

# CRITERION

VOL. XVI, NO. 27

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

APRIL 8, 1977

## ARCHBISHOP'S EASTER MESSAGE

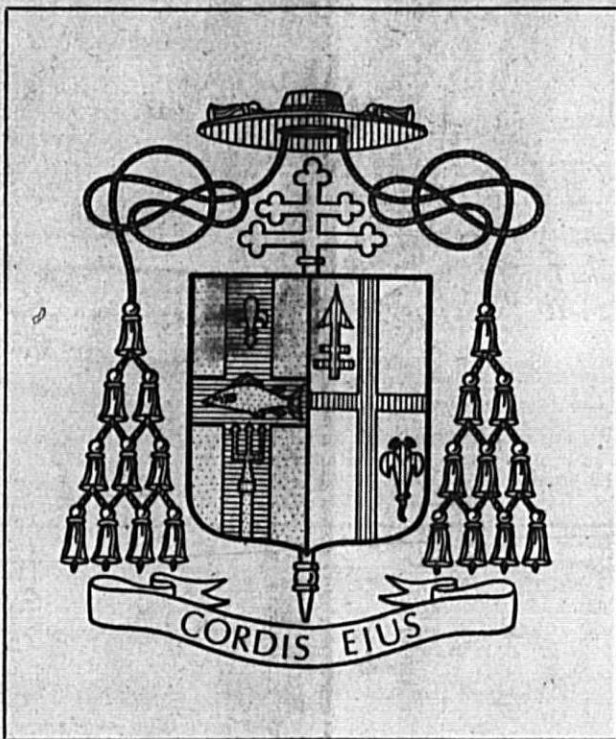
# They knew him in the breaking of bread

My dear Family in Christ:

In the afternoon of the day that Jesus rose from the dead, the risen Lord walked the road to Emmaus with two disciples. He explained passages of Scripture to them. When they reached Emmaus it was almost evening, and the disciples, still not recognizing the Lord, invited him to stay with them. While he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then broke it and handed it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Through this Easter Eucharist their faith was greatly increased.

We have the same opportunity in our Easter celebration of the Eucharist to hear the word of the Lord proclaimed in the Scripture and explained to us by our priest in his homily. We have the same opportunity to hear the blessing of the bread, and to share the Lord in Communion.

It is my Easter prayer for you that as with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, your hearts will burn within you as the Easter Scriptures are proclaimed and explained, and I pray that you



will recognize him in the breaking of the bread. Then this Easter you, as the disciples of Em-

maus, will experience a significant growth in faith in the risen Lord.

The Eucharist, as many other gifts of God our Father, comes to you through the priests who serve you. Please help your priests by your prayers and support. I also ask for your financial assistance through your Easter contribution which is devoted entirely to priestly development through promotion of vocations, education of seminarians, and programs to develop spiritually and intellectually priests already ordained and serving you.

May the risen Savior bless you with peace and joy.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

*George J. Biskup*

Most Rev. George J. Biskup  
Archbishop of Indianapolis

March 28, 1977



Photography by Dennis R. Jones



# Vatican is taking stronger stance on human rights

BY JOHN MUTHIG

VATICAN CITY—Both Pope Paul VI and the Vatican are edging away from their cautious behind-the-scenes diplomacy toward a more public defense of human rights and religious freedoms.

The new public stress on human rights, which one Vatican diplomat termed a "change in policy," probably stems from several international events:

—The Carter Administration's strong emphasis on human rights issues in foreign policy, coupled with the new militancy of Eastern European dissidents;

—The upcoming review of the progress made on the Helsinki accords, in which nations pledged to respect fundamental rights, including religious freedoms;

—Stepped-up violence against Church personnel and escalating religious persecution in several nations.

THE NEW VATICAN emphasis on human rights declarations began to surface in early January when U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale called on Pope Paul.

Several Vatican sources close to the Pope say that the Pontiff emerged from his hour of private talks with Mondale very impressed with the new Administration's human rights policy.

Soon after Mondale's visit, a series of editorials in support of the Carter policy were transmitted by Vatican Radio.

An even more notable shift has appeared on the pages of the Vatican daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. The paper has consistently given stories dealing with dissidents and human rights issues prominent

positions on the front page.

Recently, the paper even devoted most of page two to an explicit attack on the beefed-up Czechoslovakian campaign against religious education.

Vatican Radio editorials and stories in *L'Osservatore Romano* may not seem like much. But seasoned Vatican watchers know that the choice of news and its placement in Vatican media tell a great deal about where the Vatican stands on issues.

The term "human rights," moreover, is being found more and more on the lips of Pope Paul himself.

On April 4 he told the new Iranian ambassador to the Vatican that work for real peace "goes hand in hand with advancement of human rights."

AS THE THEME FOR APRIL for the worldwide Catholic Apostleship of Prayer movement, the Pope asked prayers for "those who are blocked from exercising religious freedom."

In a departure from usual Vatican practice the Apostleship of Prayer theme was announced this time with considerable fanfare by the president of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, African Archbishop Bernardin Gantin.

The Pontiff's words may be serving as a prelude to the Vatican's intervention at a conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, this June to review progress made in enforcing the Helsinki agreements.

For several months before the 1975 Helsinki conference, Communist nations courted the Vatican with certain diplomatic concessions in efforts to get its signature on the Helsinki pact.

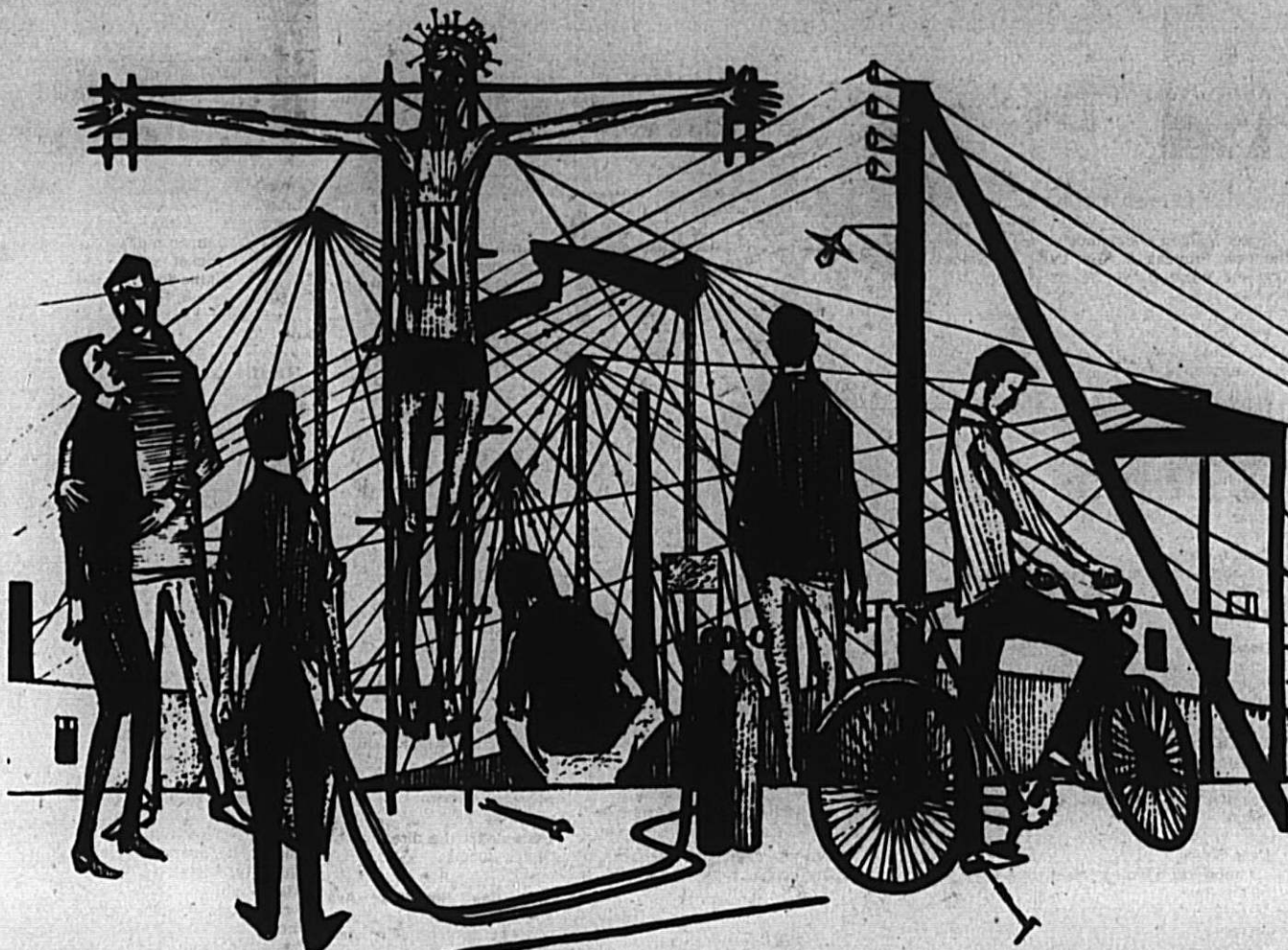
Besides assuring respect for human rights, the accords also recognized Soviet domination in Eastern Europe.

After the Vatican signed at Helsinki, it began receiving the cold shoulder from several Communist countries over the religious rights issue.

The Vatican would like to correct this situation in Belgrade.

The Vatican City-State produces no essential raw material which can be used as a bargaining tool. And the Pope's 90 Swiss Guards are anything but a military threat to either East or West.

But moral suasion can be a significant factor in diplomacy. And lately, fortified by the current pro-rights climate in U.S. foreign policy and by the dissident movements in Communist nations, the Vatican has proven itself ready to speak out publicly—though still somewhat cautiously—in support of human liberties.



GOOD FRIDAY RITES—The Outdoor Way of the Cross, sponsored annually by the Indianapolis Knights of Columbus Chapter, will be held today (Good Friday) on the American Legion Mall at Meridian and North St., beginning at 12:15 p.m.

Liturgical services will be held in churches throughout the Archdiocese commemorating the Passion and Death of Christ. The above striking depiction of the Crucifixion is the work of Emile Schelke. [RNS photo]

THE

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

## CRITERION

IN LATE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

### Tuition credit, migrant bills win approval

INDIANAPOLIS—In a dramatic final week of voting, Indiana legislators have given approval to "significant" bills on tax credit for non-public education and migrant camp inspection.

Also passed were an abortion waiting period bill and a compensation for victims of crimes bill. The former is now HB 2073 and the latter is SB 492. Both bills now need only concurrence in the other chamber before going before Gov. Bowen. All four measures were strongly

supported by the Indiana Catholic Conference, spokesman for the state's Catholic bishops.

Legislation to legally define death, formally opposed by the I.C.C., died in the Senate when it failed to be assigned to committee after earlier passage in the House.

RAYMOND R. RUFO, I.C.C. Executive Director and lobbyist, praised Senate passage of the education bill, permitting income tax credit for contributions to public or non-public elementary and secondary schools in amounts up to \$100 per individual or \$200 in joint return.

"This is a 'first' for Indiana," Rufo said. "It is recognition of the importance of non-public education in our state, and an incentive to support all of our schools."

The bill, HB 1338, was amended in the Senate to include features of HB 1746, supported originally by the I.C.C. It now goes back to the House where its original sponsors must agree to the amendment, after which Governor Bowen must sign it for it to become law.

Also termed "significant" by Rufo was House passage of a migrant bill (91-0) to require health inspection of camps before workers move in. "This is acknowledgement," he said, "of the contribution made by migrant families to Indiana's economy, as well as a matter of simple justice." The bill now is resting on the Governor's desk.

I.C.C. SUPPORT of the abortion measure cited three features:

—It would bring the Indiana statute into line with constitutional guidelines, insuring that the entire law will not be jeopardized.

—It would slow down the woman's decision-making process by requiring a 24-hour waiting period before formal application for abortion.

—It sets up a study commission to develop a more comprehensive consent form, expected to provide information about alternatives to abortion, maternal health risks and fetal development.

At press time, this proposal and one providing compensation to victims of violent crimes were awaiting final vote in the House. They then would require concurrence of their Senate sponsors, as well as the Governor's signature.

RUFO APPLAUDED the Legislature's failure to pass several bills, especially two death and dying measures, two Medicaid bills, and HB 1306, which sets penalties for employment of illegal aliens (See related story at end of article).

The Medicaid proposals would have eliminated all health care services not required by federal law and forced Medicaid patients to make co-payments for all treatment. The I.C.C. had charged that "such legislation makes the elderly and handicapped bear the brunt of the state's economy efforts." The bills died in the Senate finance committee after the House

passed them on straight party-line votes.

Three proposals which had I.C.C. support did not get legislative approval. One, a child abuse bill, failed when it was not called down for a final vote by House Speaker Kermit Burrous. This followed opposition by Wayne Stanton, State Director of Public Welfare. A second bill would have guaranteed bi-weekly or semi-

monthly payment of wages to migrant workers.

Also lost was SB 185, a measure designed to clarify the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. The I.C.C. testified to the "definite need" for such legislation, but the bill met its doom when Lt. Gov. Orr, President of the Senate, broke a 25-25 Senate deadlock by voting nay.

### 'An emotional gathering'

INDIANAPOLIS—It was an emotional gathering.

Seven state senators—members of the Senate Labor Committee—representatives of various organizations including the Indiana Catholic Conference, a man from the U.S. Immigration Department, and a small group of Mexican-Americans met to talk about House Bill 1306.

The bill would make employers subject to criminal penalties for employment of illegal aliens.

The immigration official spoke in favor of the bill. The I.C.C. spoke against it, calling for broad but compassionate and just solutions by the U.S. government.

But the "stars" of the hearing were some 15 Mexican-American citizens who spoke simply and dramatically of their own lives. They spoke of challenges to their citizenship, of various forms of discrimination and harassment, of raids and "sweeps" of migrant camps, of the fear of families who have lived and worked in the U.S. for 10 or more years, yet cannot document their right to be here.

Finally one state senator, uncommitted at the start, announced he recognized the "human justice implications" of the issue and would vote against the bill. Three other committee members joined him, and HB 1306, on a 4-3 negative vote, failed to pass.

### Ecumenical services held for jet air crash victims

SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, Canary Islands—A thousand islanders joined a handful of survivors of the fiery crash of two jumbo jets in ecumenical services at the cathedral for the more than 575 persons killed at the airport.

Bishop Luis Franco Cascon of Tenerife, who shared the pulpit with Protestant and Jewish leaders, said he and the rest of the Canary Islanders share the sorrow of the relatives everywhere.

Of the 396 U.S. passengers in a Pan-American Airways jet, 329 are listed as dead, including two who died from burns two days after the March 27 crash. All 248 aboard a Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) jet were killed in what

is considered the worst accident in aviation history.

THE EVENING MASS and ecumenical services on March 30 at nearby La Laguna lasted more than an hour. Dutch Reformed Church minister, an Anglican priest and the local rabbi led in prayers for the victims.

Bishop Cascon also voiced concern for the effects of the crash on tourism, the economic mainstay of most of the 1.5 million Canary Islanders, and asked God's help so that "our march to progress may continue."

With the congregation in the 18th-century cathedral were Spanish (Continued on Page 5)

## Week's News in Brief

BY NC NEWS SERVICE

### Fight death penalty move

ALBANY, N.Y.—The New York State Catholic Conference has written to every member of the state legislature urging the defeat of efforts to restore the death penalty in New York. The conference also sent a copy of a short position paper on the death penalty which said, "We hold that the heart of the Christian tradition is the belief that no person is beyond the mercy of God and therefore not to be beyond the bounds of human mercy."

### St. Louis editor elevated

ST. LOUIS—Father Edward J. O'Donnell, editor of the St. Louis Review since 1968, has been made a monsignor. Msgr. O'Donnell was one of 13 archdiocesan priests elevated to honorary-prelate Feb. 24. The announcement was made April 5. Associate pastor of St. Roch parish in St. Louis, Msgr. O'Donnell is former director of radio and TV for the archdiocese and former head of the archdiocesan commission on human rights. In his years at the Review, the paper has won eight first places in Catholic Press Association competition.

### In capsule form . . .

Financial problems in poor nations and among voluntary agencies are preventing U.S. voluntary agencies from settling up food and development programs in countries which request them, the executive director of Catholic Relief Services told a House subcommittee. . . . A day after Italy's bishops had appealed for an end to mounting political violence, gunfire broke out only a few blocks from St. Peter's Basilica between young fascists and police. The exchange of gunfire, almost at the Vatican's front door, left one policeman slightly injured. The incident dramatically accented the appeal made by the executive council of the Italian Bishops' Conference to halt increasing extremist violence in politically polarized Italy. . . . Thirty-two Catholic school lay teachers occupied the Los Angeles chancery building, vowing to continue the sit-in until the archdiocese recognizes their union. Carrying bedding and food, the demonstrators stayed overnight (March 28) in the lobby and waiting room of the building, demanding to see Cardinal Timothy Manning, who was not available. The chancery was closed March 29. . . . A spokesman for the Catholic Tridentine Union, a traditionalist organization, said three Mexican youths are joining the Traditionalist seminary at Econe, Switzerland. The seminary is run by French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who was suspended last year by the Vatican for opposing renewal decrees of the Second Vatican Council.

### Bishop ordained at age 38

ALBANY, N.Y.—The nation's youngest bishop was ordained and installed as head of this diocese March 27 in a ceremony witnessed by 5,000 persons and televised across upstate New York. It was only the second such ceremony Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, 38, had ever attended and this time he was the principal character.

### Reject Jewish 'proselytism'

VENICE, Italy—A Catholic ecumenical expert has told a high-level Jewish-Catholic dialogue group here that the Catholic Church clearly rejects "any form of proselytism" which intrudes on the free will and personal decision-making of Jews. Thomas Federici, Scripture professor at Rome's Pontifical Urban University and consultant to the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, rejected the establishment of any organization for the specific purpose of converting Jews.

### Praise Carter clemency plan

WASHINGTON—Two priests who served on President Ford's Clemency Board have praised President Carter's plan to upgrade military discharges for up to 432,000 deserters and servicemen with less-than-honorable discharges during the Vietnam War era. The two priests are Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, and Msgr. Francis Lally, secretary for social development and world peace for the U.S. Catholic Conference. The program will last for six months and veterans must apply individually for upgrading. But veterans with undesirable discharges who apply and fall into certain categories will be upgraded automatically.

### Names . . .

The arbitration by Bishop Joseph Hodges of Wheeling-Charleston, W. Va., of a dispute between Bishop Thomas Walsh of Arlington and some members of Good Shepherd parish in Mt. Vernon, a Washington, D.C., suburb has been temporarily halted.

Bishop Sergio Mendez

Arce of Cuernavaca, Mexico, denied keeping any ransom money while mediating between families and kidnappers. His statement was made in a Sunday homily in answer to a guerrilla leader on trial, who said that the bishop had kept some \$50,000 of ransom money in the case of Carlos Ortiz.





## THE TACKER

## Dear Sister . . .

BY FRED W. FRIES

Sister Mildred Wannemuehler, O.S.B., is the new Prioress at Our Lady of Grace Convent, Beech Grove. Several days before her election her sixth grade pupils at St. Anthony School, Clarksville, where she has been stationed for the past year-and-a-half, were invited to write her notes expressing their reaction.

Following are excerpts from some of the messages Sister Mildred received.

Dear Sister,  
I hope you win Mother Nun—whatever it is. But I don't want you to leave. I wish you could do both.

Dear Sister,  
Good Luck, Sister. I hope you win. If you win I can say mother superior was my teacher.

Dear Sister Mildred,  
I hope you win the election. I think that you would be the perfect one for Mother Superior.

Dear Sister,  
I hope you get Mother Superior! I shouldn't say this, but I kind of hope you don't get it, because I like you too much!!!

Dear Sister,  
I hope you win the contest for Mother of the Year.

Sister,  
I hope you get mother superior, but I don't want you to leave. Even though I got a C in religion, I will do worse without you to help me.

Sister,  
For us a big loss  
For you a big gain  
We all love you  
We hope you love us the same.

**HELP WANTED**—Catholic Charities is asking for volunteers to help prepare mailings for the annual Charities Appeal, which was announced in last week's Criterion. If you have a little spare time and would like to assist a worthy cause, call Pat Kelley at 849-4503.



## SHORT STATIONS OF THE CROSS

1. Jesus is condemned to die.  
God, through sin, I crucify.
2. Jesus bears the bitter cross.  
Bear me up in grief and loss.
3. Jesus falls in blood and woe.  
Sins of mine have struck Him low.
4. Son and Mother meet in pain.  
Must they grieve for me in vain?
5. Simon helps to bear the load.  
Lead me, too, along the road.
6. On a cloth He prints His face.  
In my soul Thy image trace.
7. Struck to earth again by me.  
Help me rise to follow Thee.
8. "Weep for sin," He tells them here.  
Jesus make my grief sincere.
9. Thrice He falls, by lashes torn.  
In Thy blood I ride, reborn.
10. Stripping Christ, they tear His skin.  
Help me tear my flesh from sin.
11. In His hands, they drive the nails.  
In Thy hands, I cannot fail.
12. Jesus dies, His all to give.  
By Thy death teach me to live.
13. Mary, as you take your son.  
Take me, too, when life is done.
14. Buried with Christ who dies for me.  
May I rest at last in Thee.

(Reprinted from Sunday bulletin of St. Joseph parish, Terre Haute)

**TOUCHING TRIBUTE**—Archbishop George J. Biskup received a prolonged standing ovation at the conclusion of Tuesday evening's Chrism Mass when it was announced to the capacity congregation of priests, Religious and laity in St. Peter and Paul Cathedral that he was observing the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and his 20th year in the episcopacy. It was a tribute which left the Archbishop obviously touched.

## APRIL 10

An Easter Basket Blessing will be held again this year at St. Monica parish, 6131 North Michigan Road, Indianapolis, after the 8 a.m. Mass.

The blessing originates from an European tradition when baskets of food were blessed to be eaten on Easter morning. The various kinds of food had symbolic meanings; e.g., colored eggs were a sign of the new life shared in Christ's resurrection and round loaves of bread symbolized sharing in the eucharist.

Father Albert Ajamie, pastor of St. Monica's, invites anyone interested in having their Easter food blessed to attend the ceremony.

## APRIL 12

Members of Mother Theodore Circle, Daughters of Isabella, will meet for Mass, a pitch-in dinner and business meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the Knights of Columbus Hall, 1302 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. Father John Minta will be celebrant for the Mass.

The Council of Catholic Women of St. Michael parish, Greenfield, will meet at Newcomer's community room at 7:30 for a Plant Party under the direction of Jean's Jungle.

St. Paul Hermitage Ave. Maria Guild, Beech Grove, will hold its monthly dessert and business session at 12:30 p.m. Hostesses for the dessert include Mrs. Elwood Ellis, Mrs. Walter Stumpf and Mary McCarthy.

## APRIL 13

The members of the Altar Guild of St. Philip Neri parish, Indianapolis, remind card players of the regular monthly Card Party at 7:30 p.m. in the parish hall.

The regularly scheduled Card Party and Luncheon will be held at St. Mark parish hall, Indianapolis, beginning with the luncheon at 11:30 and followed by cards at 12:30.

Leisure Day, a monthly program at Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis, will begin with registration at 9 a.m.

## APRIL 15

A post-Easter Dance will be sponsored by the Single

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## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Christian Adults at the Clubhouse of Westlake Arms Apartments, Indianapolis, from 8:30 p.m. to midnight. Advance ticket sales are \$2; tickets at the door will be \$2.50 per person. For further information call Donna Kelly, 634-9179.

The freshman class at St. Mary Academy, Indianapolis, is sponsoring a school benefit dance from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Teen-agers are invited. Advance tickets are \$1; tickets at the door will be \$1.25.

## APRIL 15-16

A Rummage Sale at St. Jude parish, Spencer, will be in progress from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

## APRIL 15-17

A Tobit Week-end for engaged couples will be held at Alverna Retreat House, Indianapolis. The program aims to provide couples who plan to be married an opportunity to develop a deeper relationship and understanding of each other through communication in the main areas of their lives—mental, emotional and spiritual.

The staff includes trained Marriage Encounter couples with the assistance of Father Martin Wolter, O.F.M., and Father Anton Braun, O.F.M. For more detailed information call Alverna, (317) 257-7338.

Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis, will sponsor a Women's Retreat beginning with registration on Friday at 7 p.m. Father Hilary Oltensmeyer, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad Archabbey will conduct the week-end program. Contact the Retreat

House, (317) 545-7681, for further information.

## APRIL 16

The Fifth Wheel Club of the Indianapolis area will have a covered dish supper and white elephant auction during the evening at Glenbrook Apartment Clubhouse, 6600 N. Keystone Avenue. Call Mrs. Carol Seal, 545-5849, for further information.

## APRIL 19

The annual Card Party under the auspices of the Newman Guild of Butler University, Indianapolis, will be held at 11:30 a.m. at the Cambridge Inn Cafeteria, East 71st Street and Road 37.

## APRIL 20

The second annual "Spring into Summer" Fashion Show and Luncheon for the benefit of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis, will be held at Marten House, West 86th Street.

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The luncheon begins at 12 noon.

For reservations or further information, call Fatima Retreat House, (317) 545-7681.

## SOCIALS

**MONDAY:** St. Ann, 6:30 p.m.; Our Lady of Lourdes, 6:30 p.m. **TUESDAY:** Assumption, 6:30 p.m.; K of C, Plus X Council #3433, 7 p.m.; Roncalli High School, 6:30 p.m.; St. Simon, 6:45 p.m. **WEDNESDAY:** St. Anthony, 6:30 p.m.; St. Francis de Sales, 1:30-11 p.m.; St. Roch, 7-11 p.m. **THURSDAY:** St. Catherine's parish hall, 6:30 p.m. **FRIDAY:** St. Andrew parish hall, 6:30 p.m.; St. Bernadette school auditorium, 6:30 p.m.; St. Christopher parish hall, Speedway, 7 p.m.; St. Rita parish hall, 6:30 p.m. **SATURDAY:** St. Francis de Sales, 6 p.m.; K of C Council #437, 6 p.m. **SUNDAY:** Cardinal Ritter High School, 6 p.m.; St. Philip parish hall, 3 p.m.

## WINDS OF CHANGE

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**APRIL 15**

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## Commentary

The opinions expressed in these editorial columns represent a Catholic viewpoint—not necessarily THE Catholic viewpoint. They are efforts of the editors to serve public opinion within the Church and within the Nation.

# Do you remember?

Easter 1977—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ occurs at a time when many of His followers seem to have forgotten Him.

Some do not care for the reforms of Vatican II and so have threatened to set up their own Church. Some do not care for the ministry of priesthood in the Church and so would create their own. Some object to moral standards of any kind and would follow their consciences without any recourse to the principles of moral theology. Some do not even like the way Jesus is depicted in a dramatic presentation of His life on television.

Hearing the Passion read on Palm Sunday reminded us that Scripture is never far away from recognizing the conflict of being Christian in an unfriendly and unjust society.

The words of our Lord to the women of Jerusalem were especially pregnant: "Weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days will surely come when people will say, 'Happy are those who are sterile, the wombs that have never borne, the breasts that have not been nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!'; to the hills, 'Cover us!'. For if men behave like this in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?"

Sometimes all of life seems like that dire prediction. Our age appears to be as disrespectful of the value of human life as was Christ's own age. Lack of respect for life permeates our society so much that it becomes a part of even our own selves. This lack of respect breeds a distrust of everyone and everything. No man is willing to risk even a kind word to another for fear that it will be misinterpreted, mishandled or perhaps just simply spit back into one's face. Man is so much into himself that he suspects anything that is not himself.

Most frightening of all, however, is man's profound fear of himself. We not only do not trust one another, we do not trust ourselves. We tend to apologize for every word of conviction that we speak. We feel defensive whenever we take a position. Or we take the safer route and take no position at all. We accuse one another of failing to provide leadership, for we fear providing it ourselves,

but we hate ourselves for it and so accuse others of the very thing we lack.

What feeds our fear and why do we not have more faith in ourselves and trust in one another? The great enemy in society is television, some say. Or the computer. Or the bomb. Such claims ignore the guilt in each man himself. Such judgments from contemporary Salem witch trials project an internal guilt without.

Man himself is human. He has inherited something called original sin, and this means that he is human. He cannot behave in any other way. Man will always fear himself and those like him. Original sin means that man is confused and broken and unable to care for himself. Man is no better than the ground upon which he walks.

Such recognition of himself is paramount if man is to appreciate Easter. A world in which man continues to isolate himself from himself and his fellowman is a world in which man has forgotten to celebrate Easter. Christians are jubilant over the freedom they enjoy because one man has healed that brokenness. They are joyful that living makes sense and that a promise of eternal life exists. Christians are people who believe in themselves and in one another because a God-man has entered human history and made an offer that cannot be refused. It is useless pretending to be Christian when we do not show our respect for ourselves and for one another.

The news of the Resurrection is out. Yet it does not make the front pages of our newspapers nor is it the lead story on the nightly televised news. Man has hypnotized himself into forgetting all about it. He has become arrogant, self-righteous, joyless and immobile. He has become a killer of life rather than a giver of life. He has contracted amnesia and forgotten not only the event itself, but what the event has accomplished for him.

Sick people need physicians to heal their illness. Unfortunately, too many Christians are celebrating without knowing why and dying without treating the sickness. If the Resurrection is to be noticed, man needs to ask his fellowman for help in curing his illness.—T.W.

BY MOST REV. CARROLL T. DOZIER

"I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from his resurrection" (Phil. 3, 10).

Have you ever sat on the banks of the Mississippi and watched the flow of the water and wondered? Or on the banks of any other river?

The Mississippi begins way up in Minnesota and flows from its source down through the heart of the United States, past Memphis, past New Orleans and into the Gulf of Mexico. The flowing waters bring life, and food and drink along the vast area. It brings energy to cities; it enriches the soil. It flows past Memphis at five knots, day after day.

Have you ever wondered about the age of this river? Have you wondered how it started? Will it end?

The imagery of flowing water has been apparent to humankind from the beginning of recorded history. As God separated the waters from the land as it is written: "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear" (Gen. 1, 9).

Thus begins the creation story. Isaiah uses the imagery of all nations flowing towards the mountain of the Lord (Is. 2, 2).

The Song of Songs relates the bride and bridegroom in the words: "You are a garden fountain, a well of water flowing fresh from Lebanon" (Song 4, 15).

DO YOU WONDER NOW why Paul uses the expression and imagery of "flowing" and joins it with the resurrection?

"On Friday evening Joseph of Arimathea requested the body and laid it in his own tomb which had been hewn from a formation of rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away" (Mt. 27, 57-60).

Such finality which the words indicate, is the finality of human things. But much more than human beings are caught in these events. If it were of human things, it would be as if the river stopped flowing. Death would triumph, it would be as if the river stopped flowing. Death would triumph. Sin would win the day.

But the events are of God. The events are of God for us: "I mean that

God, in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not counting men's transgressions against them, and that he has entrusted the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5, 19).

The power flowing from His resurrection is reconciliation.

IT IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE week now and there is an earthquake, the angel of the Lord came to the stone, rolled it back and sat on it. How relaxed he must have been to the sight of Mary Magdalene and the other

Mary. In appearance he resembled a flash of lightning while his garments were as dazzling as snow. You will remember that imagery from seeing the sun glisten on the snow last winter. That is the sight the evangelist is trying to get you to remember. But his message, what is that, what did he say?

"Do not be frightened, I know you are looking for Jesus the crucified, but he is not here. He has been raised, exactly as he promised" (Mt. 28, 5-6).

We began with the prayerful request, the words of St. Paul as recorded in his letter to the Philippians, "I wish to know Christ." Who is he? What differentiates him? What about Him do we need to recall? In the first place when He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Secondly, He took the form of a slave.

Then He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross.

Now it was because of this, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name above every other name. Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2, 6-11).

When you know that Jesus Christ is Lord, you begin to know the power that flows from His resurrection. "The old order has passed away; now all is new! All this has been done by God" (2 Cor. 5, 17).

EVERYTHING ABOUT US and around us has been changed. As Genesis pictures the work of God in arranging and creating the world, so too does the Good News picture the rearrangement of the world in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. God has done this in Jesus.

Death has been conquered. Sin has been forgiven. We are a new creation. All around us has been reconciled by God in Christ.

Reconciliation is the power which flows from His resurrection. Reconciliation alone has the power to bind up our wounds, to heal our hurts, to make us see not only who we are, but also see who our neighbor is.

Then will come justice, then will come peace. These are the other powers which flow from His resurrection. They are the elements of the new creation, reconciliation, justice and peace.

Sit alongside the river again and look quietly at the flow of the water, see how it serves, nourishes and sustains as it accomplishes its task. Think now of the power of Christ's life. He is Lord, and contemplate His grace flowing day after day, year after year, as His kingdom is nourished and sustained. Only let us be aware that we are called to that ministry of reconciliation, yes, we are called.

Alleluia! He has gone before us into Galilee where we will see Him.



## CONQUEST OVER SIN

# Easter: feast of Christian optimism

BY MSGR. JOHN P. FOLEY

Did you ever think that things couldn't get any worse—and they did? Now you know how the Apostles felt on Good Friday—no hope, no help, no happiness.

But Easter Sunday changed all that—and it made Christians optimists ever since.

First, there is no more fear of death. Death, for the true Christian, is not the end of life but a major milestone in life's progress to eternity with God.

Because of what Christ did, the Christian can ask: "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?"

Secondly, material things are no longer worshipped, but they are revered. Material things are not worshipped, because it is clear that God is not limited to a wooden image or a stone temple. Material things are revered, however, because it is clear that God not only created everything but sanctified matter in a special way by becoming man and by conquering through His resurrection the dissolution and decay to which matter is subject. Material things are thus neither idolized nor despised.

Thirdly, Christ's conquest over malicious murder—and over all sin—by His Resurrection proves that there is no evil so monstrous that it cannot be overcome and no person so corrupt that he cannot be saved. Thus, in the face of injustice and oppression, Christians can remain optimistic. Their liberation will come not only in eternity, but even in time—as the influence of the Gospel brings greater sensitivity to human dealings and as the teaching of Christ transforms human hearts. As the Good Thief discovered, the promise of paradise is sufficient to bring peace; the assurance of forgiveness can bring happiness even to the cross; the love of Christ gives new meaning to life—and to death.

Christ, life is not ended but merely changed by death. If, because of this conviction, all important decisions were made in the light of eternity, the world would soon be transformed.

In a callous world, the fact that God became man and rose from the dead should bring a profound sensitivity to the dignity of every human being, to the sacredness of every human life, to the goodness of all creation. This concern that all persons be treated with reverence and all things be treated with care because they reflect God's creative and redemptive love could also transform the world.

In a cowardly world, the fact that God has conquered the power that any evil force can bring to bear should bring courage to those who face the reality of suffering, of injustice and of persecution. The realization that no malice can ultimately endure, no evil can ultimately endure, can foster heroism.

The weak are often ignored or even despised and where revenge is often sought against real or imagined malefactors, Christ's combination of weakness and forgiveness on the cross is made to seem both remarkable and exemplary when the power of His resurrection is revealed. He bore our physical infirmity; He understood our moral weakness when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Those strengthened by the power of Christ's resurrection must be ready to understand and to forgive—and the understanding of weakness and the forgiveness of transgression are also qualities which could transform the world.

The power flowing from the resurrection of Christ is a faith giving sight to the blind, a hope giving courage to the timid and a love giving life to the lonely, the weak and the ashamed who realize that, sustained and forgiven by God, they can do all things in Him who strengthen them.

IN A HEARTLESS WORLD, where

WHAT IS THE POWER of Christ's resurrection today?

It should bring conviction, concern, courage and compassion.

In a confused world, the fact of Christ's resurrection should be for the believer the basis of a profound conviction that, for the follower of

## LETTERS WELCOME

The Criterion welcomes letters-to-the-editor. Readers should keep their letters as brief as possible. The editors reserve the right to edit letters in the interests of clarity or brevity. All letters must be signed though names can be withheld upon request. Address your letters to: The Criterion, P.O. Box 174, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.



I'M CONDUCTING A POLL ON WORKING MOTHERS.

## Letters to the Editor

### Mrs. Reichsman 'saddened' at the closing of St. Mary Academy

To the Editor:

I was saddened to read in The Criterion of March 11 that St. Mary Academy is to close at the end of the current term. The four years from September, 1933, to June, 1937, were happy and productive ones for me at St. Mary's after graduation from St. Joan of Arc grade school. My head teems with images and memories of those years.

Sister superior at that time was the incomparable Sister M. Leonette. I can see her now, pacing the auditorium stage during assembly, trying to get across to us in words the gentle womanly virtues which her life and behavior demonstrated to us all so well.

It is hard for me to conceive that this fine school, with its excellent mixture of academic, business and domestic science subjects, is not still needed. Could the scope of its recruitment of students perhaps be widened in some ecumenical demonstration rather than having the school actually close down?

What a loss it seems to be for the range of secondary school choices in Indianapolis! The Sisters of St. Francis have given so much and, I am

sure, still have so much to give to the education of the adolescent and young adult population of Indiana.

I would like to express publicly my personal thanks to the Sisters of St. Francis for the teaching, the example and the comradeship provided to my growing-up life both at the Academy and later at Marian College.

My appreciation and love goes out for those schools and all who served in them.

—Mary Jane [Lang] Reichsman  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Deny our schools to non-Catholics?

To the Editor:

Ellen Healey finds in "To Teach As Jesus Did" no call to educate non-Catholics. In the literal sense that is probably true. The public schools have the system and funds to provide education for the vast majority of these students whose parents choose to send them there.

### Cause of abortion

To the Editor:

In my opinion, the cause of abortion has not yet been correctly identified. I think women have abortions because they believe life is an accident of nature and God has nothing to do with it. It is not because they do not believe life is present from conception.

I think God says "Be" by letting that egg meet that sperm. They could be interrupted from this meeting by any number of natural causes. The fact that they ever meet is the miracle of life.

Since when, however, is welcoming non-Catholic students into our schools burdening the educational arm of the Church with evangelical work which is outside its province? Evangelization is "bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new." I thought this was one of the purposes of the Catholic school. Are we to deny this mission to non-Catholics who seek out our schools?

The Declaration on Christian Education of Vatican II, 9, states, "This sacred Synod earnestly entreats pastors of the Church and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools to achieve their purpose in an increasingly adequate way, and to show special concern for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith."

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## LAITY INVITED TO COMMENT

# Archdiocesan nuns seek guidance about mission

BY SR. CAROL ANN MUNCHEL

Effective service of the Church and its mission in Indiana is the central focus of 13 questions proposed for joint study by Catholics in the Indianapolis Archdiocese.

The PBF's (Providence, Benedictine, Franciscan Sisters) who have formulated them, trace the evolution of these questions to the challenge of LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious). At its 1976 National Assembly, LCWR called all Sisters "to move towards maximum interdependence with other groups and persons to attain shared goals."

**THE LOCAL COALITION** of the three Congregations with major superiors in the Archdiocese has envisioned its response as one of investigating the current status of the Church in Indiana and probing means for sharing the responsibility of evangelization with the entire Catholic population.

Since their four regional meetings in the Archdiocese in mid-February, the PBF's have met twice to study the

most effective means of furthering study and action on the data regarding the Church in the Archdiocese which had been presented at those meetings.

**THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**, which have already been distributed to all convents in the Archdiocese, are offered to Criterion readers for discussion and investigation.

Responses may be forwarded to the Criterion, P.O. Box 174, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.

**QUESTIONS: HOW AND WHERE DO WE BEST SERVE THE CHURCH IN INDIANA?**

**A. Mission of Church in Indiana**

1. What new models (ways) can we explore for serving the people on the parish level?

2. What is the sense of responsibility on the part of the Church in Indiana toward the Black, the Spanish, and other minority groups? To women? the poor? aged? alienated youth? divorced Catholics? unchurched? etc.?

3. What is the mission of the Church towards the needs of adults today, and what are we doing to meet those needs and/or to prepare to meet them?

4. How can we encourage among the youth more vocations to mature Christian living in the single life, marriage, the priesthood and religious life?

5. What are we doing to further the formation of strong, Christian families?

6. What collaborative efforts have we undertaken to promote Ecumenism?

7. How can we better serve the areas of Indiana characterized as "outside the Church boundaries" (geographical boundaries)?

**B. Implementation of Mission of Church in Indiana.**

1. In striving for greater collaboration among Religious, priests and laity in service to the Church, how can we eliminate the "we" and "they" concept?

2. As believers in Jesus Christ and sharers in the Eucharist, how do we

## GROWTH THROUGH PENITENCE

## Intimacy with Jesus grows through contact

BY FR. AUGUSTINE HENNESSY, C.P.  
(Last of a series)

Even before Catholics in general discovered a new enthusiasm for reading the Bible, most of us knew the story behind some scriptural incidents from having seen Biblical paintings. If we stir up our memories, we can no doubt recall paintings or prints of Daniel in the lions' den, the farewell of Naomi and Ruth, the boy Jesus instructing the doctors in the temple, or, perhaps, Salome carrying on a tray the severed head of John the Baptist.



But hardly any of us missed seeing one picture long before we ever looked at the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. It is the image of Jesus standing on a threshold and knocking at a door. Somebody might even have pointed out to us that there was no doorknob on the outside. It was a door that had to be opened from within. Only years afterwards were we able to associate the picture with the words of the risen Lord addressed to the Bishop of Laodicea, "Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him and he with me" (Rev. 3, 20).

**INTIMACY WITH HIMSELF** is the enviable gift which Christ offers to all

who listen to His Gospel and achieve genuine conversion of mind and heart. This intimacy is a loving knowledge of His own inner self, the secrets of His own heart. Such knowledge with accompanying love is the wisdom which sets us free and gives us the inner sight which produces a mystic-minded Christian. It is meant to be a foretaste of the joy we expect in a newer and better world.

Like the intimacy in a human romance, intimacy with Jesus grows through multiple contacts with Him, especially in sacramental encounters. These encounters purge our egotism and engender that purity of heart which enables us to see God and become real lovers. Even more—recognizable images of Christ.

Speaking of the value of frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation, the introduction to the new Rite of Penance says, "Frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise, but a serious striving to perfect the grace of baptism so that, as we bear in our body the death of Jesus Christ, His life may be seen in us ever more clearly" (No. 7 b).

**Intimacy in any human relationship can be ruined by any one of three destructive forces: fear, loss of wonderment, or overpossessiveness. And the same three barriers to intimacy threaten the deepening of our bond with our Lord.**

St. John tells us that perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn. 4, 18). It is impossible to discover the full beauty of another person's face or mind or heart if our vision is blurred by fear. Whether we are afraid of punishment or embarrassment or our own inability to respond to another's overtures of love, fear will always cripple us. It will make us limp in the way of love when we are called to run with eagerness and contentment of heart. And the way of love is a way of deeper discovery.

**SIMILARLY, A LOSS of wonderment** can take the heart out of intimacy. Pseudo-practicality is always imperiling the deeper meaning of love relationships even our relationship with God. The beauty of one whom we love is meant to be enjoyed, not just used for our own sense of well-being. Ironically as it sounds, we can even try to reduce God Himself to a mere adjunct to our own contentment.

Jesus came to lead us to the discovery of the inexhaustible beauty of His Father's love for us. Many of us never really achieve intimacy with this Father because we want to use Him as a guarantee of personal salvation, a deliverer from human misery, or a protector against the risks in loving. We never learn to delight in Him as "a Beauty ever ancient, ever new."

**None of us can be overpossessive of God. But we can be overpossessive of our own image of God. We can be tenacious of our own way of conceiving Him, our own way of talking about Him; we can be overpossessive about even the formulations of our faith.**

The God of mercy and love cannot allow us to turn any creation of our own minds into an idol. Not even our gift for describing His own goodness. No saint ever insisted that his or her own way of responding to the gift-giving of our Father was the only way or the timeless way or the never-changing way. Our Father wants us to be detached from His gifts so that we can become intimate with His immeasurable goodness.

St. Augustine's "Confessions" are an enraptured outpouring of a perceptive man's spirit in the presence of God's gift of intimacy. The contemporary theologian, Karl Rahner, has written a sentence which is a sharp and discernible echo of that great classic: "Understanding the heart of Jesus in faith, hope, and love," he said, "is the one long adventure, ever new, that ends only when one has arrived at one's own heart and discovered that, after all, that frightful pit is filled with God."

## THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

## What are major steps involved in becoming a permanent deacon?

Last of a series

How does a man become a permanent deacon? The real answer is determined by the type of program available within a particular diocese or available to candidates from the diocese. Since we don't have a full program at this stage, it is impossible to talk from that point of reference. However, what will be discussed is a typical program that is in existence in several dioceses in this country.

When are the sessions held? There are normally two patterns which are followed. Either the classes are held twice a week, almost in the same way as anyone would do if he were taking

## Meetings slated

Following is a list of the Open Meetings on the Permanent Diaconate to be held in the Archdiocese during the next few weeks. The meetings—which are a follow-up to the series of articles which have been carried in The Criterion during Lent—are open to all priests, members of parish councils, prospective candidates to the diaconate and to other interested persons. The meetings are all scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. The days and sites are as follows: **Thursday, April 28, St. Anthony, Indianapolis; Thursday, May 5, St. Gabriel, Connersville; Friday, May 6, St. Patrick, Terre Haute; and Monday, May 9, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany.**

college classes on a part-time basis while working at a regular job during the day. The other possibility is that the classes are held about once a month on a week-end from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.

In the first pattern given above the teachers are normally taken from diocesan priests, from others living within the diocese and who are professionally trained in their areas of concern. In the second pattern, the teaching staff is usually acquired on a loan basis from some seminary or college near the diocese. For us, that might be St. Meinrad College and Seminary. St. John's College in Minnesota does provide this service to various dioceses here in the Midwest.

**HOW LONG DOES THE** formal training last? Normally, three and one-half years. A deacon would be ordained after the first two and one-half years. However, following ordination, each deacon is required to complete another year of continuing education in ministry. The purpose of this requirement is to stress the necessity of continual growth and development in theology as well as in the practical skills of pastoral life in order to increase competence as a public minister.

**How can we describe this training program?** Hopefully the rest of the article will present the basic characteristics of the training program so that readers can see exactly what is involved.

The first characteristic is theological. The purpose of theological content and learning process is not to train theologians or religious educators primarily, but to assist the candidates to seek a deeper

contemporary understanding of faith in the light of their Catholic tradition. The basic theological focus of the training program aims at developing a deeper dedication to the person and mission of Jesus Christ and His continuing presence in the world through the visible believing community—the Church. All theology is discussed from a pastoral point of view. Each candidate is asked to direct his attention to the meaning of theology in relation to his own life and to the lives of the community in which he will serve.

**THE PROGRAM MUST BE** a personal one. Theological method used in each semester is designed to assist each candidate to question and challenge life and its meaning in an effort to assess and assimilate his personal and religious values more deeply. The candidate is introduced to a process of theologizing in the hope that he will continue a life-long search for more meaning in life for himself and others within the context of a Christian community as a man of service, reflection and prayer.

Adult education incorporates the strengths that a candidate brings to the program. Using his experience as data for reflection and sharing, and his maturity as grounds for motivation, learning and growth take place in pace groups of no more than ten men with a group leader. Direct input (lectures, reading, etc.) is used, but the main learning experience is participatory and self-directed within the context of the primary group.

By means of field experience and theological reflection under supervision, a candidate expands his experience of life and ministry. This field data constitutes an integral part of the content used in theological sessions. The candidates are gradually introduced to methods of reporting field experience in a group especially by the short case study method.

Since those candidates who are involved in the program come from various localities and represent various and diverse backgrounds, the training design must keep this in mind and accommodate itself to the different talents and needs of the people involved. Also there is a necessity that the program reflect the communities or situation which the candidates will serve.

**A LONG LIST OF SPECIFIC** subjects could be listed. However, at this point it seems to be more important that we cover the program from a general viewpoint. The subject matter of the courses which are included in the years of training are thorough and intensive. In addition to the program for the candidate, there is a complete program for the wives of the candidates. The wives' programs are designed to help the wives understand their faith better, to grow spiritually, and to more fully appreciate the reality which is a part of their lives.

This entire program is designed to deepen the candidate's exposure to Sacred Scripture, to theology, to spiritual formation, and to pastoral experience so that he will be led to new sensitivity concerning the faith-value of all that is a part of him: his Church, his family, his community. He will become more than ever a "community-service" man, a man of his church, in his image of himself, in his awareness of his mission, and in practical relations with people.

## Pope gives general absolution position

**VATICAN CITY**—In an apparent response to the questions of some bishops, Pope Paul VI declared on March 23 that general absolution may be permitted only in exceptional cases and may never dispense a Catholic from making a private confession.

At his weekly general audience, the Pope also reminded Catholics that the obligation to confess annually if one has committed a mortal sin and to receive Communion during Eastertide is still a "very serious law" in the Catholic Church.

Regarding general absolution, the Pope asserted that, "although the Church authorizes collective absolution in certain cases, please remember that this authorization is for exceptional cases and does not dispense from the need to make a personal confession."

**HE SAID THAT** permission to grant general absolution in exceptional cases is not intended to "deprive people of the experience, the advantages and the merit" of private confession.

The Pope's remarks may have been directed at the bishops of England and Wales who are reportedly seeking a broadening of the cases in which general absolution may be granted. Several bishops in England and Bishop Carroll Dozier of Memphis, Tenn., have held reconciliation rites in their dioceses in recent months at which general absolution has been granted.

Bishops who have authorized reconciliation rites with general absolution have emphasized that the rites have led to an increase, not a lessening, in individual confessions.

Many here, however, interpreted Pope Paul's March 23 comments as a clear sign that the Vatican does not intend to endorse the use of general absolution outside the very narrow conditions it has established.

In his audience talk, the Pope also firmly restated that the "very ancient Church precept" requiring Catholics to confess annually and receive Communion at Eastertide must still be obeyed.

"This is a very serious law of the Church which still holds," he insisted. "It is not a mere proposal nor a way of saying that those who want to go can, while those who don't want to don't have to."

He admitted that the obligation to confess once a year may be a difficult rule. But, he added, it is a "very healthy, wise and liberating one as well."

**"WE MUST CALL** attention to the growing lack of this sacramental practice," said the Pope.

"There have been noteworthy and multiple drops in faithfulness to and in the liveliness of the Christian life and the awareness of ecclesial life," he asserted.

He scored the "diminished awareness of the deep regeneration brought about in us through Baptism" among Christians who no longer confess.

The Pope asserted that modern man is losing the "moral courage" to admit that he has committed

sins. He said that this trend is "certainly not a sign of social progress."

He added, however, that the popularity of psychoanalysis proves that the sacrament of Penance is "not an unnatural practice, but rather one which follows the mainstream of man's development."

The pontiff scolded priests who do not make themselves available for confessions.

He urged them to "show esteem for the sacrament" and "not to flee from the penitence of hearing confessions for hours."

He called Penance "the therapeutic sacrament par excellence."

## Ecumenical

(Continued from Page 1)

government representatives, airline officials, U.S., Dutch and Spanish investigators, and television camera crews. Four surviving stewardesses also attended the services.

**COFFINS ALMOST FILLED** a huge hangar that became the morgue at Los Rodeos airport, where remains were gathered, embalmed and made ready for the final flight home. Earlier 69 survivors had been hospitalized here or sent to hospitals in the United States.

Among the few survivors in the cathedral was Mary Kay Waters of San Francisco, who lost both parents in the crash. She received Communion during the Mass, and later said the funeral services comforted her.

"It shows that people in the world care. It was touching to hear the local people crying in the back of the church," she added.

## 'Jesus of Nazareth' draws high rating

**NEW YORK**—The first part of Franco Zeffirelli's six-hour film "Jesus of Nazareth," shown on the NBC network April 3 from 8-11 p.m. EST, was "an outstanding television success," NBC officials said in releasing ratings figures.

The program received a 50 national share and a 32.2 Nielsen rating. National share means the percentage of all people in the United States watching television at that time.

The Nielsen rating means that 70 million viewers watched the program. In terms of viewers, Zeffirelli's film surpassed the Academy Awards telecast on March 28, which received a 31.0 rating.

## THE WORD THIS SUNDAY

By Father Donn Raabe

EASTER SUNDAY

"Alleluia!"

Easter Vigil (Luke 24:1-12)  
Easter Sunday (John 20:1-9)

This is the High Feast of the Church year—our salvation is accomplished. Jesus' self-sacrificing death has brought it about. The consciously willed evolutionary step taken by Jesus has brought for us His brothers and sisters the same possibility. How good is the Lord! He doesn't hold our past against us, but offers us a full share in His own life. Let us believe. Let us share this good news. Let us live it. Alleluia.

## 300-mile run fulfills vow

**SAN ANTONIO, Tex.**—In keeping a promise he made to God, 33-year-old Albert Rodriguez of San Antonio set off on a 300-mile run to the Rio Grande Valley.

Rodriguez says he plans to run about 70 miles a day until he reaches San Juan de los Lagos Church in San Juan.

**Rodriguez's daughter, Stephanie, is mentally retarded. She is five years old.**

"I made a promise," Rodriguez recalls, "that if Stephanie lived to her fifth birthday—March 20, 1977—I'd go to San Juan de los Lagos Church, a church of miracles, to give thanks." He made the promise when she was 13 months old.

**RODRIGUEZ, WHO** is a police sergeant at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), calls the run "Stephanie's Benefit Marathon Run." It is sponsored by the San Antonio Police Officers Association.

Any donations he raises during the event will go to the Bexar County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center where Stephanie is a patient.

Rodriguez says a major reason for making the run is to educate the public about mental retardation "and instill pride in the parents of mentally retarded children."

**HIS DAUGHTER** was born with brain damage, a heart murmur, a dislocated hip and breathing problems. Stephanie, he says, has never made

an attempt to walk. But she can crawl. He says he has accepted the fact she is mentally retarded.

Every day for a year, in preparation for this long run, Rodriguez has run between 20 and 40 miles. He stopped smoking and drinking and joined the YMCA athletic club to assist in this preparation.



**SPEAKER—Dr. Guy Underhill**, assistant of the Superintendent for Human Relations, Indianapolis Public Schools, will speak on "Ethnic Likenesses and Differences" in an Adult Education lecture in St. Monica Cafeteria on Thursday, April 14. The lecture is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., and the public is invited. There is no admission charge.



# 'He could rule forever; he could not die'

BY ANTOINETTE BOSCO

It must have been incredible. They saw Him hanging on the cross, exposed and exhausted, with His life's blood draining slowly from the gash in His side. If seeing is believing, there could be no doubt. He was dead. With their spirits matching His lifelessness, the followers of Jesus—

feeling betrayed, disillusioned, abandoned and hopeless—buried Him. Yet, not too many hours later, He was gone from His tomb. It could have been a trick, an unfunny joke, or the best magic show in town. It was none of the above. It was for real. His followers felt the natural elation that all winners feel. Now they

would show the world who was on top. They had a leader who had demonstrated that He was the greatest. There were Caesars and there would be kings and Napoleons who would rule by might and force and be called all powerful. But in every case, their power would end, taken over by another. Their power was fleeting, transitory and finally empty, because, without exception, each would die and their power would end.

Their leader proved He had the ultimate power—the control of His own death. He could rule forever because He could not die.

The conquering of death was, indeed, Jesus' message in his resurrection. He came back to show that He could be trusted when He said "I shall be with you always." He was keeping His promise made to them that He would be with them "to the end of the world."

**WHAT WAS HARD** to understand was His refusal to exercise the kind of power that made sense in His time—the power that made men cringe and obey, that put some men in control of others, that programmed the structures within which men would live, work and die.

His criteria for power was decidedly unusual. Power was not to be lumped with control of others, force or might. It was to be brought back to basics. Power originated with life and therefore had to do with how people controlled their own lives, from within. It therefore had to be as universal as life itself. Power belonged to everyone. But the question remained, what kind of power?

It would be a power as fundamental as the force which had produced both life and every support life needs to exist and renew it.

self. He stated it time and again: Love was the real power. It was the only thing you could take with you not just to your death, but beyond.

Love would add the essential quality to life that could put a person beyond the limited everyday conditions of existence. Even when despots ruled, or illness struck, or there were no jobs, love would be the way in which people could keep control of their lives, if not their lifestyle. Love would take life out of a category of endless individual cycles and make it intermingled, connected and continuous, making all people relatives, not opponents or adversaries. It would have the power to give people happiness and purpose, to make them special—whether they were slaves or kings.

**THAT MESSAGE** was hard to understand then and still is, unless you think of it in terms of its opposite—the absence of love—a sterile, cold, frightening place where individual value simply doesn't exist. Jesus didn't promise spectacular results, because His strange brand of power was being injected into a world which wants an instant, see-it-now pay-off, is me-centered and violence-prone. But He came back to earth to spell out once again how wrong people were to latch on to things that were destined to die. There was a better way to live and He was living proof of that—eternally.

The disciples, being human and knowing only their limited world, looked for a "hit them over the head and get even" power. But Jesus had no intention of taking over the world in the usual fashion. Because His kingdom was not of this world, experienced through the spirit, not the eyes, He chose to take over this world with a power which, likewise, was not of this world and could only be experienced through the spirit, not the eyes. Thus, love, a power springing from God, the Source of life, could never be ended by man, or self-destruct. It would remain always the only lasting power, magnificently on call to give nobility to every person.



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## GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY

# We must suffer to know the true meaning of joy

BY NORA GEISSLER

One could understandably be somewhat confused concerning the power of Christ's resurrection as we become further removed from the immediacy of His experience through the stretches of time. St. Paul speaks with great clarity, his words all the more powerful because of their simplicity, of his personal change of heart in witness of Christ's suffering. How does that same vibrant power come to us today? How does Christ continue to reveal His death and resurrection to us past the confines of time?

We all have some personal experience in sorrow and suffering. Hopefully, we also have some experiences rich in happiness and joy. The power of Christ's own personal experience is available to us through these very human experiences of ours.

I believe that Christ is closest to us when we suffer. Our own sadness, whether from loss, tragedy, or anxiety, is the testing time of our own faith. It is the time that challenges each of us to become more than we already are. The suffering Christ, realizing most fully the nature and

extent of commitment to challenge, does not leave us quaking and alone in our sorrow. That our own faith is tested through suffering seems undeniable, for if Christ is with us, and we are with Him why do we suffer?

**THE SUFFERING CHRIST** makes no sense without the risen Christ. And our own suffering makes little sense without some balance of joy. Imagine the joy of His followers finding their God risen from the dead! Imagine the leaps of faith to try to comprehend it! Just as we can comprehend to some small degree the monumental sufferings of Christ through our own experience with sorrow, so perhaps we can envision His own triumphant joy when we are made joyful through the happy experiences we are offered.

The sequence of joy and sorrow is circular. At any point we may enter into that power available only through His suffering and triumph. Some of us are largely blessed with happiness. Others seem to be plagued with sorrow. Whatever the pattern of our own experience, we can be sure that God has in mind for us to be whole people. And to be whole means that we must know both sides of His experience.

Christ's resurrection is more easily decipherable in joy than it is in sorrow. Even if we do not have extensive experience with sorrow, there is something in the human heart which can only believe the acuteness of honest joy through faith.

The value of sorrow and suffering is revealed less directly. Perhaps we sorrow so that we learn compassion, so that we make ourselves more readily available to others in need. Sorrow and suffering make us God's tools. Perhaps we suffer so that we may know the true meaning of joy in the renewal of spring, in the birth of a child, or in the finding of a mate with whom to share our life. The true meaning of that joy is that God is caring very singularly for each of us. He challenges us to continue to expand the

notions of our own personal limitations by presenting us with suffering.

**NONE OF THESE** experiences happen in a vacuum. It is hard to see our pathway in life; hard to see where we fit into the grand scheme. There seems to be a tendency in sorrow to keep

our experience private, not wanting to burden others. And often joys are played down for fear that the response of others will not be as positive as our own response. None of our experiences are private or independent from those we know and love. We have a tremendous effect on one

another and when we share our experiences we open opportunities which lead us to discover our own road, as well as helping others to clarify their vision.

This notion of interconnected pathways carries with it great responsibility. It is a difficult way to live with others for it

means we must be charitable, that we must strive for the good of others, and that we maintain a faith that we will also be cared for in a similar manner. We must envelop others in their sorrows, and dance with them in their joys. And perhaps the hardest thing for most of us, we must allow

others to comfort us in our sorrows. Again, none of this makes sense except that Christ suffered for us, and thought each of us individually worthy of redemption. And maybe we can welcome suffering because it inevitably leads to the joy of the risen Christ.

## Maria bore a special cross on Good Friday

BY JOSEPH HOLLAND

"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Phil. 3, 10).

Maria and her mother sat quietly in the dark chapel. She prayed over these words, from Paul's letter to the Philippians, until the Good Friday services began. Other Indian people from her small village were also entering the chapel, a scene repeated at this moment across thousands of similar Latin American villages. Maria wondered if the sadness ran as deep in the other villages, or was the pain she and her mother felt a special cross?

Her father, who often led the people in prayer in his role as "minister of the Word," had just been taken away by the political police. Perhaps he would be returned tomorrow. Or perhaps they would find his body scarred with torture marks in the river. Or perhaps he would simply never be heard of again. This is what was happening with so many of the other active Latin American leaders in nearby villages, and especially with those whom the Padre had blessed as "ministers of the Word."

**OF COURSE, MARIA** and her mother are fictitious, as are the details of their story which follows. But the heart of the story is terribly true, for in our time persecution is again being visited on the Church—in the areas of torture, and even death of people like her father, and in the tears and loneliness of people like Maria and her mother.

Across Latin America, a great confrontation is beginning between

Christians who witness the Gospel and a new form of government called "The National Security State." The name is misleading, however, for it is not security which the government gives to poor people. Rather it sees the poor as an internal enemy to be controlled, repressed, and sometimes eliminated. It crucifies the poor, and it crucifies the Church too when it stands with the poor.

But Latin America is not the only scene of Christian persecution. Christians, even bishops, are persecuted in Southern Africa, when they speak out against the sin of racism. In Eastern Europe, new tensions are arising as the Church defends the rights of workers and believers together. But let us return to

Maria, for in her meditation we may be able to listen in on a great swell of prayer which is rising in the whole Church.

**MARIA PRAYED OVER** the words of the Apostle Paul. She knew from her Bible studies that Paul wrote these words while he was in prison. Like her father, he could say, "my imprisonment is for Christ" (Phil. 1, 13). He, too, had been put there "for defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1, 16). Yet it was hard to accept these sacrifices, not only for her father who was probably suffering at this moment, but also for her mother who would now face the world alone—without her husband's love and penitence. Then there were her little brothers and sisters,

who loved so much to play with him in the early evening. No more would the joyful cries "papiito" ring out in the early evening as he returned from a hard day in the fields.

She even thought about her own loss. Here, she hesitated, afraid that she was being selfish. But who would sit down with her in the evenings after supper to study the beautiful writings of the Bible. Her father had always done this with her, and with older children in the village. He was so wise, and so holy—they all loved him.

Then it came to her. She knew she must begin to

study the Bible on her own. She had learned to read and write at the Sisters' school. She could ask the Padre for books to help her. She could teach other young people, too, all through the village. Perhaps one day the Padre would even bless her as a "minister of the Word."

Then she bent her head and prayed through the Spirit within her. For each person taken away—people like her father, holy and wise, leavers of the poor from whom they came and with whom they remained—she asked that, for each one taken away violently, many more young people like herself would take their place. She prayed to be worthy of this new call enveloping her life.

Her family's cross was already creating new life.



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# 'When humankind dares to touch as Jesus did'

BY MARY MAHER

Jesus came forth from death to life wishing to be touched, wishing to cast out fear in the concrete action of His body. The feast of Easter is, among other things, about life given when humankind dares to touch as Jesus did. The touch of Easter is about healing.

A recent television drama, "Green Eyes," gave us a G.I. who returned to Viet Nam to

find the child he fathered. He seeks his child one day in an orphanage of hundreds of abandoned and hungry children. The moment he enters the building, 20 or more children with ribbed body forms projecting from flesh jump up from their meal and run to him to be touched. Touch is that basic.

The need for touch, for contact and communication led many Americans in the middle 1960s to encounter, marathon and sensitivity groups. The point of these was more than physical pleasure. They sought to lead people to new behavioral aliveness to their own and others' presence. They strove to relate people to their environment again. They invited people who were dissociated from themselves to be back in touch. Most of us have experienced this power of healing touch. We say to those we love, "Keep in touch," and it is more than conversational metaphor.

I RECALL AS A CHILD getting lost in a Minnesota cornfield when I was trailing my father who was hunting pheasants. I could hear him calling but I went right on crying, for his voice told me that he was near but not yet with me. When I felt his arms around me, I knew I was safe. Touch does assure us of being with others in a way in which the other senses sometimes do not. At the bed of a sick person, touch is often the only action which brings response. The Church knew this basic wisdom as it chose to touch

with all those who are sick and in need of care.

Yet touch is not always human. Shakespeare was a master of this awareness; he presented many characters who were betrayed by others who touched them. Communication, also a form of touching other lives, is not always human.

A recent movie, "Network," subtly leads us to see how this is so. A gifted

young television producer is able to produce a high Nielsen-rating program. She uses this ability to dominate others in such an unfeeling way that she actually loses the ability to communicate and feel the needs of the man who loves her. Nothing could be harder than this sort of isolation in which persons lose touch with their relatedness to others.

We need to be touched by relationships. Sometimes that touch is human in the sense that it gives us pain rather than takes any away. A person sees the goodness in us and will not let us live with any falseness which denies that good. Or a person may see how we need to look at certain things in our lives that need change; he or she tells us that. Such touching may be very human. All touch is not of Cinderella softness; some comes in what Carl Jung called the "stab that opens us to ourselves." Both kinds may be healing.

OUR CULTURE CRIES OUT for healing that comes from touching other lives. CB radios link people with their homes, offices and casual traffic associates.

Hotlines are available whenever we need to touch one other human being in order to live with strength through moments of anxiety and pain. Meals on wheels bring food to the aged and contact with concerned others. Many found that mingling and talking with others in the crowds of Inauguration Day or Bicentennial, was good.

The bodily, communicating presence of Jesus Christ is heightened in the Easter mystery. He communicated His body—we call it Eucharist. Scripture does not present Jesus risen as many later painters did: an angelic body whose spirit lifted it beyond human concerns. His bodily presence touched others and cast out fear. He spoke with His disciples of placing their hands upon the sick.

He did not wish to be identified as a pure spirit; He asked His friends to "feel me, and you will know, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones" (Luke 24, 36-39). And it would be hard for those of us who live near Chesapeake Bay or fresh lakes to believe that Jesus did not enjoy the cooked fish He was given in

a post-resurrection meal setting.

Easter is a bodily feast. And it is a time to be in touch with the earthy Hebraic background in which Jesus was formed. The first resurrection event is a very busy affair of earth. People ran with joy or fear; some protested the impossibility of the whole

event; some ran behind doors to lock them. However, they had one response in common: All sought to be in touch with others and with the meaning of the event.

Indeed it was fitting then that Jesus risen should present Himself as One in whom they could commonly touch each other!

## Novena service

A Novena of Tuesdays to honor St. Anthony of Padua before his feast on Monday, June 13, will begin at Sacred Heart Church, Indianapolis, on Tuesday, April 12. The devotions will be held at 7 p.m. every Tuesday until June 7.

Father Tom Vos, O.F.M., of Sacred Heart parish will conduct the novena services and preach the homilies.

The public is invited to participate.

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## THE ROMAN PRAETOR AND THE SLAVE

The Colosseum glitened in the blazing Roman sun, That had often seen the triumph and the martyr's trophy won;  
The massive circus quivered with the shouting of the crowd,  
When the mighty Praetor entered with his grand cortege and bowed.

A spectacle awaited; soon the swell'ring, seething mob Manifested their impatience yonder prison cell to rob.  
Impatient, too, the leopards in a spacious cage beneath;  
They were ready for the slaughter—primed and armed to the teeth.

The Christian slave was ushered to assume his noble stand  
Where so many died before him—on the Colosseum sand.  
Into the vast arena from their isolated den  
Bounded forth the savage monsters feared alike by beasts and men.

But lo! they stopped and cowered as they neared the sainted slave,  
Then returned as though affrighted to their blood-be-spattered cave!

The Praetor's heart was melted such a marvel to behold;  
All aglow with admiration was that heart till then so cold.

Thrusting off his jeweled sceptre, he forsook the royal band,  
And united with the Christian on the blood-bespattered sand,  
"I do believe," he shouted, "In the God the Christians love

[And his voice shook with emotion] ". . . in that Father up above."

All was silence for a moment; then there rose a savage cry  
From the throats of teeming thousands, "Both the Christian dogs must die!"

"Release the beasts!" was ordered, and some rebel dared obey;

Bursting forth, the fearful leopards bounded out to take their prey.

That day above in heaven were two splendid garlands spun;

In the bloody Colosseum was a double triumph won.

—By Fred W. Fries

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## VIEWING WITH ARNOLD

## 'Slap Shot' hits new low

BY JAMES W. ARNOLD

"Slap Shot" is apparently intended as a thinking person's black comedy on hockey, on violence in sports, on American values, or the commercial and media exploitation of all of the above.

Unfortunately, it alienates almost everyone in its natural audience, except

perhaps the inebriated low-life slob who hopes to salivize—the folks who use back-to-back obscenities to spice their arid vocabularies, who yell "Kill, kill!" and enjoy sports events not imaginatively but literally as mini-wars.

It's probably the most foul-mouthed show in movie history (which covers some impressive territory),

although written by a person named Nancy Dowd, based on the experiences of her hockey-playing brother. Ms. Dowd appears anxious to prove she can write anything a macho male can write, and is not intimidated by anything that goes on behind locker-room doors or in the manly combat of the arena. The result is not only raunchy and cynical, but violent, blood-spattered entertainment that makes Bronson and Eastwood seem like fashion coordinators.

THE FILM COULD be ignored and consigned to the pits it deserves, except for the track record of its other key participants, chiefly actor Paul Newman and director George Roy Hill ("Butch Cassidy," "The Sting"). Out of simple respect, one hesitates to drop the axe: what could

they possibly have had in mind? The increasing pollution of sports with violence—mayhem is clearly becoming an all-pervasive aspect of North American culture, and perhaps it has no geographical boundaries—qualifies as a fresh and very important social issue. It deserves attention, and "Slap Shot," for all its sloppiness and confusion, raises the question like a red flag.

Scraped down to its basics, "Slap Shot" is about a minor league pro hockey team (based in Charlestown, Pa.) suffering both on the ice and at the gate, and close to expiring. Player-coach Newman, a street-wise con man, encourages psychological and physical warfare against their opponents, and starts a rumor that the team is moving to Florida. Immediately, of course, the team starts to

win, media interest perks up, fans pack the arena and form a booster club. The only player who resists the new roughhouse style is a Princeton graduate (Michael Ontkean), who prefers to play the game as it was invented.

IN TURNING THE club into an adult "Bad News Bears," Newman's motive is to save the team and the players' jobs, but the payoff is that the owner (a slick upper-class female) still insists on folding the club as a profitable tax write-off. The ending is a kind of chaotic triple reverse. The team decides to play the championship game straight, but gets badly mauled in the opening period by the enemy's hired goons. Hearing that big league scouts are watching, opportunist Newman orders his guys back to the attack, and

the game turns into a bloody brawl that is delighting the broadcasters and spectators. Suddenly, Ontkean (in disgust) skates onto the ice and begins a choreographed striptease that defuses the fighting, distracts the mob, and brings victory by forfeit.

Clearly, "Slap Shot" doesn't pretend a realistic-dramatic approach to the subject, like the recent made-for-TV film, "The Deadliest Season." Instead, the style is heavy satire by exaggeration, which accounts for the endless vulgarity, the stupidity of the players, fans, wives and customers, the crass self-interest of Newman and general manager Strother Martin, and even the absurd gory extremes of the violence. (Except for the blood, it is neatly staged slapstick of borderline taste, including a shot—for laughs—of the organist getting beamed by the puck). The style also sets up the credibility of the final striptease, which Dowd and Hill obviously believe illustrates the eternal tension between sex and violence in Show Business. It's one or the other, and the same folks who enjoy brutality protest the strip as lascivious and disgusting.

The bottom line is that most viewers who hate sports violence will also hate the exploitation and abuse of humanity in "Slap Shot." Reacting to the club owner's insensitivity at one point, Newman says, "We're human beings, you know." She doesn't believe him, and neither do the producers, and neither do we. [Rating: C—condemned]

## This week's TV network films

**BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY** (1973) (ABC, Friday, April 8): Mark Harris' funny-sad story of the last year of a fringe major league baseball player (Robert DeNiro) who happens to be dying, and the compassion of his friend, the cynical star pitcher (Michael Moriarty). An often poetic film, it is so far the only intelligent and beautiful baseball film ever made. Almost everyone will like it, but sports fans will get hit very close to the heart. Recommended for all but very young children.

**WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS** (1974) (NBC, Saturday, April 9): An old-

fashioned story about a young country boy and his two redbone hunting hounds during the hard times of the Depression. With James Whitmore and Beverly Garland. Routine but satisfactory family entertainment.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH** (1977) (NBC, Sunday, April 10): The concluding three-hour segment of Franco Zeffirelli's respectful and intelligent life of Christ begins with the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS** (1956) (ABC, Sunday, April 10): Cecil B. DeMille's unarguably colossal version of the Biblical Moses story, with Charlton Heston in his most famous role. You may have to squint to see the panoramas and orgies on TV, and the first half is ponderous as well as phony, but this remains the classic of schlock religious films. Satisfactory, especially for old movie buffs.

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## 'Racy' advertising for movie about nuns draws criticism

CHICAGO — An executive board member of the National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN) is crying "foul" at the movie "Nasty Habits," advertising for it and a column by movie critic Rex Reed about it. "Both the title of the film and the ads which have flooded New York newspapers and streets cater to the pornographic tastes in the manner of current theater 'attractions' which are offensive to the general theater audience," said Sister Ann Gillen, the NCAN board member, who is also executive director of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry. She concluded, "I, for one, cry 'Foul.'"

BASED ON MURIEL Spark's short satirical novel "The Abbess of Crewe," published in 1974, which set the Watergate affair in a convent, the movie stars Glenda Jackson and Sandy Dennis. Ads for it depict a nun lifting her skirts to reveal a tape recorder strapped to her thigh.

The New York archdiocesan communications department protested to Brut Productions, the movie's co-producer and subsidiary of Faberge, Inc., about the ads, and the New York Times modified the ads after receiving numerous phone calls and letters about them.

The New York Daily News and other papers have not changed the ads. In a column in the Daily News on March 18, Reed said:

"The Catholic Church has gone up in smoke over 'Nasty Habits,' bringing pressure against the New York Times to remove all ads showing nuns with concealed tape recorders under their habits. But in the light of the daily headlines, we all know nuns are doing all sorts of unsavory things in real life, so the protest

seems a bit unjustified." Reed said the movie made clear that the Catholic Church is not being ridiculed. Its characters represent political groups, he said, and the film's point is "that laughter is a great healer and it's time to treat Watergate with humor."

IN A STATEMENT sent to groups of nuns around the country, the News, Faberge, Reed, and the news media, Sister Gillen, member of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, said the film "targets Religious women for its attack, which is abusive, not amusing, in its cumulative effect."

Commenting on Reed's column, she said: "So, the nation is to be 'healed' by this sickly humorous attack on Religious women, whom he has indicted in print in his syndicated column as 'doing all sorts of unsavory things in real life' as evidenced by 'daily headlines.' This sweeping accusation compounded by the negative effect of the title, the advertising and the film itself,

will inflict incalculable damage on the credibility of Religious women, a value which is the result of centuries of sacrifice and service."

Sister Gillen suggested that U.S. nuns should unite to sue Faberge's Brut Productions, Reed, advertising agencies which carried the ads and newspapers which published Reed's column. She suggested asking \$100,000 or more per congregation of nuns in damages and using any award to finance charitable works for women across the nation, including homeless women, battered wives and women in prison.

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# Conversion means 'to return'

By Father John J. Castelot

When Jesus began preaching, His message was essentially a call to conversion: "This is the time of fulfillment. The reign of God is at hand! Reform your lives and believe in the Good News" (Mk 1,15).

The exhortation to "reform your lives" sounds like a challenge to change one's conduct, behavior, way of acting.

It involves this, of course, but the Greek word which it translates signifies something deeper, more fundamental: a radical change of mind, of outlook. And behind this Greek word there is a Hebrew (Aramaic) word used frequently in the Bible. It means "to return." And this brings us to the heart of the matter: our reformation, our change of outlook is literally a conversion, a return.

It is, consequently, not something merely personal, but interpersonal, a return to someone from whom, in one degree or another, we have turned away — a return to God.

CONVERSION, then, was at the heart of the call which Jesus issued to mankind. Indeed, it seems to be at the heart of humanity's ongoing relationship with God, if we are to judge by the account of that relationship which we read in the Bible. We may take as an illustration the history of God's people as interpreted by the authors of those books known as the Early Prophets: Joshua,

Judges, Samuel and Kings.

These books cover the history of the people from the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua in the 13th century B.C. down to the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century B.C. Looking back over these centuries from the dismal perspective of the Exile, the authors contemplated not just what had happened but why it had happened. They discerned a pattern emerging from the jumble of events: When the people were faithful to the Covenant, all went well; when they were unfaithful, disaster struck. But again and again God invited them to conversion. This pattern has been called the cycle of Call — Fall — Recall.

It is a pattern discernible in the lives of individuals, too. They heard God's call and responded eagerly, joyfully. But in the course of time, they drifted away and often fell so low that there was only one direction in which they could look: upward. And there was God, stooping, so to speak, to help them up, to call them back to Himself, to invite them to conversion. (Read 2 Sm. 11-12)

CONVERSION can take many forms. It can involve a return to God after falling away from Him into sin, or a turning to Him from another form of religion, or a return to a more fervent relationship with Him after a period of lukewarmness and mediocrity.

A good example of the last-named

type is found in the letter to Laodicea in the Book of Revelation. Here the Lord is pictured as admonishing this community and calling it to conversion: "I know your deeds; I know you are neither hot nor cold. How I wish you were one or the other — hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth! . . . Be earnest about it, therefore. Repent! Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him and he with me" (Rev. 3,15-16, 19-20).

Even Peter, the man selected by Jesus to head his little flock — even he needed conversion. After his tragic denial of Jesus, as Luke tells us: "The Lord turned around and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word that the Lord had spoken to him, 'Before the cock crows today you will deny me three times.' He went out and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22,61-62).

THE CAREER of the great St. Paul began with a dramatic conversion, an event so important that Luke tells the story three times (Acts 9; 22; 26) and the Church celebrates it with a special feast on Jan. 25. But even he felt the need for constant conversion, as we read in Philippians 3, 7-16.

Indeed, it has been remarked that the life of a sincere Christian is an unending series of conversions — and the Scriptures certainly seem to substantiate this.

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## Conversion confessions: where and how?

By Father Joseph M. Champlin

This year's Holy Week, with its customary long line of penitents seeking forgiveness, will be the first since the revised Rite of Penance became mandatory in the United States.

I have no statistics indicating the percentage of parishes throughout our country which have introduced rooms of reconciliation for an easier implementation of that restored ritual. However, I gain the impression from personal conversations, articles in periodicals, and clergy conferences that American priests have taken the directives of their bishops in this matter quite seriously.

The hierarchy proposed, as an ideal, chapels of reconciliation in which the repentant sinner would have the option of confessing anonymously, behind some type of partition, or openly, face-to-face as it were, across from the priest. More and more parishes seem to be fulfilling that suggestion either through the construction of a new reconciliation space or the renovation of an existing area.

IT IS critically important here that we preserve the penitent's freedom. This means insuring a person can easily select the arrangement in which he or she confesses without being seen and recognized.

People frequently speak today about openness and self-revelation. The former we naturally consider a virtue and the latter, a possibly helpful process in some circumstances. But it would be wrong to convey the notion that we have chosen the lesser path with the sacrament of Penance when we approach the confessor in hidden, anonymous fashion.

Turning our lives around from sin and selfishness to grace and self-giving almost always involves a painful, embarrassing experience. In my two decades of ministry, I have assisted many who either called for an appointment or stopped at the rectory door to work through

this awkward, but liberating conversion process. They felt ashamed and down on themselves, but also sensed a need to sit down and talk through their situation at length and in the open.

ON THE other hand, the greater majority of individuals who have been away for many years from the Lord or have slipped seriously in the recent past prefer a behind-the-screen, secret setting.

Conscientious Catholic Christians whose daily lives quite faithfully follow the teachings of Jesus still have the need of regular inner conversions. God calls us continuously to improve ourselves.

To quote the new rite: "The Church, which includes within itself sinners and is at the same time holy and always in need of purification, constantly pursues repentance and renewal." (Article 3). In another section it observes: "Those who through daily weakness fall into venial sins draw strength from a repeated celebration of Penance to gain the full freedom of the children of God." (Article 7).

Even such persons making what we used to term devotional confessions do not necessarily opt for face-to-face admission of their sinfulness. They may, and an increasing number do so, but these individuals should never sense any pressure to choose that practice.

OUR RECONCILIATION rooms at Holy Family have been in use for over five years. In the beginning, perhaps half who entered the area walked past the partition and sat at the table opposite the confessor. Now 85-90 percent select this open procedure.

They have discovered the more relaxed atmosphere and comfortable setting enables them to speak in a fuller way about their inner selves. These penitents judge their own conversion process reaches deeper, lasts longer and brings greater peace when they receive the sacrament face-to-face.

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# Our hide and seek game with God



*'We seldom if ever turn to God fully and completely...  
we waver toward Him in a hide and seek fashion...'*

By Father John Spicer, C.S.S.R.

Recently a priest acquaintance wrote to me sharing his deep inward searching: "For many years I've been struggling with the mystery of the cross, and the mystery of doing God's work, and yet feeling there must be more to it than I was experiencing."

Two recent articles which Father read stirred him anew and light came. He wrote, "I went jogging and it came together. I prayed to God differently — I gave up and told him it was too hard, that I couldn't do it. The load was lifted. It was over, and I knew that something was different. No longer do I pray 'Lord show me how to love.' That's not enough. So now I pray 'Lord, I cannot love this person the way you want me to. But you can. So come in me, it's impossible for me, you love him through me.'"

**THIS IS** a true story of a conversion. Not a conversion in the sense of turning from unbelief to belief, or changing from one religious denomination to another, but a conversion nevertheless. This is the kind of conversion to which all of us are called over and over again throughout our lives.

We are good at playing games with God. We intermittently hide from Him, then seek Him. But are we really the seekers? Is it not rather God?

Surely God initiates the seeking. How could it be otherwise? For who knows God? Who knows where to find Him?

Certainly not we sinners, backturners, hesitant ones! Yet God in His great love seeks us out. He sought our first parents as they hid from Him in the shadows of Eden. He seeks us out, too, as we cower in the cracks and the crannies, the shadows and depths, of earthly life. And having found us, He takes us to His heart.

**UNFORTUNATELY**, if but rarely, we try hiding from God completely. We occupy ourselves totally with selfish concerns. We push Him out. But God will not go. He seeks us out even in our mortal sin. When we yield to Him, we experience a radical conversion. Assuredly this is a miracle of grace — a new creation.

But not everyone needs radical conversion. Many make serious slips, but not mortal ones. Nevertheless, they too need conversion. We are all called to continual growth. There is no such point as absolute maturity. We must keep growing if we wish to be fully human. This is what continual conversion is all about.

What is this hide and seek game we play with God?

The "intellectual" excuse is a fairly common door to hide behind. Behind it we simply refuse to "change our minds." Ignorance is alright, thank you! It's so much less threatening. Were we to look up and do some hard inquiring, we might have to change intellectual gears. We

might catch a glimpse of broader horizons and have to get on our way and pilgrimage further. That's a forbidding thought. So we keep hiding. We need a bit of Christian mind-blowing!

**"EMOTIONAL"** doors are hiding places too. We allow emotions, formed in the past, to impede our present acceptance of grace. We are emotionally attached to former ways of thinking, doing, feeling, expressing, as well as to past external forms of Church existence. This may be alright but sometimes the past has been outlived and we refuse to let it go. Our emotions won't let us. Such emotional insecurity hinders the conversion process.

Then there are "psychic" doors to hide behind. We are often reluctant to break out of yesterday's self-image. We remain encased in our hard and brittle ego. Yet "unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains alone . . ." We must die to self in order to grow. This calls for "psychic" conversion.

Now we can sum up our findings. Conversion is a turning to God and is al-

ways initiated by God, not by ourselves. It can be both radical and continuing, depending upon whether we have turned completely from God or are struggling to love Him more. And there are many obstacles to our conversion, obstacles from the world as well as those of our own making. But God's grace is constant and strong, leading us ever onward to a greater participation in Christ's body, the Christian community, and to greater love for Him and our neighbor. Thus we experience ever-deepening conversion.

**SO CONVERSION** is an ever-present challenge. It will remain so as long as we are pilgrims on earth. For every new conversion experience invites a further one. And as we grow and become more and more "converted" our joy will increase proportionately. Even when we come face-to-face with our God at the end of our conversion process, might we not continue to grow wildly, joyfully at a pace and depth beyond our present imagining?

I like to think so.

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**† KNOW YOUR FAITH**



# Southern nights: 'Free as a breeze... whistling tunes that you know and love so



## Southern Nights

*Southern nights,  
Have you ever felt a southern night?  
Free as a breeze  
Not to mention the trees  
Whistling tunes that you know  
And love so.*

*Southern nights,  
Just as good even when you close your  
eyes.  
I apologize to anyone  
who can truly say  
that he has found a better way.*

*Southern skies,  
Have you ever noticed southern skies?  
Rich, precious beauty lies*

*Just beyond the eye  
That go running through the soul  
Like the stories told of old.*

*Old man,  
He and his dog that walks the old land,  
Every flower touched his cold hand  
As he slowly walked by  
Weeping willows would cry for joy —  
joy*

*Feels so good,  
Feels so good, it's frightening  
Wish I could stop this world from  
fighting.*

*Mystery, like this and many others in the  
trees  
flow in the night in the southern sky.*

*Sung by Glen Campbell  
Written by Alan Tousaint  
(c) Marsaint Music Inc. BMI*

YANKEES should read this article with caution because it is loaded with southern pride.

The singer, Glenn Campbell, is a southerner from Arkansas who has learned to share his hospitality through music. The composer is a quiet genius of southern music who has made an impact on the national scene without raising a fuss. His name is Alan Tousaint, a native of New Orleans. He has done musical arrangements for almost everyone in the business. He is an extremely versatile composer with numerous gold records to his credit, including "Yes We Can Can" by the Pointer sisters and recording artists. This present single "Southern Nights," is a new release of a song that Alan recorded several years ago.

If that is not enough southern spice, be aware that the writer of this article is a born and bred southerner whose usually slow southern heartbeat has quickened a bit for having the chance to extol the praises of his beloved homeland. This song provides just the needed excuse for boasting.

MUSIC IS such a part of the South that it is in the breeze, "whistling tunes that you know and love so." Much of what made America's music distinctive comes from the South. The great spirituals were born of simple faith here. The blues grew out of the black man's struggle with slavery and oppression. And of course jazz sprang up as southerners got playful with sounds, improvising on melodies and playing one instrument off another, allowing the feelings to guide the tune. Music here is part of the breeze.

The music in this song is a weaving of many of these southern influences. There is a definite playfulness that comes from jazz, mixed with a touch of luck. But a close listening will also bring out the sound of minstrels like those who rode the showboats and played to crowds on the levees on many a "southern night."

The mighty Mississippi river, the "old man that walks the old land" is the continual link with another strong southern influence; her past. Tradition has colored southern living from architecture to food. All of it is a blend of many cultures and ages which are still felt along the mighty river. To sit beside it and listen to its stories is to understand why "weeping willows would cry for joy."

I ONLY boast of the South because it has been important in helping me become who I am. It certainly is not the only important place in the world. Places are important for us because of the meaning they have. And the meaning comes from what happens in that place. A tree in the park becomes special if it is where you fell in love. A room in the house becomes sacred if it is where your mother died. An abandoned beach becomes holy if it is where you sensed your God. Places take meaning from what happens to us there.

But you will only realize what is happening if you are fully aware. So whether it is in a "southern night" or a northern morning, you can make it important by sensing the "mystery" it contains. Once it is important for you, then you, too, may boast.

(All correspondence should be directed to: The Dameans, P.O. Box 2108; Baton Rouge, La.)

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## KYF questions

1. When we speak of religious conversion, how would we usually define it?
2. What is the basic meaning of conversion?
3. What was the original meaning of the word repent?
4. Discuss what it means when we say that there is religious conversion within the Church.
5. Discuss this statement: "The presumption is that once one is converted there is no more converting to do."
6. Discuss the matter of conversion. How does it affect your life?
7. What is the pattern that emerges from a study of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings? How is this pattern discernible in the lives of individuals in the Scrip-

tures? Read Chapters 11 and 12 in The Second Book of Samuel.

8. As an example of God's invitation to return to a more fervent relationship with Him after a period of lukewarmness and mediocrity, read Chapter 2, verses 4 and 5, in The Book of Revelation.

9. In The Gospel According to Luke, read the story of the Prodigal Son. What does this parable tell you about conversion? Discuss.

10. What is radical conversion? Does everyone need radical conversion?

11. Discuss this statement: "There is no such point as absolute maturity."

12. Name the three doors we hide behind as God seeks us out.

13. Who initiates our conversions?

14. Discuss this statement: "Conversion is an ever-present challenge."



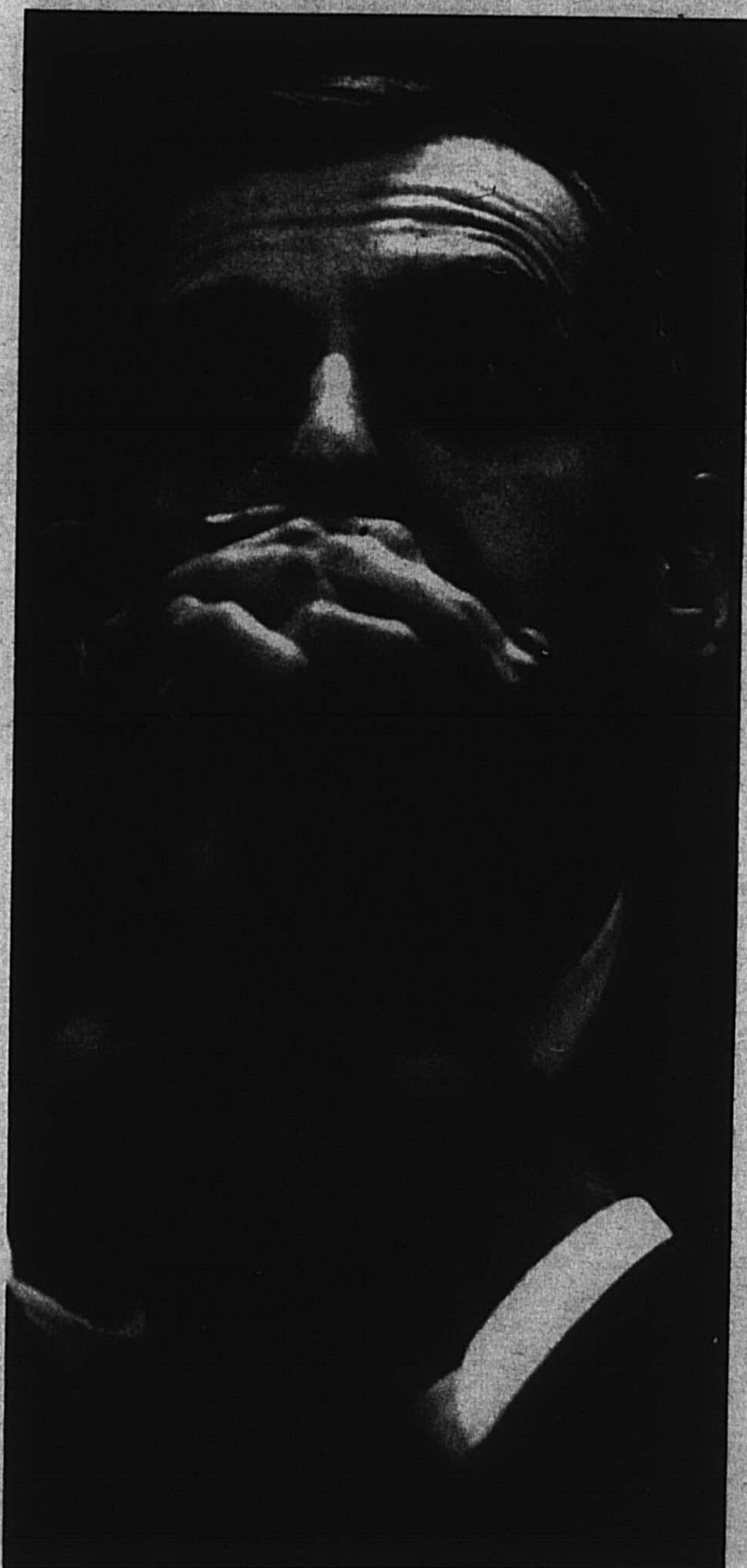
KNOW  
YOUR  
FAITH

## THE BIBLE

### Prayer

*a special section to help the people of God grow in their faith*

# Prayer— what good is it?



By Father Alfred McBride, O.Praem.

In his poem, "Motre D'Arthur," Tennyson pictures King Arthur in his last hours bidding goodbye to his faithful servant. On Arthur's lips he puts these words: "And you that look upon my face, pray for my soul. For more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. For what is man better than a sheep or goat that nourishes the blind life within the brain, if he lift not up his heart in prayer?"

Americans by the thousands are turning to various forms of meditation. Some study transcendental meditation. Others go in for "Sitting Zen." A few try the relaxation response. Some simply close their eyes and sit quietly for 15 to 20 minutes a day. All of this interest in meditation is presumably stimulated by a need for Americans to counteract the stresses of daily life in a fast-paced society.

But at another level, it is an indication that a hunger for prayer is rising as rarely before in modern times. Americans are choosing techniques invented by eastern gurus and western psychologists. These relaxation techniques quiet the inner soul and seem to bring the meditators in contact with an inner presence. Some call it being, or the white light, or the soul center — or the buddha.

THE BEAUTY of all this lively interest is that it puts people in a position of moving to prayer in a solid and lasting form. The technique is not the prayer itself, but it is a warmup exercise (or perhaps better to say — a cool-down and let-go resolve) that makes it possible to commune with and hear the Holy Spirit. Social critics have been lamenting that modern society turns people into machines and impersonal robots.

This is what Tennyson said a century ago when he indicated that people are no better than sheep or goats nourishing a blind life within the brain, if they do not pray. Society today is responding not with prayer necessarily, but with the kind of behavior that will rescue them from being sheep or goats — or machines for that matter.

The wholesome emphasis on meditation sets up the possibility of prayer which is a talking to and listening to God. Requiring the seeking of tranquility on a regular basis, prayer immediately is beneficial to the frayed nerves of the citizens of the rat race. The actual communion with God sends into the one praying a rush of inner peace and inward settling as well as the motivation and energy to face life with a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

FOR MANY years, prayer was often confined to saying prayers. The busy outpouring of words tended to be mechanical and often more disquieting than if one had done nothing at all. Excessive

word praying also tended to dwell on petitions accompanied by an almost morbid self interest. For many people, it was little more than talking to oneself like a scared person talking in the dark to assure oneself. Overdone word prayer meant a lot of talking to God, but not much listening to Him.

This is not to say, of course, that verbal prayers have no useful place in the life of prayer. The prayers of the liturgy and devotional prayers are important both for community prayer as well as helping the individual to get into a mood of reverence and divine presence. Nor is this to say that prayer of petition has no place, for after all, Jesus did say, "Ask and you shall receive."

But the words of Christ must be seen in the context of a life of faith and meditative communion with God. The prayer of petition is but one aspect of a living dialogue with the Lord sustained on a daily basis. A quiet and reverent communion with God on a regular basis both deepens faith and communicates the kind of sustained happiness that is the mark of a mature, spiritual and lively person.

Every saint has testified to the remarkable power that comes from praying. Since this obvious source of peace and joy and power is so close at hand, why not accept the gold so available. Then we can appreciate Tennyson's line that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

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*...And you  
that look  
upon my face,  
pray for my soul.  
For more things  
are wrought by prayer  
than this world  
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