

Difficult shepherd

From an East Coast friend:

"You may be mad at me after reading this letter, but I must unload on someone, and you have broad shoulders. If this sounds uncharitable, and I suppose it is, I think the man who has brought desolation to my spiritual life is more uncharitable.

"I do not like my pastor. He is a capable administrator, and the parish finances and property are in fine shape. But he thinks he has all the answers, and if we offer a suggestion, he takes it as an affront. After all, it is our parish, though I do not think he thinks so.

"A recent convert told him bluntly that the parish has no spirit, that the people in the church she left to become a Catholic were kinder and more welcoming than those in our own parish. She said that when she became a Catholic, hardly one person welcomed her or seemed glad that she had come in to become one of a body of loving believers, as the Church is supposed to be.

"He bristled and reminded her that he is the pastor. She bristled back, reminding him that Vatican II directed the laity to be involved in the Church, and he is defying the Church's direction. She is exceptionally well-educated and takes her religion

seriously. Now all we have is an impasse. The pastor is well-regarded by the bishop, so there is no recourse there.

"Forgive me for being so negative, Father. But this 'great democratic Church' is an autocratic stronghold within which we suffer as ignorant subjects. At least in my parish. Please pray for me."

To a hurting friend:

"Recently I picked up *Letters of Flannery O'Connor: The Habit of Being* from our Webster Public Library. (O'Connor died in 1964.) It is an interesting series of letters. Many treat of religion, from the heart and mind and pen of an author who was a strong, intelligent, knowledgeable Catholic, who loved the faith wonderfully, yet was quite conscious of the quirks and weaknesses and stupidities which have always been within the Church. You might steer your 'well-educated recent convert' to her *Letters*. (Better not mention them to the pastor. O'Connor has some acid things to say about some priests and nuns.)

"I admire Flannery O'Connor's consciousness of the Church as Christ's body, afflicted aplenty by boils and sores and bruises, and her awareness that the Church

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



continues to nourish us with God's grace and doctrine and inspiration.

"I like to talk to high school and college youngsters to encourage them to read some of our great thinkers. In reading Flannery O'Connor's *Letters*, I am struck by the profound influence that Maritain, Guardini, Aquinas, Dostoevsky, Bernanos and Mauriac had on her. I wish I knew someone who would enlighten me about high school and collegiate reading interests. I doubt that the O'Connor authors would 'send' many students with the exception of a few gifted 'eggheads' — though I did meet a McQuaid student reading for pleasure a book by C.S. Lewis. But it seems to me that the lives, for example, of Dr. Dooley, Father Damien and Mother Teresa should interest youth.

"What with messy church tales in the papers and the sickening novels of Father Greeley, our people need inspiration as well as doctrine. I wonder why Greeley's novels are so full of bed-hopping priests, bishops

and Irish Catholics. I have lived a long time, and these creatures have never come to my ken. But I suppose sex means sales; though what has that to do with extending the kingdom of God?

"Forgive me for going off on a tangent, but the youth are my great hope, and I want them to be enthusiastic Catholics, fired to share that gift of God which we possess — and should be spreading.

"Well, back to your pastor. I don't see that you can do anything but pray for him. I suspect that your recent convert has the zest and determination of a social position to make his life less self-secure, and perhaps the parish will give into a living, loving body of the faithful. Pray for your pastor. You will find that he is more endurable if you pray for him instead of just resenting him.

"Greetings to the children — who I hope will fulfill my hope for them: of zealous, knowledgeable, cordial Catholics, fired with the love of Christ and His Church."

Immigrants

Continued from Page 1

tion Act of 1924 established an annual quota based on national origins, thus reducing immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Under the act, most Asians were denied admission on the grounds that they were not eligible for citizenship, a right they did not gain until 1952. Africans were excluded outright.

The legislation was fought by groups such as the Knights of Columbus and the American Jewish Committee. Finally in 1965, in a ceremony at the Statue of Liberty, President Lyndon Johnson signed the act that eliminated the quotas.

"It was a signal at the feet of the Statue of Liberty that racist criteria were no longer acceptable," Father Tomasi said. Today, he added, immigration follows the "first come, first-served principle."

Current policy aims to reunite new immigrants with family members already in the United States and to offer asylum to refugees fleeing political persecution. But critics contend that in practice some groups, particularly Central Americans, face discrimination because it would be politically embarrassing for the U.S. government to acknowledge that persecution exists in their homelands.

Attempts at reforming immigration policy flounder almost annually in Congress, as various interest groups reject one of three major parts of the reform proposal — some form of temporary worker program, amnesty for at least some illegal aliens, and sanctions against employers who hire illegal aliens.

Those proposals were among the changes suggested by Father Hesburgh's commission in 1981. "We said close the back door (of illegal migration) and open the front door half again as wide" to America's immediate neighbors, Father Hesburgh said.

Today, according to Father Tomasi, "an awareness has developed in the Catholic community that although we are no longer an immigrant Church the way we were at the turn of the century — we are now a grown-up



Church — there are still very large segments of the population functioning as 'sidestream' rather than 'mainstream' in the United States.

But now, he said, "the diversity is accepted, it is seen as part of what America is about. Being different is part of being American."

Belfast theater company opens Nazareth run

The acclaimed Charabanc Theatre Company opens a three-week run in Rochester this evening at Nazareth Arts Center. From July 3 through July 20, this troupe of five leading Catholic and Protestant actresses will bring a century of sectarian strife to vivid life in *Gold in the Streets*, a series of three profiles of women who have borne the brunt of the violence in Northern Ireland.

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cludes an inaugural North American tour that has included performances at major international theater festivals in Toronto and Baltimore.

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