

### Attorney Debates Bishop

# Amnesty: Strength Vs. Forgiveness

By CHARLOTT MAJNER  
Special Writer

Amnesty for draft evaders was the topic for a debate between Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, vicar for parishes of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, and Kenneth Haber, assistant U.S. district attorney, at St. Clare Catholic Church Lenten program.

Haber spoke against amnesty, stressing that he does not intend to reflect any policy of the Department of Justice whose function is to enforce the law.

"I am speaking here merely as an individual who has deep feelings," Haber told the Farmington parish.

Haber presented two questions on amnesty: (1) Should amnesty be granted to draft evaders? (2) Should amnesty be granted to deserters?

"First and foremost, I feel amnesty is unfair to those who served in the armed forces, to those who served at Fort Wayne or Germany or those in Vietnam. It is unfair to those who had convictions but went to fight; unfair to those who love their country and did not leave it," stated Haber.

"Those who left," continued Haber, "did not have conviction in their beliefs nor feel that their country was worthwhile fighting for to remain. These are the ones asking for amnesty."

Haber pointed out that the volunteer army is presently in an experimental stage and that years from now there could be another war where a volunteer army would not be able to supply all the forces needed.

"World peace depends on strength," stated Haber. He doubted that if war broke out years from now young men would submit to the army. All they would have to do is go to Canada or Sweden and sit out the war.

"I feel that we cannot grant amnesty to an individual who has left his country for a lack of sincerity, commitment and love of country," said Haber.

*"Those who left did not . . . feel their country was worthwhile fighting for. These are the ones asking for amnesty."*

Atty. Kenneth Haber

BISHOP GUMBLETON, a defender of conscientious objection, pointed out his aim of speaking on the policy of the church which he represents. He said he wishes to proclaim the Gospel message which is ordained to preach and which at its very core lies reconciliation and forgiveness.

"Every day when I celebrate the Eucharist, I proclaim that God has granted forgiveness to men and calls out to us to forgive and love," said the Bishop.

He stated that the country has been torn apart too long by much hostility, anger and violence. "All of us must set as a higher priority the effort to be reconciled with one another and to forgive one another," stressed the bishop.

Gumbleton said those who have reached the conclusion that the war is immoral should be ready to forgive conscientious objectors. Those who think the war is necessary have a responsibility to try to understand the moral position of those opposing the war and refusing to fight in it.

"Only when we come to a reconciliation that we can hope for America to be united again," said the bishop.

BISHOP GUMBLETON continued to stress that a Christian person may not participate in a war until he proves that his participation is justified.

"War must be fought within just means, and it must be fought for just reasons," said the bishop. He asked the audience to consider the great dilemma of a young person who comes to

the conclusion that the war is never just, but at times only necessary. He said war is immoral and irrational, and until we evolve into a higher form of social development, war must be fought.

"You can never give it a moral aroma. You can never take a decayed piece of life and flower it up to make it sweet," said Haber.

Haber stated that forgiveness is not an element in the argument. The value of freedom of conscience depends on the price paid for it. He stressed the importance of depth of conviction.

Bishop Gumbleton replied that he was not using the term "war is justified" the same way as Haber, and he did not think that we can wait for any further evolution of society.

He stated that the weapons which society now has are very dangerous and destructive. He asked the audience to heed the moral sensitivity that young people have taught.

The bishop agreed with

Haber that valuable things have a high price, but he asked if our men in jail are not paying the cost.

"This is a terrible price," said Bishop Gumbleton. "It seems unfair that we must ask our young people to pay such a horrible price for freedom of conscience. I don't think we will safeguard freedom of conscience unless our government shows sensitivity to these people."

The bishop then quoted the late President Kennedy: "War will exist until the conscientious objector will receive the same prestige and respect as today's warrior."

IN A QUESTION-answer session that followed, Haber was asked how many of those resisting induction were prosecuted and how are they selected. Haber replied that he did not know, but they are selected by reviewing the draft files.

Terry Jolly, assistant U.S. attorney and Haber's colleague, added that the less education a person has, the more likely he is to go into the service.

The bishop was told that he gave the impression that all draft evaders and deserters are sweet, as if "we are drafting from the seminaries," and it could not be believed there are 50,000 moral, Christian people out of the country seeking amnesty.

"I don't believe this either," replied the bishop, "but we ought to examine if our young people today are as immoral as you suggest. Maybe the quickest way we can rebuild a moral America is to be humiliated, pull out of the war and start over."

The bishop suggested that complete amnesty might be the best way to rebuild a moral America.

ANOTHER QUESTION to the bishop: "You failed to mention the 50,000 dead in Vietnam: Have you gotten your priorities mixed up?"

"Anyone who has experienced a loss," replied the bishop, "has suffered. We must sympathize with them, but our harsh treatment of conscientious objectors will not ease the pain of these."

Haber was asked if the country were breaking the law for fighting the war and if there is freedom when it is against the law for a man to follow his conscience.

"As far as any international law broken, there is no universal international legislative body," said Haber. He continued by pointing out

a distinction between morality and legality.

"If you feel something is immoral," said Haber, "then you should petition to change that law, but if everyone had moral sanction to break any law they thought immoral, then we would live in fear."

"I think we want to uphold the premise that laws on the books are to be upheld," added Bishop Gumbleton.

"But if so, many of our best people are reaching the conclusion that a particular law is unjust, we should examine that law immediately."


THE BISHOP was asked to explain when a moral law became immoral.

The bishop, using war as an example, stated that this would depend on two conditions: (1) When immoral and unjust means are used to perpetrate the war; and (2) when the good hoped to be achieved is outweighed by the evil.

"It is on this premise that the American bishops have reached the conclusion that this war is immoral," concluded Bishop Gumbleton.

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