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Mass of reconciliation at Notre Dame

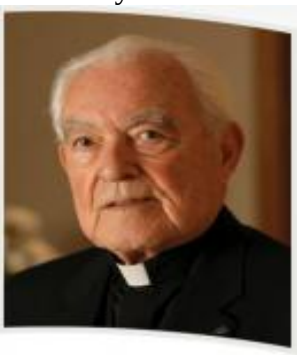
Jerry Filteau | Nov. 18, 2009 NCR Today

While reporting for *NCR* at the Fall General Assembly of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, Bishop John Michael Botean mentioned to me that Frs. Ted Hesburgh and Emmanuel Charles McCarthy will concelebrate a Mass of reconciliation at the University of Notre Dame today. The Mass marks the 40th anniversary of the university's suspension of 10 students for their protest of CIA and Dow Chemical recruitment activities on campus.

Botean reminded me that the students' suspension led McCarthy (a Melkite priest, strong pacifist and father of the girl whose cure was later the miracle leading to sainthood for Sister Benedicta of the Cross -- Edith Stein) to resign from the ND faculty.

The students who were suspended had lain down in front of an administration building to prevent others from interviewing with a CIA recruiter.

Hersburgh, who was president of the university from 1952 to 1987, was quoted after the event in *Time* as saying ?I think there are many legitimate reasons for protesting today, but the university has to do this according to its proper style, which is rationality and stability, not force and violence.?



You can find more info about the event at the Web site for the Center for Christian Nonviolence here [1]. McCarthy has posted a personal reflection here [2] as well. Here are a few excerpts from that reflection:

?The gods of nationalism, militarism and institutional survival, spend their deceiving existences tempting Christians to follow their ?truths and values? and to set aside the Eternal Truths and Values proclaimed by Christ-God?or at least to set their ?truths and values? above those taught by Jesus in the Gospels. On November 18, 1969, the Christian administrators at Notre Dame, knowingly or unknowingly, yielded to these gods and this

temptation.?

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?When the students were excommunicated [from the Notre Dame community], I chose on December 22, 1969, to send in my letter of resignation from the faculty and as Director of THE PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION effective upon the termination of my contract the following summer. The issue for me, as it was for every member of the faculty, administration and student body at the time, was, ?Who do you stand with: the excommunicators or the excommunicated?? The excommunicators had my livelihood. (I had just bought a small farm.) The excommunicated had the truth about the ?overwhelming moral atrocity? (Thomas Merton?s words) that the U.S. Government was perpetrating in Vietnam and in which DOW and the CIA were major-league players.?

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?Silence is not neutral. Silence can be as violent, as merciless and as morally corrupt as propagandizing abortion as the moral equivalent of an appendectomy. Silence can be the moral support system without which murder could not take place. Ten students were thrown out of a Catholic school because each communicated with his whole person that monstrous evil?as determined by the standard of the teachings of Jesus?had no right to recruit on a Christian Campus.?

Source URL (retrieved on *02/07/2016 - 09:52*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/mass-reconciliation-notre-dame

Links:
[1] http://centerforchristiannonviolence.org/events/events.php#NotreDameTen
[2] http://centerforchristiannonviolence.org/downloads/ND_Ten_DOW-CIA_Personal_Statement_2009_ECM_05a.pdf