

meeting of Catholic Bishops in Rome in the mid-sixties. The document, known as *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Declaration on Religious Liberty, was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in December, 1965 after five drafts and two years of vigorous debate. Called by the Pope "one of the major texts of the Council" it began with the felicitous observation, "contemporary man is becoming increasingly conscious of the dignity of the human person" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1). It is no secret that one of the most influential framers of this document was the American Jesuit, John Courtney Murray, who brought with him to the Vatican a deep understanding and a genuine admiration for the guarantees established by the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. It may have been indirect but there is no doubt that the American experience, dating back to the Toleration Act of 1649, found a responsive echo in St. Peter's Basilica.

If there was any question about this new initiative it was resoundingly dispelled by our new Pope, John Paul II, in 1979 during the very first year of his pontificate. Here was a man whose only fellow seminarian was snatched in the night and executed by the Gestapo precisely because he was a Catholic seminarian. Here was a priest and bishop who later prevailed over the disabilities imposed upon him and his flock by an atheistic Communist regime.

In his papal letter *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II would recall and reaffirm that Vatican Council document and again declare that the right to religious freedom together with the right to freedom of conscience is not only a theological concept but is one also "reached from the point of view of natural law, that is to say, from the purely human position, on the basis of the premises given by man's own experience, his reason and his sense of human dignity." (*Redemptor Hominis*, 17)

For over 20 years, on every continent, again and again the Holy Father has stressed that the human dignity of each individual is the basis for all law.

Within the last year, in his New Year's message, addressing people of good will everywhere the Pope reiterated his conviction that "when the promotion of the dignity of the human person is the guiding principle and when the search for the common good is the overriding commitment" (World Day of Peace Message, 1999, 1) the right to life, to religious freedom, of citizens to participate in the life of their community, the right of ethnic groups and national minorities to exist along with those rights to self-fulfillment covering educational, economic and peace issues become possible.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, intimately associated with the United Nations Charter, affirms the innate dignity of all members of the human family along with the equality and inalienability of their rights. Even though these ideals are being blatantly ignored in many places across the globe, here in this land we must not ignore the unique opportunity we have to solidify the principle enunciated and developed by our leaders of both church and state that "human rights stem from the inherent dignity and worth of the human person." (Cf. In particular the Vienna Declaration, 1993 Preamble 2).

Crafting principles is easy in comparison to applying them to the extraordinary complexities of modern life. Mistakes have been made in the past. On the part of the Church there have been excesses of evangelistic zeal: in the halls of justice nobody seems proud of

the Dred Scott decision. We live in an imperfect world and we are not all pious God-fearing and timid law-abiding clones.

There will always be tension between church and state. This tension, in many ways, creates a safety valve. It is, after all, when this tension disappears that we should worry.

In the enactment and administration of civil laws, people of faith do not expect privileges but they do expect fairness. George Orwell in his classic, *Animal Farm*, coined the phrase that "all animals are created equal but some are more equal than others." Is there a danger that the devotees of secularism are "more equal" than those who are proud of the faith they profess? Do secular symbols enjoy more protection than religious symbols? In every age there are some who would like to have religion disappear. As religion has proven itself remarkably durable, the next line of attack is the attempt to trivialize it into insignificance. It seems incredible but now and again there are those who maintain that believers have no right to engage in the public debate.

"To accept the separation of the church from the state did not mean accepting a passive or marginal status for the Church in society". (*Responsibilities and Temptations of Power: A Catholic View*. J. Bryan Hehir, Georgetown University.)

The church by definition has a theological foundation but it is also a voluntary association within our society with much to say about social policies. It should be accorded the same rights in the public debate as associations which profess no theological leanings.

Even Pope John Paul II expressed his apprehension on this matter when he accepted the credentials of one of the esteemed John Carroll Society members, Lindy Boggs, as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See, a year ago. On that occasion he declared, "It would truly be a sad thing if the religious and moral convictions upon which the American experiment was founded could now somehow be considered a danger to free society, such that those who would bring these convictions to bear upon your nation's public life would be denied a voice in debating and resolving issues of public policy. The original separation of church and state in the United States was certainly not an effort to ban all religious conviction from the public sphere, a kind of banishment of God from civil society. Indeed, the vast majority of Americans, regardless of their religious persuasion, are convinced that religious conviction and religiously informed moral argument have a vital role in public life."

Religion will endure. Christianity, for one, has its own inner guarantees revolving around the presence of God's Spirit and the promises of Christ. They are doomed to disappointment who constantly predict that the unfolding discoveries of the many scientific disciplines will make religion obsolete or, at best, the hollow consolation of the feeble-minded. On the contrary, the more we reveal the mysteries of the universe in which we live, and decipher the minutiae of human existence, the more we come face to face with the creativity of God. We can partially answer the "hows" and the "whens" and the "whats" but at the end of the day, there is still the "why"?

My accent always betrays my origins and on July 12, 1965 I became an American citizen in the court house of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, which, coincidentally, is the town where John Carroll was born. I willingly promised to uphold the laws of the United

States and I acquired the freedom and, indeed, the expectation to be part of the process which monitors, implements and sometimes modifies those laws. During these past thirty something years of my citizenship I have observed the Constitution endure some severe pressures and, by and large, I agree with the national consensus that "the system works". There is no substitute for the rule of law.

Across the impressive facade of the Supreme Court Building are the words "Equal Justice Under Law." If I were the architect I would have been tempted to add two further words, "For All." Criminals should fear the law: good people whose means are meager should not be intimidated by either the law itself or the wealth of those who can retain a bevy of high-profile lawyers. Claims are sometimes made that those on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder rarely have access to adequate legal representation. It is for this reason that I wish to commend those legal firms and individual lawyers who, through various pro bono networks, seek to alleviate this shortcoming. They bring a nobility to their profession which is beyond value and it is often the only antidote to the popular cynicism which is foisted upon lawyers in general.

As we usher in a new millennium, and as the world shrinks around us, we have much to learn from each other. The Church and the state must protect the freedom and the integrity of one another within their respective spheres of competence, and where there is overlapping, the dialogue must be marked by, as one scholar suggested, (J. Bryan Hehir) technical competency, civil intelligibility and political courtesy. In this way the 350 year old vision of the Toleration Act of 1649 will endure.●

IN TRIBUTE TO RONALD DOBIES' INDUCTION TO THE NEW JERSEY ELECTED OFFICIALS HALL OF FAME

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mayor Ronald Dobies of Middlesex Borough on his induction into the New Jersey Elected Officials Hall of Fame. After nearly 30 years in public service Mayor Dobies was inducted last January. He was first elected Mayor in 1979, and he has been re-elected four times since. Prior to this service, Mayor Dobies was a member of the school board for six years, as well as a four-year member of the Borough Council.

Through these years, Mayor Dobies' administrations have grappled with some basic suburban dilemmas, such as preserving open space while attracting development and keeping municipal services up and taxes down. Among his accomplishments, Mayor Dobies has secured flood-control measures and ongoing road projects, increased park and recreation areas, and overseen the construction of the borough's Senior Citizen Housing complex.

Mayor Dobies is originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania, and attended the University of Scranton. He graduated with a degree in chemistry and philosophy, and ultimately joined basic training at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. After serving in the military

police corps overseas, Ronald and his wife Blanche returned to the United States.

Mayor Dobies has added to his impressive record of community service by demonstrating his abilities in the business world as well. He is currently the Director of Analytical Research for Wyeth-Ayerst Research in Pearl River, New York. While this job is a full-time one, he still finds the time to devote between 30 and 40 hours each week to his responsibilities as Mayor. Each Friday night, Mayor Dobies hosts meetings with his constituents, a tradition he began during his first term. Mayor Dobies has won the respect of both Republicans and Democrats in his borough, and his non-contentious style has promoted a successful bipartisan spirit at all levels of government in Middlesex Borough. This December, Mayor Dobies will conclude his fifth term, and he hopes to return for a sixth next year. I look forward to his continued service in this office, and I extend my congratulations to him on his honor by the New Jersey Elected Officials Hall of Fame.●

WORKER SAFETY AWARD FOR FORT JAMES MILL OF OLD TOWN

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce that this past June 2, 1999, the Fort James Corporation Paper Mills 2 was recognized for its impressive safety record of performance for the entire year of 1998. The award was presented by the Pulp & Paper Association, which honored the St. James Mill at its Awards Banquet at the Association's annual Professional Development Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The award is the highest honor given for safety performance throughout the paper industry, and reflects the most improved safety record in the class of 56 mills working between one and to two million hours per year. Mr. President, the mill logged over 1.3 million work hours with an extremely low incidence of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordable work injuries—only 21, yielding an exemplary incident rate of 3.2. This incident rate reflects that very few employees required any type of medical attention while carrying out their demanding jobs.

Further, in light of their accomplishments on behalf of the safety of the community and its people, the City of Old Town issued a resolution to the Fort James Corporation honoring its employees for their outstanding commitment. And at a follow-up picnic, mill employees were given a true Maine "thank you" as mill management, along with corporate environmental and safety leaders as well as local officials, helped out in cooking and serving a Celebration Picnic to all of the mill's employees. Each employee

was also presented with a gift in recognition of the worker safety accomplishments.

To the entire workforce and management at the Fort James Mill, I would like to add my congratulations and a sincere Maine thank you as well for their efforts in worker safety that have culminated in this well deserved award, and I thank the Chair.●

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT DEVELOPMENT CREDIT UNION

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 10 years ago, Caryl Stewart, Executive Director of the Vermont Development Credit Union, had a dream for a grass roots community development "bank" to serve low and moderate income people in Burlington, Vermont. Who would have guessed them that her dream would become a growing credit union with over \$10 million in assets and 5,000 members in 175 Vermont towns?

Through it all, the credit union, with Caryl at its helm, has stayed true to its vision of serving lower income families and small business entrepreneurs in Vermont. Not just with loans, but also with the personal attention and counseling needed to ensure that loan recipients succeed, whatever their goals. It is that commitment to Vermonters and the communities they live in that has won the Credit Union the support and patronage of so many Vermont businesses and organizations.

It has also won the organization support from far beyond Vermont's borders. From Fannie Mae to the Community Development Financial Institutions program the Vermont Development Credit Union has received funding and won national recognition for its innovative lending and support programs.

Vermont Development came from very small beginnings in a very small city of our very small State. But like that State, it had very big ideas and has earned its place as a model for organizations providing credit and financial assistance to low and moderate income people throughout the country.

Happy Birthday, Vermont Development Credit Union and congratulations on 10 years of bringing hope and opportunity to thousands of Vermonters.●

THE CONSTITUTION IN TODAY'S CLASSROOM

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an important matter brought to my attention by one of my constituents. I recently received a letter from G. Ross Darnell, and he pointed out the importance of educating our students about the Constitution. In his letter, though, he also mentioned that our educational system has not been performing well in this area. I agree with Mr. Darnell on both points.

The importance of education in preserving our liberties has been realized since the founding of our Republic. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison with his reflections on the new Constitution. In that letter he said, "I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty." Jefferson knew if the people were not aware of the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution they would be powerless to stop any encroachments upon them. I'm sure Mr. Jefferson would be quite alarmed at the state of ignorance today.

While it is a cliché that a generation always finds faults with the one which follows, there is no denying that in terms of constitutional knowledge, the level of ignorance is severe. A poll of teenagers last year illustrates this. Only forty-one percent could name the constitutionally ordained branches of our government, only twenty-one percent could say that there were one hundred senators, and only thirty-six percent knew one of the most important phrases in our nation's history: "We the People . . ." These teenagers are moving into adulthood, but they are not taking with them a knowledge of our nation's Constitution.

It is undeniable that our educational system has failed to address this deficiency. Many experts have documented the fact that most textbooks do not devote a sufficient amount of space to exploring the Constitution and the ideas and personalities which shaped it. Even the national history standards proposed a few years ago failed to address adequately the importance of this document. The Constitution, along with the Declaration of Independence, is the very foundation upon which our nation is built. To not devote sufficient space in textbooks or time in class to it is a tragedy not only for students but also for the nation.

It's also troubling to note that when constitutional history is discussed today, the Founding Fathers are portrayed as racist, sexist elitists. This caricature of the Founders, which fails to take into account how the Constitutional Convention tried to balance the idealism of the Declaration of Independence with the political realities of the day, is only abetted by the shallowness of the constitutional teaching in our schools. How can students weigh the competing claims in this important debate when they don't even know what is in the Constitution?

How should this deficiency be addressed? I'm not here to suggest another federal program which would impose standards on the state and local school districts. I have long believed that curriculum is best determined by local school boards which are much closer to the people than we are here in