

Religion

Peace marchers follow tradition

By JIM RYAN
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary
Time
Matt. 22:34-40

A Sign of Peace
Every year at this time, a coalition of peace groups plans a rally and walk in Toronto, starting at Queen's Park, and ending at a site appropriate to the theme of that year's rally. This year, the walk ended in Grange Park, just north of Queen St.

A good choice. The theme this year was the environment.

The rally and walk is always a mixture of medieval market place and carnival, with serious, 1960's civil rights march.

The medieval market place has its tables of goods: T-shirts, buttons, books and papers, banners, costumed players, and a motley mix of ages and classes: member of Parliament, street people, teachers, students and mental patients.

The 60's civil rights march is there in the speakers and the good intentions.

The emphasis has always seemed to me to be on the medieval market place. Bring your child in its Smuggli, your dog on its leash. You can carry a balloon, eat a hot dog, listen to musicians, and watch people who dress up as trees and loons.

Last Saturday, a group called "The Raging Grannies" (real grandmothers with kazooos and noisemakers) sang songs about their Innu sisters, nuclear energy, the Persian Gulf and the environment.

They were followed by an earnest fifteen year old student who said that maybe the cherished sign of adulthood, the driver's license, wasn't such a big deal. (Cars pollute).

A dog walked by with its owner, carrying a sign stating "Bones not Bombs."

A bearded man in white overalls walked by with the earth crucified to a cross.

A group of Mohawks from Kahnsetake, carrying a circular drum, sang Longhouse chants at intervals during the walk from Queen's Park to Grange Park. The leader, in tweed cap and leather jacket, led the chant in falsetto voice. The men who sang the response, big men, got tired from the exertion, and joked with girlfriends about being out of shape.

A man remained asleep on a park bench, undisturbed in his Indian summer.

Ethics has more to do with beautifully painted banners, humour and hot dogs, than with loquacious politicians and

earnest clergypersons. Ethical teaching has less to do with dogmatic pronouncements than with drama and storytelling.

In today's gospel reading we hear Jesus say that loving God and neighbour is of equal importance. He doesn't spell out in detail how to do this.

Presumably he leaves this up to each society.

Jesus and the prophets taught ethics by means of action. Jeremiah broke jugs, buried loin cloths in the ground, and bought property, to make a point. Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and partied with tax collectors and prostitutes.

Even when verbal teaching was done, Jesus used parables.

Parables involve the listener. They become lightning rods for human responsibility.

When a person is addressed by a parable, that person isn't bludgeoned into obedience. Response is free and creative.

Ethics should be like this. Watch Jesus, see how he acts, and then go and do likewise.

Going to a peace rally has little to do with rigorous argumentation and debate, that's for another time and place.

It has much more to do with walking together.

It's a simple sign, but it works.

Book review

Religious persecution still exists

By JACK McLEOD
You would be surprised how much a book about small religious groups can reveal about the problems of the Canadian political and constitutional system. But wisdom is where you find it and, these days, we need all the help we can get. *Limits On Liberty* is a book that raises big questions. In a liberal democratic society where rights are seen in individualist terms, what are the rights of a group - such as the Mohawks of Oka? Can the collective claims of a language group to be a "distinct society" be reconciled with a majoritarian system where only individuals are said to have rights and liberties?

These are the searching questions raised by William Janzen in *Limits On Liberty*. Janzen examines, as the sub-title states, *The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor communities in Canada*. That experience is interesting, but also highly instructive.

All three communities have attempted to live within, but somewhat separate from, Canadian society - loyal, peaceful, but resolutely different. These attempts have been tolerated in the main, but also often

misunderstood and attacked. **OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM**
Janzen analyzes the relations of the three groups with the state in terms of their particular practices regarding landholding, education, exemption from military service and non-participation in certain social welfare programs, particularly pensions. Each of the three communities has insisted on standing outside the mainstream, not through stubbornness or convenience, but because of religious conviction. Each has found the pressure to conform exerted by the Canadian State persistent and heavy.

The principal thrust of the book is that our majoritarian-individualist society does not adequately comprehend how to accommodate the rights of a group. We may be obliged to learn, and quickly, and Janzen's timely book has much to teach us.

The author holds out the hope that the old constitution derived from the genius of Sir John A. Macdonald may yet provide us with room to manoeuvre. Janzen quotes with approval Western Tory historian W.L. Morton, who wrote of "the extreme flexibility of the Canadian state, both in its

several parts and its functioning, and in its relations with the society of groups which it serves and from which it derives its being."

On the other hand, there are always those who insist on homogeneity, like the Manitoba educational officer who observed in 1906: "Doukhobors will need constant watching until schools and contact with other settlers will transform them and make them think in the same way as an ordinary man does."

STRUGGLED

This is a demanding book, not light breezy reading, but it is wonderfully informing about our treatment of minorities and the determined ways in which groups within the Canadian mosaic have struggled to preserve their identities.

Choral concert

The Brampton Festival Singers, under the direction of Iain Morrison and accompanied by Nancy Rawlins, present a choral concert with orchestra accompaniment on Saturday, November 17 at 8:00 p.m. at Saint Paul's United Church, 30 Main St. S., Brampton. Major works include Mozart's *Missa Solemnis*, Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and a medley from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*.

Tickets are \$10.00 for adults, \$8.00 for seniors, \$5.00 for students and \$4.00 for children 12 and under, available at the door. Subscription rates are also available in combination with Spring 1991 concerts. Call 791-4307 for information.

Founded in 1985, the choir has offered fine choral concerts twice yearly as well as performing in benefit concerts and as guests at Christmas of the Brampton Concert Band. Its repertoire includes classical, sacred, folksongs and musical theatre, arranged for four-part mixed voices. The members are talented singers from a wide variety of backgrounds and professions, all with a true love of choral performance.

All who enjoy good music are cordially invited to attend this spring concert and to support the arts in our community.




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Special service at Knox Presbyterian

This Sunday (tomorrow), 1990, Knox Presbyterian Church, Main and Church Streets, Georgetown, will be celebrating its 130th Anniversary as a congregation, 130 years of Christian witness, outreach and service to the community and beyond.

The guest minister and speaker for this special outreach will be the Rev. Robert Little, M.A., B.D., who is the Director of the Renewal Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Rev. Little, a native of Belfast, Northern Ireland, received his Masters of Arts degree from Edinburgh University and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Hartford Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Anne Polley and they have four children, one of which is the Rev. Paul Little, pastor of the

Georgetown Alliance Church. Rev. Robert Little has been involved in a wide variety of ministries, including 32 years as a pastor in Scotland and Canada, radio and TV ministries, leadership in para-church groups, various boards and committees of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Evangelist-at-large for P.C.C. and vice-president of Ontario Bible College and Theological Seminary. It is with this background, together with his faith and zeal for his Lord, Jesus Christ, that Rev. Little will be speaking to the congregation. We are delighted to have him with us and hope that you will join us and Rev. Little on this special celebration day. Worship service is at 11:00 a.m. There will be a coffee hour following where you may speak with Rev. Little. Everyone is welcome.

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