaud your words: "The challenge for you and for me is to stir up the lives of our people so much they are on fire with faith and love of our God. Thus they will draw others to come and see where the Lord lives." Lovely rhetoric. But do you not have any backsliders at St. John's? Have you no Catholics who have abandoned the faith, despite your own generous efforts? Have you no church goers who are little fired either with faith or love? Thanks to Adam's fall, we all suffer the effects of original sin: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony and sloth. Certain charismatic saints have moved weak men and women to great sanctity: St. Paul, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius, Vincent DePaul. And in our own day: Dr. Tom Dooley, Father Bruce Ritter, Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity, Bishop Raphael Ndigni and his native sisterhoods in Kenya. Wherein do we fail? I am convinced part of our leakage from the Church comes from ignorance of her teaching.

Most of our people hanker for faithful priests, brothers, sisters and laity who love the Lord and Our Lady, are devoted to His Church and His Vicar, who live lives of faith and charity. They hanker not just for the good things of yesterday, but also for today and tomorrow, where goodness has a sameness in Jesus Christ who is "yesterday, today, the same forever."

A Word for Sunday

with Father Albert Shamon



Sunday's readings: (R3) Mark 14:12-16, 22-26; (R1) Exodus 24:3-8; (R2) Hebrews 9:11-15.

Next Sunday is the solemnity of Corpus Christi. This feast owes its origin to one woman, St. Juliana of Mt. Cornillon. When she was 16, she was haunted day and night by the appearance of a bright moon streaked with a dark band. She feared for a time this might be from the devil to distract her at prayers. But one night our Lord in a vision explained to her that the moon was the Church Year with its round of feasts and that the black band denoted the absence of one holy day to complete the cycle — a feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1225, Juliana launched a campaign to secure the institution of such a feast. Her efforts won for her only incredible sufferings and hardships. She died in 1258 in poverty and sickness. She had paid the price for obtaining her mission in life and, like Christ, she achieved after death what she could not in life. In 1264, Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of Corpus Christi and commissioned two great doctors of the Church to compose the liturgy of the feast: St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure.

Each man worked independently and each composed a liturgy. Both men came together to present their work to the Pope. St. Thomas read his classic composition first. It was so beautiful that St. Bonaventure was moved to tears and tore up what he had written without even submitting it.

It was God Himself who intervened to have the feast of Corpus Christi instituted. Why? To teach that as the Church Year was incomplete without a feast to honor the Blessed Sacrament, so our lives are incomplete unless a deep and constant devotion to the Blessed Sacrament forms an integral part of them. In the material order, one dime equals

10 pennies. But this is not so in the spiritual order. One soul of great faith is worth more than 10 of average faith. If a flat iron has to be heated to 10 degrees to press trousers, then one flat iron heated to 10 degrees is better for getting the job done than 10 irons of one degree each. Thus, one person of 10-degree faith can do more than 10 persons of one-degree faith. St. Francis de Sales, for instance, all alone, converted more than 80,000 Calvinists, so great was his faith. Mother Cabrini complained because the world was too small a world to give an outlet for her zeal for the faith. Of the Cure of Ars, St. John Vianney, the devil said that three such souls would have destroyed his kingdom in France. Whence their zeal? Whence their flaming love? It was the Eucharist. The Cure of Ars said that he needed only three things: the altar, the confessional, the pulpit. Of these three, the really important thing was the altar.

The secret of the saints, the source of their drive was Corpus Christi — the Body of Christ. That Body, too, must become the center of our lives. As in the physical universe, God gave us two lights — one for the day and one for the night — the sun and the moon; so in our spiritual lives, God gave us two lights: devotion to Our Lady who is fair as the moon, and devotion to Corpus Christi, the Sun of Justice.

Two stanzas from one of the hymns St. Thomas wrote for the feast might serve as our prayer for this feast:

O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee
Who truly art within the forms before me
To Thee my heart I bow on bended knee
As failing quite in contemplating Thee.

Jesu, whom for the present veiled I see
What I so thirst for, Oh vouchsafe to me
That I may see Thy countenance
unfolding

And ever be blessed Thy glory in
beholding.

LET YOUR LOVE FOR THE SACRED HEART REACH OUT TO THE POOR OF THE MISSIONS!



The very saddest part of Maria's growing old was, suddenly, to find herself alone in the world. She would wake up in the middle of the night burdened with questions: "What will become of me? Will I be able to take care of myself? Suppose I get sick!"

Maria Kim's worries are over now. She lives securely bathed in love as she and Sister Lawrence share a daily smile and prayer at the Sacred Heart Home for the Elderly Poor in Cheong-Ju, Korea.

In this month of the Sacred Heart, would you share your love and compassion so that other Marias of the Missions can know the healing, saving love of Jesus every day of their lives?

I WANT THE POOREST OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO KNOW THE LOVE OF JESUS AS I DO. I enclose my gift of:

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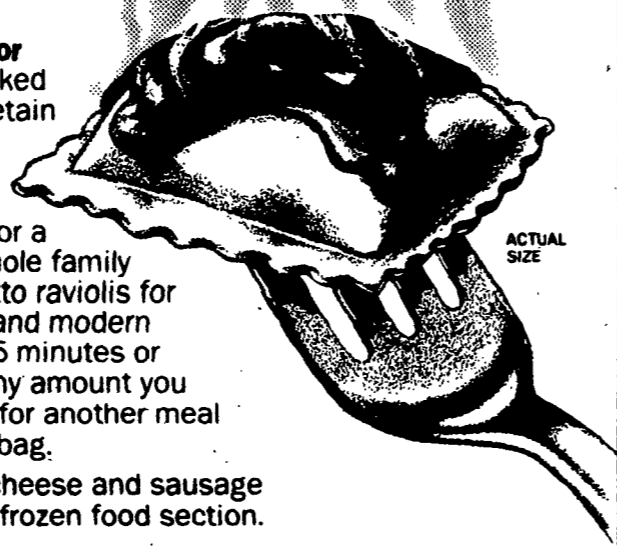
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