

A Statement of Policy

"Public opinion plays a part in every normal society of human beings... wherever there is no expression of public opinion, above all, where it has been ascertained that no public opinion exists, then one is obliged to say that is a fault, a weakness, a sickness, in the social life of that area... Finally, I should like to add a word about public opinion within the fold of the Church -- about things that can be left open to discussion, of course. Only people who know little or nothing about the Catholic Church will be surprised to hear this. For she too is a living body, and there would be something missing from her life if there were no public opinion within her, a defect for which pastors as well as the faithful would be responsible."

Pope Pius XII

The words of a great pontiff best express the goal that Sententiae seeks. We hope to provide a bi-weekly selection of pure opinion as expressed by the seniors of our seminary. We hope that these opinions of ours will treat especially of such contemporary themes as Church renewal, the place of Catholic thought in politics, and certainly the philosophy of the seminarian's development for the priesthood in a fresh, positive, and decisive manner. It is our desire to present you, the members of the senior house, with an open forum. Let us not forget that, as theologian Karl Rahner so cogently expresses it, "Ultimately it all boils down to the fact that every individual Christian is responsible in his own day and way for the Church and the life of the Church." Sententiae intends to respond to the challenge of this responsibility.

Seminarians are not tempted in the ordinary ways, I feel, but chiefly by very subtle means. The effects are surely evident, however. A class of seventy-five, from a diocese of this size, is reduced maybe to ten. Could it be possible that Christ is calling merely ten?

Maybe we could shift our defenses a bit. I feel the devil lures seminarians by tremendous temptations which we rarely recognize. Most of us succumb, although to be sure some choose the lay life because they feel God wants his service and honor in that vocation.

If we think of the doubts we have, the great mental torment, the futile feelings, the loneliness and the dislike for the seminary life itself, we will see Lucifer working. (An examination of these points might prove fruitful.) But how many leave the seminary because of these feelings? Should not our only reason be that we feel Christ has picked this other life for us? This, I realize, is ideal.

Let us try, however, to overcome these human feelings and fit into Christ's long range plan. Do I want to be a priest, serve God directly, serve many, many men, be a mediator, a teacher, and helper? Or do I want love God through a woman, have a family, recognize the goodness of God by becoming one with another person?

With these questions, our life appears almost simple. Circumstances may be easy or difficult but we can cast them aside and choose which we really want to be and do.

A Chance to Lead

In which book of the Bible do we find the passage, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay"? What is the Parable of the Unjust Judge all about? What will result when the Seven Trumpets of the Apocalypse are blown?

The average Protestant fourteen-year-old who attends Sunday School every week can answer at least two of these questions correctly. The average Catholic, on the other hand, whatever his age, can answer none correctly. This demonstrates how little Catholics know about the written Word of God.

Let's not try to defend ourselves by saying, "The Bible is all their religion has; naturally they will know it better." This is ridiculous. We have the Bible, too. The point is: they read it, and we don't.

Recently, the Church has been encouraging its members to read the Scriptures frequently. Let us seminarians be the first to follow this exhortation. Let us spend our spiritual Reading periods reading -- not Butler's Lives -- but God's word.

Contributors: James Hanink
Joseph Radelet
Michael Murphy

Classism or Family Spirit - Are We Guilty?

Upon reflecting on the spirit in the Senior House this year, I have come to the conclusion that it is tremendous, as compared with that of former days in the Junior House. With reflection there comes the big question, why? Why is it in the Senior House? Why isn't it in the whole House? Right away will be raised a question of maturity, but to me it seems to be something a little more simple than maturity. The Senior House, due to small classes, has been rid of the class ghetto and cliques. Hence a greater closeness is felt and more of a family spirit prevails. While I am on the subject, it would be good to keep in mind that to have this family spirit here is going to be more of a challenge next year with a possible larger fourth class coming in.

But on the other hand, haven't we now turned ourselves into one big class, one big clique? Maybe not so much physically as in olden days, but in attitude. I have heard some distressing talk on the lines of "Let's have the old wall again between Junior and Senior Houses." If we want the old wall, disunity, then we are guilty of classism. Rather against the present tide of indifference should come the attitude of "big brother", not with an overtone of lord. The higher law of love and fraternal charity is calling us to break down physical barriers as well as barriers of indifference between the two Houses.-- Chris Poterack

The Need for Dialogue

To say that communication is essential to human life would be an understatement because dialogue is not only essential to human life, but also constitutes life that is human. Without dialogue men are reduced to irrational animals, incapable of noticing or paying attention to others. Lack of dialogue has plunged nations into needless and bloody wars. Lack of dialogue has put impenetrable barriers between the best of friends. The wayward teenager is, more often than not, a product of this lack of dialogue between himself and his parents.

Here in St. Joe's we too are in danger of falling into the same error. Our community spirit is not what it should be. Our attitude toward the rule; our attitude regarding our Superiors; our misunderstandings with other students, are all effected by this lack of dialogue. Most of us are afraid to take the first step toward open and free dialogue because we are afraid that others will find out what we are really like. Those who do make attempts most often meet with ridicule of a blunt refusal of co-operation. It is time that we realize that dialogue is probably the most important part of our character development. It is time to realize that we are not independent individuals who need no one but ourselves. We are individuals, it is true. But each unique personality in the seminary was placed here by God as a complement to the personality of others. How much longer will we refuse to give our complete personality to others? -- Randy Cirner

Methods of Seminary Instruction

We see that all teachers in the seminary must go farther, when teaching, than just giving academic advice. The teacher falls short of his role if he does not also bear personal witness to salvation truth both in and out of the classrooms.

Adequate instruction should be given in such fields as sociology, economics, cultural anthropology, social psychology and related subjects which lead to a better understanding of the world in which the Church must carry out her divine mission.

In the teaching of dogma, moral theology, scripture, liturgy and spirituality, the seminary should train its students to express what they learn in a language that will be understood by the laity. This will help to stimulate the laity to live by these principles.

The life of study in the seminary demands the development of responsibility and the opportunity for free exercise of creativity and initiative - always, however, in the spirit of Christian obedience. Classroom lectures should then be supplemented by seminars and study groups under the guidance of a professor. This in itself will help create student initiative.

Seminarians should have free access to libraries both in and out of the seminary. Increased dialogue between professors and students will help community relations and devotion to study.

The seminary should also seek to form a suitable number of priests who will join the intellectual apostate. The Church today is suffering because she lacks a sufficient number of priests in the important apostolate.

It also seems that something should be done about making the first two years of college college years and not simply two extra years of high school. - *Thomas Budzynski*

Moderator's Comment: Isn't it strange that this is the complaint of even many community junior colleges - even of those on separate campuses?

Personality Development In The Seminary

Assuming that we grow and develop as spiritual, intellectual, and social personalities through introspection and experience, the question arises: Is our growth impeded or fostered by the present seminary system? Granted, we become well acquainted with introspection, but does the same hold true for experience?

I feel that the experiences of growing up in a normal atmosphere have been absent somewhat. One solid proof is our scarcity of communicative topics. Day after day we discuss the same classes, characters, and commonplace circumstances, since our new experiences are quite limited. Since we don't encounter many new faces, we instead become attuned to every detail of personality, dress, and speech which are the components of our fellow seminarians. And when we feel weighed down by various problems and difficulties, we find as social outlets basketball and anecdote swapping on the path. Many problems trace their source to this lack of experience.

High school seniors and college men are at the stage where constant confinement conflicts with their youthful enthusiasms for meeting new faces and seeing new places. When your life is, of its nature, somewhat routine, the seemingly small pleasures of added freedoms and privileges take on a much more significant nature. In fact, such events as the trip to Holland and Recorder interviews actually become blown out of proportion, insofar as they become items of extreme importance.

Maybe an opportunity such as students checking out for Wednesday afternoons to do as they please is not the endall to the problem of the need for experience, but it is an untried solution. Perhaps it could be the basis of a most interesting experiment.

Tom Drinan

Why Only Two Religion Classes?

This is a question which has always had me wondering.

If a person came up to one of our college students and asked, "What subject are you majoring in?" the young man would have to reply, "None."

Our Religion course, which is the main subject of our vocation, has only two semester hours per week. If this is what some call majoring in a subject, then the students at Michigan State, who are majoring in a subject, sure have it easy!

The only other answer that the young man could give to the question above is that he is taking a liberal arts course in college.

I thought that the reason we are in the seminary is because all of us believe that our vocation in life is to become a priest.

If this is so, should we not, at least in college, major in the course which is going to be our business?

Jim Loser

Moderator's Comment: Further study of this question highly favored.

To Cry Out Or To Carry Out: The Distinction

For J.Q. Hegford, struggling seminarian, this was (as most times are) a time of decision. He felt the will of the Lord entailed some changes in the seminary. The fact was, at times J.Q. felt like he would go nuts if changes did not come. Was his thinking on the beam? Could he help? How? He took two small steps which he felt were best for his immediate interests and for all concerned.

First, J.Q. formed a basic attitude. Instead of getting caught up in an impetuous movement against certain policies, he tried to keep an even disposition, to evaluate charitably and not to complain.

Secondly, he accepted the open invitation from faculty members and talked over pertinent subjects with them. He found them with differing opinions; he gained understanding and broadened his views. With his theories ever developing, he concentrated his efforts on specifics. He thought an idea out, discussed it, and, if it seemed feasible, he never hesitated to ask for it. The important factor was that when the answer was "no", he took it maturely and continued to work with equal vigour on other ideas. It was not easy. But he endured and matured because he saw Christ in everybody even if their views differed. He knew all was in the hands of the Lord, and accordingly, he acted.

Joe Radelet

Disunity We Want?

We have witnessed recently a revival for the virtue of unity between Upper and Lower houses. But when we think about it, how much unity does everyone really want? Is it unity of action in our common projects and duties concerning the whole seminary that we want? Or should we rather strive more for a community united in fraternal charity and common purpose, but a community disunited in the means to attain our goal? Should not the means in forming a well-rounded priest be changed as the years of the aspirant also change?

There are boys here just beginning their teen-age years and boys just ending them. A lot happens in six years! Should our activities be geared to freshman high school or to sophomore college? Neither. They should be geared to each individual group as they progress along each stage of the road.

Maybe a bigger separation between high school and college would best accomplish this. Couldn't each house of seminarians best fulfill its potentials working together as a separate high school and as a separate junior college? I'm all for having the high school become a strong, effective unit, doing much of what now takes an older college boy to do and then opening up many new avenues of advance for all those eager college students! -- Donald W. Garthe.

Grand Silence For Seniors

Lately there has been some discussion about the value of certain facets of the rule. The rule of silence has come in for its share of bouquets and barbs. The issue seems to have boiled down to the aspect of self-discipline. Would it be more beneficial if it were not compulsory, if it were not a specific rule to be kept strictly out of obedience?

The main purpose of the rule, as I see it, is character development. And character development that is meaningful is based on sacrifice. Granted that there is sacrifice in obeying for the sake of obedience. But isn't it more of a sacrifice to give up something freely, rather than because it is an infraction to be reported?

Dropping the rule of silence wouldn't be a matter of dropping silence itself. Rather it would be changing the legalistic law for the law of charity. Silence, with charity as the motivating force, would be just as evident, I would think. The only difference would be the matter of reporting. We stand to gain a firmer development by replacing the burden of reporting with the burden of charitable responsibility. It is something worth consideration. -- Thomas Drinan.

Moderator's Comment: I always thought the basis of silence was charity. Cannot charity be within the Law? The Great Commandment (law) says, "Thou shalt love."

De Adulescentia

Very often I have heard people say, "Those were the good old days," or "when I was young...." It makes me wonder what they saw in youth when they themselves were so. Did they feel that it was only a transition period that seemed more of a hindrance to identity than a boon? No, most likely not; they lived too slow. I would rather look forward to the future. Do not we all often dwell upon the future, as to the greater opportunities that will lay before us? I like to think about tomorrow (although I despise dreaming and wishing). Perhaps that is what makes time seem to pass so quickly; we do not dwell upon things that we cannot change, we do not try to relieve every moment of bliss or blight, over and over. We realize that there are greater and further reaching things which must occupy our time and energy. We find that we must prepare ourselves for tomorrow and for the next century, and not ad hoc--certainly one mistake of the Past. No, I am not pessimistic toward youth. I merely believe that getting excited over every problem that comes along helps to blind us and wears down our enthusiasm for problems that are within our grasp and solution. Enthusiasm is a tremendous leader, but persistence and hard work is what really gets things done. We need both to ever really accomplish anything. -- Gary Gleason.

SENTENTIAE

- A Personal Problem -

One of the impressions about seminarians at the Sacred Heart Conference was their outward personalities, an outgoing spontaneity about most of these boys. Seeing this in others brought home reflections on our own boys here at St. Joe's.

Silence seems to be a characteristic trait of many of us here. We seem to be quite reserved, shy, unsure, inward when it comes to being with people, not only with other people, but even with one another right here. Sure, we feel at ease and talk easily about petty externals such as sports and seminary systems; but communication person-to-person seems treading and unsteady for most.

We could think of many reasons for this social fear; but for one, could our schooling system be a reason? We in college sit passively receiving information for all but four classes each week. We are literally dumb. We then hit our solitary and silent rooms where we sit expressionless for the rest of our study. After a period of time this must affect our personalities and their initiative, creativity, and outwardness. If we can't change the scholastic program, maybe we can overcome its bad effects with a little effort and awareness.

Going out to people demands outgoing ambassadors. Let's live.

- Pete Garthe -

Moderator's comment: "Quiet and reserved" priests have done outstanding work.

- Another World -

In my opinion, it is about time we stopped devoting so much of our attention to classism, family spirit, the need for dialogue, and the methods of seminary instruction as individual entities in themselves. I rather think we should turn our attention more outside the seminary boundaries and take these things a little more for granted. Remember there is another world out there. If we notice too impenetrable a barrier between us and the world, I suggest we just ignore it. Let's assume that we are one body and, as such, be more altruistic.

- Mark Gardeski -

- Is It Expended? -

First of all, I would like to say that not all of the ideas in this article are my own. Some are taken from a book by G.K. Chesterton that I have been reading. I have tried to apply these ideas to our seminary as I understand them. I would like to present them to you in view of the new spirit and revolution that is now taking place here. I would not like to be labeled as a conservative because of this article; but I am merely trying to show you the other side of the coin, the side which I am afraid we have tended to overlook.

Have we really gotten all the good and benefit out of the past? By the past I mean here, the rule of our Seminary, its forty years of experience, and the good ideas which have come forth from it. Could it be that maybe we are afraid of the past, afraid not merely of the failures of the past, but of the good of the past also? Could it be that we here in the Seminary invent new ideals because we do not dare to attempt old ideals?

In history there is no Revolution that is not a Restoration. Take for example the Renaissance. Did the writers and sculptors of the Renaissance look to the future for their ideas? No, they went digging back into the past, into the Roman and Greek culture. Another example Napoleon, where did he go to learn military stratagems? He delved hundreds of years back into the war accounts of Alexander the Great and of Caesar. He did not discard the past. What about the Aggiornamento that is now going on in our Catholic Church? Where is the Church turning? Back to the past, to the Apostolic times to recapture the corporateness and oneness of the early Church. The Church is bringing new life and breath into its members. How? By bringing back the ideas and traditions of the past which have been tossed aside by the passing centuries.

I think that along with moving forward and updating our present system, we should take a long serious look at the past, at the things which we thought were impossible. Let us truly bring forth from the storehouse things Old and New.

- Fred Czarnowski -