

# 'Enlargement' Vs. Values

It is not our intention to assume the role of the "arm-chair General." We have confidence in our leadership in managing military activity in Vietnam. However, this past week the pictorial and written accounts of the enlargement of military engagements with a death toll of 416 U.S. men who were killed during the single week which ended last month, needs comment. The atrocities of war have loosened their venom with particular vigor.

"It became necessary to destroy the town to save it," is indeed a strange way to conduct a military operation which is intended to preserve law and order. News reports from abroad originating from Papal statements or diplomatic observations of other governments indirectly warn that we may be stooping to the same level of inhumanity as the Communist motivated Cong. This bombing activity is having a marked effect on all Americans. We are beginning to feel that our sacrifices are not being appreciated by the South Vietnamese people and it certainly is bringing rising opposition by government officials, clergy, educators and others in humanitarian interests.

In the field of morals we are conscious of a deadening effect of habitual faults upon our values of virtues. At this point in the war we must constantly be alert lest through constant observation of brutality we take this for granted as the nature of war. Clergy in Ohio recently cited the Vietnam war as immoral. They claimed the bombing of the villages is being sympathetic to the enemy and contrary to what was taught about human relations in the recent Vatican Council. Silence, they said, is false patriotism.

Another priest sees the activity as an unjust act of U.S. colonialism even though President Johnson has repeatedly stated that our involvement was simply to reassure the free people of that country that they may enjoy their rights. "Indiscriminate" bombing has been cited as a crime against God and man. We know that a military operation is a failure or a success by its contact with a supply of oil. Would it not seem that the bombing could be controlled to areas of supply which feed the engines of war?

Under the guise of conscience and morals there are many Americans who feel obliged to engage in direct expressions of dissent including acts of civil disobedience such as breaking with the draft, refusing to pay taxes and the like. Most of the time what is said finds nothing contradictory to the traditional Catholic moral teaching on conscientious objection. Moral and civil rights, dictates of conscience, acting when a person feels a matter is morally imperative, a right to express an opinion — all of these judgments seem to point out the recommendation of Senator Kennedy, "Stop the enlargement of the war!"

The TV in our home, the news magazines, the religious and daily secular press all tell a story that is told too often.

## 'Gossip Club'

THE news stories both from abroad and home were very sobering last week. The other editorial reflects the consternation in the minds of every person. The welfare of the Church in this period of transition so susceptible to emotional extremes also contributed a depressing theme. Journalists were told to avoid substituting their own views for those of the Church. At times they have presented the spectacular or even a sensational aspect of things. The writer of religious matters must be careful not to present his own views as those of the Church. Many of the new books with which we have been deluged by Catholic Publishing houses trying to interpret the decrees of the Council, have turned out to be matters of theological research and have given the impression that the authors' theories are definitive conclusions. Pope Paul warned of this when he initiated the "Year of Faith."

Criticism of a destructive nature is deplored. A prelate said that recently Catholic circles are becoming a "gossip club." "Criticism that is constructive is what we can welcome." "Questioning and uncertainty," commented the speaker, "are two distinct processes of reasoning. We can do good by presenting the positive side of things."

From South America comes the observation that evolution is not revolution. The Council presented many changes in the Christian mentality because its goal is not that man should be saved in the world but that he should save the world. Previously we were all under the impression the world was considered to be merely the scene where man could save himself. Oftentimes we feel there should be a period of moratorium in the publishing world. Yet this is the medium of communication exchange and experimentation.

So many books will be published, so many magazines and newspapers must have their columns filled with ideas. A priest says that the Christian faith of the new Testament was a religion of experience. Later it became a doctrinal system and it divorced religion from life. Today's theology is to translate the essential message into terms meaningful and creditable to modern man.

We appreciate the gift of Faith. Those of us who speak about God in sermons, CCD classes, or in private conversation know how inadequate our words reflect His glory. We are asked in these times to "be less impatient, less demanding, more grateful or at least more sympathetic toward those who make themselves a bit ridiculous by trying to say something about God."

## Diocese Represented

Continued from page 2A with a temperateness born of the realization that there are no easy answers, no easily discernible culprits and that only with the trustful cooperation of Bishops, priests and laity would the present difficulties be the prelude to a new Pentecost.

Representatives at the national meeting were grouped according to Provinces; each province elected a priest to poll the group and present the votes to the convention.

AN IRISH priest with more than forty years' experience in the parish ministry expressed the opinion that large sums of money on sociological research was a waste; a 70-year-old priest of the Albany diocese expressed his joy

at living to the day when the American priests would have a voice for their opinions; both priests were applauded by the assemblage.

The Atlanta Province which comprises seven dioceses was represented by nine priests from four dioceses. Atlanta, Raleigh, Miami and Charleston were represented; St. Augustine, Savannah and Belmont Abbey were not represented.

The nine priests of the Atlanta province voted unanimously for the formation of a National federation. All shared the enthusiasm and elation of the moment. The Church, which the Bishops of America described as a "house of freedom," now has another avenue in which to exercise that freedom.

### Inspiration



### In Current Thought

## Msgr. Dolan Cites Secular Aid Dimension to SO-CALLED Negro Missions, Decent Life

The Right Rev. Hugh Dolan, Pastor Saint Pius Tenth Church Greensboro, North Carolina

Reference is made to the inspiring article "Negro Mission Aid" by Monsignor Gable in the February 4 issue of the NORTH CAROLINA CATHOLIC.

I agree totally with everything the good Monsignor has stated and commend him most highly for giving us his spiritual perspective on this important question. However, in addition to all of the worthwhile things that have been done and are being done by many

The Negro apostolate is more embracing than caring for the spiritual requirements of the Negroes by any group, be that group Catholic or Protestant. It is a problem that should involve not only the Catholic white community, but the TOTAL COMMUNITY — the city, the state, and the nation. Any response to the complicated problem must be both communal and ecumenical, and must take into account the human condition.

We are all most grateful for the leadership of the American hierarchy; and to our own Bishop, in particular, for his leadership; and to Monsignor Gable, also, for reminding us of the theological principles involved. However, I suggest—more than this is needed. Theological formulations do not work automatically in an existential vacuum. The supernatural still builds on the natural, and in this case the natural framework needs to be undergirded by the response of a concerned and socially conscious community.

#### Community Action

The magnificent statements enunciated by our Bishops and by other religious leaders throughout the land must be implemented by constructive community action. Until our citizens, both Catholic and non-Catholic, become concerned and convinced that community action—and particularly, political action—is another form of Christian witness, the best we can hope for is a token response to the problem. Here is the place where the Christian layman, both Catholic and Protestant, must be willing to stand up and be counted. The layman must speak freely and act courageously. The best results will be effected by laymen joining with other like-minded groups who band together for political and social action. I refer

to groups organized for the common good of all classes, not just those organized to protect vested interests. I suggest that it is in political action, divorced from selfish group interest, that the Negro community and the underprivileged white can find one medium to liberate them from the humiliating conditions and economic injustices to which they are subjected.

#### Politics Questioned

Catholics and many other citizens have had until recently a tendency to shy away from the field of politics because all too often in the past entering politics has been identified with promoting class or group interest; often at the expense of the common good. It still carries with it this dangerous possibility. At the same time, the field of politics offers today a very real opportunity for Christian witness and Christian service, and possibly for some form of Christian martyrdom — in the best accepted meaning of that word, not the lugubrious or "pity me" mentality.

Practically speaking, this means that the voices of intelligent, articulate laymen must be heard at City Council meetings, political gatherings, and in all of those groups that are part of our modern society. This is primarily the field of the layman — not that of the priest. Political action can be implemented by interest in Human Relation Councils and by taking part in constructive programs for neighborhood improvement, such as Neighborhood Councils. The sensitive and concerned Catholic layman will find in such activities for the common good a realistic and twentieth century living out of the command of Jesus, to love one's neighbor as oneself.

#### Realtors and Housing

An even more significant contribution can be made by Catholic developers and realtors. It is

## C.U. Theological Coll. Has Fr. Walsh, Rector

Baltimore — The appointment of Father Eugene A. Walsh, S.S., as rector of the Theological College of the Catholic University of America has been approved by Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington, university chancellor.

The appointment was announced here by the Society of St. Sulpice, which staffs the Theological College. Father Walsh, who has been associated with St. Mary's Seminary here for more than 25 years, will begin his new duties in June. He will succeed Father John P. McCormick, S.S.

Father McCormick was elected in 1966 to represent the United States province of the Sulpician Fathers in the general council of the order. He has been rector of the Theological College since 1949 and is resigning at the direction of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Brunon, Sulpician superior general, to devote full time to the international scene of seminary administration.

difficult to see how either a Catholic developer or realtor can remain morally neutral on the question of open housing. This can hardly be swept under the rug on the grounds that it may be economic suicide. Catholic realtors might let it be known, quietly, but effectively, that they will accept people in their apartments and residences without regard to ethnic background. They should fight with all their might the "panic buying" and "panic selling," which all too often has accompanied the entering of the Negro into lily-white suburbia.

#### Avoid Legalisms

Christians, properly formed in the spirit of the Gospels, and who have read carefully the social encyclicals, should not need the compulsion of a federal law to inspire them through law to do what every Christian should have been doing for all of these centuries. Nor should Christians take safe, play-it-cool, positions — ready to jump on the band wagon only when the difficult work has been done by others.

To get back to Monsignor Gable, we will somehow or other get the support we need for our churches and missions. The needs of our day, however, require a little more than soup kitchen charity, or paternalistic kindness. Men and women are beginning to realize, perhaps for the first time in history, that the lot to which they have been confined by man's inhumanity to man need not be perpetuated in the name of man's absolute rights. Neither can we as Christians escape our responsibility by taking out of context the words of Jesus "the poor you will have always with you." Thanks to modern communications, men realize better than ever before that a decent human life is possible for the thousands of underprivileged at home and the millions of underprivileged and underfed abroad.

#### United Objectives

As Harvey Cox suggests in his recent book entitled "On not Leaving it to the Snake," we can no longer separate the secular See Current Thought, page 5A

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