



## Cardinal Mindszenty's Living Words

By William A. Borst, Ph.D.

I was amazed at how relevant the following thoughts from Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty's life of suffering under both Nazism and Communism have for us today. Excerpted from his "Memoirs," published in 1974, the following sections should illustrate this fact. Please note that the location of each series of quotes is not noted until the last quote in that document.

*Democracy implies that every citizen and every social class is equally entitled to participate in shaping the common fate of us all. Democracy should come naturally to Catholics, for the Gospel teaches us the meaning of true democracy. We who know the gospel know that we must never use our democratic freedoms to promote our selfish ends.* **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

What the Cardinal wrote is true if each voter had a clear conscience and led a life steeped in faith and tradition. That is not what has happened to America and its conventional wisdom. Today, democracy is used to foster selfish aims. In what has become known as "hard Wilsonism," the world is now, not only being made safe for democracy, but our form of this way of government is being used to justify intrusions in internal affairs all over the world. Democracy is our new religion and we are evangelizing, often out of the barrel of a gun. This is not the kind of democracy the Cardinal envisioned when he wrote the above.

*In a country where the citizens fear God, they will respect the law. Where they respect the law, they will live in peace. A nation filled with peace is a strong nation.*

**CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

What is wrong with millions of Americans today is that they lack the peace of soul, necessary for good citizenship. There is so much crime and abject violence in society because religion and its moral principles have been chased from the public and educational marketplace. God is not welcome because of some twisted notion of "separation of Church," which is not mentioned at all in the United States Constitution.

*Religion has more power over men than any social force or institution. For religion does not rule by intimidation or terrorize men into obedience. Its power comes from inside the human heart. Religion maintains order by teaching men to govern their instincts and passions.* **#3 Pastoral Letter, May of 1945**

When people have the love of God in their hearts, they will by nature do the right thing, whether a government is watching them or not. They will instinctively treat their neighbor and his property with the respect that is due all of us. But in the selfish, inner-directed climate that pervades today's overtly materialistic civilization the reverse is true. Americans are starting to resemble the Pharisees whom Jesus said were "whiten sepulchers, filled with dead men's bones."

*The creator Himself endowed families with the duty and the right to educate their children. No earthly power or social institution, including the government, may deprive parents of the right to educate their children.* **#27 Address at St. Stephen's Academy, May 21, 1946**

### EDUCATION

Ever since the Civil War, the Federal government has gradually usurped the powers and responsibilities of the American family in the name of children and their rights. In many cases this has happened because of the family's failure to recognize its importance, or because of economic considerations. Education has always been a main concern of the family. It is not surprising that one of Karl Marx's ten planks in his Communist Manifesto, written with Frederick Engels in 1848, advocated public school education. Once government started providing children with a free education, they could mold their young minds to their liking. Since the turn of the nineteenth century we have witnessed what the progressive educational beliefs of John Dewey and his thousands of disciples have done to American students. God has been

written out the curriculum. He had been replaced with value neutral ideas, which amount to nothing more than a return to pagan ideas and a hedonistic life style. Kids are encouraged to explore their basest nature because it's fun or makes them feel good. There is never any mention of eternal values. Natural determinism became the dominant voice and "Heather has Two Mommies" the leading voice in the school's social engineering policies.

*Throughout her history, the Church... has insisted on maintaining her independence from secular authority. The popes have repeatedly condemned all doctrines which regard the Church as the mere handmaiden of the state... the Church has always opposed government interference in matters of faith or Church administration. In modern times, governments still wage war against the Church; but now they are waging a new kind of war. In the past, Christians were deprived of their churches. Now the churches are being emptied of their believers.* **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

Church attendance in this country has been steadily declining for the past thirty years. Catholics seem to show up, only at Christmas and Easter. For Sundays and Holidays, attendance is minimal in some parishes. Where have all the Catholics gone? Religion has become too kind and too gentle. Strong religious people need to be challenged about, not only about the world around them, but also the state of their immortal souls. Too often, many of the young and energetic think, if they build a house for Habitat for Humanity or go off to Africa and spend two weeks working in a poor village, their souls are guaranteed eternal happiness with all their family members and even their pets. Universal salvation is the unspoken assumption that too many Catholics seem to accept without question or debate. I find it to be a very risky business.

### NAZI GERMANY

**T**he outside world knew very little of what was going on inside the Third Reich... (Nazi Germany, 1933-1945) The government attempted to totally secularize German national life. The press, theater and films, radio, exhibits, and advertising posters, public lectures, and political parties all disseminated anti-Christian propaganda. **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

There is an unseen war going on in the United States and Catholicism is its target. The recent scandals of the clergy over the sexual abuse of adolescent boys, and its attendant cover-up in many dioceses, have given fodder to the forces of religious hatred in the media. For a generation the media have been hunting for any excuse they could use to defame and neutralize the Church on such issues as abortion, pornography and euthanasia.

*The Germans did everything to make the practice of religion as time consuming and as fruitless as possible. The authorities*

*banned all organizations, which did not support the government. People who wanted to sing religious music or read Scripture together had to publicly advertise their meeting at least one month before it was to be held.* **#35 Address of November 7, 1946**

The verbal axis of evil revolves around words, such as anti-Semite, racist and homophobic. These words have created an invisible protective shield around Jews, blacks and homosexuals that no other minority in America enjoys. What you never will see in this secular world is the use of the word, "Christophobic." For thirty years the media and its allies in entertainment have attacked Catholicism with a vengeance that rivaled what Hitler did to the European Churches in World War II.

*Some of us wear our hair cut short, while others prefer to part theirs down the side. Some of us eat meat while others are vegetarians. These are matters of personal taste. They affect no one but ourselves. But what if I started raising tobacco... or my neighbor decides to distill a bit of liquor... Now our behavior is no longer a "matter of personal taste."* **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

Activist groups, such as those promoting abortion, euthanasia, and homosexuality, have developed a new strategy. They have latched on to the successful Civil Rights momentum of the sixties, so that the perverted activities of gays and abortive women rank equally with those of black citizens. The right to die is trumping the right to life. Gay marriages and gay adoptions are already in the works in an attempt to bring to fruition the Marxist Cultural Revolution that invaded this country in the thirties.

*People who separate religion from the rest of life are trying to get rid of religion altogether for they do not want it to interfere with the way they live. The Church teaches that we must not kill, we must not fornicate, and we must not lie or bear false witness. There is good reason why some people want to silence the voice of the Church... Societies which regard religion as a personal matter, unrelated to the conduct of public life, will soon be swallowed up in corruption, violence and sin.* **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

The Church with its moral "thou shall nots," remains an affront to people who do not have the moral training, nor the initiative to break the chains of their slavery that dominate so many behavioral addicts today.

*Hitler regarded religion as a private matter. We have seen the results of this attitude: Dachau, Auschwitz, a nation of prisons and gas chambers, ruled by the Gestapo... The Jews were driven into gas chambers...* **#45 Address of October 20, 1946**

Sinclair Lewis wrote a book in the 1930s, entitled *It Can't Happen Here*. While I do not expect to see death chambers, exactly like the ones mentioned above, it cannot be denied that we have abortion mills that perform basically the same function. It can happen in a country that has lost its moral sense. Or in a country that only superficially believes in God. It can happen in a country that prides itself in making up its own morality, so that under the rubric of self-actualization, it can advocate the elimination of any of its people who do not fit the popular definition of "meaningful life," as in Hitler's Nazi Germany. In America, abortion rights have inexorably led to a right to die, which can easily turn into the duty to die. It IS happening.

### CHURCH, FAMILY, SCHOOL

**W**hat his heart is to a man, the church is to a town. The church is "the house of God and the Gate of heaven." (Gn 28:17) The church is the place where we offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the fortress of souls and the visible expression of a community's faith. **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

Like many philosophers and churchmen before him, Cardinal Mindszenty realized that there were three sanctuaries necessary for a stable society: the Church, the family, and the schools. Since the dawning of the twentieth century Communism has made each one a target for the downfall of American civilization. Our interests and our desires have outgrown the local church and the religious community. If eternal life is a guarantee, then church attendance and religious devotions are not necessary.

*History shows us that when the schools grow away from the Church, they grow closer to the prisons. They become houses of sin and damnation... When schools cease to teach virtue, then we will all need protection from their knowledge.* **CARDINAL MINDSZENTY**

Many of the commentaries above have focused on how true this has become in the United States. School killings and other crimes have recently started to draw the attention of more poisonous venom flowing through the school system's veins. Schools are now becoming the springboard to the prisons.

*These three institutions form a protective circle around us... Whatever new plague may come to destroy the world, remember that the church, the Catholic school, and the family will always be sacred. Guard your fortresses bravely!* **#48 A Sermon in Szentgotthard, Hungary**

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen often recounted the story about the children who lived and played on a small island that was protected from the dangers of the world by a huge wall. The more liberal members of the community said that the wall restricted their

freedom. It came down and then the children were seen huddled in the center of the island, afraid of all the dangers that appeared to them once their shield had been removed. Is that not the case now of our schools?

*Cruel hands are reaching out to seize hold of our children. They are not the hands of Jesus or the arms of the Church; they are claws belonging to people who have nothing but evil to teach our children... Full of evil intentions, they are slinking around our cradles and our school desks.*

### CARDINAL MINDSZENTY

Unrestricted abortion was supposed to make every child a wanted and a loved child. Since the usurpation of the legislative rights of all fifty states by Roe v. Wade in 1973, child abuse both physical and sexual has skyrocketed. More children come from broken homes and millions of children are being raised in single parent households.

*The new reform movement (in Soviet Russia) began to call itself the "Living Church" and gradually infiltrated the church organization... The hierarchy had to surrender many of its rights... Liberal trends in theology would be encouraged. With an arrogance worthy of Voltaire, it predicted that by 1937 there would not be a single priest left in the country, nor a single believer to fill up their empty churches... The forecast failed to come true... Statistics from 1937 show that 30% of the city dwellers of that time and 70% of rural workers identified themselves as believers.* **#68 Communism and the Russian Orthodox Church.**

Patrick Buchanan has lamented the virtual death of the Catholic Church in Europe. Only old people and the very young attend Mass any more. On the surface, it appears that in America we are sliding down the same slippery slope.

Professor Ralph McInerney of Notre Dame seems to disagree. He cited a new book, which CMF recommends, *The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy*. He says: "As if to prove the worst of times are also the best of times, the author Colleen Carroll heartens us with a detailed and documented tale of how the young are turning to Christian (Catholic) orthodoxy."

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**ST. JOHN 13:34**

*"This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you."*

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