

Press—Adult Education

Describing the Catholic Press as "the single most important influence to complement the Catholic school system on the level of Adult education, — we spend so much money on the education of children and spend no time or money on the education of the Catholic laity — except in our own press," a California Bishop said, since the Second Vatican Council, "the day of infantile Christianity should be gone forever." The Catholic press, he said, "can bring us out of the kindergarten by exposing all to a new degree of Catholic education."

He sees the fruitful press as one dealing with controversy and which is an open forum but warns newsmen to carefully present both sides and not to use the press as an instrument to promote personal views and ideas.

These are weighty thoughts for us during this "Year of Faith."

Do we read the diocesan press out of a spirit of loyalty only because it is Catholic, or for an interest in learning the happenings around the diocese, nation and world, as they take place, or of the private or official pronouncements which are made in behalf of the Church.

Catholic journalism, like its education and church sponsored welfare programs, is under-going a searching re-evaluation. Some publications are ceasing, others amalgamating, new ones appearing and as the daily newspapers have stepped up their coverage of religion there is competitive response toward increased professionalism and improved coverage in the diocesan press.

The Catholic paper of the Baltimore area is edited by a layman. He says, "The diocesan paper, in addition to publishing the news, has an additional duty to offer sound editorial comment and to keep Catholics abreast of developments in the Church. The diocesan newspaper can be a vital ingredient in continuing adult education of Catholics, and in my opinion it ought to be. This role cannot be filled by the daily newspaper," he concluded.

Thinking Catholic laity are expressing the need of an hour weekly "Sunday School" as the Confraternity offers the children. It seems the weekday evenings given to discussion club texts are always running in conflict with family, community or other commitments. The Sunday morning hour seems made for religious education. Maybe the day will come to this for the study of scripture, adult Christian Doctrine and moral issues. Until that time arrives the weekly diocesan press remains our strongest effort in stabilizing progressive thinking toward the directives of implementing the decrees of Vatican II.

Religious Antiques

News reports of looting antiques from unguarded churches in England and Mexico, tell us of the corresponding rise in the sales of religious art treasures in antique shops around the world. "Everyone knows how antique dealers openly sell paintings, sculpture, ivory pieces and liturgical objects that obviously came from our churches," said an official of the National Academy of History in Mexico. He pointed out that these treasures are an irreplaceable part of a national heritage.

While making calls at various interior decorator studios recently, seeking samples for a wall covering in the area of the sanctuary where the "altar fixed to the wall" once stood, we saw a pair of altar candelabrum on display for sale. The handsome gold plated articles, with the seven candle sockets and adjustable arms, did look good on the massive dining buffet, and, no doubt, they had served their usefulness in a church.

The statue manufacturing company of Daprato, is ceasing operations the first of the year, we are informed. No doubt this is a result of the trend of sanctuary designers today who cite simplicity as the hallmark for furnishings now suitable to the revised liturgical services of divine worship. Be that as it may, however, as our present Catholic church buildings are being renovated throughout the country to logically accommodate the English dialogue and the simplification of the rubrics, let all of us be extremely careful lest we prove to be an open market for antique dealers who will generously offer to take discarded sanctuary furnishings off our hands.

Already in mothball storage are the heavy, ornate missal stands; the gold-plated filigree framed altar cards; the handsomely all-leather bound altar missals; the massive traditional "six high Mass candlesticks" and possibly a variety of brass candelabrum. Among this collection of appointments no longer in use, there is possibly a painting or statue, a wood carving of some intrinsic value to the parish, or perhaps a gift of a benefactor. The problem is, what to do with these items that seem to belong to another age, yet demand some judgment to be made for their proper disposition.

The Cardinal of London was recently quoted as giving a directive that unused altar plate may be sold and the proceeds donated to the poor. If this is correct, surely such sales cannot be made without some kind of specific direction.

The museums of the world are full of treasures once found in the Catholic churches of Europe. Shortly after World War II we traveled around Germany and were impressed by the excellent blending of the traditional furnishings which survived the bombings, and with the modern

See Religious Antiques, page 7A

One More Challenge



In Current Thought

America's Top Priority Claims U.S. Rights Commission Says

WASHINGTON — The problems of race and poverty cannot be resolved until their solutions are made America's first priority, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights said in a report released here (Nov. 22).

The report also warned that the solutions do not lie at the end of a search for culprits and conspirators, or in cheap or painless cure-alls.

The report, entitled "A Time to Listen . . . A Time to Act," compiled data learned in commission hearings and State Advisory Committee meetings over the past two years.

The commission warned the nation that it faces two choices in dealing with race and poverty: "The nation may continue to struggle with the problems which inevitably arise when we are divided into separate, unequal and alien groups—either torn by violence or co-existing in an uneasy peace purchased at the cost of repressive action.

"Or we can all together make the commitment which will redeem our promises and ideals by opening the doors of the ghetto so that Negroes and other minority groups can become full participants in American society, with a truly equal opportunity for all."

While the report offers no concrete solutions — which other commission reports have done — it makes clear what problems the solutions must attack:

Problems to Face

— "The policeman who . . . has often not provided protection for citizens within the ghetto, does not treat them with dignity and respect and views his role as that of keeping Negroes 'in line. . . ."

— "Inadequacy of sanitation services . . . the absence of needed health and recreational facilities and the transportation services which would make them accessible.

— "The merchant who sells inferior merchandise or who exploits the economic dependence of Negroes by providing credit at exorbitant rates. . . ."

— "The absentee landlord who reduces services and allows property to deteriorate once Negroes become tenants.

— "Welfare programs (which) have been devised and administered in a manner which tends to break up families and perpetuate dependency.

— "Union practices of discrimination which have not been eliminated by civil rights laws and government action.

— "Education practices which put 'most Negro youngsters in overcrowded and inadequate schools which are, as a practical

matter, segregated by race and by class, and which are stigmatized by the community."

Questions Program

The report strongly criticized government attempts to provide help in several areas:

— "Contrary to widespread belief, recent federal efforts to make available more aid to inner-city schools have not appreciably affected the disparity between the resources of these schools and those of other schools within the city and better financed suburban schools.

— "Government efforts to provide (job) training have been small in relationship to the need and frequently have been poorly coordinated or misdirected.

— "Despite its declared goal of providing a decent home in a suitable living environment for all American families, the federal government has not met the housing needs of the great majority of low and moderate income families and has often acquiesced in the decisions of local authorities to locate publicly assisted housing only in tightly restricted areas of the ghetto.

The commission report also attempted to dispel some common assumptions made by whites:

— "It would be reassuring to conclude that the situation of Negroes in the slums is not dissimilar to that of past generations of American immigrants who lived in ghettos but were able to leave. . . . But the analogy is misleading and dangerous.

"Negroes are not recent immigrants to our shores, but Americans of long standing. They were oppressed not by foreign governments but by a system of slavery supported by this government and its people. The legacy of slavery continues in the form of racial segregation, discrimination and prejudice. Escape from the ghetto for any group is much more difficult in the America of the 1960s than it was one or two generations ago. Society has become more complex, and unskilled employment or small business enterprises no longer are meaningful first steps up the ladder.

"These factors . . . have been translated into barriers far more

Catholics 'Divorced' From Community Acts And Affairs, Charged

MILWAUKEE — (NC) — Catholic daymen as individuals "seem to divorce themselves almost totally from community affairs," the director of the State University of New York's local government studies center at Albany, N. Y., said here.

Joseph F. Zimmerman, addressing the National Conference on Government here, said rabbis and Protestant ministers seem more "social-action-conscious" than Catholic pastors.

Principal subject of the conference was whether organized religion should become more involved in solving community problems. Some of the conference participants said that in their experience, the Catholic Church, compared to other denominations, has remained noticeably aloof to community problems.

Zimmerman said he tends to agree with a theory regarding this lack of involvement — that Protestants are more concerned with the public good, while Catholics are more concerned with "what's in it for me?"

The Church, he said, cannot be concerned solely with spiritual needs, because physical conditions have a direct bearing on the spiritual. He admitted that bishops have issued statements on social needs, but added that "what positions the bishops take in their statements do not get down to the parish or individual level."

Zimmerman suggested that lay parish organizations concentrate on more than the social in their activities and meetings.

formidable than those which were faced by the Irish, the Italians, the Poles or the Jews in this country."

The commission also warned the nation that while recent city riots involved "relatively few people," the riots "are only the violent manifestations of feelings of anger and despair which are much more widely shared."

Leadership Cooperation

The report also warned that the failure of governmental agencies on all levels to respond to the efforts of moderate Negro leaders "is causing increasing numbers of Negroes to despair of moderate methods and of moderate leadership and to favor a separatist course."

"Even the most constructive efforts by Negroes," said the report, are not likely to reduce feelings of frustration and despair "until Americans generally make a massive commitment to strike at the underlying causes — poverty and segregation."

Chinese Priest Reported Dead In Prison Camp

Hong Kong — (NC) — A Chinese priest twice imprisoned by Red China Communists, has died, presumably in a labor camp, the Maryknoll Fathers here have been told.

The priest, Father Paul Lam Kwok, was formerly vicar general of the Kaying diocese in Kwantung province, the see of the late U.S.-born Bishop Francis X. Ford, M.M.

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