

Talk in New York

(March 1960)

Americans don't like their religion heavily laced with politics and vice versa -- so I must tread carefully in what I say. Moreover, my concern is the growth and full development of the Micronesian people for whom I work, not the flag that flies over their country.

Full and integral human development of Micronesians. Material enrichment -- but not only that! Insuring that they have the sense of pride in themselves, a heritage to cherish, and all the "spiritual" qualities needed for growth. This is our major concern as priests.

The Word of God is a word of Salvation, a healing word. Christ promises not simply a happy afterlife to those who will listen, but a "wholeness" in this life as well. Liberation, development -- however you choose to put it.

Micronesia, like other Pacific groups, has been a battleground for the past century.

- Spaniards and Germans in 1880s -- controversy taken to Pope.
- "spoils to victors" after Spanish-American War -- Germany obtained the islands.
- Japanese, as result of secret agreement with British, swept down on islands in 1914 - WWI.

Talk (cont'd) page 2

- World War II battles and US occupation.

But this is the sad fate of colonial nations the world over! One would have expected, hoped that the battles would have ended, but they have not. The battle of the dollar bill continues -- the bitterest one yet.

In early 60s, US saw that self-determination was bound to come before very long -- and actively pursued a policy that would enable it to carry that day. Goal was to lure Micronesians into a permanent association with U.S. Strategic location!

- Peace Corps
- education and health programs
- lots of money

But don't be too hard on American policy of 60s!

- 1) Many Americans must have sincerely believed that what was in best interests of US was also good for Micronesians. It would leave them with a developed nation of sorts populated by a happy and healthy people. Money for toothbrushes, protein that they couldn't get from the sea, and Toyota pickups.
- 2) Today many of us are shocked by Soviet aggression and Communism's cold inhumanity to the masses that it pretends to champion. You have only to consider the recent horrors of Cambodia and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Talk (cont'd) page 3

Might may not make right, but it unquestionably can forestall great injustice (providing, of course, one side is not as corrupt as the other).

At any rate, the US policy of the 60s has been successful, according to the terms of those days. Micronesia has chosen to let Uncle Sam carry it through the 80s and into the 90s. Dollars are a great consideration here. Why walk when you can ride piggyback?

Let<sup>it</sup><sub>^</sub> be said here that the "battle-lines" are not between Americans and Micronesians, as they may have been in the 60s. Today a very great number of Micronesians espouse big budgets, big development, big education, etc -- for more than those who support practical measures designed to bring about self-reliance. To this observer at least, the greatest enemy of Micronesia is most Micronesians themselves.

What's wrong with plenty of money (big budgets, etc)?

1. constriction of future political choices -- to a permanent dependency. "Creation of a colony" in our day of indignation at colonialism.
2. leads to imposition of programs and structures that people cannot responsibly oversee. Loss of real control! A person is taught to walk before he learns to run. Corrollary - financial irresponsibility.

Talk (cont'd) page 4

3. rapid social change -- faster perhaps than is good for people. Social problems -- delinquency, suicide, etc -- don't prove this point, but they certainly suggest it. "If you want to control change, turn off the money tap!"
4. creation of welfare state. Are people ultimately happy and fulfilled in a society that depends only minimally on their productive efforts? Can they take satisfaction in the legitimate pride that they have made their country what it is? Isn't this pride what we Americans used to celebrate in our poetry and song? Or is that only an American value?

We are the threshold of Free Association with US under a compact that has been almost completed after 10 years of negotiation. Ambassador Rosenblatt can speak of that compact far more knowledgeably than I.

My hesitations are related to the dollar amounts for the reasons I have given. I would like to see Micronesians learn to walk, develop -- mentally speaking, but I wonder whether they shall under present terms of FA.

What can you do?

Micronesians have become skilful advocates of their own causes these days -- and they must speak for themselves.

Yet you are an interested and influential group, and there must be something you can do.

Talk (cont'd) page 5

Day in which we coddled Micronesia should have come to an end!  
You don't teach young people to walk by cradling them in your  
arms.

Have done with whatever guilt complexes you may have and take  
a tough line.

- Don't waste taxpayers' money -- in Micronesia or anywhere  
else. No freebies! Strict fiscal accountability should  
be demanded -- for the good of Micronesians as well as of  
your pocketbooks.
- Don't be too ready to buy the "poor boy" line. Again for  
the sake of our people!
- Don't make the foolish mistake of attempting to give  
Micronesians what you have -- in life style, housing,  
employment -- at least not overnight. (I say this against  
strong instincts in the opposite direction). You'll be  
doing them no favors.
- Don't give anything away. If the people want something  
-- bigger budget -- make them pay for it -- loss of some  
political control. Force them to make hard choices.  
They'll be able to do it, when driven to it.

Do I seem hard on Micronesians? I am, as I have been with my  
students for 15 years now. I can be because I've seen them grow  
not despite but because of "hardships." If I regarded them as  
imbeciles or infants, I would not have the nerve to make these  
suggestions.