

Father Richard P. McBrien

# Essays in Theology



## What really bothers the Right

Reviewers of Malachi Martin's new book on the Jesuits stopped counting the errors at 40 — this despite the publisher's boast that the author "has established a record of accuracy so unique that it has been called 'uncanny.'"

Why, then, would a newspaper as respectable as The Wall Street Journal have given the book to a reviewer so demonstrably unprepared for the task as Edmund Fuller (March 10 edition)?

Fuller caught not a single one of these errors, because, it would appear, he doesn't know very much about Catholic doctrine, theology and history, nor about the Society of Jesus. What is of interest to him, and apparently to the editors of The Wall Street Journal (whose subscribers' average net worth is more than \$787,800), is Malachi Martin's attack on the renewed emphasis on social justice and human rights, on the part of both postconciliar Catholicism and the Jesuits.

Indeed, Fuller's review is concerned only with that.

Fuller repeats Martin's charge that the Jesuits have been transformed into a society dedicated to "changing the sociopolitical structure of our contemporary world." He echoes the author's complaint that Father Pedro Arrupe, the Society's former Father General, abandoned the order's traditional discipline in an attempt to "achieve the ideal of a New Man in a material setting."

Fuller says this is "the essence of liberation theology." Significantly, he cites no liberation theologians who hold to such a view, nor is there any reason to believe that Fuller could tell the difference between Gutierrez and Sobrino, Alves and Bonino, Galilea and Segundo, or Boff and Miranda.

What really catches the reviewer's attention (and, through him, The Wall Street Journal's) is Martin's every mention of Nicaragua. He quotes approvingly Martin's unsubstantiated and defamatory assertions that Father Arrupe "knew his Jesuits in Central America were training Marxist cadres; were themselves active Communist guerrillas; ... were participants in bloody and sometimes sacrilegious events."

The weight of the Jesuits, according to Martin, was "thrown against capitalism." In the corridors of The Wall Street Journal, which had a few months earlier denounced the U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on the economy, this is the ultimate heresy: criticism of capitalism.

Pope John Paul II is invested here, as in Martin's book, with a certain heroic status, striving valiantly to turn back the tide of unbridled socialism in the Church and in its premier religious order. This is because few political conservatives

bother to read, much less take seriously, any of Pope John Paul II's writings and speeches on the subject of social justice. And there are many writings and speeches — many more, in fact, than the Holy Father's occasional admonitions about nuns' veils and clerical celibacy.

If political conservatives were to sit down and actually study the pope's 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), for example, they would probably be reaching for their Maalox Plus in a matter of minutes.

Michael Novak's commentary at the time the encyclical was released was at least an honest appraisal. His lack of enthusiasm was reminiscent of the young Chicago baseball fan who, in the teeth of the famous Black Sox scandal of some 70 years ago, plaintively appealed to star player Shoeless Joe Jackson, "Say it ain't so, Joe."

And William F. Buckley, too, deserves credit for being open about his dissent from Pope John Paul II's vehement denunciation of the economic gap between the rich North and the poor South, in Buckley's extraordinarily blunt homily at an Air Force base outside of Edmonton, Canada, in September, 1984. Buckley likened the pope's words to the harangues one hears from Third World delegates at the United Nations, to which no one listens.

But apart from such exceptions, most politically conservative commentators, Catholics especially, seem to ignore whatever this pope says about social justice, human rights and peace. Instead, they focus, as Fuller does in his Wall Street Journal review, on the stupid and insulting behavior to which Pope John Paul II was subjected during his Mass in Managua on March 4, 1983.

"Currently," Fuller concludes, "we are awash in apologetics for liberation theology." He urges us, therefore, to read Martin's "forcefully argued" attack on the Jesuits for the sake of "balance against the leftist 'liberation' barrage..."

Many of those who donate money to the schismatic and disobedient Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre have no interest whatsoever in the restoration of the Tridentine Mass. What they like and are willing to support with their dollars are his attacks upon the Church's social doctrine, which so threatens their net worth.

Similarly, many who couldn't care less about Jesuit spirituality will applaud anyone, Malachi Martin included, who raises a sword against those who dare criticize sacred capitalism.

Thus far, few of them have had the intellectual honesty to point it at Pope John Paul II himself.

Father Paul J. Cuddy

# On the Right Side



## Do you know how to confess?

To Father Vincent Curtin, SJ  
Loyola Retreat House, Faulkner, Md.

On March 15, I was to celebrate Mass in the Rochester jail, and wondered what kind of a homily one gives to jail inmates. So I asked Father Ed Golden, chaplain of Elmira Correctional Facility (a fancy name for Elmira State Prison). To my surprise, he said, "Explain how to go to confession. Many don't know how to go."

A year ago, when I was filling in at St. Michael's in Lyons for Father Orlando, I published in the parish bulletin an examination of conscience that met with acclaim from the parish. So it seemed a good idea to give these jailed people (about 60, of whom 10 were women) something in print. It has always seemed to me more important to get people to read about the matters we speak of. The spoken word evaporates so quickly. The printed word is like fine wine in a corked bottle — preserved and opened when wanted.

Deacon Stan Zawacki later told me the men and women were thrilled to have my essay. And he is having a quantity photocopied for a prison he serves elsewhere in the diocese. I am sending you a copy.

You may note there are no references to such high-class sins as "lack of concern about social justice" or "not picketing about nuclear matters" — in the mode of the Berrigans and my priest-nephew, Father Bill Cuddy of Syracuse, who recently did a 20-day stint in prison for molesting a government plane. The sins I mention are more meat-and-potatoes sins, comprehensible to a group which includes a cross-section, from bashibazouks to less fortunate people. For years, I have promoted the albums of Jesuit Father Basset's taped confessions. I think his best is "Each Man Is an Island."

Enough! May the Lord God bless us both in our work for His Glory.

### How to go to confession:

1) Begin: "Bless me, Father, it is — since my last confession." Give approximate time (two months, two years, 20 years). "These are my sins." (Use table below.)

2) When you have finished, say, "That's all I remember." Listen to the priest and find out your penance. Then say the Act of Contrition. Here is a short, simple one: "Dear Lord God: have mercy on me, a sinner. I am sorry for

these sins and all the sins of my life. Help me to be good, and help me to help others to be good. I ask this through Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

### Examination of conscience, based on the Seven Capital Sins:

**Pride:** What is my prayer life, my reverence for God and holy things? Is my knowledge of my religion commensurate with my ability and station?

**Covetousness (avarice):** Do I have an exaggerated desire for money or possessions? Do I share with others? Do I buy what I cannot afford? Do I pay my bills on time, pay a just wage or give an honest day's work? Do I compromise in business, politics or religious beliefs?

**Lust:** Do I revere my body and the bodies of others as God's temple? Is my married life in accord with God's law — or is my single life sexually controlled? Do I deliberately tempt others? Are my eyes on racy movies and magazines?

**Anger:** Do I hold resentments and grudges? Will I apologize when I am wrong? Am I angry when I should be, or apathetic about evil? Have I been involved in the death of the unborn (abortion) or bodily mutilation (for example, vasectomy)?

**Envy:** Am I disappointed at the good progress of others? Am I jealous of what I have, not sharing what should be shared?

**Gluttony:** Do I handle alcohol or tobacco correctly? If I am an alcoholic, do I refuse to go into treatment or attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings? Do I acknowledge the hurt I do to family and friends by over-indulgence? Do I trifle with drugs that I should acknowledge as harmful? Am I overweight through excess? Do I ever fast or abstain?

**Sloth:** Am I indifferent to the things of God and the Spirit? Are my children adequately instructed in the faith, and do I take a personal interest in their religious knowledge and practice? Am I active in my community and parish? Do I go to confession with reasonable frequency — every couple of months? Do I avail myself of spiritual opportunities (retreats, seminars, Marriage Encounters, renewals, spiritual readings, etc.)? Am I indifferent to the spiritual good of my family, friends, fellow workers, the sick and the housebound?

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The above letter was written to the brother of Father Cuddy's niece, Laila Cuddy of Auburn. As for the reference to "bashibazouks," please consult Webster's Unabridged.

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