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ENCOUNTER:

A Catholic-Jewish Confrontation



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MILLARD MAYER

1888 – 1960

A native of Kansas City, Millard Mayer contributed to its industrial growth and its social welfare.

For many years he served as Chairman of the Community Relations Bureau where, under his leadership, significant advances were made against bigotry and discrimination and toward understanding and equal opportunity for all. His influence for better human relations was felt both locally and nationally in the fields of education and legislation.

*"Sparing of words but profuse
in thought and more so in deeds."*

ENCOUNTER:

This symposium brought together nationally recognized Jewish and Catholic spokesmen for a one-day program of lectures and open discussions.

The purpose was simply to provide an opportunity for Jews and Catholics to explain themselves to each other—and to those of other faiths to whom this dialogue was of interest.

Along with other, related phenomena—such as the holding of similar meetings elsewhere and the publication of articles, pamphlets and books on the same general theme—the symposium was an indication of the opening of a new phase in Jewish-Catholic relationships, marked by greater frankness, greater willingness to acknowledge past tensions and present problems.

But the symposium was not exclusively problem-centered; that is, it was not concerned only with differences about inter-religious and Church-State relationships. The speakers tried also to help both "sides" realize something of what they had been missing because of mutual ignorance.

Life in a pluralistic society does involve the responsibility of resolving conflict; but pluralism also holds promise of adding a certain richness and interest and depth to the business of living.

The original program and the publication of this report is the happy result of tireless efforts by Sister M. Raffaella de Sion of Ratisbonne Center; Sidney Lawrence, Director of the Jewish Community Relations Bureau; and William F. Bartholome, Director of Public Relations & Development at Rockhurst College—all of Kansas City, Missouri.

Massman Hall, Rockhurst College

January 29, 1963

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ENCOUNTER

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Mr. Hoyt addresses his talk to Jews, ". . . with Catholics listening in over his shoulder." Rabbi Tanenbaum addresses Catholics—with Jews as interested listeners. The focus is on what each IS, rather than what he believes . . . on behavior rather than belief . . . on the actual rather than the ideal.

civily because each assumed the integrity and sincerity of the other. Each sought the common good, and the dispute, when it arose, was always assumed to be a dispute over the best or better means to attain it.

And we share, of course, an even more significant tradition for the framing of our thoughts and the shaping of our speech toward one another. For both Jew and Catholic put at the very summit of their religious values the great Commandment—thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole mind and thy whole soul and with all thy strength—and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Caritas and *philia*, charity and civic friendship. These are the virtues, rooted in our common political and religious traditions, which can turn mere contact into meaningful confrontation. These virtues can smash the stereotypes we have of one another—and of ourselves. And *philia* and *caritas* can heal the wounds inflicted by tragic history and bad theology, and can usher us into what the Catholic can only call the Pentecostal present—a present which, under God, will be different from our scandalous past—and the scandal of that past, the wall of our separation, was never really our theological differences. The scandal historically has been simply our tragic and sinful failure to love.



ROBERT G. HOYT

Mr. Hoyt is editor of THE CATHOLIC REPORTER, newspaper of the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese.

What is a Catholic?

I was complaining a few days ago about the difficulties of this assignment, and it was suggested to me that there is an easy way to fulfill my obligations. All I need say is something like this: "I've been thinking and reading and talking about this question, 'What is a Catholic?' and I've decided that I just don't know." I could then sit down and wait hopefully for your applause, and somewhat less hopefully for the approval of our hosts. Even though I would not have contributed much to anybody's enlightenment, I could do this with a certain consciousness of virtue; because in fact that is the only honest answer I can give to the question.

But honesty, whatever its benefits for the rest of mankind, is not really a live option for the public speaker; so for the next halfhour or so I will proceed with an air of confidence to disguise my ignorance and uncertainty. I will spare you any further agonizing over the difficulties of the question, but I do want to indulge in a fairly extended preface concerned with its nature.

As your programs tell you I was a member of the arrangements committee for the symposium. When this session was being discussed by the committee someone suggested that the Jewish speaker would have rather an easier job than the Catholic, since every Jew is entirely free to determine for himself what it means to be a Jew. I suppose this difference exists, but I want to insist that it is relative. As I pointed out at the time, it would be easy to line up on this platform spokesmen for what one might call Orthodox, Conservative and Reform versions of Catholicism; and the differences among them would be real and important even though all would protest that their differences do not touch the essence of the faith. By way of example, I suppose the whole world knows now that Cardinal Bea and Cardinal Ottaviani have rather different ideas of what it means to be a Catholic in the modern world; and in this country I suppose most informed persons are aware of the very considerable contrast in style of life and thought between the late Senator Joseph McCarthy and the living Senator Eugene McCarthy. Since the Second Vatican Council began it has become modish to cry out in glad surprise that the Catholic Church is not monolithic but full of tensions and contrasts. This has always been the case, even though the realization of it is a new experience even to many Catholics. Not to belabor the obvious any further: despite the dogmatic character of the Church's teaching, despite the definiteness of her doctrine and its inclusiveness, what I have to say here will be in many respects quite personal; and this would be true of any Catholic who tried to answer this same question without resort to formulas out of the catechism or the seminary textbooks.

I've been talking about Catholicism, but you will note that we are asked to concern ourselves not with doctrine but with behavior, and in discussing behavior to focus not on the ideal but on the actual. In the sense that the question means, "What do Catholics do that is distinctive; what are the results of the interaction between Catholic belief and the circumstances of the modern world?" it pertains to the realm of sociology. If you take the question to mean, "What is it like to be a Catholic—how does a Catholic look at life?"—in other words if you want to see the thing from the inside—the only discipline with the tools for the job is that of the novelist. It happens that my skill as a sociologist is exactly on a par with my attainments as a novelist; I couldn't break 110 on either course. Aside from that it happens that the great Catholic novel, like the great American novel, remains to be written; and that if sociology proper is moving out of adolescence toward maturity, religious sociology has only recently stopped wearing diapers and begun to speak in complete sentences. Nevertheless I will be borrowing some of my information from sociology, notably from Will Herberg; and I will take illustrative bits and pieces from various recent

and not-so-recent novels. By way of preview, a passage from Steve Allen's novel, NOT ALL OF YOUR LAUGHTER, NOT ALL OF YOUR TEARS, a passage which I find both helpful and hurtful. A Jewish character is speaking to the Catholic protagonist, and he says: "From my observation of my Catholic friends I would guess that not one of you in a thousand has any real feeling for what your Church is . . . To most of you people your religion seems to be a matter of church attendance, hating the communists, lighting candles, praying for the impossible and reading some second-rate diocesan newspaper." I'm thinking of reviewing Mr. Allen's book.

Finally there is a third way of viewing the question, "What is a Catholic," which would lay its emphasis on the verb, the *is*-ness of the question: in other words, what is going on among Catholics? What are the significant tendencies in the Church and what is the situation out of which they proceed? What temptations and what opportunities present themselves to the American Catholic in 1963? This is a nice fuzzy question suitable for the journalist, especially for the would-be pundit; and this therefore is where I shall dwell in relative comfort. Let me point out that at least in this country's tradition, when the journalist sets out to do a reporting job he isn't supposed to be selling anything. Such an approach seems to me well suited to the present occasion. To Catholics it may seem that I am laying undue stress on the temptations as against the opportunities; I would rather risk this imbalance than make it appear that the podium has been turned into a pulpit.

This very notion of trying to give an objective public assessment of the state of things Catholic is itself a significant phenomenon of contemporary Catholicism. I recall that some 15 years or so ago, as a very junior member of the staff of a Catholic diocesan newspaper, I wrote an editorial which was critical of some aspect or another of Catholic institutional life. The responsible editor agreed that the criticism was justified by the facts of the situation and perhaps needed to be made. But he turned it down on the ground that Mr. Paul Blanshard was on the alert for just such instances of Catholic self-criticism and would be bound to make use of it and in doing so to exaggerate its importance. Well, Mr. Blanshard is still around and still on the alert for ammunition of this sort; but today it is being supplied to him in such volume that it must be something of a burden and an embarrassment.

The most intensive wave of self-criticism among American Catholics began in 1955 with a speech delivered by Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, a well-known historian who reviewed the state of Catholic intellectual activity and cultural concern and found it sadly deficient. There was a great deal of argument

over the merits of the evidence he offered, but it would be my estimate that his thesis found general acceptance in academic circles and in the more influential Catholic publications. Paradoxically, Will Herberg has pointed out that this very concern about anti-intellectualism is "one of the best indications of the cultural progress" of American Catholics. Moreover, more new evidence has been turned up tending to show that Msgr. Ellis's criticism, however valid they may have been of the past and of the generations now passing from the scene, do not apply to the present generation of college students and recent graduates; a national survey of June, 1961, graduates found, contrary to its own hypothesis, that Catholics were as likely to go to graduate school, to choose an academic career, to specialize in the physical sciences and to plan a life of research as were Protestants. (Jews, of course, scored higher than both other groups in these indicators of intellectual interests.) It may be, therefore that we will be hearing less from Catholics about Catholic anti-intellectualism. But just as this wave dies on the beach another one is reaching a crest. This time the criticism is concerned with the status of the laity in the Church, and to a lesser extent with Catholic contributions to social reform and social consciousness.

Not everybody welcomes all this candor; some look on it as being bad public relations at best and a symptom of masochism at worse. Only last week a columnist in an Iowa Catholic weekly complained bitterly about the amount of Catholic breast-beating that is going on; he called it the "kick-him-again-he's-a-catholic" technique. It is true that there has been a certain amount of faddishness about this self-criticism; and it is true—and very trite—that there is a certain temperament which delights in knocking the home team. It seems to me, however, that the argument over whether Catholic self-criticism is needed and valid has been, or ought to have been, laid to rest by the purposes assigned to the Second Vatican Council and by the direction it took in its first session. The Pope and the Council have said, almost in so many words, that the era of the ghetto and of the tight, unbroken line of defense is over; it is good for us to be candid among ourselves and in the presence of others. The Council has not been called to define new doctrines or to condemn new heresies; it is a pastoral council, meaning that it will institute changes in the Church's mode of action among the faithful, in its relations with other religious bodies, and in its posture before the world. This can only mean that all is not well with the status quo. Most emphatically, this does not mean that the Catholic Church is considering any change in fundamental doctrine, in her definition of her own nature or in her basic interpretation of the moral law. Still, it does mean change, as I will hope to illustrate.

With some misgivings I offer a passage from the first of two reports on the Council published in the NEW YORKER over the name of Xavier Rynne. In this passage Mr. Rynne is talking about the bishops of the United States. "In Europe," he says, "they are regarded as a hard-working, ingenious but theologically deficient lot. Most of them seem to feel, for example, that the current liturgical movement, which goes to the very heart of the attempt to renew the inner life of the Church, is for the most part merely a fad—a matter of introducing the Dialogue Mass, abolishing Latin in favor of the vernacular in ecclesiastical ceremonies, and letting laymen read the Epistle and the Gospel. A few of them even seem to think that it is only a question of rubrics, or the rules to be followed in sacred ceremonies. Actually, the liturgical movement means much more; namely, a return to the great sense of mystery with which the Apostles and the Fathers of the early Church announced the good news of the Kingdom of God established in the world by Jesus Christ. The early apologists of Christianity stressed the tremendously mysterious aspects of a religion that maintained that its founder was both God and man at the same time, that He had submitted to death on the Cross to redeem all mankind from sin, and that He had established an organization in which there were forgiveness of sin and participation in the life of God through the reception of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. To the tough, cynical Greeks and Romans of the ancient world, such ideas were ridiculous, as St. Paul admitted, and they also proved a stumbling block to the adherents of Judaism, from which Christianity sprang. The modern Roman-trained theologian tends to teach these same all but incredible truths as if they were everyday facts. He has simplified the life and teachings of Jesus so that a Sunday-school teacher can break them down into easily digested stories for first-to-fifth graders. Despite a great display of Latin learning, he apparently believes that these truths should be taught to the generality of the laity on the same level, as if they were so many commonplace happenings."

Now, I do not call your attention to this passage because of what it has to say about the American hierarchy. In his second letter from Vatican City Mr. Rynne—incidentally, that is apparently a pseudonym—speaks rather more admiringly of at least some U.S. bishops. My concern, however, is not with the accuracy of his report in its details but with its truth; and to me Mr. Rynne's description of the situation has the ring of truth—partial truth, needing balance and perspective, but not open to serious dispute. The religion he describes is a set of propositions and rules which are neat and comprehensive and mutually consistent, but which of themselves create neither a sense of wonder nor a driving generosity. I recognize this religion because it's the one I learned and which I find still

operative within and around me.

By way of illustrating, or possibly of obscuring this point, I am going to inflict upon you this shorthand of "ism" language.

The first of my "isms" is rationalism, which happens to be my own besetting temptation. I remember that in my formative college years I devoured books of apologetics—that is, books concerned to demonstrate the reasonableness of the act of faith—at about the same rate that President Kennedy reportedly rips through political columnists. I thought then that I was taking a serious interest in religion; but in fact I was determinedly remaining on the threshold, constantly testing the action of the door knob. It is true that the Catholic as such is concerned to demonstrate that this faith is intellectually respectable; but this demonstration is not in itself a means of deepening one's faith. It is necessary to pass beyond the historical and philosophical prologomena to actual contemplation of the mysteries.

Perhaps the only thing worse than rationalism in this sphere is pseudo-rationalism, the pretense of putting up a rigorous argument, where in fact the cards have been stacked. I think most of the people who studied philosophy and theology at the undergraduate level in the American Catholic college of 20 years ago were later to find that they had not encountered the real meat of philosophy but rather were fed on pabulum. I know, for example, that I felt I learned a great deal more about St. Thomas in a six weeks' summer course at the University of Kansas City than I had in several years in a Catholic college; this simply because I was for the first time genuinely challenged. So also in theology: I recall one course where we studied the tract on justice and never heard the problem of race relations in the modern world mentioned, although we did a fairly exhaustive study of what ought to be done under the various circumstances in which one might discover buried treasure.

In religious practice itself, one encounters the problem of formalism, which we have already touched upon in the instructive quotation from Steve Allen. There are passages also in James Gould Cozzens's "By Love Possessed" which illustrates the Catholic version of this disease which threatens every religion. I should mention that to Mr. Cozzens demonstrates an attitude toward both Catholicism and Judaism—or rather toward Catholics and Jews—which is reminiscent of the Kiplingesque attitude toward the lesser breeds without the law. But even though he slants his presentation rather obviously, the Catholic characters he portrays can be encountered outside his pages—people who have a formula to answer every human

problem, people who use syllogisms after the same fashion in which Nikita Khrushchev sometimes employs his shoes. As there is a formalism of thought, so there is a formalism of devotion: so many rosaries recited, so many Communion received, so many visits, so many indulgences gained, and salvation is in a safe deposit box.

Related to formalism is activism, the heresy of good works. Perhaps the best illustration of what is meant by activism in American Catholic life is furnished by J. F. Powers in his many short stories and in his recent novel "Morte D 'Urban". Father Urban of the mythical order of Clementines is above all efficient, if not exactly effective. He gets things done, he knows his way in the world, he makes the right contacts, he understands the psychology of the big businessman and potential big benefactor. All his words and his works are performed, he thinks, for the advancement of the order and the glory of God; but there is something missing and Father Urban has to get ingloriously beamed by a golf ball to get some hint of what it may be. I had to vulgarize Mr. Powers' work by trying to say what that something was, but perhaps it could be said that Father Urban realized God does not stand in need of big-time operators.

Catholic worship is by its nature communal, it is the collective act of the people of God. It was a little startling, therefore, to find that a Lutheran minister setting forth to describe Catholic worship for his coreligionists as fairly and honestly as he could felt constrained to remark upon the individualism actually to be found in the attitudes and actions of Catholics at Mass. For historical reasons too complex to enter into here the mode of Catholic worship, which ought to reinforce in the worshipers their sense of community in Christ, has lost much of its force. So long has this continued that people have lost the taste for this conscious expression of union and, paradoxically, the worship of Protestantism, which is supposed to be so much more individualistic than Catholicism, has actually in many cases created a much stronger sense of fellowship. Mr. Evelyn Waugh recently constituted himself the spokesman of those who desire no change in what they have come to regard as traditional in the conduct of the Mass, and Msgr. George W. Casey has paraphrased Mr. Waugh's desires in the current issue of THE COMMONWEAL:

"The people like the Mass as it is in most places; in a dark church, with a distant priest, back to them, speaking a foreign tongue, inaudibly. They do not want to understand it, really. They would rather be over-awed and mystified. That is the best mood for worship, and anyhow, they prefer to pass the time of Mass in their own way, saying the rosary, wrestling

with recalcitrant children or pondering their earthly affairs. They do not like conformity; their lack of unity and attention shows that. Nor do they want any part of 'togetherness' in the business of breaking bread."

One of the reasons Msgr. Casey and other supporters of the liturgical movement disagree with Mr. Waugh is that they see a connection between the present individualism of Catholic worship and the individualism apparent in the views of many Catholics about problems of the social order and of international relations. In this country the Church has never been afflicted by being identified with the aristocracy of the old regime or the plutocracy of the industrial revolution. But in candor one must concede that the Church had excellent reason in the character of her own membership for supporting the cause of the working classes. The record of the Church institutional in the last question is not bad if it is compared with that of other religious bodies; but it is not very good if it is judged in terms of Catholic doctrine on human solidarity. Looking beyond the American scene, the Catholic can take legitimate pride in the courage and the profound wisdom of such social documents as Pope Leo XIII's *Return Norarum*, Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* and Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra*. On the other hand, the doctrine of these social encyclicals, even though it is an integral part of Catholic teaching and is binding on all Catholics as such, has not yet been integrated with the great body of Catholic moral teaching. It is only now beginning to appear in the textbooks in use in the seminaries. Several months ago I asked a great German theologian why it is that Catholics and other Christians have found it possible to accept and take part in the evils associated with such historical movements as laissez faire capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, nationalism. He said "it was because for centuries we have been teaching 'save your soul,' when we should be saying 'bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ'."

At the National Conference on Religion and Race held earlier this month in Chicago our luncheon speaker, Mr. Philip Scharper, suggested another reason why Catholics have not worked to give the Negro the place demanded for him by Catholic theology, but instead have conspired to keep him in his traditional place on the rim of American society. He said it was because of the near obsessive preoccupation of Catholics with sexual morality. Most observers have attributed this preoccupation to inheritance from the Irish form of puritanism. Whatever its source, its existence is undeniable. The Magazine *Marriage* two issues ago reprinted John Updike's short story entitled "Wife Wooing," which wonderfully evokes and celebrates the sensual and sexual tensions of man and wife and

their resolution. Predictably, the next issue brought expressions not only of dismay but of profound disgust at what the writers called the filth and dirtiness of the story. Incidentally, I thought the reply of the editors was exactly right; a meditation on the Canticle of Canticles.

I am nearing the end of this melancholy procession. The final "ism" I want to mention is rather a cluster of qualities: ghettoism, separatism, cultural imperialism, defensiveness. In part this set of attitudes may be traced back as far as Constantine, or, for all I know, even further; in part they may be attributed to the tremendous trauma wrought by the Protestant Reformation; in this country these attitudes are blamed by sociologists on the persecution and discrimination suffered by the Catholic immigrants of the 19th century. Of course there will always be a degree of separatism which most Catholics will defend as legitimate and necessary, flowing from the unique claims the Church makes as to her own origin and meaning—this in addition to the necessity we all feel, in religion or in politics or in matters social, to identify with our own group and protect its exclusiveness. In the past this tendency has been exaggerated to the point of xenophobia in the American Catholic community. If I remember correctly James Farrell documents this in describing the boyhood of Studs Lonergan. Steve Allen in the novel already quoted has his hero describe his upbringing in an Irish Catholic family. Here are some excerpts from that page:

"I am indebted to my family for many things: they gave me food and clothing and money and as much love as they were able. They also taught me however by example to despise Jews . . . and to make jokes about Protestants . . . to laugh at and tolerate Negroes but also to look down on them . . . and to refer to Italians as Dagos and Poles as Polacks . . . they taught me to scurry about and feel trapped if strangers or, indeed, friends came to call and they taught me to regard everyone else in the world as an outsider, to be tolerated, perhaps even loved, but always to be considered an outsider."

I do not in the least suggest that the experience of Allen's hero was typical or is typical today; but of course it contains elements of truth. And these elements were in some measure reinforced, as we are discovering by research today, by tactless or careless or crude or even theologically false formulations taught in the Catholic schools or in Catholic textbooks of the attitude Catholics must take toward Protestants and Jews.

I'm sure you are aware that I'm not going to leave you at this point without some effort to restore balance to the picture and to discuss the response that is coming about from the reali-

zation of these phenomena. At the same time I want to stress that what I will say will not cancel what I have said. These are not trivial or transitory faults. Acknowledging that a good many Catholics would not grant the validity of this listing, I can at the same time assert that this indictment is not of my creation but rather stems from the insights of sober and reputable and eminently orthodox Catholic scholars. As Father Hans Kung says in the forthcoming book, a chapter of which appears in the current issue of *Sign* magazine, Catholics ought not to feel constrained to defend what they find indefensible. The whole tone of discourse on these matters is changing and the Church too is changing.

That is why, as I have already suggested, it is not really possible to give a final answer to the question posed in the title of this talk. If the answer were available once and for all, why has the Pope called a new council? What have the bishops been doing in Rome if not trying to provide new qualifications to the answers given by earlier popes and earlier councils?

Catholic dogma and Catholic morals are selfdefined as permanently valid and permanently binding. Both Catholics and others tend to be rather too conscious of the frigid and permanent quality of the Church's teaching, too little aware of its open-endedness, its potential for adaptation and development. Let me remark here that I say this not as a so-called "liberal" Catholic, eager to get rid of inconvenient inheritances from the past, but simply as a Catholic. If the Church claims divine origin and divine guidance, it insists equally on the presence of a human element: a Church of holiness, a Church of sinners. Moreover, Catholicism is preeminently a historical faith whose adherents are charged to understand and believe, not as a set of relics but as a living body of doctrine which is affected by the novel circumstances of every age.

Unless they are deeply aware of the aspect, Catholics are tempted to resign from living, and especially to resign from thinking. It is comforting to believe in a Church which is infallible and indefectible, but it is possible to be too comfortable, too secure. In a time like ours the Catholic who thinks life can be lived in a rut is not likely to contribute significantly to the world's needs.

So the Church is changing. If the same question were put to an informed Catholic 20 years from now—the one I'm trying avoid answering today—I suggest his response would be different in important ways from the answers he would give today. Even aside from the Vatican Council, there is a great deal going on, most of it closely associated with the problems I have discussed.

In the passage I quoted from Xavier Rynne's article in the *New Yorker* there is mention of the liturgical movement as an effort to restore a sense of mystery to the Catholic apprehension of the religious fact. But mystery does not mean mystification; on the contrary, the movement seeks to remove all unnecessary barriers to understanding, everything which smacks of mumble-jumble, of meaninglessness, of sentimentality, so that every worshiper can be drawn into the depths of genuine personal encounter with the truths of God and with God himself. Yet this is not to say that the liturgical movement is partial to intellectuals only, nor that it is opposed to the enlisting of emotion. The liturgical movement reaches its climax in any parish when the worshipers experience the joy which we are told was felt by the first Christians.

Accompanying the liturgical movement and intimately related with it are the Biblical and catechetical movement. Modern Catholic Biblical scholarship—which incidentally works in close conjunction with similar Protestant and Jewish movements—is in part scientific, even technical: the application of archeological, philological and literary techniques to recover in fuller sense the meaning intended by the human instrument of divine inspiration in composing the books of Scripture. So far as the actual text of Scripture is concerned even with regard to translations, some scholars foresee the day when Protestants and Catholics will share a common Bible. It need hardly be added that interpretation is another matter altogether.

Internally the significance of the Biblical renewal derives not merely from increased accuracy in textual analysis but rather from the effects this movement is having on the presentation of religion itself to the faithful. As we have seen, Catholic teaching has been made available to the people as a set of propositions. The effect of the Biblical-liturgical-catechetical renewal is to present Catholicism as a story—or, rather as THE story—in which we are all involved. The logical and rational articulation of the faith is not being abandoned, but rather confined to its proper academic purpose. The mission of the preacher and catechist is not to argue the faith but to announce the good news.

As you will understand, this has ramifications beyond my own grasp and beyond the limits put upon us here. Moreover there are other movements underway, more or less connected to the ones we have discussed which are leading to a restructuring of Catholic moral theology; a re-thinking of the place of the laity in the Church; a far stronger insistence on the social dimensions of morality, including applications to international, interracial and intergroup relations. In this country it is being realized that Catholic intellectualism has almost wholly neglected

the realm of art and aesthetics. Catholic humanism, which has been almost exclusively literary, is striving to give more adequate attention to art, music and drama.

This sort of listing, just as the previous listing of errors and inadequacies, could go on quite a while. There is a certain air of solemnity and selfconsciousness about this which we can hope will be shed as this tendency matures.

Thinking about all these things in relation to today's symposium, it struck me that much of what has been touched upon here shares a common quality with some pretense to our whole effort here. I hope this is not a forced or artificial construct; it does seem to me valid to say that in some sense one effect of these changes will be to make Catholics more "Jewish." By this I mean we are beginning to give more attention to the immediate, the concrete, and to these earthly goods which are genuinely good no matter how earthly. We are beginning to demonstrate a greater concern for social justice and to give a greater place to freedom, both in practice and in theory, both within the Church and in the civil order. We are beginning to restore the things of the mind to the proper place in the hierarchy of our values.

I cannot hope to tie all the threads together, but I would like to close with a couple of quotations even more closely connected with the purpose of our coming together. The first of the quotations is from the same article I mentioned earlier written by Msgr. George W. Case of Boston and appearing in the current issue of COMMONWEAL. Msgr. Casey writes:

"For weal or for woe, there are strong forces at work in society, not necessarily in conflict either, that are increasing the Catholic desire for change, and for changes that will make for greater association and collaboration with others. Among these forces, which are working in other 'closed' societies than our own, as for example that of the Jews, are: pluralism, suburbanization; social mobility; the wider diffusion of higher education and of prosperity; the need of conformity and status; the common fear of communism; the common exposure to the same media of information and opinion, the picture magazines and the television programs; and so on. Minds and sympathies are being unconsciously standardized by common influence and there is plenty of conscious reaching out, too. Many Catholics, on all levels, want to be less circumscribed in their social contacts and fuller and freer in their participation in community affairs. They are sick of unnecessary suspicion, aloofness and determined separation from men of other minds and ways. They want peace among neighbors as among the nations, and for this they know that they must give as well as get."

A less pragmatic, more profound and I think more moving expression tending in this same direction was contained in a lecture by the philosopher Jacques Maritain on "Truth and Human Fellowship." I am borrowing it here from a paper delivered by Donald McDonald at a symposium very like this one at Marquette University in May of last year. Maritain said on that occasion:

"It happens that we are man, each containing within himself the ontological mystery of personality and freedom; and it is in this very mystery of freedom and personality that genuine tolerance or fellowship takes root. For the basis of fellowship among men of different creeds is not of the order of the intellect and of ideas, but of the heart and of love. It is friendship, natural friendship, but first and foremost mutual love in God and for God. Love does not go out to essences nor to qualities nor to ideas, but to persons; and it is the mystery of persons and of divine presence within them which is here in play.

"This fellowship, then, is not a fellowship of beliefs, but the fellowship of man who believe . . . Love which is charity . . . goes first to God, and then to all men because the more men are loved in God and for God, the more they are loved themselves and in themselves."

If my remarks this evening have led to some measure of understanding of the American Catholic, or even if they have but suggested areas for further investigation leading to that understanding, I will have considered my mission accomplished. In any event, it has been an honor to have had the opportunity to take part in this ". . . fellowship of men who believe."



RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

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What is a Jew?

It is an act of *Chutzpah*, audacity, on my part even to suggest that I can within the compass of thirty minutes or so answer the question: *What is a Jew?* How can one deal seriously in one half of one hour with four-thousand years of history, spread across all the continents of the world, ranging the full spectrum of human experience from tragedy to triumph, through heroism and destruction, from Mount Sinai through Babylonia, Bergen-Belsen, Brooklyn and Beersheba reborn, all of which have forged the complex destiny, the mysterious and yet marvelous survival of the Jew in the salvation history of mankind. To seek to reduce that to "a talk" really borders on blasphemy. And yet, as the Rabbi said to the parishioner who came to him saying that he felt that he was not adequate to pray, had great fear of it, "My son, have fear *and* pray." So with fear and trepidation, I embark prayerfully on a suggestive statement regarding *What is a Jew?* I should like to approach this in something of the Biblical and Prophetic tradition, which is to say, that this is to be a non-speculative statement. I seek to address myself to the perceptions that many of you may have

about the Jew in your concrete human situations and to see whether I can help to clarify your understanding of the Jew on this reality level, perhaps raise some questions and, hopefully, even try to answer some.

Anyone who travels in interreligious circles can give you on quite short notice a check-list of Catholic perceptions or misperceptions about Jews, Judaism, Jewish history, the Jewish people. And I am sure, as Robert Hoyt and William Ball have already made impressively clear, that on the other side of the coin one can point up similarly Jewish misperceptions of Catholics. But instead of improvising such a list, instead of giving you *my* impression of what I think these perceptions are, let me rely on something more substantial in terms of what is a Catholic understanding of the Jew.

Recently a prominent Catholic educator traveled around the country addressing students in Catholic colleges and universities about the problem that we are discussing here today. And as a result of her discussions with Catholic students, she came away with a list of the questions which Catholics ask her most frequently about Jews and Judaism. The following is a verbatim report of the questions asked of this lecturer by Catholic students. I leave it to the judgement of our Catholic friends in this audience as to whether these views are peculiar to students or whether they are more broadly representative of Catholic opinion about the Jewish people and their tradition. My impression is that the latter is probably the case.

These questions fall into four categories, and these provide the framework for my discussion of *What is a Jew?* The first category deals with the problem of "The Jews in the Business World." These are some of the questions which were asked:

"Don't you think that in this country we are antagonistic to Jews because they are too successful in business?"

"Why are all Jews rich?"

"Why are the Jews better than anyone else in business?"

"I have heard it said that Hitler had to do what he did because the Jews held all the money in Germany."

"Why did the Jews in the middle ages have money to lend people in states? You said that it was the only profession that they were allowed to exercise but where did they get the money in the first place?"

Category number two, roughly entitled, "Jews Are Secular", and these are the questions:

"Why do Jews who do not go to the synagogue, even atheists, insist that they are still Jews? A fallen-out Catholic does not still consider himself a Catholic; why does an irreligious Jew still consider himself a Jew?"

Third category, which Philip Scharper dealt with so extraordinarily this afternoon, "The Role of the Jews in the Crucifixion":

"If the Jewish people did not kill Christ, who did?"

"You said that the high priest and the elders and not the Jewish people had a share of responsibility in Jesus' condemnation; that is not true, the Gospel says that the people clamored for his death."

"I am a Catholic and I know what I have been taught when I went to catechism, and that is that the Jews killed Christ. This is what my Church teaches. I don't like it. I have several friends who are Jewish, but what can I do? I have to believe my Church."

"My Church teaches that the Jews are no longer the chosen people since they killed Christ. I don't hold it against my Jewish friends; that would be silly. Yet I cannot help remembering that they are not chosen any more and I guess it does make a difference. What can I do?"

Fourth category, "New Approach to Jewish-Christian Relations":

"You said that we Christians have a deep conscious or a subconscious contempt of the Jews, but the Jews have a deep contempt for us, too, believe me; so that's 50-50. Don't you think that the Jews should also meet us part of the way in this new approach?"

"I do understand that we cannot hold present day Jewish people responsible for Jesus' death; I don't think I ever did. Yet, my Jewish friends do not become Christians. Why?"

There were several other categories of questions, such as religious freedom in the State of Israel, the Dead Sea scrolls, the threat of communism to Christianity and its impact on the Christian response to the new world situation. But these ques-

tions would carry us far afield. I have selected these four categories out of six or seven as the basis for my remarks.

Now it should be evident at the outset, that some of these questions are formulated in rather naive or gross terms. That is a matter of language and should not detract from the substance of the questions raised. It is also necessary to keep in mind that there were other questions asked which reflected a more positive understanding of and orientation toward the Jew. But these questions that I have just read to you must be taken for what they are, namely, an indication of the mode of perception of the Jew by many Catholics, and to this fact I seek to address myself this afternoon.

Let us seek first to dispose of, at least to try to understand, this popular and negative perception of the Jew as a business man, the Jew as a merchant, because it is one of the most persistent myths and one which Christians, and Catholics in particular, encounter most frequently. Catholics encounter it most frequently because the sociology today of Catholic-Jewish relationships brings Catholics and Jews into greater contact in the major urban centers of America more than it has at any time in the past. Now this myth has deep and ancient roots. A spirit of charity, it would seem to me, requires a genuine effort to try to understand the sources of this sinister view of the Jew as the economic conspirator, a view that is not far removed from the Kremlin's caricature of American capitalists as a collective breed of "Wall Street robber barons."

In seeking to achieve such understanding, hopefully we will gain some insight into the larger process of myth-making and stereotyping, confusing truth with half-truths, leaping from the particular to "generalization", all of which are the surest barriers to mutual trust and to love of neighbor as one's self.

The Jews in western Europe, going back to the fourth century, were not business people. The Jews were predominantly a farm community, and on the continent, and in particular in Rome, Sicily, in France and Germany, they earned their livelihood as farmers, artisans, and as petty tradesmen. But through the pressures of history, as is known to many of you, Jews were perforce driven from the farms and were compelled to become merchants. The entire farm economy of the Roman Empire was based on slave-holding. By virtue of the social arrangement that prevailed at that time, the slave generally adopted the religious practices of his master, and so many slaves owned by Jews became Jews. Adolf Harnack, the eminent historian, adduced evidence that by the fourth century there were at least two million Roman converts to Judaism, many of them slaves in the household of Jewish masters. When Con-

stantine established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Jews were forbidden on the penalty of death to convert pagans, heathens, non-Jews, to Judaism. Thus the basis of the slave economy, and, therefore, of the farm economy was destroyed for the Jew, and he had to find other ways of subsisting.

During the period of the Moslem-Christian conflict in the seventh and eighth centuries, trade was mainly in the hands of Syrian Christians, and the Moslems on rising to power prevented the Syrian Christians from having commerce with their brothers in the Levant. The Jews were then encouraged both by the Christians and the Moslems to become the tradesmen of that world, bridging East and West. Very often, the Jews were indentured as the merchants of princes and popes. Consequently, the only profession open to Jews were those of banker or usurer. In a number of instances, the Church turned to the Jews for funds with which to build magnificent churches and cathedrals which are the glory of Europe.

And so this history of the Jew as merchant goes back to the earliest days. It is a complex story and cannot in respect to truth be explained simplistically as the sinister plot of the Jew to infiltrate the financial power centers of the Christian West. Rather the force of events of history, in most cases not of his own making, cast the Jew into a mercantile role, and throughout the entire period of the middle ages he was given no other option that would enable him to survive. Parenthetically, it may well have been an act of Providence that the Jew's properties were in liquid assets because the expulsions and the persecutions that overtook him demanded that he be able to move swiftly, taking his possessions with him overnight, across foreign borders. It is no accident today that on forth-seventh street in New York City, the Jews who have come recently from eastern Europe, from the ghettos of Poland and Russia still wearing beards and sidecurls, dressed in caftans and gabardines, trade in jewelry and diamonds. A pocketful of pearls or precious stones can be the ransom price for buying one's safety and the security of one's family from border guards. Even in the freedom of America many of these immigrants act on Old World memories.

The fact that America has beckoned to Europeans precisely because it was the preeminent mercantile society doubly served to enhance its appeal for Jewish immigrants who were uniquely prepared by their histories for the great American dream of success and security through commerce and industry. A marriage of the Jew's past and the pressing needs and opportunities presented by a dynamically expanding America encouraged the Jew to concentrate his energies and creativity in the world

of business, trades, and professions. The ancient and inherited Jewish reverence toward Torah as learning, the pursuit of intellectual perfection, provided the internal motivation and the mental orientation that enabled the Jew to respond successfully to the challenges of an industrialized technological society that has placed a premium on the kinds of educational and allied skills that Jews have come by over the centuries. Thus, it is factual to state, as did the college students, that Jews have been successful in business, but the reasons one holds in making this observation spell the difference between empathy and bigotry.

This past January, I was privileged to serve as Program Chairman of the National Conference on Religion and Race, held in Chicago. One revelation for me that came out of that meeting, far and beyond others, was the failure of the white man—the white Christian, the white Jew—to understand and to feel genuinely the depth of the predicament of the Negro. James Baldwin gave us but a foretaste of what became disturbingly evident at this historic conference, namely, the widespread Negro resentment toward the white man because of the failure of the white man to come to grips with the truth that the Negro is the creature of the white society and he is blamed and abused for being the product that that society has made him. I felt something of a mystical communion taking place over and again between Negro and Jew throughout the conference. Undoubtedly, there was a profound sharing of feeling of common plight; the Negro and Jew alike have suffered from a dominant society which proclaims self-righteous principles of spiritual and democratic equality, but which persists in a relative insensitivity and hard-heartedness to the pain and insult to the human dignity of these minority peoples. The Negro like the Jew understands in very personal terms the comment of Heinrich Heine, "My friends, first you cripple the Jew and then you blame him for limping."

What bothers the Jew when he finds his Catholic neighbor espousing such unsympathetic stereotypes is that his understanding of Catholic beginnings in this country leads him to expect the very opposite. The similar immigrant and ghetto phases of their respective American pasts, the discriminations and hurts their communities suffered should have led, at least theoretically, to greater mutual empathy. And certainly the Catholic teaching of charity would lead non-Catholics to a certain expectation in attitude and behavior on the part of those who belong to the faithful. But perhaps what the Jew has not understood is that it is precisely the distinctive character of the Catholic immigrant experience that had predisposed many Catholics to be negative if not hostile to the Jew. The heaviest Catholic immigration to this country came after the Irish potato famines. The immigrants came here penniless,

ravaged. The Jewish immigrants, who also fled from dire circumstance, nevertheless brought abilities as shopkeepers, petty tradesmen, and business competence. The encounter between Catholic and Jewish immigrant, therefore, in the early days of this century began in numerous instances as a merchant-customer relationship, a form of relationship which under the best of conditions is attended by resentments, claims and counter-claims, and bruised feelings.

As the American Catholic and Jew today leave behind their immigrant pasts and enter simultaneously into the urban middle class societies and cultures in which they share increasingly the same values and aspirations, the same levels of education and opportunities for status employment, it is to be devoutly hoped that the stereotypes of the past which crudely served to compensate for depressed and unequal life situations will collapse in the face of the new social realities which will bring Catholic and Jew together increasingly as human beings and not as abstractions or gargoyled myths.

Even as we confront and try to explode "the social myths" about each other, we will need to be on guard to see through some of "the ideological myths" which time and unreflective habit have allowed to be conjured up to our mutual disadvantage. Perhaps the most vexing "ideological myth" that many Catholics continue to hold about the Jew is that reflected in the students' second category of questions, namely, "The Jew as Secularist".

The most complex challenge that the Jew has been faced with since the Emancipation is that of his own self-definition. Is the Jew to be defined solely in terms of religion? Are the Jews a people? Are they a race? A nation? It is no great wonder that Catholic students asked perplexed questions about Jews who do not attend the Synagogue and yet insist on identifying themselves with the Jewish people. By all conventional categories, the Jew in an anomaly. It has taken a French Catholic priest, Father Paul Dëmann, to penetrate into the deeper meaning of Jewish identity. Writing in his most perceptive book, *Judaism*, Father Dëmann has avoided the easy way of tagging a label on the Jew, but has sought to understand him in his complexity and reality:

"What does it mean to be a Jew?" writes Father Dëmann. "Perhaps the least inadequate answer would be something like this: To be a Jew is to belong to a community, a special destiny, which is defined only by history, and this unique history and destiny, with a concrete human condition which flows from them, are closely bound up with the bible history, the history of salvation in the eyes of the believer. With some this belonging

will be expressed by loyalty to the tradition of Judaism and the conscious acceptance of a destiny founded on divine election. In others it will take the form of an attachment, whether willing and accepted or almost instinctive, and of the feeling of solidarity founded on a common descent, tradition, education, and condition. Clearly, then, there are several ways of being a Jew. But this does not prevent the Jews from forming an entity whose cohesion, permanence, and personality stand out with extraordinary vigor."

May I respectfully comment that I think it is inherent in the Christian situation that the Jew will never be entirely understood to the satisfaction of Christians. The neo-Platonic and Scholastic categories which are the basis of Catholic thought preclude any precise definition of the Jew in his existential reality. These categories perceive all reality, all of nature, as falling within the duality of the sacred and the secular. To these dualities are attached values, the sacred being associated with the divine and holy, and therefore superior, and secular being associated with an inferior and "unredeemed" order of nature. Therefore, when the term "secular" is used in the Christian tradition, and in particular in the sense of medieval Scholasticism, it must perforce bring to mind a negative association.

Christian humanists such as Erasmus and Thomas More sought to close the gap between the secular and the sacred in their conception of the *Res Christiana* penetrating the *Res Publica*, a conception closer in many ways to the Hebrew view of the Biblical categories of reality than to Thomas Aquinas. But up to this day at least Thomism and the Secular-sacred dualism remain as orthodoxy in Catholic thought, and the Christian humanists are referred to still somewhat critically as *Erasmismo*.

We need to face the fact that the conception of the secular, and all that it implies, is a tradition that is uniquely Western. The metaphysique of sacred and secular does not exist in the Orient; this dichotomy is unknown to the Moslem, the Buddhist, the Hindu traditions. And the Jew is more the theological child of the East than of the West. The Jewish community emerged out of the Mediterranean world, out of near-Eastern traditions. And the dichotomy of sacred and secular in the Scholastic sense is essentially alien to the Jewish experience and thought, and therefore the Jew resists and resents having to define himself in terms which are inherently not Jewish, especially when those terms are employed for polemical purposes of intimidation or coercion.

The Jewish religious experience reflects the Semitic background which viewed religion as the *praxis* of a particular

people; religion was the way of life, the *paidea* of a destined community. The Jew by virtue of being born into this community is committed both as a member of its polity as well as of its religious tradition, and the degree of his religious observance or lack of observance does not remove him from his natural society, the most ancient form of human association. (I suggest you read W. Robertson Smith's classic study, "The Religion of the Semites," to perceive the distinctiveness of Semitic religions.) The Rabbinic sages of the Talmud gave a religious interpretation of this ethnic factor in Judaism indirectly in their injunction. "An Israelite even though he has sinned remains an Israelite. Until the day of his death he is able to repent."

The foregoing hardly begins to do justice to the complex question of secularism, both in its general meaning and in its Jewish significance. (A fuller discussion, for example, would have to confront the issue of why there is virtually no anti-clericalism in Judaism, while Catholicism with its traditional opposition to secularism has been beset by anti-clerical movements, very often the most powerful expressions of secularist movements in history.) What I have been trying to suggest is the need for a psychological Mercator's globe adjustment in our perceptions of each other. Our Western *hubris* (intellectual pride) combined with our American swagger and superiority hinder us from accepting people as they are, in their own terms; prevent us from respecting them in their full integrity and uniqueness. There is some tragic truth in "The Ugly American" insensitivity to the preciousness of other human beings' cultures and ways of living; but for religious people to wear such "ugly" spectacles is to fall into a heresy that blasphemes the very image of God.

Profoundly related to the problem of Catholic perception of the Jew sociologically ("the merchant") and ideologically ("the secularist") is the theological ground on which the Christian first confronts the Jew. The third category of questions asked by the students regarding "The Role of the Jew in the Crucifixion" is in fact the most important influence in the shaping of the Christian's attitude toward the Jew. Phillip Sharper has already stated with characteristic perception and scholarship how the misinterpretation of the role of the Jew in the Passion, contrary to the authoritative teaching of the Church in the council of Trent catechism which he described, has contributed to the historic use of the Jew as a scapegoat for one's own sins, "the mask" which hides one from one's self.

More than one study has revealed that the predisposition on the part of many Christians to think the worst of the Jew is related to that distorted teaching of the dramaturgy of the

Crucifixion in which the Jew is portrayed as the villain, banished and rejected forever, and deserving of his persecution. A study of Protestant religious textbooks, recently published as "Faith and Prejudice" by Yale University Press, and the Catholic textbook study, conducted at St. Louis University with which I have been privileged to be associated through my work with the American Jewish Committee, support this thesis. At the same time the studies indicate that Protestant and Catholic teachings contain resources, "anti-ethnocentric antidotes" that allow the noblest teachings of charity, truth, and justice to be set forth in a way that is not contradicted by misrepresentations and inadequate formulations about Jews—as well as about Protestants, Negroes, and others that are more reflective of history than of theology. The recognition on the part of His Holiness Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Bea of the primary need to separate the essential teaching from the nonessential—those accidental accretions of changing cultural, political and social conditions of the past—represent one of the most heartening developments in relations between the faith communities since the earliest centuries of this era. Pope John's removal from the Good Friday liturgy of "The perfidious Jew" reference, and Cardinal Bea's condemnation of the charge that Jews are responsible for deicide are historic contributions to the improvement of relations between Christians and Jews.

I come now to the fourth category of questions, "The New Approach in Christian-Jewish Relations". Despite the impressive growth in ecumenical understanding, suspicion continues to hover on both sides. Not all Catholics are aware of the great strides that have been made, especially in recent years, toward improving radically the basis of understanding between Catholics and Jews; and among those who are aware, there are some who are not necessarily happy about it. Somehow to view the Jew and Judaism sympathetically calls into question cherished childhood antipathies which have been hallowed by time into dogmas. There are also many Jews who are totally ignorant of the Christian outreach to the Jew as a genuine expression of Christian love and charity. And among those who have heard of the "new approach" there are some who are suspicious of its genuineness and of its motive. Are Christians changing their tactics, substituting "honey for vinegar" in order that Jews lower their defenses and become easier candidates for conversion, or are they prepared to love Jews as they are, as loyal sons of the Covenant between God and Israel.

These resistances reveal the degree to which we are victims of the polemical readings and conditionings of our histories. If the world is not to give up altogether on the now tired yearning that the forces of religion translate into reality their profes-

sions of respect for human dignity based on love of God, that they become in fact agents of reconciliation and harmony in the social order as contrasted with their past histories so outrageously pockmarked with religious wars, heresy hunts, and bloody persecutions, then upon us, each of us, rests the heavy but inescapable obligation to become pedagogues of the new *kerygma* of Christian-Jewish fraternity; pedagogues in the specific as well as in the general meaning. We need to examine with meticulous care what we teach our children about each other in our textbooks, catechisms, liturgy, in our Sunday schools, religious schools, our homes. We need to train our teachers to be sensitive to the intergroup factors in their classroom presentations. We need to make our parents aware that if our homes are truly altars to the Divine Presence that anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-Protestant, anti-Negro attitudes, either as intentional barbs or as unreflective jokes, are in fact violations of the sanctity of the home, of their stewardship of God's children.

Without touching our doctrinal and dogmatic truths, we can reinterpret in our history textbooks, our social science textbooks, and in all our relevant curricula the irenic view of the relationship between Christian and Jews as contrasted with the polemical presentations which now predominate in the majority of our teaching materials. In my studies of the interaction between Christians and Jews from the first four centuries onward, even through the Middle Ages, I have found literally hundreds of episodes which bespeak the warmest and mutually helpful ties between the ecclesiastical leaders of Christianity and Judaism, as well as on a daily level between "the common people". This is not to minimize for a single moment the tragic fact that the contemporaries of these Christians and Jews were engaged in the most horrible mutual antagonisms and violence, with, let the record be kept clear, Jews being the victims in the majority of instances of this sad history. But Christian textbooks, both Catholic and Protestant, have a far road to travel before they portray adequately and empathetically the Jewish people and Judaism as a living, vital, relevant community in Western civilization. Similarly, Jews are a far cry from dealing adequately and sympathetically with Christians and Christianity. While there are Jews who feel that the persecutions of the past, and in particular the Nazi holocaust which took place in a nation that boasted of its ancient Christian culture, does not obligate them to meet the Christian half-way, there are also many of us who feel that our obligations to future generations of Jewish children require us to help prepare them to live humanely and fraternally with their Christian neighbors.

The cycle of mutual recrimination, suspicion, and hostility has run long enough. It is time to set into motion a cycle of

benign relations, mutually trusting and loving, as befits noble sons and daughters of the Sovereign of the universe. I, as a Jew and as a Rabbi, and together with me thousands of my co-religionists here and the world over, are prepared to join hands with you, our Catholic neighbors, to work together unceasingly toward the realization of that goal so simply but compellingly enunciated by Pope John in his encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*.

"Let every man tend to do that not which divides one from another, but let every man do that which unites one to another."

