

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

VOL. XLIII, NO. 8
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1963

REV. LLOYD W. TESKE, C.S.C.,
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITOR

FREEDOM TO THINK -- AS I DO

Reactions to this year's Religious Bulletin have been generally favorable -- guardedly complimentary, laudatory with reserve. "I like the new format." "I like the idea of book reviews." It's a good idea to get other writers. And by the way, why not student contributors?"

We're grateful for the praise and we understand the need for caution. The new Religious Bulletin hasn't passed the test of time.

One article, however, raised more pointed comment. It was an article on Latin in the liturgy -- a defense by Father Richard Ginder as quoted from Our Sunday Visitor. It seems there are people who don't like Father Ginder and hence don't want to give him a hearing -- and that is all the Religious Bulletin was doing. It did not say it agreed with Father Ginder's ideas.

For these people -- and for many others -- who promote freedom of thought and expression as long as what is promoted is in agreement with their ideas, Peter F. Clarke of the Davenport Catholic Messenger, hardly a conservative Catholic newspaper but one of the best, has some pointed remarks. (The Messenger had been criticized by a correspondent for reporting an objective article on the John Birch Society.)

"Let us be fair about this. No encyclical yet written has outlawed the Birch Society, the right wing or conservatism. Any Catholic who wishes to become a member of the Birch Society has a right to do so. They also have the right to be members of the right wing or a conservative group. Just as they can in good conscience be members of the ADA, leftist groups (excluding the Communist and Socialist parties) and the various liberal societies.

"Unlike those conservatives who wonder if Catholics can be liberal and those liberals who wonder if Catholics can be conservative, and still remain good Catholics, I am for freedom of thought and action in these areas. I would hate to see the day when Dorothy Day would be told that she must close down the Catholic Worker and Bill Buckley told that he could no longer publish National Review.

"It would be a sad day indeed when every Catholic editor in America was compelled to pledge that he would condemn in his edi-

(continued on the next page)

torial column the Birch Society or the ADA. And just as sad a day when he would be prevented from condemning either one.

"The Catholic Church, fortunately, is not as narrow as some liberals and some conservatives would have it. It has room for the wise and the stupid, for saints and sinners, for conservatives and liberals, (and even independents), for pressure groups and fraternal organizations, for contemplatives and actionists, and for just about anyone.

"Just take a look at some of the people who are Catholics. There is Miss Day, Buckley, Brennan, Ginder, Ammon Hennacy, Dr. Rock, de Gaulle, Adenauer, Kennedy, Franco, Frondizi, Clancy, Scanlan. I must admit that if all these people were placed in one room to debate their views, we probably would need a fresh encyclical on peace, but I doubt very much that an encyclical condemning the views of any one of them would be forthcoming.

"The freedom in the Church that Father Hans K  ng was speaking about applies to all of these people, although there are too many who think this freedom applies only to those in agreement with them.

"Baptism is what makes us Catholics, and often I wonder if there is a priest alive in America who would deny baptism to Barry Goldwater, Jimmy Roosevelt, Clayton Powell, Bull O'Conner or Hubert Humphrey if they asked for it. Baptism is not for those who agree with us. It is for all men who will accept Christ.

"Let's keep it that way."

* * * * *

BISHOP JOHN NEPOMUCENE NEUMANN was finally beatified on Sunday, October 13. We say finally because it was at least rumored that he was to be beatified with Mother Elizabeth Seton last March 17. This proved to be without foundation. For a while the date was uncertain but later was set for June 24. But before that date arrived Pope John XXIII had died.

Though he was born in Bohemia in 1811, Blessed John Neumann was ordained in New York in 1836. As a pioneer missionary he spread the Faith throughout various regions of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, Maryland, and Virginia. Named the fourth bishop of Philadelphia in 1852, at the age of 41, he established there the first unified system of Catholic schools under a diocesan school board, introduced Sisters and Brothers into the Philadelphia diocese as teachers, and wrote a diocesan catechism and Bible history for the faithful. He helped construct 80 churches in the diocese, held three diocesan synods, and organized the first diocesan schedule of Forty Hours Devotion in America.

He died in 1860, at the early age of 49, renowned not only for his achievements, but also for his humility.

FREEDOM TO SUFFER --- Freedom of conscience is being spoken of these days as if it were something new, a discovery , perhaps, of Father Hans Küng. Father Küng, or any other modern theologian, would, of course, disclaim any such credit. For freedom of conscience has been the heritage of every Christian back to Christ Himself "who though He is by nature God, did not consider His equality with God a condition to be clung to, but emptied Himself by taking the nature of a slave, fashioned as He was in the likeness of men and recognized by outward appearance as man. He humbled Himself and became obedient to death; yes, to death on a cross."

Peter exercised this freedom when he went back to Rome to be crucified, just as every martyr of the early Christian era freely chose death for his convictions. Witnesses to the Faith through the ages have exercised freedom of conscience: St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher who against the tide of public opinion chose not to acknowledge Henry VIII as their spiritual lord; Franz Jägerstätter (the Austrian peasant whose story is told in the September Jubilee) who refused to serve in Hitler's army and was beheaded -- in this enlightened 20th century! -- on August 9, 1943 for following the dictates of his conscience against the persuasions of his wife, his mother, his family, his friends and neighbors, even his pastor and the prison chaplains; Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague, Czechoslovakia, just released by the Communists after twelve years of imprisonment and detention for refusing to conclude an agreement with the government that would have injured the rights of the Church and its bishops; and Cardinal Mindszenty and Cardinal Stepinac and St. Thomas a Becket and St. Josaphat and hosts of others spanning the centuries from Peter to Paul VI.

But this doesn't sound like the same freedom of conscience which allows a Catholic married couple to resort to "the pill"; or the student to disregard even the general classifications on the Roman Index of Forbidden Books though these merely restate the norms of the commandments; or the Catholic to scoff at the Legion of Decency classification of movies, to miss Mass on Sunday, to disregard the laws of fast and abstinence, to justify cheating and other forms of dishonesty.

It's the same freedom, but not the same conscience. The safer course, according to the virtue of prudence, would be to follow the dictate of one's conscience when it is to one's temporal disadvantage. There's great danger of rationalization when freedom of conscience works to one's temporal advantage and leads to a life of greater ease and comfort. In other words, it's prudent to take a second look at the freedom of conscience that makes life easier.

* * * * *

IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following. Deceased: Brother Albinus Butler, C.S.C., University treasurer and cashier for almost thirty years when he retired last summer; Brother Maximus Czyzewski, C.S.C.; Raymond T. Coffey, '10. Ill: Thomas W. Dunlay, '52.

Fresh from the Pad.....

LOOK INWARD, STRANGER

"If I find the right girl --" "When I get back home --" "After I'm married --" "Once I graduate -- then I'll be able to shake a habit of impurity, or solve my difficulties with faith, or get some insight into my emotional confusion." In more sober moments, however, you recognize this for what it is--rationalization. But are you aware how often you subtly rely on God to wipe away bad habits, solve problems or bring dazzling insights. And when He doesn't magically make your life problemless you cross Him off your list. "If he can't do it, what's the use."

Isn't this throwing the whole burden on God strictly a peripheral approach? You keep your difficulties at a distance by constantly shoving them away from yourself. As the vital growing process explodes within, you view it with all the impersonal objectivity of a research observer. You stubbornly refuse to get involved in your own problems. Solutions are expected to come from outside. And when these are not forthcoming you either violently blame God or else sit back quietly disappointed in Him.

What is the quality you most respect in a parent? Isn't it his ability to unselfishly cut the umbilical cord and let you make your own decisions and face the risks of living? You realize that it is extremely detrimental if a parent is possessive and over protective. This stymies growth and makes responsibility impossible. To allow you to live your own life is the finest expression of unselfish parental love.

God is a good Father. He respects your ability to work your way through life to Him as a free spirit. His help and His grace surround you like an ocean but He will not treat you like a senseless automaton. He respects your mind which can look inward and plan and your will which can energize you to put what you know into action.

In the divine scheme of things you can't be a spectator at your own life's drama. You can't be a stranger to yourself by divorcing yourself from the struggles which are inseparable from growth. And God, least of all, will not usurp this most essential duty and privilege --- self-involvement.

--Father Baker, C.S.C.

P.S. Success is a ladder you can't climb with your hands in your pockets.