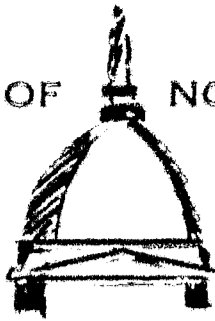


**RELIGIOUS BULLETIN**VOL. XLIV, NO. 33  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1965REV. LLOYD W. TESKE, C. S. C.  
UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN - EDITORTHE CONTRADICTION OF PROFANITY

*With it [the tongue] we bless the Lord and Father, and with it curse men who are made in the image of God! Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. It is not right, my brothers, that it should be so. Does the spring gush forth fresh and bitter water from the same outlet? James 3:9-11*

Scriptural scholars attest that the word "Jesus" means one who saves. Christ's mission was precisely that. Salvation and redemption are thus capsuled into Christ's very name. Hence, the name should stand for a mission of love, of making people holy, of lifting them toward God.

But profanity and blasphemy are the negation, the contradiction, the turning wrong side out, of the meaning of the word, Jesus. Reverence and respect, and blessing, are of the very essence of the word -- and yet it is used for cursing. It is perverted by being employed to call down maledictions, or at least to express a bad kind of anger. Sometimes the devil is called the "Ape of God" -- not in the sense that he imitates God, but that he mocks God and the things of God. The devil turns things around so that they are used not for their right purpose, but for a contrary purpose. Cursing originated with the devil; it's his form of expression.

Speech itself is a gift of God, given to man for a specific purpose -- that he should give honor and glory and gratitude to God. Profanity and blasphemy are excellent examples of the misuse of one of God's gifts -- almost like taking God's gift and hurling it back into God's Face to insult Him.

Even among pagans a vulgar tongue is regarded as uncouth. It signals a lack of refinement. And on the intellectual level its use betrays a woeful lack of vocabulary. A curse is an "omnibus" word -- a cover-up for the owner's intellectual poverty. Among the unlearned, vulgar words are regarded as a badge of distinction, a sign of daring -- but only in the mental slums where similar minds are not so inventive. To be regarded as a man of distinction because of this flair for mental garbage is small honor, indeed!

The use of profanity, incidentally, is also a sign of mental laziness -- it saves us the trouble of thinking -- of using our minds to search out the vocabulary required to express precise shades of meaning, and to express strong emotions. There is no distinction worthy of the name attached to the foul mouth of university caliber.

(continued on page three)

WHAT IS YOUR GIFT AT THE OFFERTORY?

A priest friend of ours complains that the Mass, with all its compelling beauty, constitutes for most people only a little island of piety without relevance to the crowded and troubled world of men outside the doors of the Church. This is an old complaint and a partially justified one. It amounts to saying that thousands of sincere souls who gather around the altar to sacrifice on a Sunday or a week-day are bringing nothing much to the Mass and nothing much away from it. For them the Mass and its prayers and songs and holy actions are mere gestures toward heaven, an academic exercise in religion.



It is no fault of the Mass if all this criticism -- or part of it -- should be true. It is the fault of the men and women who "go to Mass." The fault is that they take part in Christ's sacrifice of love without realizing that this sacrifice must cover all their life and that it must reach from here to eternity.

It may be true to say that most of us take part in the Mass with one or more of three faulty attitudes:

(1) With scanty attention even for the moment, to the meaning of the prayers and actions; (2) With hardly any realistic reference in our thoughts or prayers to the life we have left for an hour and the life to which we shall return after the Ite Missa est; (3) With only superficial commitment to the total Christian life as we must live it with faith and charity and justice in a hostile or indifferent environment.

If your Mass is an isolated experience in your day or in your life then you must translate into the jargon of the market place the profound pronouncements in the sanctuary. Every man should make a beginning of doing this at the Offertory of the Mass.

Each worshiper joins himself to the priest and his fellow worshipers to say: "Receive, Holy Father ... this unblemished host." When the drop of water is added to the wine; "... Grant us that by the mystery of this water and wine we may share in the Godhead of Him who chose to share in our manhood" ... We offer you the cup of salvation, Lord, asking your mercy that it may ascend as a sweet fragrance in the presence of your divine majesty: for our salvation and that of the whole world ... Humble in spirit and repentant in heart, may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and May our sacrifice be so offered in your sight this day that it may be pleasing to you."

Is this prayer intended to be an idle speech, liturgical rhetoric, a flick of the heart to heaven? Or is it intended to be the honest, down-to-earth, grimy and gruelling gift of self on the part

of the people of God to the Lord of truth and light and love?

The love of Christ swept the years and the humble haunts of all men of all generations. And our love must sweep our world with realism and penetration. There is no way honestly to love God whom we cannot see without loving our fellow man whom we can see. Our gift of self to God must be a gift of self to others - to the narrow and petty souls of our society, to the poor and needy and sorrowful and lonely.

The Mass - and your gift of self given in the awful purity of Christ's love for all sinners - must reach into your home, where your equals and subordinates need your attention and compassion; into your office, where bickering and smut and conspiracy must be put to flight - with charity; into the business world, where jealousies and injustices abound; into schools and organizations and laboratories and athletic fields where egotism runs riot; into holy places of study and contemplation, where man easily confuses his own hidden ambitions with the all holy will of God.

The gift of self must encompass the many needs of a society deep in turmoil and tension; citizens deprived of civil rights, victims of poverty, the mentally ill, the people of underprivileged nations, sufferers from anti-Semitism, the children of religious division and dispersion, and others burdened by the inequities and inadequacies of faulty social institutions.

The Offertory of the Mass is not only the opening of the sanctuary upon the court of heaven; it is also the opening of the pews upon a world at odds with God. The man of faith and truth places himself on the Offertory paten and in the cup of sacrifice. The bread and wine are the materials of sacrifice and the symbols of man's sacrificial soul. The mystery of Christ daily becomes the mystery of man caught up into the rewards of redemption through man's honest, Christian commitment to the life he has been called upon to live in the City of Man.

--Rev. Joseph A. Hughes in the Register

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PROFANITY [continued from the front page] is also a little stupid -- it doesn't help a whit, but only harms you, and labels you as irreverent on the spiritual level; uncouth and unrefined on the social scene; and dumb on the intellectual front. A man addicted to cursing and swearing does not flatter himself at all. He may be a king among morons -- but that is hardly a mark of distinction either.

We should be grateful for the gift of speech; we should be grateful, too, for our Redemption and Salvation. And being grateful, we can hardly misuse the Holy Name that calls for thankfulness, and adoration, and repentance, and love for God.

--RELIGIOUS BULLETIN  
February 3, 1956

About Books.....

UNITY BEGINS WITH DIALOGUE It is not easy to draw up a General Council statement in a truly ecumenical style, says one of the Council Fathers, Emile-Joseph de Smedt, in Fr. John O'Brien's latest publication, Steps to Christian Unity\*. On the one hand, he says, we must avoid every trace of indifferentism, and offer an exposition that faithfully portrays the complete and integral Catholic doctrine. Yet at the same time we must show that we have a clear idea of present-day teachings of separated Christians. We must know what opinions they hold of our doctrines, know what they feel is missing or feel is insufficiently elaborated in Catholic doctrine. We must express ourselves in a way that will not antagonize others, and, finally, avoid all sterile polemics.

This excerpt is an example of the many fine things to be found in Fr. O'Brien's volume. Father has gathered here the wisdom of some of the best modern ecumenical thinkers, both Catholic and Protestant. Men such as Karl Barth testify: "I find myself quite at home when working with certain Catholic theologians. I even wrote a preface to Hans Kung's book, and the book received an imprimatur. I embarked on that book rather as Noah embarked on the Ark, with a dove in my hand, and I awaited the deluge. But so far, there has been none. In other words, reconciliation depends essentially on knowing. The more we learn to know each other, the better we shall understand that though there is only one Christian faith, there are several different and quite valid ways of expressing it."

Karl Rahner here answers Protestants' doubts concerning our se-

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\*Doubleday, 1964, \$4.95

riousness and sincerity with regard to such questions as that of "religious liberty" by saying: "One can hope that Vatican II will declare that every person has the inviolable right freely to follow his conscience and that neither the state nor society nor the Church may restrict this freedom by physical or moral force. This also holds for the individual conscience which errs unintentionally, provided he does not injure the inviolable rights of another man or of society. True unity among men is not effected by force and power but by personal truth and love."

This volume has all the good qualities of an ecumenical "dialogue" at its best, of which John Cogley says in this book: "Dialogue should not be confused with debate or argument or dialectic... It does not involve the conflict of ideas so much as the confrontation of persons, each taking the other as he is. No one comes out of a dialogue a winner or a loser, but simply as a fuller person, enriched with a deeper understanding of how another person thinks, why he thinks as he does, and what at the innermost core of his being are his convictions."

-- Claude L. Boehm

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*Father Dennis Freemal, C.S.C., was killed in an automobile accident in Chicago early Sunday morning. Since September, 1963 he had been teaching at Notre Dame High School in Niles, Illinois, but for the two years previous had been here on the campus. His funeral Mass will be sung in Sacred Heart Church at 3:30 on Wednesday.*