

Columnists

## Addiction: A modern enslavement

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

One day in 1950, Father Robert Kress, now in Livonia, and I were at the airport waiting to go to Germany to attend a Passion play. Forth from the crowd loomed Col. Mike Luckey, whom I had known in Dothan, Alabama, eight years before as a 24-year-old pilot instructor for fliers who got their wings at our Napier Advanced Flying School.

He was one of the finest men I have ever known — a strong Catholic, educated by the Christian Brothers in Philadelphia — who had an intelligent understanding of the faith and who practiced it both on Sundays and all week. He was a man of utter integrity, and had a curious combination of profound seriousness and a rollicking humor. It amused him that he was educated by the Brothers of LaSalle Christian Brothers College while he taught aerodynamics at St. Joseph's Jesuit College, also in Philadelphia. The schools were great rivals both in sports and in traditions.

With delight I greeted him. "Mike, I haven't seen you since I left Napier for Europe six years ago. Where have you been?" I asked. "I've just returned from China two weeks ago," he replied. "China? What were you doing there?" He replied: "I was military attache for the Air Force at Peiping."

Now, the communists under Mao Tse Tung had taken over the government the previous year, 1949. Our newspapers had given dreadful accounts of the evils the communists were committing. So I asked: "What about the communists, Mike? We hear terrible things." With his usual directness, Mike said: "Oh, they're doing a great job. When they came in, the previous government was riddled with corruption. Prostitution, theft, murder, dope were rife. The communist government has that all straightened out!"

Astonished, I inquired: "How did they accomplish that?" His response was, "They mean business. For example, they shipped out all the prostitutes to work on the farms. They have completely wiped out the drug traffic." Again, I asked, "How did they accomplish that?" "Well," he answered, "if a man was caught selling dope, he was given a warning. If caught the second time, he was beheaded. In six

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months' time, there was no dope in the whole of China."

I have often thought of this account with regard to the millions of young people in our country who are enslaved through the drug traffickers, and to the ineffectiveness of our government to destroy the traffic.

A technique used by pushers was explained to me. They will hover around high schools and even elementary schools, watching for the youngsters who seem to be popular. Then they will cultivate the friendship of the popular ones, and introduce them to drugs by giving them samples. The youngsters are soon addicts, and the pushers now have cash customers so caught up in dope that they will become small pushers themselves, steal, go into prostitution or anything. Why? To get money for the slavers. My sympathies go to the beheaders of 39 years ago.

People who have studied the slave trade through the centuries have great emotions, not only about the slaves but also about the slavers who captured, transported and sold human beings like so much cattle. Their motive? Money. Slavers were devoid of all decency, all goodness. Yet it took centuries to eliminate the slave trade. One of the chief actors in the international agreement to end the slave trade was the great French Cardinal Lavignere, archbishop of Tangiers and founder of the White Fathers.

The slavers sold men and women and children like beasts, always for money.

The dope peddlers are our modern slavers, enslaving men and women, boys and girls to dope addiction, a modern slavery. And all this for the same reason — a love of money, which St. Paul reminds us is the root of all evil.

## Double standard on sex, violence

By Father Richard P. McBrien

It is wartime. One of "our" planes, flying high above the densely populated capital of an enemy country, unloads its cargo of nuclear weapons. Thousands of non-combatants die instantly, and many more will die years later of cancer and related diseases.

Can the bombing be morally justified? Many Catholics would still say, "It depends." It depends, they would say, on whether the war is a just one. It depends on whether the bombing might bring the war to a speedier end. It depends on the requirements of national security. It depends on the enemy's moral character. Are its people godless? Are they bent on world domination?

Now, take a second case, involving the same plane flying over the same overcrowded city. This time, instead of dropping nuclear bombs, the plane drops boxes and boxes of condoms.

I submit that some of the same Catholics who would be slow to render a negative moral judgment in the former instance would immediately and vehemently denounce the latter deed. "Outrageous!" they would protest. "A blatant violation of divine law!"

What is there about us that makes us hesitant even to question the use of deadly force — whether directly in Grenada and Libya or indirectly through support of the Nicaraguan contras, for example — yet quick to condemn anything that carries even a hint of laxity on sex-related issues — e.g. the U.S. Catholic bishops' recent statement on AIDS and condoms?

Many months ago, a prominent Catholic politician was invited to give the keynote address at the annual convention of a national Catholic organization. Several weeks before the event, the bishops of a large Middle Atlantic state passed a resolution that sharply criticized the invitation because of the politician's presumed stance on abortion.

When the politician got wind of their action, he suddenly discovered a conflict in his schedule and politely withdrew as the keynote speaker.

Some time later, one of the bishops — who was recently promoted to a larger see — was questioned about the action he and his brother bishops had taken. If we are not allowed to invite speakers whose views on abortion seem

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to some, at least — contrary to the teaching of the Church, what about the Church's teachings on such other issues as capital punishment. Should conservative politicians who disagree with the bishops on that topic also be excluded from consideration?

The bishop shrugged in response. "Why should they (be)? Capital punishment is a legal issue, not a moral one."

The double standard again. When the debate is about a sex-related matter — abortion, contraception, homosexuality — the distinction between morality and law is completely collapsed. There is simply no room for disagreement. If it has to do with sex, conflict over the legal implementation of moral principles is forbidden. To reject a maximalist legal position — a constitutional amendment to ban all abortions, for example — is tantamount to approving the behavior in question.

On the other hand, when the issue is not sex-related — capital punishment or the use of military force, for example — Catholics are granted all kinds of room for disagreement over "legalities."

Why the difference? What is there about violence that doesn't seem to bother us so much, and what is there about sex that seems to bother us endlessly?

A very prominent American Catholic — now retired, after a fashion — has said more than once that if elected pope, his first action would be to impose a 10-year moratorium on all Church pronouncements and debate concerning sex.

What a cruel proposal! If that were to happen, some of us would have nothing else to focus our attention on. Nothing, that is, except for the welfare of the poor, justice and peace — the sort of dull, everyday things that Jesus was crucified for preaching.

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