

NOGUTZKY GETS THE LOWDOWN

Ya know Stooge, like I told ya last week, I been around here now goin' on three years, hittin' the books, hittin' chow-hall, hittin' the sack, day after day, month after month just like in high school, just doin' time, ya know. Then day before yesterday I gets a letter from the old gent back home---not the usual kind o' letter with a couple of fins in it--but just a short note, crisp an' business-like, an' the pater says in this little valentine: "Now that you're more than half way through out there in South Bend, Oswald, it's about time you started thinking of the future."

Brother, that hit me right between the eyes--that thinkin about the future business, I mean. An' do ya know Stooge, I sits there in my cubicle for the next two hours an' done some real thinkin'....the first time I thunk long an' hard since I hit ND. Ya see, that's how I finally come to drop in on the padre.

Well, sir, I knocks on his door, an' after battlin' my way through the smoke screen (jeepers, the ropes he smokes!), I plop down in one o' them plush chairs, an' says to him: "Padre, how's a guy gonna know whether he should be a lawyer, a teacher, a writer, a doctor, a banker, or what, huh?"

"You mean a vocation, Mac?" he shoots back at me. An' right then an' there I make a lunge for the door before he hooks me.

Well, he tells me to knock it off an' not get all hot and bothered and not to think I was gonna get hooked, like I thought. "You know Mac," says he, "you're like a lot of lads. Every time they hear the word vocation they get the hooby-jeebies and think right away about monks, and seminarians and Gregorian chant and Latin and Greek. As a matter of fact, Mac, your own mother and dad, and my mother and dad, and my brother the dentist and your sister the nurse, and my brother-in-law the linoleum salesman---they all have vocations. And there isn't anyone in this universe that doesn't have a vocation."

How about that, Stooge! An' all the time I'm thinkin' o' vocations in terms o' black-robes an' nuns an' the like. Ya know, Stooge, a guy learns somethin' every day. So I says to the padre: "How's about elucidatin' on that vocation deal, pere?"

So he gives me the lowdown.

"There isn't a person in the world who doesn't have a vocation in general," he says. "By that I mean a calling to fill, a calling that comes from God." Then he quotes somethin' out o' the Book o' Daniel or St. Paul or the Gospels or somethin' about God willin' the salvation of all men. "That, Mac", says he, "is the general vocation all of us of the human species have. In other words, all men are given an invitation from God to get to Heaven. Some people might get there by the marriage route--by settlin' down and raisin' a family; some get there by becoming doctors, or lawyers, or financiers or bookkeepers or coal miners or even by selling Fuller brushes, and so on. They are all called by God to get to heaven, using their professions, their state of life, their work-a-day lives with that end in view. That's what I mean by a vocation in general, Mac. Catch on, lad?"

Ya know, padre, says I, that all adds up to somethin. I never looked at it that way.

"Roger," says he, as he reaches into the smudge box for another El Rope. "It all adds up to doing what your best suited for in the best possible manner, and while doing it, looking beyond the weekly paycheck, the new Pontiac, the new television set and three squares a day, just making sure they aren't the end-all and be-all of your days and years in this vale of tears."

(To be continued)

Prayers: Deceased: mother of Geo Heimal (M); uncle of Bill Toohoy (Cav); Ill: Uncle of Pat Coffey (F); niece of Joe Adams (Ly); Operation: Aunto Fr. Ray & Ed Murray; Thanksgiving: Mr. and Mrs. Howie Doyle; 2 special intentions.