HORACE B. McKENNA, S.J.

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To Rosemary and our children
With deep appreciation to Ann O’Donnell and R. Emmett Curran, S.J., for their encouragement and support.

A tip of the hat to Robert O’Brien and John B. Breslin, S.J., for their inspiration and advice. And a bow to Evelyn Bence, Deborah McCann, and Eleanor Waters for their editorial and production know-how that helped turn a manuscript into a book.

Warmest thanks also to those who cheerfully and even eagerly talked to me about Horace and whose names appear throughout this book.

A natural question arises as to the propriety of using Horace’s given name throughout this study. Some have suggested that this usage is disrespectful to such a saintly and dedicated priest. In this matter, I defer to his own judgment. When he was once asked which address he preferred, “Father McKenna” or “Horace,” he replied, “I take what I can get.”

Since he had no objection to the familiar form, since most of his friends, both lay and clerical, used it, and since it retains something of the uniqueness of his character and the warmth of his personality, it seemed appropriate to abandon the more stilted description and refer to him as Horace.

—JSM
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The Funeral

Rest!
It spiraled through the Mass.
I laughed at it within.
I couldn’t laugh out loud.
Rest in peace!
We sang it out;
We spoke the word
for Horace B. McKenna.
Absurd!

Imagine him at rest!
I see him running back and forth
interceding in the very ear
of God himself,
loving everyone around,
wondering—if they were in need;
if so, his heart would slip its moorings.

Rest in peace?
Augustine must have missed the point:
“our hearts are restless . . .”
How can love lie calmly in Elysian grass
with heart-leaps
mind bounding
fantasy flying
entering into that joy of the Lord?
He laughed and laughed.

He said one time,
when our God lets me into heaven,
I will off into a cozy corner
settle down and cry
for half an hour
because the strain is off,
the work clean done.
He never did sit down
nor did he cry.

—J. William Michelman, S.J.
May 15, 1982
ON SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 15, 1982, MORE THAN A THOUSAND people gathered in Saint Aloysius Church in Washington, D.C. Among them, at the back of the church, sat a group of street people in various stages of decline. They had come to pay their respects to the priest they loved. Horace McKenna, S.J., had died four days earlier. At 11 A.M., the parish choir led the congregation as they sang the song written by Saint Francis of Assisi, “All Creatures of Our God and King,” to the spirited tune from the Kölnisches Gesangbuch:

And thou, most kind and gentle death,
Waiting to hush our latest breath,
O praise him, Alleluia!
Thou leadest home the child of God,
And Christ our Lord the way hath trod.

One hundred and twenty vested priests marched to their places in the forward pews on the side aisles, and then Father Joseph P. Whelan, Provincial of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, pronounced the greeting and the blessing of the body, now resting in its simple casket, covered by a white pall with a surmounting red cross.

Before he began the formal liturgy, Father Whelan acknowledged that he was a “stranger” to most of the large
congregation and, in simple language, explained his supervisory position in the Jesuit order and his reason for being there. Immediately, the people of the street let him know of their approval. “No problem”; “Don’t worry”; “Tha’s awright,” was the chorus from the back of the church.

The first reading, Isaiah 61:1-3a, was delivered by Adrienne Cato, Director of the House of Ruth, a shelter for homeless women, which Horace had christened and in which he had been especially interested. “The spirit of the Lord is upon me,” she read, “because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, . . . to comfort all who mourn; to place on those who mourn in Sion a diadem instead of ashes, to give them oil of gladness in place of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit.” These ringing words clearly expressed Horace’s mission.

The choir then sang the 27th Psalm, with its fitting admonition to “Wait for the Lord with courage; be stout-hearted and wait for the Lord.”

The second reading, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, was delivered by the Reverend Imagene Stewart, Pastor of the What’s Happening Now Church, and a great friend of Horace. Slim and youthful, garbed in a flowing robe with flower-like patterns in orange and red and a Roman collar, she read in a strong and musical voice the familiar and glowing words that described Horace’s guiding belief: “So there abideth faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” She almost crooned the word “luhv,” and concluded, “God bless Father McKenna.” Then, as she walked back to her pew from the lectern, she gently touched the casket with her hand.

When the Alleluia had been sung, the Gospel, Matthew 9: 35-38, was read by Horace’s dear friend, Charles Hill, a black permanent deacon of the archdiocese, who voiced the plaint that the harvest was great, but the laborers were few. “Pray, therefore,” he read, “the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest.”
The homily was delivered by Father James L. Connor, S.J., theologian and pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown. Having been Horace’s provincial superior during some of his stormy days, Connor was intimately acquainted with Horace’s character, his dedication, his ministry, and his sanctity. He had received enough ill-typed reports on execrable paper from Horace to be aware of his humor, his acidity, and his gift of clear expression. With sensitivity, felicitous choice of language, and an ingratiating delivery, Connor successfully carried out his difficult preaching assignment. Basing his eulogy upon a hand-written summary of Horace’s life which Horace had prepared nearly seven years before, the speaker pointed out that the frequent use of the word integration in the “Personal Odyssey” suggested the word was a characterization of Horace, since he had given his life “for integration, for reconciliation, for the unity of love among all people.” Like Jesus, as described by Saint Paul, Horace had broken down the barrier of division and had destroyed hostility.

“Look around you,” the preacher suggested. “What do you see in this congregation, this gathering of people? We see rich and we see poor; we see blacks and we see whites; we see men and women—of every segment of our society. And why are we here? What has drawn us together? . . . We are bound together in our love and affection for him, for Father Horace. We are one today because of him. In his own person, he had broken down all lines, barriers, and distinctions between us. He is our reconciler, mediator, and peacemaker. He is the door through whom we pass to friendship with one another.”

Our tribute to him, he concluded, must be a pledge to strengthen that friendship with one another, to rededicate ourselves to integration, to continue his work with the poor, and to reverence the Gospel which he read. “As we say ‘Yes’ to him, we say ‘Yes’ in our own lives to all he stood and lived for.”

The representatives who offered the prayers after the homily were from organizations to which Horace had been
dedicated. Each walked to the lectern and offered a petition embodying the ideals of the organization or activity to which he or she was devoted. They included members of the parish council, the McKenna family, the archdiocese, and the Society of Jesus. Among them were Sister Marilyn Hopewell, a vital and youthful black nun from Horace’s old parish in Ridge, Maryland, who credited Horace with having inspired her vocation; Dr. Veronica Maz, long a co-worker and Director of Martha’s Table, a food distribution service for the poor; Richard McCooey, restaurateur and board member of SOME (So Others Might Eat); Richard McSorley, S.J., an old and dear friend, of the Center for Peace; Lutheran Pastor John F. Steinbruck, an activist from the Luther Place Memorial Church.

The choir then sang the offertory song, “Comfort Me,” and the gifts were presented by a group that included Horace’s sister, brother-in-law, and nuns of the Sacred Heart order. After the Sanctus, Consecration, and Agnus Dei, a corps of priests gave Communion to the large crowd. During the rite, the choir sang continually and spiritedly the hymns, “Soon and Very Soon,” “May the Work I’ve Done Speak for Me” (particularly impressive with its reiteration of the pleading chorus), “I Love the Lord,” and “Give Me a Clean Heart.” From time to time members of the audience would respond with a hearty “Amen,” a waving arm, or a nodding head. Some sang along with the choir.

The Jesuits provided one of the most moving parts of the ceremony when they rose (all others seated) and sang the hymn of their order, “Take and Receive” or “Suscipe”:

Only thy grace, thy love on me bestow,
Possessing these, all riches I forego.
Only thy grace, thy love on me bestow.
Possessing these, all riches I forego.

When they had taken their seats, Archbishop James A. Hickey stepped forward to deliver his eulogy. Speaking without notes and in a warm and personal style, he conveyed his intimate knowledge of Horace’s life and works and a deep appreciation for his sacrifice and dedication. As a
relative newcomer to the Archdiocese of Washington, the archbishop showed a remarkable grasp of the problems and personnel of the church in the District. His was not a perfunctory or boilerplate address pulled from a collection to fit any occasion, but a thoughtful and detailed memorial which made clear that the church hierarchy was eager to salute the achievements of one of its great men.

The song of farewell was “Amazing Grace,” the hymn perhaps most frequently sung and best beloved by the black community:

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
May Christ who called you, take you home.
Near Abr’am may you rest.
Give him eternal rest, O Lord.
May he have endless light.

As the recession began, the entire assemblage joined in a hearty rendition of the Ralph Vaughan Williams setting of William Walsham How’s triumphal hymn, “For All the Saints”:

The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest;
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.
Alleluia!

By the end of the eighth verse, the procession had passed through the church doors, into the bright sunlight.

Immediately after the ceremony, Horace was buried in the Jesuit cemetery at Georgetown University, right below the original main buildings of the campus. The dates on the simple stones go back to 1808 and their uniformity eloquently bespeaks the order’s disregard for earthly recognition and material accumulation. Horace was given one of the few remaining open spaces, and the group that gathered there, including his family, his Jesuit brethren, fellow priests, nuns, associates, and friends clustered about the casket. His nephew, Father Thomas Ambrose, spoke briefly
and emphasized that it was not enough to say that Horace had represented Christ. It had to be asserted that his life had *re-presented* Christ so that Christ might live again in others.

When he had finished his modest homily, he said the committal prayers and gave the final blessing. Then, as the casket was lowered in the grave, a small group of black nuns of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the order which had staffed the school at Horace’s parish at Ridge, Maryland, sang softly the 103rd Psalm:

Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me.
Bless his holy name.
He has done great things,
He has done great things,
He has done great things,
Bless his holy name.
"He’ll Be the First"

January 2, 1899 was the coldest day New York City had seen in twenty years. Thermometers read five degrees above zero, but winds of up to forty-six miles per hour added to the underlying chill. The five inches of snow which had fallen on New Year’s Day still covered the ground. Horses struggled, sometimes futilely, to pull their vehicles through the clogged streets. City authorities had tried to mobilize an army of snow shovelers to clear the public thoroughfares, but, according to a humorous New York Times reporter, many of the workers were “affected by an alarming epidemic of Katzenjammer” and “succumbed gradually to cold and thirst” so that “by noon, the army was sadly depleted.”*

But winter conditions brought pleasure to some New York residents, who hitched their fast horses to their racing sleds. Along Riverside Drive sleigh bells jingled blithely as drivers vied with one another to show off their speedsters. Upon the higher ground to the east, at 155 West 91st Street, the day’s joy derived from the birth of a boy, later to be named Horace Bernard. Laura and Charles McKenna welcomed their sixth lively child along with the new year.

The year 1899 was a good one for Americans—those living on West 91st Street as well as those living across the country. The Spanish-American War had ended on the previous December tenth and, on January first, Spanish troops hauled down their flag in Havana as U.S. forces took control. Editors viewed the country as “a world power—not for aggression and conquest—but for the orderly and just extension of that commerce for which our resources and our qualities fit us.” Money was easy and cheap. The Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank was paying three and a half percent on deposits. The stock market was described as “buoyant” and an editorial, pointing to the broad scope of popular well-being, crowed that “prosperity is here.”

In Albany, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, the “Dude Cowboy” and recent Rough Rider, had just been sworn in as governor of New York, and, in Washington, President McKinley had manfully endured the painful handshaking ordeal at the annual White House New Year’s reception. On the evening of the second, Marcella Sembrich, Lillian Nordica, and Edouard De Reszke appeared in Don Giovanni at the Metropolitan, and, on Broadway not far from the opera house, a cab horse found enough cleared surface to run away and cause a flurry of excitement.

The newborn McKenna boy, had he been graced at birth with the keen sense of humor and of social justice he was later to develop, might have noted with appreciation several intriguing events of his natal year. He might have raised his eyebrows a bit ironically at Leo XIII’s papal bull Testimonium benevolentiae which condemned what seemed to the Vatican the “dread Americanism” of Father Isaac Thomas Hecker,**


**Father Hecker was the founder of the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, known as the Paulists, whose church was and is located at Columbus Avenue and West 59th Street in New York City. He and Archbishop John Ireland, of St. Paul, were in the wing of the Roman Catholic Church that differed with the Vatican on matters such as the rights of workers to organize in unions.*
at whose church the McKennas frequently worshiped. He would no doubt have been pleased at the prospect of the First Hague Peace Conference, where twenty-six nations were meeting at the suggestion of Czar Nicholas to seek a permanent world peace. He might have smiled at the news that Archbishop Brouard of Montreal had issued a Mandament forbidding bazaars of any sort. He would have been gratified that President McKinley had shown concern over the "lynching of colored men in the Carolinas" and had met with the executive committee of the National Afro-American Council to discuss the problem. He would have laughed to learn that, on the night of his inauguration as governor, Teddy Roosevelt had been locked out of the executive mansion and had broken a window with his keys to get into his new home.

The McKennas were an established, comfortably situated, middle-class family. Laura O’Neill McKenna was the daughter of a well-known Philadelphia lawyer and political figure who occasionally lent his oratorical talents to Tammany rallies and eventually moved to New York. There was a family tradition that the first O’Neills to reach the United States had come over on the ship that carried the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812. Charles F. McKenna had been born in New York in 1861. At eighteen he had graduated from the Jesuit college of Saint Francis Xavier and, in 1880, had earned his M.A. there also. Later he received a Ph.B. from Columbia and, after studying under Dr. Charles Frederick Chandler, in 1884 was awarded his Ph.D. as the first chemical engineer of the Columbia School of Mines.

Before the development of corporate analysis and test departments, McKenna practiced chemistry independently and maintained a laboratory in lower Manhattan on Church Street, near City Hall. He developed an expertise in the field of explosives and, in 1904, was called upon to testify as an expert witness in connection with the General Slocum excursion boat disaster in which 1,030 men, women, and children had lost their lives. He subsequently was to write many of the American Railway Association regulations on
the handling and shipping of dangerous chemicals, as well as the New York City rules on this subject. He was described by the eminent editor, Richard K. Meade, as "one of the first of our distinguished 'homegrown' chemists."

Dr. McKenna came to public attention again in 1916 when German saboteurs set off the notorious Black Tom Island explosion near Hoboken, New Jersey, and he was called to testify at the subsequent trial.

He was a member of the New York State Board of Parole and vice-president of the State Board of Probation and in 1918 served on the Council of National Defense. His name was noted in *A History of the American Chemical Society*, an association he chaired in 1910.

In *Who's Who* Charles McKenna listed himself as a Republican, which seems somewhat out of character, considering the strong Democratic loyalty of most Irish Catholics. Several possible reasons might explain his departure from the norm. To begin with, he was a professional who associated with the managerial class, and he was relatively affluent. Then, too, the Democratic Tammany organization was hardly a model of probity and McKenna had tangled with unethical building contractors sponsored by Tammany when he insisted on the use of high quality materials. He had also resigned from the Municipal Explosives Commission when he decided that politics was more of a concern than science. Finally, he was associated with Theodore Roosevelt and worked to achieve the ebullient president's objectives in the field of social work. It is probable that he was not sympathetic to the philosophy of William Jennings Bryan.

In the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, McKenna's Sargent-like photograph reveals a subtle and arresting character, with a long, oval-shaped face, high cheekbones, black eyebrows, and a grizzled, carefully clipped moustache and Van Dyke. He was indeed a forceful and lasting influence upon Horace and the rest of the McKenna family.

Charles was the son of William and Mary E. O'Meara McKenna. William was born in 1831 at Auchnacloy, near Dungannon, in County Tyrone, Ireland, and came to the United States as a young man. He and the other members of his family, who emigrated in one of Ireland's most tragic periods, proved to be keen and enterprising and made the most of the opportunities afforded them in New York City. They operated a prosperous brass factory on Cherry Street, not far from the present Brooklyn Bridge, and later branched out into profitable real estate investment. As a token of their success, James McKenna, a brother of William, presented Saint Patrick's Cathedral the first window on the left of the main entrance while William's daughter, Mary, a Most Precious Blood nun, paid for much of the building of the order's monastery at Fort Hamilton in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn.

On January 14, 1899, the baptismal date of the McKenna baby, Charles told the officiating priest at the Church of the Holy Name that the infant was to be named Horace. The clergyman, bridling at the classical appellation, objected. "Give the boy a chance," he pleaded.

But Charles was adamant. His rationale, later retold by Horace, was that he had often served as a sponsor at confirmations and had found that "everyone was named 'John James' or 'James John'." He wanted to "break the routine."

"But there's no Saint Horace," the priest said, referring to the requirement that children be named after saints.

"He'll be the first," retorted Charles with what may have been unconscious clairvoyance. And so the boy was named.

Just as Horace was beginning to move about and to take a share in the life of the family, another child, a daughter, Laura, was born. But two weeks later, when Horace was twenty-one months old, tragedy struck. Laura, his mother, died suddenly from what appears to have been puerperal or "childbed" fever, caused by a lack of postnatal hygiene.

Even though Mary, the eldest daughter, did all she could to care for her six brothers and sisters and servants kept the home running, Horace lived without a mother's care for two
of the most formative years of his life, until Charles married Julia Harlin in 1903. The deprivation of these early years must have been felt by the small boy and surely must have sparked his sensitivity to the needs of the dispossessed.

Fortunately, this family void was affectionately filled by the woman Charles chose as the second Mrs. McKenna. What a tribute to Charles’s powers of persuasion—that this unattached young woman took on the cares and responsibilities of such a large household. Someone is reputed to have asked the bride-to-be if she had no fears about marching down the aisle into the complex of problems and demands which awaited her. “No fears,” came her down-to-earth reply, “but no illusions either.”

Horace’s feelings toward her were amply evidenced by his later designation of her as his “Mother Julia,” according her equal rank with his own “Mother Laura.”

It was a blessing for all the McKennas, and not the least for Horace, that Julia came and set her firm and understanding hand upon the tiller of the family craft. Having developed a strain of timidity in the give and take with his older and stronger brothers, Horace had much to gain from the sympathy and encouragement she offered him.

When the time came for him to go to school, Horace was sent, along with his siblings, to Holy Cross Academy on 42nd Street, but, as he subsequently put it, he “did not get along with the nuns.” When he sought refuge in tears and other children began calling him “cry baby,” Julia kept him home for a while where she taught him to read. He studied with her until she thought he was ready for regular school, when she sent him to the public school, just around the corner. He enrolled in grade 2B and stayed there through the fifth grade when, during confession, a priest told him that he should be in a parochial school. His father then placed him in the Holy Name parish school on West 96th Street, where he was taught by a layman teacher for one year and thereafter by the muscular Christian Brothers. When he was nine years old he suffered an attack of pneumonia, the first of his serious illnesses and then a dangerous malady, but he recovered satisfactorily.
Older children of Dr. and Mrs. Charles McKenna at their farm in Suffern, New York about 1903. Rear row, left to right: Mary, Laura, Helen, Daniel Morris; front row: William, Horace, Charles. Courtesy of Thomas E. Ambrose, S.J.
A 1983 photo of Trinity School at right and the block of dwellings on West 91st Street, New York, where Horace and his family lived. No. 155, the McKenna residence, is marked by the protruding bowed structure.
As he matured, Horace took part in the games and frolics of the boys in the neighborhood. He learned to play stickball in the street near his home. He ran from the cops after he and some of his fellows had been caught trespassing upon a forbidden grassed area which covered a section of the pipes of the New York water system. On one occasion, he even steeled himself to punch a playfellow who tried to take his sled away from him. He later admitted that his stepmother would have called him a "muff" and a "pushover" if she had found out that he hadn't put up a fight against such an aggressor. In these pursuits, his older and more athletic brother, Bill, whom he adored, kept an eye on him and, for protective purposes, called him "Pat" instead of "Horace" when they were with the neighborhood boys. As an old man, Horace would still remember the thrill of Bill tossing him up in the air, of losing his breath for a second as he fell back down into his brother's arms.

The neighborhood between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues was economically and racially mixed. The well-off, such as the McKennas, lived in tall, graceful three-and-a-half story brownstones on the north side of the street, while the less favored lived in tenements on the south side or on the avenues. Farther to the east rose the heavy stone facades of the select Trinity School, an educational haven for the sons of the wealthy. German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, and "American" boys all roller-skated, played stoop ball, and walked the narrow tops of the backyard fences together. Although far removed from the Bowery, it was here on the upper west side of New York that Horace gained his first knowledge of city streets, but not without causing some displeasure to his family.

His father came home one afternoon and found Horace playing in the street. He told the boy that he didn't want him to become a "street boy" and made him stay in the house with his "nose pressed against the window pane" until Julia saw fit to release him.

Clearly, there was a touch of the "lace curtain" about the McKennas, a feeling that they had attained a certain position in the community. Julia was sensitive to the popular
tendency of many Americans to categorize those of Irish blood as “hooligans” and she was determined that her family should not furnish material for their characterization as “shanty Irish.” In fact, the McKennas had been fully assimilated and thought of themselves as Americans. They might have gone down to an occasional Saint Patrick’s Day parade (as “something to see”) but there was no perpetuation of relations with the Auld Sod nor yearning after the Dark Rosaleen, the romantic spirit of Ireland. Probably the most frequent guests at the McKenna dinner table were German academics with whom Charles enjoyed scientific rapport.

THE FAMILY’S STRONGEST TRADITION WAS THEIR LOYALTY AND devotion to the Roman Catholic Church. Julia was sedulous in supervising the performance of their religious duties, and she was personally devout herself, although without affectation or drama. She kept statues of the Blessed Virgin and of the Sacred Heart on her bedroom bureau and she kept a votive light burning before the latter as an indication of particular attachment. It was natural that her demeanor and these practices should have made a deep impression upon the sensitive and observant Horace, who so loved and admired her.

Charles also provided an example of dedication, compassion for others, and high-minded living which strongly impressed Horace, remained with him permanently, and helped him to define his own altruistic objectives in life. Even small aspects of his father’s practices remained firmly imbedded in Horace’s memory. Charles was a devoted and hard-working member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and Horace, many decades later, would recall his father canvassing the family to borrow a quarter for the society meeting offering. This national lay organization was dedicated to helping the poor and was a vital arm of the Catholic Church before the development of massive social service organizations. Charles took a leading part in the efforts of the society to help relieve local needs and in organizing and supporting orphanages and hospitals.
He was particularly interested in the field of child care and vigorously supported the work of the national leaders of the society, Thomas M. Mulry and Edmond Butler, in this field. Horace was to have many contacts with members of the Mulry family and Thomas Mulry became one of his heroes. This New York banker, as national head of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, had worked closely with Dr. McKenna in its programs, had served as vice-chairman of Theodore Roosevelt’s pioneering White House Conference on Dependent Children and had established peace among New York City’s charitable agencies, which had been dissipating in sectarian jurisdictional squabbling, the efforts which should have been devoted to the care of the children in their charge.

As recognition for Charles’ efforts, in 1909 Theodore Roosevelt made him a delegate to the ground-breaking First White House Conference on Dependent Children which the president had set up in response to the critical national problem of homeless children.* On a more humble level, his children long remembered scenes such as Charles leaving the house at a late hour to bail a charwoman’s son out of jail or attending an official meeting to assist the Christian Brothers with their zoning problems. In a time of rampant materialism, he was a conspicuous practitioner of the corporal works of mercy. Horace, early in his life, became impressed with the worthiness of these pursuits and conceived the desire to emulate his father.

Horace said that he had wanted to be a priest when he was seven years old. While he would joke later that his short stature and his lack of funds inhibited his interest in girls, it is clear, as his sister Betty Fargis has said, that he was one who, from early childhood, was endowed with a “real vocation.” It was important, also, that the ambience of the McKenna household provided a fostering climate for this call. He was also encouraged when he visited his Aunt Mary at her convent and was further familiarized with the

religious life and its feasibility. As might be expected, Horace's views of the clerical vocation were somewhat unrelated to reality, and he painted the priestly function in a romantic light. During this period, as he later revealed, he often indulged in a rosy dream in which he, as a newly ordained priest, and somewhat resembling the holy Aloysius Gonzaga, expired slowly in the odor of sanctity. His vivid imagination thus disclosed itself at an early age, as did his interest in the priesthood, which remained firm despite radical changes in his conception of its real components.

When Horace was growing up, no blacks lived in his neighborhood. Nevertheless, even then, he took an interest in defending the underdog. One day in grammar school, he came upon a Christian Brother who, with the notorious physical discipline of that order, was giving one of Horace's friends what appeared to be an overvigorous thrashing. To the consternation of the brother, the diminutive Horace shouted at him: "Take off your Roman collar and I'll give you a good licking!" No such chastisement eventuated, but how interesting that the callow Horace showed true respect for the cloth.

When Horace graduated from the parish school in 1913, his father decided to send him to Fordham Preparatory School in the Bronx for his secondary education. Although the older McKenna boys had attended Saint Francis Xavier on 16th Street, Fordham, also a Jesuit institution, would take applicants in the middle of the school year. Since Horace graduated in February, Fordham allowed him to take an accelerated course which let him finish a full year's studies in five months. Then, in the fall, he became a member of the Class of 1916, with which he graduated.

Successful people who have graduated from rural schools have stressed the vicissitudes of attending the storied one-room institution, but little note has been taken of the complications of the urban itinerary such as that which Horace and his city compatriots followed to get from their homes on the upper West Side of Manhattan to school in the middle Bronx, and back. The daily route was by subway: from 91st Street to 149th and, then, after a change onto the
Third Avenue El, to Fordham Road and the campus. The five-cent fare and new equipment made the trip much more tolerable than it would be today.

Fordham University, originally Saint John's College at Fordham, was a thriving institution when Horace first entered the campus as a student. It was relatively small, but had been in operation for nearly seventy-five years, and with its college, graduate, and secondary schools, was attracting increasing numbers of students from the city, its suburbs, and beyond. Set in the midst of green lawns, with graceful elms shading its curving drives, its gray stone buildings offered a pleasant prospect to passers-by on Webster Avenue or Fordham Road. Its semipastoral setting gave no hint of the blight which would engulf it and the rest of the Bronx five decades later.

The president of the university was Joseph A. Mulry, S.J., a brother of Charles McKenna's Vincentian co-worker, and the youngest university president in the country. Vibrant and enthusiastic, he was an outstanding orator in the overflowing style of the period and had initiated a program of expansion which included the establishment of a graduate school, downtown extension courses, and a school of social work, a discipline then hardly defined or recognized.

The preparatory school was small enough to encourage close relationships among students and teachers. Class grades were reported and discussed in regular, open fora and this, in some cases, proved searing for the laggards. By the same token, the Jesuit teachers could appraise their students' piety and their aptitude for the priesthood, and encourage those who might follow in their steps.

Horace was a good student. He enjoyed meeting the challenge of his subjects and he particularly delighted in his contact with the men and practices of the Society of Jesus. He had acquired a secondhand respect for the Jesuits from his father, who had studied at their 16th Street college and had a deep regard for them. But now that the respect was his own, Horace found the life of these dedicated men profoundly sympathetic. From the romantic picture that he had conjured up for himself in his childhood, the characteristics
of the priesthood now took on a more realistic but no less attractive form.

He worked industriously at the traditional curriculum. He won a prize in mathematics. He studied zoology with the younger Joseph A. Mulry, S.J., the president's nephew who was then a scholastic or unordained religious. He enjoyed the English course of Louis Gallagher, S.J., who developed and strengthened Horace's innate love of language and literature. Another scholastic, Daniel J. Quigley, S.J., adopted Horace as his particular charge and, suspecting the direction of his vocational ambitions, made him stay at his lessons while his classmates were at their games, once even making him spend a whole day on Virgil in preparation for an examination.

Naturally, it was not all work and no play with the McKenna tribe of scholars. Their terms at school were broken up by summer vacations when they would move en masse to the farm which Charles owned at Suffern in Rockland County, New York, up on the west side of the Hudson. On occasion, when, as Horace once phrased it, "the cash flow might be impeded," the family would remain on West 91st Street and find their diversions in the neighborhood, but that seemed the exception rather than the rule. The farm was truly in a rural setting, and Horace enjoyed swimming and boating with his brothers and developed a nodding acquaintance with agricultural pursuits through contact with the routine of the three farmers who kept the place going. Once in a while, he would vary the routine by visiting friends or relatives at the Atlantic beaches. All the while, Charles kept a watchful eye over the family in the country by commuting to his Manhattan office every day via the Erie Railroad and the Hudson Tube.

While Horace fully enjoyed all his leisure time in the country or at the seashore, his most satisfying hours were those spent playing tennis on the nearby West Side courts maintained by the Park Department of the city. In this sport, his size was not a detriment. Since play times were allocated, he would take out permits in the names of his sisters,
brothers, aunts, uncles, and any other people whose names came to him, so he could hit his smashes and backhands for hours at a time without interruption. Apparently, the joy of exercise prevailed over any ethical considerations of fairness to his fellow tennis enthusiasts. But, in a longer perspective, these hours of physical exertion were strengthening his body for the shocks and challenges which lay ahead.

Back at school, as Horace progressed through his course, he spent more and more time thinking about his future career. He felt comfortable in the religiously oriented life of the Jesuit school. He took part in the services, sacramental rites, observances, and student rituals which formed an integral part of the schedule of the institution. He developed an admiration for the priests’ ability and dedication. He could easily picture himself as one of them. Then, in 1914, to the surprise of his family and through a “kind of sudden resolve on his part,” Bill McKenna entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Saint Andrew-on-Hudson at Poughkeepsie, New York. Horace had always admired and respected his older brother and Bill’s decision to take the course which Horace was now considering for himself had a markedly stimulating effect upon him. When Horace and the family visited the rigidly structured novitiate high above the Hudson, his determination to follow his brother increased. Even the severity of the regulations, which prompted a nervous Bill to warn his nine-year-old sister, Betty, not to stray into the wrong corridor and violate the sanctity of the cloister, did not give him pause.

After Bill had taken his first vows at the end of his probationary period of two years, Horace began to make overtures to his Jesuit teachers about entering the order himself. When he finished his course at Fordham Preparatory, he received the welcome news that his application for admission to the novitiate at Saint Andrew-on-Hudson had been granted. With great satisfaction and keen anticipation, he set about preparing to take the first step of his priestly training.

His separation from his family was not emotional or
traumatic. His conviction that the future held satisfactions and rewards more than compensated for the loss he might have felt in leaving.

Ironically, by the time Horace was ready to enter, Bill McKenna had been asked to leave the order for what would now be considered a peccadillo—illegal smoking. Not being amenable to the rigid discipline of the time, he went into business on Wall Street and, eventually, in Chicago.

The day Horace left for Saint Andrew, he packed his modest wardrobe and personal effects and said good-by to his “Mother Julia” and sisters. His father and his brother, Morris, accompanied him to Grand Central Station where he would board the train for Poughkeepsie. When they arrived at the terminal, he saw a knot of religious, obviously bound for the same destination, standing near the gate to the train. When he started to walk over to join them, Morris restrained him by grabbing hold of his arm. “Stay here with us,” he said. “You’ll be with priests for the rest of your life.” Morris must have sensed that Horace’s vocation would stand firmer than their brother Bill’s.

HORACE HAD ARRIVED AT ONE OF THE IMPORTANT TURNING POINTS in his life. Having made a major decision as to the direction of his future, he had eliminated many alternatives, but he had not yet developed the ambition which would define with precision his special field of endeavor.

To a great degree, he was as yet unqualified to make any such choice. He was seventeen years old and the recent graduate of a sectarian preparatory school for male students which adhered to the strictest standards of conduct and morality, and where the great majority of teachers and fellow students had been Americans of Irish descent. Most of his teen years had been spent in religious-oriented surroundings and with teachers who were priests or candidates for the priesthood. His home life had been of the most conservative coloration—deeply and practically religious, with an intellectual and uplifting bent. Horace’s life in a comfortable neighborhood had been regulated by a controlled routine. His activities had been carried on under the
watchful eyes of his parents and the affectionate protection of his older brother. He had found no occasion to observe the people or surroundings of the lower East Side or similar slum areas which were far removed from West 91st Street. He had known people who were less fortunately situated than his family, but he had not known them well. Except for the occasional coarse epithet or sniggling smutty reference which he might have heard in neighborhood play, his only touch of life-in-the-raw had been his and his playmates' discovery of a fetus inside a box hidden in the bushes in Central Park. Thus, his knowledge of the world and of the hates, fears, and hopes of his fellow men, was limited by experience.

But he had acquired a new confidence in himself. With his scholastic success and the acceptance that accorded, he had developed an individual personality. All in all, he was a sensitive instrument whose fine-tuning had scarcely begun and who was poised for the calculated and formative adjustment which the next few years would bring.
When Horace entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Poughkeepsie, New York on July 30, 1916, the United States was still feeling the thrust of the youthful vigor which had stimulated its people and institutions at the turn of the century. Its confidence was not weakened by any suspicion of the doubts and turmoil which would soon wrack the country. After McKinley’s assassination, Teddy Roosevelt had become president and then relinquished, with no little reluctance, the White House to his friend, William Howard Taft. But a feud ended their friendship and, through his Bull Moose candidacy, Roosevelt succeeded in helping Woodrow Wilson gain power. Now, in this presidential year, Wilson was to run for re-election against and defeat Charles Evans Hughes, on the claim that Wilson had “kept us out of war.”

Regardless of party, however, it was obvious that feelings about the place of business and government in modern society and the needs of the individual citizen were changing. All three of these recent presidents had supported and signed laws which put limits to the powers of the great corporations and increased the responsibility of the managers of large enterprises toward the public. The day of untrammeled free enterprise had passed.
The same vigor which characterized the nation infused the United States branch of the Society of Jesus. The number of applicants for admission was increasing; their schools and colleges were thriving. For administrative purposes, the province of the Society which had included the whole of the Northeast was eventually to be divided into three separate provinces: Maryland, New York, and New England. The actual split had not yet been implemented, but in anticipation of the change, the impressive red brick novitiate named after Saint Andrew had been erected in 1904 high above the Hudson River a short distance below Krum Elbow.

This was historic country. Many of the land titles went back to colonial times and the affluent Dutch patroons. The estate of the James Roosevelt family at Hyde Park overlooked the river just a few miles to the north, its young squire Franklin now on service in Washington as assistant secretary of the Navy. A more attractive and healthy location for a seminary could not have been found. The view of the river matched the famed panoramas of Europe's river valleys. The surrounding wooded land separated the property from the outside world. The Jesuits would build other scholasticates at Weston, in Massachusetts, and at Shrub Oak, in Westchester County, New York, but none would match Saint Andrew in setting.

Horace entered into his new routine with enthusiasm. He found the required order challenging and fulfilling. His novitiate had begun when he set his foot inside the "House of Probation," as it was technically called. He started to follow the daily order which involved rising at 5:30 A.M., a visit to the chapel, an hour's private meditation, Mass at 7:00, breakfast thereafter, and then a round of duties through the day and evening until retiring at 10:00 P.M. After a few weeks, Horace and his fellow novices were permitted to don the belted black cassock of the order and began to feel that they were really a part of the community.

The noviceship is the two-year period of probation during which the candidate studies the Society and the
Society studies him. Horace made the thirty-day retreat according to the prescription of the *Exercises* of Saint Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits.* He learned the meaning of the regular exercises, for the meditation, examens, litanies, and spiritual reading would become a part of his daily life. He became acquainted with the rules and constitution of the order, but less arcane subjects were also on the docket. He studied English and the classical languages and deepened his knowledge and appreciation of them. He loved the reading assigned by his mentors, which included Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*.

He was thrilled by the spirituality of the religious life with its periods of prayer, of meditation, and of conscious striving for self-improvement to the exclusion of mundane cares and considerations. He no longer had the opportunity to play his beloved tennis or organized games, but found pleasure in the austere recreation of taking brisk communal walks. To describe the satisfactions of his new life, he later would refer to a metaphor which his novice master had used in describing these gratifications: “God,” the priest had said, “is giving you a spiritual stick of candy.”

The more time he spent with the Jesuit priests, the tighter grew the bond he felt with them. Their spirituality and their guidance were sound. Father Vincent A. McCormick, a man with a classical mind, made him realize that “scholarship was an elegance like physical strength,” that it “contributed to your moral strength and your human values and your ability to serve your neighbor,” and that it “groomed you for the highest efforts of your later life.”

Father Francis X. Byrnes helped him understand the meaning of love and helped him relax enough to cultivate this emotion. Horace had always been chary of this sensation, even to the extent of being reluctant to kiss or show affection to his own sister. He revealed to his spiritual

*Details of Jesuit training are described by John LaFarge, S.J., in *A Report on the American Jesuits*, photographs by Margaret Bourke-White (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956).*
advisor that he had been shy and afraid to love, and had thought it weak and sentimental. But the older man challenged him, and Horace never forgot this discussion. “You must remember,” his superior said, “that our Lord loved Saint John since He allowed the saint to rest his head upon His breast at the Last Supper.” He also pointed out to Horace that Saint Paul had said that the greatest sin of the pagans was their lack of affection. It was, therefore, not only proper, but necessary to enjoy the company of one’s brethren, to speak freely with them and, above all, to love them.

In his days as a novice, Horace also developed a vivid sense of the Divine presence, especially in the Blessed Sacrament. His attitude was intimate and touchingly colloquial. “After Father Byrnes had awakened my spirit, I couldn’t pass the open door of the chapel without asking our Lord in the tabernacle, ‘How is it in there?’ It just meant that I was friendly with him. He was another intimate, the closest intimate of mine, the one whose company I enjoyed the most, the one whom I saw in everyone else.” It is clear, even in these homely phrases, that he was developing an almost mystic relationship with the Divinity and an awareness of Christ’s presence in every human being. This conviction deepened as he grew older and was the basis for the indiscriminate love of his associates, friends, and even antagonists which became his most remarkable characteristic.

As the weeks passed, Horace found, as Father John LaFarge has said, that “the world of the novitiate and the outside world are quite distinct.” In LaFarge’s experience, there was little to talk about with visitors from beyond the walls, as their concerns were so different from his. On the other hand, Horace enjoyed the occasional visits of family members, even those with his “outcast” brother Bill, who was not officially permitted to come beyond the entrance gate, but who talked with Horace over the property line. Such regulations were only minor irritations, and, in his euphoric mood, no such pin-prick could lessen Horace’s
enthusiasm or decrease the satisfaction he derived from the new role which suited him so well.

In late July 1918, following the second anniversary of his entrance, during Mass, before receiving Communion, Horace pronounced to his superior the simple but perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience which ranked him as a "scholastic." As a full-fledged member of the Society, he was then entitled to write "S.J." (Society of Jesus) after his name, although not yet authorized to prefix the "Reverend" of the ordained priest. He was delighted to pass this crucial milestone; his probation was over.

WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE NOVICESHIP, HORACE AND HIS classmates embarked upon the two-year juniorate during which they studied Latin, Greek, English, history, and mathematics. In accordance with Jesuit tradition, this course of study included special training in the art of self-expression in writing and in speech, and Horace took particular pleasure in developing these skills with special competence. His economy of words and exactitude in phraseology helped him throughout the whole of his ministry.

Hardly had Horace attained the status of a junior when the first of the murderous epidemics of Spanish influenza which ravaged the country struck down six of the young seminarians, including Horace. Three of the Jesuits died, and, although Horace hovered on the edge of death, he passed the crisis and recovered in this second of the major physical challenges he would meet and overcome in his long life.

As he regained his strength, Horace's capacity for reflection asserted itself. With greater and greater anticipation, he looked forward to the priesthood. His interest in language and his tendency to flights of fancy led him to picture his future life in terms he later would refer to often. In sentimental metaphor he likened a priest to the fabled Little Lord Fauntleroy, the child hero of the popular 1887 novel of Frances Hodgson Burnett. As the youthful lord went about his grandfather's estate ministering to the needy tenants, so Horace and his fellow priests "in helping people
Horace in 1916 when he was graduating from Fordham Prep and preparing to leave for the novitiate.
Horace at the novitiate of St. Andrew-on-Hudson about 1917 with his sisters, Mary, left, and Laura.
to realize their lives in Jesus Christ and to enter into the
inheritance of their Father” would be “spiritual Lord
Fauntleroys, able to dispense the bounty of the Big House to
the people in the tenant houses who had so little.” In an
increasingly real way, this childish concept remained a
guiding principle for Horace for the rest of his life.

In April of 1917 the United States had entered World War
I, and even the philosophic calm of the novitiate could not
remain unaffected by the shocks and reverberations of
conflict taking place on the battlefields of Europe. Horace
was particularly aware of the fighting because his beloved
brother Bill had joined the Army and had been sent to
France after a brief session of training. Bill had gone into the
service in August, 1918, had contracted pleurisy in the
trenches, and had been sent home, more dead than alive, in
October. The vigorous youth who had left the country
weighing 160 pounds, came back weighing a mere 90. He
was awarded a service-connected disability rating, but, after
a period of convalescence, regained reasonable health and,
disregarding his father’s hopes for his return to a seminary,
joined the business world, where he demonstrated expertise
in the reorganization of large companies.

In these days of disillusion with war, it is difficult to
recapture the mood of the public during the first great world
conflict. Insulated by censorship from the realities of the
battlefield and stimulated by a calculated flow of propa-
ganda from the Committee on Public Information, the man
in the street was inclined to view the struggle as a sort of
football game. His sympathies were completely with the
home team, and the issue was simply winning. The Catholic
Church strongly supported the military effort and one
prominent advocate of the nation’s course was Father
Joseph A. Mulry, S.J., president of Fordham. Noted for his
emotional speeches in support of the war and the “boys”
under arms, he was in great demand as an inspirational
orator. A high point in his addresses was his lament that he
could not go to the battle front to fight side by side with the
doughboys in the trenches.

As one would expect, Horace was affected by this general
feeling and its influence seemed to last for decades. Forty years later, in calling for courage in the fight against poverty, Horace’s rhetoric retained remnants of those war speeches as he urged an effort like that of “our boys fighting at Chateau Thierry,” one of the crucial battles of the First War. Horace supported the Allies in World War II as well. Only in the 1960s, when faced with the questions of Vietnam and atomic weaponry, did his reasoning change, leading him to question war as an instrument of national policy.

After completing his juniorate studies, Horace and his contemporaries remained at Saint Andrew for the first year of philosophy instead of moving to Woodstock, Maryland as was customary. He was happy to remain in the complex he had come to love. And Saint Andrew offered one other benefit for him. Sensitive about his short stature, approximately five feet, five inches, he occasionally had an urge to slip downstairs to a clothes closet to measure himself against the hooks in the wall. “Maybe, just maybe,” he thought, “I’ve grown.”

Philosophy provided Horace with a new scholastic atmosphere and he took to it with enthusiasm. It was for him a time of introduction to the great thinkers such as Plato, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, and a period for pondering the eternal questions of Being, Soul and Body, Knowledge and Reality, Freedom and Necessity, and Right and Wrong. Here he learned how the greatest of minds had dealt with these topics. The year wasn’t an easy one, the courses were difficult, but Horace loved the work, knowing that his mind was opening to new ideas.

In 1921 after he had completed one year of philosophy, Horace, as would have been the case in the preceding year if the Jesuit province had not been in the process of reorganizing, was sent to Woodstock, Maryland, the historic seminary of the Jesuits, just west of Baltimore.

At Woodstock, another component was added to Horace’s education and ultimately to the manner in which he approached his own problems and those of his people. Here his teachers introduced him to a practical approach to ethical problems. This material and way of viewing things
were totally new to Horace and his fellow scholastics and, in their eagerness to comply with all requirements, they tended to be overly scrupulous in interpreting the personal application of the principles. Horace would recall with a smile one example of this down-to-earth treatment.

Father Peter Lutz, the rector, was "a simple old Dutchman who could evaluate everything without being disturbed and was very sympathetic and understanding," Horace explained. "I remember having what you might have called 'a case of conscience' in those old days when we were very careful about what we would call 'reserve' or 'modesty.' I had been walking with a friend in the woods when we came to a swimming hole. Neither of us had our bathing suit and we wondered what to do. The Irish province was the only place in the Society where they were said to swim bare naked and, in the Philippines, you practically wore a Zouave suit to go in the water.

"At any rate, we took off our clothes and swam. Then, later on, when I was wondering whether that had been the right thing to do, I went to Father Lutz and asked him if it was all right to swim naked in the Patapsco.

"He said, 'It's all right if you have forgotten your suit.' In other words, it was perfectly all right.

"He would settle questions of that type in a very homely way and it made you feel that your moral life and your spiritual life were normal, humane, and domesticated. He made the same decisions and showed the same common sense which you would expect from your father and mother and your brothers and sisters and the gang on the street in their better moods."

Father Lutz and his confreres thus provided a further significant stage in the molding of Horace's character. Through this training, he was formed, as he described it, "in such a way as thereafter to be unafraid to make ordinary human judgments." It was to this training that he owed his tolerance and sympathy in the confessional and his determination to stand for his concept of the needs of his people, even in the face of overwhelming organizational opposition.
During his years of philosophy, Horace spent his spare time reading the plays of Sophocles and he hoped that, after Woodstock, he would be permitted to “hang around New York for a while” to put his classical expertise to work in the production of a series of English translations of Greek authors. As he was nearing the end of his Woodstock assignment, he confided his hopes to the rector, Father Lutz. Lutz advised him to talk it over with their superior, the provincial, which Horace did. But the response of the provincial was a three-year teaching assignment at the Ateneo de Manila, the educational institution of the Society in the Philippines. In the Jesuit rubric, after the ethereal world of the philosophers, the seminarian is returned to prosaic, everyday activity, which usually means teaching high school. From his contact with active young men, their ambitions, waywardness, virtues, and interests, the future priest is expected to receive further education in “a school of humanity, taught by humanity itself.”

In explanation of the manner in which his request was treated, Horace would point out that the need was great and that, in those days, “everybody volunteered for service in the Philippines.”
The Treaty of Paris had been signed on December 10, 1898 and ratified by a single vote in the United States Senate on February 6, 1899. It had embodied the changes effected by the Spanish-American War, including the ceding of the Philippine Islands to the United States. Resistance to the previous rule by Spain had been steadily growing for many years and, when the United States had taken control of the Islands with the appointment of a civilian governing commission headed by William Howard Taft, Spanish administrators had been displaced and Spanish institutions eliminated. Opposition to the alien friars and the village caciques or chiefs had been particularly strong because of their harshness.

Accordingly, it had been inevitable that, with the cessation of Spanish rule, the ecclesiastical influence of the Iberian religious had diminished. Thus, after nearly 350 years, the responsibility for the operation of the Roman Catholic Church in the Islands had been, in fact as well as in theory, transferred to the general organization of the Church. An Irishman, Michael O’Doherty, was named archbishop of Manila.

The departure of the friars had left a serious priestly vacuum, and, in 1921, the General of the Jesuits, Father Wlodomir Ledochowski, had sent twenty American Jesuits to the Philippines to supplement the efforts of the small hold-over band of Spanish members of the order who had remained in situ. Thereafter, this initial company of ten priests and ten scholastics had been strengthened from time to time by the assignment of additional Americans until, twenty years later, the total number would reach 450.

Consequently, upon the completion of his philosophy in 1923, without any overpowering conviction about working in the foreign field, Horace found himself ordered to the capital city of Manila to serve as a teacher.

In later years Horace glided over the shock of this assignment, but, at the time, he found compliance with the order a painful necessity. Although he made no personal record of his feelings, he did receive and kept until he died letters which reflected dismay at his mission, and the fact
that he preserved them implies his agreement with their messages. One brother Jesuit stationed at Saint Inigo’s [sic], Maryland, on June 24 adopted the normal congratulatory line: “I am . . . happy to think that I am a brother of one who has been called by God to do what Xavier did and to do it as I pray and hope as Xavier did it.”

This, however, was not the mood of the letter which his stepmother wrote to Horace on June 1:

Dear Horace

We got your letter breaking the news to us of your appointment to the Phillipines [sic] yesterday afternoon & in this morning’s mail another letter confirming the news . . . . I am going to suppress the expression of my feelings of regret and disappointment so that I can have a small share in your merit but I did hope always that you might be somewhere near us to help me out of my fits of cowardice and despondency but your prayers will go up to heaven just as sure from the Phillipines as they would from here and I will always keep myself in communion with you . . . . Pa was terribly affected by your letter last night. He had been sleeping well lately but he was restless again during the night . . . . Pray for us all to have courage and patience. I read a few of Cardinal Newman’s sermons lately & found them helpful and instructive. With fondest love from us all & expecting to hear further details.

Your aff Mother

Julia McKenna

This disturbing missive was followed the next day by one from his father which could not help but have an unsettling effect. Its handwriting was that of someone laboring under physical difficulty and emotional stress:

Dear Horace,

You have given us a great shock but we must stand it. If the hand of God is directly guiding you we certainly cannot rebel. I will make it the dedication of a son to the army and will try to develop more pride than regret.

Your point is to keep that cheerfulness that you have always had and not let your hardships dismay you.
There must be libraries of things to learn about the Philippines that will keep your buildings, monuments etc. fresh for your interest and thus lighten your burden.

When I feel the need of your prayers I will make the aspiration through the Blessed Mother and she will communicate it to you—we will be nearer than Woodstock [?] is here....

Affectionately
Pa

These were the letters of distraught people and, in spite of some of their language, were not calculated to encourage acceptance and resignation. The desperate view of life in Manila implied in these and the following letter has its amusing side, especially in comparison with conditions in the Southern Maryland counties from which it was written.

The third letter was sent from Saint Inigo’s Villa, Saint Inigo’s [sic], Maryland, on June 24 and appears to be a response to a letter from Horace:

My dear Horace,
P.C.

There is nothing to be said, you say; and yet I sometimes felt that much might have been said, if we would make ourselves clear. But, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,—in its love for you, and its interest in you and yearning that you become a perfect Jesuit and a saintly scholar,—you will find expressed what I have deeply felt these several years, and in my selfishness, have very poorly, if at all, shown. You will meet many friends, I hope, in whose friendship you will find help and consolation beyond what I have been able to give: you will find none more anxious to help than I have been. And when you return we may be able to work together more closely than ever.

Your dear Mother and Father were heroes. So, too, were the girls. Like yourself, though not so much, they checked most outward expression of feeling. But, they have lost a deeply loved one for a while, and they feel it keenly....

Go out to your new field of labor with the courage of a Xavier and the simple piety of a Berchmanns. You will do great good. You are loved and privileged of God and He will use you for this special work. My prayers follow you. I have missed you and shall miss you very much. But, God speed you back soon again....

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This letter was from Father Vincent A. McCormick, who was Professor of Theology at Woodstock and must have been in Southern Maryland for his “villa” or vacation. It was sent on the day Horace was to sail from Seattle and, therefore, was an ex post facto opinion, but it is interesting that he should have held out a hope for Horace’s ultimate return.

It was a far cry from the cool heights of Poughkeepsie or from the rolling hills of Maryland to the lush foliage and steaming humidity of Luzon, but Horace adjusted to his new surroundings with characteristic flexibility. Passing the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor on the incoming steamship, he was impressed by the broad expanse of the city of Manila, and he found the extensive, white, colonial-style buildings of the Ateneo aesthetically pleasing and appropriate, however different they were from the elm-shaded, gray granite of Fordham or the red brick of Saint Andrew.

Although the cassocks worn here were white rather than black, the American accents and the familiar routine of a Jesuit community made Horace feel at home in this distant land. He was pleased to find an O’Beirne from New York and Fordham in the group and their common background and interests in affairs at home bound them in a particularly tight fellowship. Through his associations with the Filipino religious, Horace became aware of the important job his order had assumed in moving the nation toward representative government and social justice which previously had not been widely practiced. He also found that the gentility and courtesy of the Filipinos won his heart and added charm to his social relations outside the Ateneo.

While the scholastic ambience was pleasant and he was able to vary his teaching routine with sightseeing and recreations, such as swimming in the tepid Manila Bay with his old friend, Father Joe Mulry, the younger, who came in 1924, Horace was somewhat restless. New thoughts and questions which would change the direction of his life and vocation surged into his mind. In Manila, for the first time,
Horace saw vast and desperate poverty. And here he began to see how much these people, who through no fault of their own were in such dire straits, needed help—personal help. Here too, he started to ponder a new humanitarian focus for his own efforts, a focus which would be radically different from the classical, literary, and pedagogical pursuits he had hitherto been following.

In later years, when Horace looked back on these days, he would relate this change of heart not only to his general experience, but more specifically to an exchange he watched daily and which typified the deprivation which he came to hate and against which he would fight with ever increasing vigor.

At the Ateneo, the upper-class boys who attended the school customarily gathered at recess time in a play area where they relaxed and, among other diversions, bought and ate snacks. When they went back into the school, they would carelessly toss leftovers on the ground, tables, and benches. Then an old Filipino religious, Brother San Román, would make the rounds, carefully gathering up these scraps and pieces and placing them in a receptacle which he would carry to the Ateneo wall, beyond which a group of young Filipinos was always waiting. When the boys saw him coming, they would call out, “Bread for me, Brother! Bread for me!” And the old brother would give them the fragments which he had so carefully collected.

Horace never forgot the brother’s love nor the boys’ desperation. The poor were no longer statistics, but flesh and blood people who were caught in an unjust class structure and economic system. This shocking demonstration of desperate need struck him forcefully, profoundly affected his thinking, and provided a beacon to guide the future course of his life.

It soon became obvious that the providential plan did not envisage Horace spending a protracted period in these exotic surroundings. After seven months in Manila, he suffered two severe attacks of dengue fever which prostrated him. Dengue is caused by a filtrable virus which is carried by
a mosquito and causes muscle and joint pains, accompanied by a rash and intermittent fever. In World War II, it would be common among the service men fighting in the Pacific. The disease was rarely fatal, but it caused great temporary pain and its symptoms tended to cause concern in the onlooker. In Horace’s case normal sympathies were exacerbated because his rector and chief officer of the Jesuit community, Father Francis X. Byrnes, had been the Master of Novices at Saint Andrew when Horace had been sick with “the flu” in 1918, and Byrnes also knew of Horace’s childhood bout with pneumonia. In the patient’s quaint phraseology of later years, “He didn’t want me dying on him again.” Whether or not the motivation was as personal as Horace humorously suggested, the decision was made to send him back to a more temperate climate and, in March of 1924, Horace boarded a steamer bound for California. There, at the University of San Francisco, in the salubrious climate of the city named after the great saint of Assisi, the young scholastic, liberated from teaching assignments, spent his time reading and resting and in a remarkably short time was declared to be in robust health.

He recovered so well that in August of the same year he was assigned to Boston College High School to resume his interrupted scholasticate. He served as a quadruple-threat man since his job was to teach English, Greek, Latin, and Spanish. Although, as he said, his Spanish was “not advanced,” he was highly competent in English and the classical languages and he was able to communicate his enthusiasm for the latter to his students. He did his work thoroughly, but, even though he asserted that he enjoyed his task, one cannot help but feel that the educational role was not wholly sympathetic to him.

“I enjoyed all the work I had,” he subsequently told a friend. “I don’t think I was distinguished in any of it, though. It was just ordinary work, but I was happy to be doing it and the house associations and the work associations and the brotherly associations were always friendly.” Still, this sounds like a “boilerplate” acceptance and one
senses a yearning for something more challenging and rewarding than scanning the Aeneid with Boston stripplings.

In any event, the work was not destined to continue and, after a year in Boston, Horace was transferred to Saint Joseph College in Philadelphia, where he continued the task of teaching secondary students. Then, after finishing this assignment, in the Fall of 1926, he returned to Woodstock, once again as a student rather than as a teacher. Following the Jesuit canon, he was now to embark upon his four years’ prescribed study of theology in what constituted a return to the quiet of the cloister. This course would provide an examination of “the methods and channels by which the Creator has revealed His wisdom to the creature, and the reflections and analyses that man, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has made upon this Revelation in return.” Included in this scrutiny were dogmatic and patristic theology, moral theology, apologetics, canon law, Scripture, church history, and liturgy. Obviously, at this stage, the priesthood was no longer a distant goal.

Horace again viewed the resumption of his courses as a necessary and welcome step along the road to ordination, and he derived satisfaction from the broadening of his understanding of the Divinity and of the divine wisdom available to those who studied its manifestations. Of equal significance, and in addition to his spiritual development, Horace underwent, while at Woodstock, other and less esoteric experiences which affected him as deeply and lastingly as his studies.

In his own words: “In my first year in theology, I was attached to the local mission to teach the Sunday school. I had thirteen children in the school and they were all black. The whites were free to go to the parochial school which the blacks would not be permitted to enter for another fifteen years. I then realized what it meant to be deprived when other people were not. It was a stiff lesson. I thought of the experience of not being cared for and I realized that many times black people couldn’t get the Sacraments when they
wanted them; couldn’t get people to give them the Sacra-
ment of Peace in Confession or to give them the Eucharist.
That really fixed my mind on paying attention to black
people.”

In this spare and almost elliptical language, Horace
described what was a profoundly shaping experience for
him. He had already thought deeply of poverty and its effect
upon humanity in general, but here at home he now saw
deprivation in another form, based upon racial discrimina-
tion.

He also later relayed to an associate another lesson
learned during his theological training, but not in the
classroom: “During my fourth year I was ‘catechista famil-
iae’ or ‘cat fam,’ as we put it in slang, that is ‘chaplain to the
workmen’ at the seminary, and they were mostly blacks.
That gave me many, frequent, intimate relationships with
the black people in trying to minister to them and to help
them.” This was further evidence of the development of his
vocational preferences and of the manner in which their
growth was accelerated by his extracurricular activities at
Woodstock.

Nearly three years after his return to Maryland, Horace
reached the goal toward which his efforts had been directed
since 1916. On June 24, 1929, he was ordained at Wood-
stock by the Archbishop of Baltimore, the Most Reverend
Michael J. Curley. At the age of thirty and with the laying on
of episcopal hands, he heard the sacerdotal words and
joined the distinguished army of his predecessors who had
been consecrated as priests according to the order of Melchi-
isedech. To offer the sacrifice of the Mass, to say the
transforming words over the bread and wine, to absolve for
the commission of sins—words cannot express what the
spiritual authority and responsibility of this charge meant to
him.

He said his first Mass at Woodstock and then traveled to
the family farm at Suffern, New York, and offered his first
solemn Mass with his family. Horace was particularly happy
that his father was able to attend the ceremony since Charles
was suffering the debilitating effects of Parkinson's disease and had not been able to attend the ordination. The Mass was supposed to have been "sung," but, according to a server at the Mass, nephew Thomas Ambrose, who would later become a Jesuit priest, Horace could not sing and his deficiencies in the vocal department made the Mass somewhat less than perfect. Despite such superficial flaws which were laughingly dismissed, the day was joyous, for he was revelling in the company of his family, from whom he had been separated for so long and in his new role, being able to say Mass for them and give them his personal blessing.

However pleasant this contact with family, it was necessarily short-lived, as Horace was required to complete his theological studies at Woodstock College and then was assigned to the Jesuit House of Studies at Auriesville, New York, in 1930 for his "third probation" or "tertianship," as it is more commonly known. This period was set aside for repose and contemplation, when the ordinand would take stock of himself prior to taking his final vows and entering upon the work which would be his for the foreseeable future. Auriesville, in upper New York State, was the site of the shrine in memory of the three French Jesuit martyrs who were killed by the Iroquois Indians. Horace's proximity to the shrine gave him cause to ponder the heroic role these missionaries had assumed and the suffering they had endured while ministering to the needy, and, again, his desire to serve was strengthened by the example of others in his order.

His progress toward a speedy resolution of his future plans was accelerated by the receipt of a report that his lungs were sound and his physical condition satisfactory. This meant that he could return to the Philippines if he so desired. By this time, however, he knew that he belonged elsewhere. If he returned to the Pacific, he knew he would be called to work with the upper crust of society, and not with the poor, who had won his heart. He felt, too, that the Filipinos had an adequate and growing supply of native priests; their need for clerical services was no longer acute.
On the other hand, the American blacks, who were citizens of long standing, had only two priests of their color in the country and neither was in the geographic area covered by the New York-Maryland Jesuit Province. Also, new priests showed little interest in joining a mission to these needy people and superiors were less than aggressive in seeking recruits for this critical work.

Horace concluded, then, that, with the approval of his superiors, he would cast his lot with the black people. He would abandon the scholarship and the Greek translations, he would leave to others the "standard" parish work. He would relinquish the opportunity to go around the world to serve people of foreign cultures. Instead, he would work, if permitted, in familiar territory, in his own country, but among his fellow citizens who did not enjoy equal treatment either under law or in the operation of American institutions, including his own. They were people who needed his ministrations desperately and, in his judgment, as he often expressed it, there was only one race—the human race.

Having arrived at this conviction after hours of prayerful meditation, he knew that he would have to obtain permission for his assignment from the provincial, the officer-in-charge of the province. Even after he had reached this conclusion as to his wishes, Horace showed a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty about his mode of proceeding. He wrote two letters, the first to his immediate and the second to his ultimate Jesuit superior. The latter (which he may not have sent, since LaFarge thought it superfluous) was "a big, long, Latin letter to the Father General (in Rome) to tell him that he was in a higher tower in our Lord’s Vineyard and could tell me best where to go, but I would like to go to black people."

Why he considered it necessary to go over the head of his own superior, it is impossible to tell. Possibly he thought this added clout could prevent his assignment to the Philippines or some other seemingly undesirable place and purpose. For whatever reason, his action is an early example of the direct approach which Horace increasingly adopted.

The earlier missive, directed through normal channels,
was sent to the Father Provincial during Horace’s fourth year of theology at Woodstock. It was headed “Solemnity of Saint Joseph, May 7, 1930.” In it Horace asked for a tertianship in France or Belgium because wanted “to be ready to devote my life to Catholicizing the Negro Race in the United States” and “the French and Belgians have, I believe, a robust, Catholic way of accepting every phase of the situation.” He added that “to live in this other atmosphere should help me to see our situation in a more extensively Catholic light.” The words “extensively Catholic” were carefully chosen and described Horace’s conception of the way in which racial questions were treated in these countries in contrast with the United States. In spite of his background and former inclinations, he conceived his role as responding in a forthright and dedicated fashion to a crying need by carrying on a ministry to blacks. The vast majority of his fellow ordinands felt no such urge. Indeed, the apostolate to the blacks of the United States was practically untenanted.

The use of this phrase also demonstrated that Horace’s views of a proper Catholic policy for relations with the black community differed from the existing practice of the church in Maryland, which permitted segregation in church facilities and in the administration of the sacraments. In fact, the Jesuit order, in former days, had owned slaves and when, in 1836, younger, nonagrarian Jesuits had effected a decision to end slave-holding, an ill-advised provincial had sold their slaves to slave-merchants who had carried them off to Louisiana and Georgia.* Even the Carmelite nuns at Port Tobacco, in 1790, had brought slaves into their convent farm as part of their dowry. As might be expected, by the 1930s, conditions had been greatly mitigated, but, nevertheless, deep prejudice and rank discrimination still persisted in Southern Maryland and Horace’s hopes to change the

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conditions solidified by tradition were based upon his own view of what a truly Catholic attitude meant.

The provincial did not disagree with the objectives of his young charge, but he was more attuned than Horace to the realities of the situation. This was true also of other senior members of the order. When Horace told Father John LaFarge, who was a great friend of the blacks and who, after fifteen years in Southern Maryland, had recently gone to New York as an editor of America, that he would like to spend a year in Harlem getting acquainted with blacks and surveying their problems, the older man did not approve.

“What is needed in Southern Maryland is work, not surveys,” he said. The provincial’s decision to send Horace to tertianship at Auriesville rather than in France or Belgium reflected the same kind of hard-headed realism.

LaFarge knew of the critical need for a young priest at Saint Michael’s in Ridge. One priest was dying and another was ailing and could not work and, as a result, the parishioners in the multi-parish charge were not receiving the services which they needed and wanted. Impelled to action by LaFarge’s sense of urgency, Horace “thought I’d better go down there and do what I could” and he spent the entire Lent of his tertianship year performing the varied and demanding duties which had been suspended during the incapacity of the two regularly assigned priests. He felt “privileged” to be there carrying on the Lenten services which he described as “vigorous,” although it isn’t clear whether that adjective described the volume or the character of the work.

After Easter, he went back to New York to finish his tertianship and then, in June of 1931, he was assigned to the all-black church of Saint Peter Claver at Ridge, an area of 2,043 people, in the Saint Inigoes Voting District, located seven miles above Point Lookout in Saint Mary’s County, Maryland. This was the only “black” church under the jurisdiction of the Jesuit province and it was named, appropriately, for the seventeenth-century Spanish Jesuit missionary who worked among the slaves in South America, whose remains rest in Cartagena, Colombia, and who was known as the “Apostle of the Negroes.”
Out of This World

...the place abounds not alone with profit, but also with pleasure. Laus Deo.

Andrew White, S.J.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS HAS EXERCISED A CARE OF SOULS IN Southern Maryland since March 25, 1634, when a band of 320 English colonists, sponsored by Lord Baltimore and led by his brothers, Leonard and George Calvert, sailed their tiny ships, the Ark and the Dove, into the Potomac River and set foot on what was later called Saint Clement's Island. Included with the company of settlers were two Jesuit priests, Fathers Andrew White and John Altham and a brother, Thomas Gervase, who had been persecuted and prevented from freely performing their religious functions in England.* They had been invited by Lord Baltimore to become members of his company which was mostly Catholic and for whom they would be able openly to offer the solaces of religion while working to support themselves, as did the *A helpful and complete account of the Maryland settlement and a biographical sketch of Father White may be found in J. Moss Ives, The Ark and the Dove (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936).
other colonists. Andrew White was a remarkable man and an important figure in the early history of Maryland. A distinguished student, teacher, and theologian on the Continent, with broad experience also in England, he had given up the opportunity for advancement in gentler pursuits to brave the rigors of the mission field. He was a student of law and of government and a skilled writer who, as a close associate of Lord Baltimore, wrote the Declaratio Coloniae which outlined the purposes of the new colony and the terms and conditions offered to prospective settlers.

From this modest beginning, the colony grew remarkably and the number of Jesuits grew with it. Throughout the colonial period, the order expanded until, at one time, its members had the responsibility of serving all of Saint Mary’s and Charles Counties, meaning twenty-two missions or parishes. This charge was later reduced when, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Archdiocese of Baltimore took over some of the parishes in Charles County and it was further cut down when the Archdiocese of Washington assumed responsibility for all but one.

Father White, his successors, and the Catholic community generally found that life in the New World was as difficult as life at home. The environment itself was a challenge. And after a happy period of toleration, the Cromwellian, the Jamesian, and the William and Mary eras prompted persecutions. Nevertheless, the Jesuits and their coreligionists persevered. They stolidly endured the legal obligation to support an established church other than their own while they set up and maintained a substantial, simple, and industrious agricultural community.

In Life magazine in 1949,* Evelyn Waugh, the British author, writing about the Catholic Church in the United States, concluded that the old Maryland Catholic families had “much in common with the old Catholic families of Lancashire. The countryside at Leonardtown has the same tradition of Jesuit missionaries moving in disguise from

family to family, celebrating Mass in remote plantations, inculcating the same austere devotional habits, the same tenacious, inobtrusive fidelity."

The Jesuits set up churches and missions, schools and convents. They labored diligently and effectively, surviving such unforeseeable problems as the general suppression of their order by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. Indeed, it was in Saint Ignatius Church at Saint Thomas Manor in Southern Maryland that the Society of Jesus was reborn on this continent when several members took the required papal oaths in 1805, associating themselves with the remnant of the Society of Jesus in Russia that had never been formally suppressed.

The properties which the Jesuits developed encompassed farms and manors as noble and beautiful as the Manor of Saint Thomas at Port Tobacco which, with its church of Saint Ignatius, was called by a visiting scholastic in 1889 "the gem of our country possessions." Most of the buildings in what eventually came to be called "the Counties" (Saint Mary's and Charles Counties) were small, simple, frame structures. The standard of living was very modest. As the same scholastic noted, the Palm Sunday Saint Ignatius congregation of 450 people had contributed $3.86 to the collection basket. On the whole, the way of life there was not too greatly changed from its earlier days when Horace made his way down the dirt roads in July 1931.

Before heading for Saint Mary's County, Horace took one unorthodox and characteristic step to prepare himself for his pastoral duties. He himself never drank, although he had no objection to moderate imbibing, but he was aware that excessive drinking caused many parochial problems. In fact, when given his choice, he requested strange nonalcoholic mixtures, such as Coca-Cola and milk. When he stopped at New Rochelle for a farewell visit to his sister, Betty, and his brother-in-law, Bert Fargis, Bert offered Horace his usual, by saying "I suppose that you want one of those doses of yours."

To everyone's surprise, Horace replied, "No I don't. You know, Bert, as long as I'm going to be a parish priest, I'd
better learn how to drink martinis.” So Bert made him a martini and Horace “drank the whole thing down at a gulp.”

One cannot help but be captivated by the delightful naïveté of the whole episode. Perhaps the down-the-hatch approach gave Horace an insight into the attractions of alcohol, but the fact was that he would find very few martinis being consumed in Saint Mary’s County, Maryland.

As he had wished, Horace had been designated pastor of the Church of Saint Peter Claver, the only black Jesuit parish, but his place of residence was at the Saint Michael’s Jesuit community, where he shared quarters with other Jesuits who were ministering at various nearby parishes. Saint Michael’s and Saint Peter Claver were both located in the township of Ridge which had been named such because it overlooked the two sides of the fifty-mile-long ridge of terrain which runs the entire length of the southern Maryland peninsula.

Saint Michael’s had originally consisted of both black and white parishioners. Even though the seating and the administration of the sacraments had been segregated, both races had used the same facilities. At Christmas in 1902, however, a distressing incident took place which resulted in a physical separation of the racial groups. The white organist refused to play the organ after a black person. Then, after some young white men praised the singing of the black choir during late Mass on Christmas Day, a dispute broke out at the church door. When tempers flared and farm implements were used as physical threats of violence, Father William Tynan, the pastor, reluctantly took action. In January 1903, he racially separated the services and assigned the blacks to the sodality hall, located some distance from the main church. Even though he considered the division necessary as a matter of security, he showed his displeasure by hanging a black crepe on the parish door for a month. Thus Saint Peter Claver became a wholly black church and was administered by its own pastor, even though there was some formal question as to its technical constitution as a parish.
This strong antipathy between the races was a constant and historically divisive element in the Society of Jesus. Forty years before, a scholastic diarist had recorded the stir caused in the Counties when a pastor of liberal views had rented a pew in the middle of the church to a black parishioner, and this same antagonism and resistance to change continued to characterize a majority of the otherwise devout white parishioners.

From Saint Michael's residence, the Jesuits took care of Saint Michael's, Saint James, Saint Inigoes, and Saint Peter Claver. The parishioners were sharply divided. On the one hand were the whites, many of whose families had lived in the area for hundreds of years and were of English stock. One the other were the blacks, whose forebears in many cases had resided in the vicinity for over a century and who numbered among their members many individuals of significant character and endearing personality. The two groups had a different culture, different customs, and different ways of viewing life and its problems. Their main point of similarity was their devotion to the Catholic Church, but even here there were major obstacles erected by tradition and prejudice. The very seating customs differed. The whites sat in family groups in the body of the church. The blacks were relegated to the rear of the church or to the galleries.

Racial segregation was enforced in the local society, even in education, where both public and parochial schools were separate and unequal. From the beginning of his ministry, the unfairness of this traditional and fundamental community division between black and white disturbed Horace, but even so great an advocate of racial justice as Father John LaFarge had then considered it inexpedient to try to breach the wall since any suggestion of liberalization was met with implacable and outraged opposition. So Horace, at the moment, accepted the status quo and directed his efforts toward improving the lot of his black parishioners and ministering to their needs. This did not mean that he approved the existing condition, but only that he was forced to tolerate it. In his heart, he knew that it was wrong and was
convinced that it had to be changed. In his way and in due time, he would work to bring about such a change.

IN THE EARLY THIRTIES, COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION were in a primitive state in Southern Maryland and the physical task of carrying on a parish ministry presented real problems. Housing was Spartan. Heat was often provided by wood stoves. Electricity was rare, home installation costing six hundred dollars, an amount equal to the annual collections at Saint Peter Claver. When Horace arrived, the roads were still innocent of asphalt and sometimes boat travel was the most efficient means of transport. He circulated on foot and by borrowed automobile until his stepmother gave him her old model-T Ford which she and his younger sister Betty drove down from New York to deliver to him.

Horace was never famed for his skill at the wheel; in fact, he became known for his blissful disregard of the rules of the road and the mechanical requirements of good driving. Conceivably, this deficiency may have gone back to the manner in which he was introduced to the art of driving. A few years before, at the family summer home in Suffern, Betty had given Horace a few lessons in operating a car, but the process, as she afterwards described it, was a difficult one because Horace, with the hypersensitive conscience of a scholastic in the almost Manichean atmosphere of the time, insisted that Betty give her directions from the rear seat lest viewers be scandalized by seeing him in the front seat, next to a young woman.

As soon as he became settled, Horace set about performing the pastoral duties which had been neglected. He said regular Masses. He heard confessions, a function in which he excelled, and which became a source of increasing satisfaction to him. He brought the sacraments to the elderly and the sick. He counseled the erring and the confused. He strengthened them with his faith and showered his affection upon them. He found that this contact with black people increased his understanding of their marvelous racial endowments and, as he warmed increasingly to them,
his parishioners, in turn, gave back his devotion and esteem. This was an experience for which his background and training had not specifically prepared him, and most of his contemporaries viewed his work with a lack of understanding. They could not share the thrill he felt when his congregation recognized him as being more open and concerned than his predecessors, who had conformed to the traditional racial attitudes.

In puzzling over the racial problem, Horace was fortunate to find light and solace in the example and long-distance counsel of Father John LaFarge, now on the staff of America, the Jesuit weekly, and living at Campion House in New York City. LaFarge, who had labored in Southern Maryland from 1911 to 1926, excepting his tertianship, had refused to adopt the conventional attitudes of the Catholic whites. Like Horace, he had come from a sheltered, even aristocratic, background and had labored heroically with the rural poor, coming to understand and sympathize with them. Now, in the more responsive atmosphere of New York City, he was beginning to help set in motion the national movement for civil rights and racial equality which would eventually shake the nation.

Before he departed for New York, LaFarge had achieved remarkable results in organizing financial and economic support for his parishioners. He had founded schools and had brought in black and white sisters to staff them. He had set up the Cardinal Gibbons Institute, whose function was to upgrade the technical abilities of the young men and women who would be part of an agricultural society.

These accomplishments had far-reaching results, but his personal, Christian relations with his fellow men and women and their exemplary influence on the youthful Horace were just as memorable. Horace later made an appraisal of this influence: “He taught me zeal and love for my neighbor under all circumstances—yet a patient and wise love and not a foolish love; a love that is accompanied with spiritual training and practical economic exercise and the labors of daily life. He certainly exhibited these in his own contact with people; he was a most laborious worker both in
the homes and in occupations in the rectory, such as going over the books. Above all, he taught me to view an unfortunate parishioner as a fellow human being and not as an applicant for charity.” Clearly, the example of this great man was a potent influence in molding Horace’s character and the lesson taught was one which he took to heart.

“I admired his devotion to black people, his skill in managing them and his truly Ignatian qualities of developing strategy and procedure in his dealings with them. I understood that his devotion was based upon the spirit and that this made him appreciate them, love them, work with them, and see their needs—especially as a minority. Like him, I came to recognize their human dignity, their generosity and their abilities.” In providing this characterization of LaFarge,* Horace was unknowingly furnishing an accurate profile of himself.

After his ordination, Horace served nearly every year with black people. “I thank God for that,” he told one of his intimates, “and I hope that the dear Lord will develop their spiritual gifts. Black people have the unique gift of being able to make spiritual use of their physical nature.” This is a perceptive analysis of the black personality and one upon which he expanded many years later in describing an experience in the 1960s in a District church.

“Up at Holy Comforter Church, sometimes they bring over a choir from Baltimore and the group always sings with great spirit and great vitality. The women wear skirts and blouses, but underneath the blouses, you can see the bouncing breasts. These are highly spirited liturgies which are very enthusiastic and very expressive and very full of feeling.” Such physical manifestations of devotion, he asserted, must be taken with quiet trust. “That’s how I hope

*In later years, Horace followed and admired LaFarge’s work in organizing the Roman Catholic Clergyman’s Council for Negro Welfare to monitor racial crises; in obtaining admission of black students to the Catholic University of America; and in establishing the Interracial Council on Religion and Race, which formed a national network to provide support and physical presence in areas of racial confrontation such as Selma, Alabama.
that they'll always take me and I'll always take them, trusting one another in Christ.” This was a liberal attitude for the times, yet it illustrated his breadth of view, his ability to adapt, and his disposition to find good in any sincere expression of humanity.

Horace’s work at Ridge became increasingly important to him with each day that passed because he was steadily more aware that the pastoral ministry was the ideal vocation for him. He knew for sure that teaching was not his calling, nor foreign missions, nor public service. His true task was dealing in his own country and at the parish level with the problems of people—and particularly with people who were deprived and ill-starred.

Looking back on those days, he later observed: “I was supremely happy there in Saint Mary’s County because I was the minister of Christ at the altar, offering the Holy Sacrifice, and dispensing grace through the sacraments to the people. And these people, 80 percent of whom had been Roman Catholics for three centuries, were very receptive of the sacraments, deep in the love of our Lord and His Blessed Mother and very appreciative of what they received in the way of religious services.”

There were certain aspects of his service which he found especially rewarding. “I was particularly happy to be able to take care of the sick. Father Lawrence J. Kelly, an old pastor from Leonardtown and a former provincial, used to tell us that if we would take care of the sick, the people would forgive us a whole lot, so I used to try in this way to build up some credit. But there were several other reasons. In the first place, the sick are everywhere, so, if you take care of the sick, you get everywhere. Then, the sick, particularly the older ones, don’t confess their sins. They confess everybody else’s and you know what’s going on, even though you can’t do anything about it.

“Above all, I liked parish work because everybody felt so free and open with the priests and the priests with them. There was a perfect understanding, it seemed to me and a perfect mutual trust and that was true amongst the white people and amongst the black people. I loved this work and
I took it as a great compliment when one of the parishioners told me that I was one of the few white people that the older folks didn’t call a ‘foreigner.’”

While this may have been an accurate description of relations in the early days of his assignments, Horace was being disingenuous if he meant to suggest that this situation continued until the end of his stay at Ridge. In later years, as the racial problem became more insistent and the progressive feelings of some of the priests became clear, there was unquestionably less freedom and openness between priests and people and less than perfect trust and understanding.

The experiences of these days persuaded Horace that the pastoral ministry provided the closest possible participation “in the life of our Lord.” “You’re doing just what He did for three years of His apostolic life, revealing Him, living Him amongst His sheep, the people He loves, those whom He calls, those with whom He dwells, and the ones who are His Father’s kingdom whom He’ll hand to the Father some day. So, being in such a ministry and close to Him and treating Him in everything you do as a model, as an objective, as a measure and rule, and as an ideal, is a very happy life. The happiest kind of life, I guess, that a person could have.”

In these challenging times, Horace found support in prayer. With his mystical sense of her nearness, he sought and found sustenance in Mary, Christ’s mother. As he described it: “...my characteristic attachment to the Blessed Virgin made me constantly feel her presence and her inspiration, her encouragement, and her desire that we be perfect images of her Son and I feel assured of her cooperation and support, her prayers, her guidance, and her attention to our needs and wants.” With this faith and confidence one could eagerly take up the most difficult of tasks, as Horace did, not simply believing, but knowing that he enjoyed this supernatural aid.

Destiny and his personality decreed that Horace should be swept up in some of the great, historical currents of this troubled century and should assume a positive role in trying to force them into constructive channels. One such move-
ment was the Great Depression which had begun with the stock market crash of October 1929 and had spread and deepened. The year 1931 was indeed an inauspicious time to begin a mission to a poor, rural community. In the centers of population, industries were failing, unemployment was mounting at an unprecedented rate, trade was stagnant, and, despite the optimistic predictions of some in government and in the upper levels of industrial management, the general trend of the economy continued downward. The Hoover administration, with its laissez-faire tradition, took some steps to bail out and keep important business enterprises afloat, but was constitutionally unable to adopt the strong and hitherto alien measures which were required to invigorate the economy. At the end of 1932, twelve million Americans, out of a population of some 123 million, were out of work. Banks failed, businesses went bankrupt, and desperate men sold apples on street corners, ate in “soup kitchens,” and lived in clumps of shacks called “Hoover-villes” by angry partisans.

Some Marylanders living in agricultural communities were able to raise their own food and secure a cushion against the hunger that plagued the cities, but, even on the farms, the slumping market prices were sharply felt. Among the poorer farmers, suffering was acute.

It is almost impossible to imagine what the depression was like if one did not live through it. But, on the other hand, if one lived through it, it is impossible to forget it. Years later Horace recalled, “The people were in a sad condition. If you were going by, they’d run out to the road and ask you to come in and you’d see nothing on the table, nothing in the sugar bowl, nothing in the cupboard, nothing in any of the jars and nothing on the stove except hot water. And they’d say, ‘We have nothing!’”

Seeing the plight of many of his people, Horace moved to set up his own modest food distribution system, as no other program of assistance was available at the beginning of the hard times. He decided that flour, meat, tea, coffee, sugar, and beans were basic essentials, and he made up packages of these items and passed them out to the people he knew to be
in need. Securing the money to buy the commodities posed a problem, but it was an early call upon Horace’s ingenuity, and he was not found wanting. He relied upon the generosity of charitable friends and, as was to happen through his life, they were happy to help. In this modest program, Horace initiated his own egalitarian system. Whatever funds were raised—in one instance, a state senator gave him twenty-five dollars—he was careful to see that there was equal distribution. In this instance, five black families and five white families received a food package.

Eventually, it became apparent that traditional private charity and the modest existing public welfare programs were inadequate to cope with the unprecedented economic decline. First, local communities organized new voluntary groups, but these could not meet the demand. Later, with a change of administration and national policy, broadscale, national programs were organized—the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, the PWA, WPA, and others.

Horace welcomed the organizations which reached out to serve people, however minor their effects were in his rural backwater. He was relieved to see public officials feeling a greater responsibility for the welfare of the individual. In the van of the movement which sought to connect the people with their government, he deluged the Maryland chief executive, Governor Ritchie, with letters asking for help for his people. When he finally had a chance to meet the governor at the dedication of the cross on Saint Clement’s Island at the tercentenary of Maryland’s settlement, he was not inhibited by the historic nature of the occasion, but pressed his advantage and persuaded the governor to staff the welfare office in nearby Leonardtown and to provide simple, direct assistance from state revenues.

It was in this period that Horace met another public official, Dr. Harry Clifton (Curly) Byrd, the ebullient and occasionally controversial former football coach, who was now President of the University of Maryland and for whom Horace developed a great admiration. He enjoyed recalling their first meeting at a regional fair run by the University extension service in Southern Maryland. “It was in a large
hall which was filled with appliances and equipment. There was nobody else in the hall but this gentleman whom I recognized as Dr. Byrd, who had raised the University from a one-building, football college to one of the greatest universities in the country, with a student body of 80,000 and extension departments all over the world.

“Well, as it worked out, we got closer to one another, inspecting those machines, and he came over to me. I guess he knew that I was there because of the extension work which the University did with some of our people who attended the farmers’ conferences and summer cooking schools and things like that. After a greeting, he said to me, ‘I don’t think there’s any satisfaction comparable to that of a priest working close to the lives of his people.’

“This was a great, important sentence for me because it expressed my life and the lives of the other priests down there in the county, and many ministers who are socially active. This was a striking illustration of how people may be impressed when, even though nothing may be said, a program of action carried out by clergymen may really be a great witness to the dignity of human nature and the glory of God and humanity.”

Horace’s efforts were not confined to providing spiritual assistance and direct aid to the hungry, but he pondered the long-range needs of his people who depended on agriculture, oystering, and fishing for their livelihood. He sought the means to provide them with education and improved technology, so they could compete in the modern market and raise their standard of living. The Cardinal Gibbons Institute had been founded by Father LaFarge to provide young people education in canning, nutrition, home economics, animal husbandry, and farming methods. This training was priceless to the black community, as they had limited access to public schools because of segregation. Horace served as director of this progressive institution and struggled manfully to obtain the personnel and revenues to keep it going in a period of dwindling charitable giving.

In 1933, the mortgagee had foreclosed the mortgage on the Biscoe family and, in a transaction of questionable
wisdom which was to have later repercussions, the Institute in July 1933 bought three of the adjacent Biscoe farms totaling nearly five hundred acres. Only a few months later, the directors of the Institute ran out of funds and, in December, closed the doors, thus terminating black high school education in the county. The adult education work of the Institute was not interrupted and during this period Horace persuaded the University of Maryland to provide a series of lectures on tobacco farming and marketing and home economics to help fill in the gap left by the Institute’s closing.

On the night of March 13, 1934, disaster struck the Church of Saint Peter Claver, causing total physical loss and nearly resulting in the death of the young pastor. He had conducted the services for the Novena of Grace at Saint Peter Claver and, after supper at the residence at Saint Michael’s, had returned to his church and gone upstairs to find a catch-as-catch-can and austere place to sleep. As he mounted to the loft, he noted that the church, usually very chilly, was comfortably warm. He fleetingly thought of the clogged flue which had been demanding attention, but he put the job “off until tomorrow” and fell asleep. He later told the story of the night’s events: “I awoke about midnight and saw layers of smoke in my room while the front of the church was leaping in flames. I could see that it was more than reflections from the stove. I telephoned the pastor of Saint Michael’s and called the fire department in Leonardtown, twenty-two miles away. I then pulled on some clothes and took the tabernacle key and opened the sacristy door to the sanctuary, but a hot wind struck me and I knew that I couldn’t get in that way. So I went around to the windward side of the church and opened the door on that side and went in. It was very hot, but I reached the altar and tried to insert the key in the lock of the tabernacle in order to save the Blessed Sacrament. Today, of course, it would be considered that our Lord was present by sign and that when the sign was destroyed, His body wouldn’t be affected, but nevertheless, I did try and poked at the door but never struck
New church of St. Peter Claver, Ridge, Maryland, dedicated on May 28, 1938, replaced the wooden structure destroyed by fire on May 12 and 13, 1934.

The trap door over the sanctuary in the new St. Peter Claver church by means of which Horace, from his upstairs sleeping quarters, was able to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
Horace at a benefit rummage sale at Ridge, Maryland, about 1938.
the lock. When I put my fingers to the door, it was like a frying pan. I took two breaths of air which was as hot as gusts off a gas stove and I said to myself, 'A pious man would stay here to get our Lord out, but I had better use my third breath for running.' So I ran off the altar and into the wall. I knew the place thoroughly, and yet I was so frightened that I didn’t even think to feel my way. I just screamed. Then one of my parishioners who had been at a night meeting of the Knights of Saint Jerome at the school, had seen the glare of the flames and had rushed over, came to the door with a flashlight. I saw the gleam of light and I got up and scooted like a rabbit through the doorway to the outside. Then the flames took over and destroyed the building. Even though the firemen arrived in record time, there was nothing that they could do to preserve the structure. I was thankful that two things were saved—the tabernacle key and the pastor.”

The firemen did save the church hall and the school, the basement of which became the locus of church services pending rebuilding. The destruction of his church was a devastating blow to Horace, but it was also a challenge to which he was quick to respond. So effective were his efforts that a new church was constructed on the site of the old and was dedicated on May 25, 1938. With the insurance proceeds, a generous bequest of $10,000 from a former officer of the Baltimore Police Department, Captain Charles E. Lastner and his wife, and many other generous donors, a charming brick church was erected to take the place of the structure which had been destroyed. Its architect was Philip Hubert Frohman, who had spent twenty years supervising the construction of the National Cathedral in Washington and had asked for the privilege of overseeing the building of this new church. The edifice included a beautiful marble altar and tall candlesticks designed by the architect and, as a special feature, a small trap door in the ceiling over the sanctuary that opened from the pastor’s quarters, through which Horace would be able to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament on mornings when he had stayed away from Saint Michael’s.
Of the architect, Horace said: "He gave the project great care. He used to leave the massive structure in Washington and come down to Ridge to supervise our twenty-five thousand-dollar job. The results of his devotion are evident in the lovely brick edifice. People who visit it say, 'This is a church where you feel like praying.' It is uplifting and it has harmonious proportions which tend to lift you and are the basis for all devotion.'" Horace would always smile deprecatingly whenever he described his beloved structure. "This is the way it strikes me," he would say, "but, of course, I guess I'm overattached to it."

For one who lived through more than his share of exciting events, the Saint Peter Claver fire was the most dangerously dramatic experience in Horace's long life. Ironically, the negligent maintenance and its destructive consequence had a beneficial result: to Horace's quiet satisfaction the black people now worshiped in the most attractive and the only brick church in the neighboring cluster of parishes.
ONE CAN, IN REVIEWING HORACE'S CAREER, SENSE SOMETHING of the excitement and satisfaction which he felt as he performed the tasks of his ministry at Ridge. At the time of the church fire, he was thirty-five, and several pictures taken about that time are beguiling for those who knew him only in later years. One shows him relaxed and smiling, standing in front of a rack of ladies' dresses, at what must have been a benefit rummage sale. Another shows him garbed in cassock and standing with the three Saint Peter Claver's School graduates of June 1935. With his dark hair and slim, boyish figure, he could almost be taken for an older altar boy.

He quickly became a respected personality in the area among whites and blacks alike. To some degree, he ministered to both, although his prime responsibility was to the 125-odd black families of his parish. His boundless energy allowed him to perform the normal tasks of a parish priest with zealous dedication, and the contacts he fostered with his parishioners were intimate and close. But at the same time, he seemed to be able to keep up with developments in theology and church doctrine and even to look at his favorite Greek classics from time to time; he corresponded
with the Jesuit provincial and with Archbishop Curley of Baltimore; he wrote and published a parish newsletter (an early example of this genre of publicity), *A Little Vine-Branch*, which combined season’s greetings for Christmas, a history lesson, a report on school activities, a charming picture of confirmation candidates, and a plea for funds to rebuild the destroyed church. He knew only too well that voluntary church collections which amounted to $296.00 in 1934, even when supplemented by parish and archdiocesan support, would be inadequate to finance the sort of program he deemed necessary, and so he began to solicit money from his friends and family and from other potential supporters, including wealthy Washington women. It was from this reaching-out that “Bridge for Ridge” (one can detect Horace’s imaginative phrasing) fund-raisers developed in New York City. This group raised as much as eight thousand dollars a year ultimately in return for an afternoon at the card tables and a cocktail or two. At one of these smart parties at Saint Francis Xavier, on E. 16th St., one of his urbane Jesuit brothers commented on the shabbiness of Horace’s clerical costume and recommended that he find a good tailor. Clearly, Horace had already adopted his policy of refusing to spend money on himself and living, as someone said, “like a poor mouse.”

It was this developing expertise of Horace in extracting funds that led Archbishop Curley, a constant supporter whom Horace did not hesitate to dun, to refer to him as “the cleverest money gatherer in this end of the Province.”

In the simpler pre-World War II agricultural economy, the small, family farm was much more prevalent than today. Particularly during the depression, the problems of the small, one-man operation were almost insoluble and many were going to the wall. One of the main problems was the lack of available credit for the purchase of necessary materials and equipment. Accordingly, novel enterprises sprang up to provide the hard-to-come-by essentials. Credit unions provided modest loans and savings opportunities,
and cooperatives increased the buying and selling clout of individual operators. Horace was quickly convinced of the need for units of this type and pressed his people to unite and organize these entities. He considered this joint effort a "mature" way for his poor people to accept responsibility and improve their lot.

The first unit developed was the Saint Mary’s Seafood Cooperative, created to give the producers some strength in their bargaining with Baltimore middlemen. Closely monitored and supported by Father Edward A. Kerr, the cooperative lasted several years and did well in net fishing, but disastrously with crabs. Eventually, the venture went under, due, according to Horace, to the lack of managerial training for such enterprises in Catholic colleges. As a result of this defect such coops relied on "distracted and untechnical priests who serve as grandmothers screaming from rocking chairs." With his sensitivity to publicity, Horace early on had written an article for the Jesuit Seminary News about the seafood cooperative’s activities and this had been read by Harry Sylvester, a free-lance writer, who in turn developed it into an article of his own, "Coops on the Chesapeake," which appeared in the Commonweal magazine of December 9, 1938. At the time, Horace was delighted with the publicity and complimented Sylvester, but his pleasure turned to outrage when Sylvester expanded the material he had gained in Southern Maryland into the novel, Dearly Beloved, which he published a few years later.

Horace also made overtures to the officials of the Federal Farm Security Administration and convinced them that they should make loans to the local farmers for stock and seed purchases, and give local demonstrations on proper rural living methods. In this program, Horace found the people who gave the demonstrations only "partly successful" at their task (which meant "not at all successful" in his noncritical rhetoric) because, as he said, "They didn’t do, but wanted to watch you do." This was a not uncommon characteristic of many public servants, who were simply pleased at being on a payroll.
Nevertheless, there was at least one beneficial result of their presence. When they departed, they agreed to make eight hundred dollars available to buy a tractor. The money would be furnished to the Ridge Purchasing and Marketing Cooperative which Horace had fathered after having traveled to Canada to study a Nova Scotian prototype. A board of parishioners was formed and Horace explained the function of the cooperative in owning and operating a tractor. “They had no previous idea of saving except in a cigar box,” he told a friend. “Then a gypsy would come to town and do a belly dance and they would throw it all away.” Now they would be able to build a fund which would be owned and used in common and could be expanded by the joint efforts of the members.

Horace never forgot the glee which was aroused in his group of black farmers when the news finally came that the tractor was in Baltimore. He showed understanding and sympathy for these simple people in describing the occasion. “They were so happy,” he recalled, “that they all began to celebrate and then to give witness and testimony, and every once in a while, they’d run down to get a shot to quiet their nerves.”

The tractor performed nobly, preparing the soil efficiently and returning rental fees to the common fund. Finally, when the end of the war was imminent and new models were coming on the market, the cooperative decided to sell the machine. All the creditors were paid, the investors had their capital returned, a bonus was paid to all, and the cooperative was dissolved. Horace was pleased with the result because the whole experience had provided his parishioners with an object lesson in cooperation and effective saving methods.

Blacks had always had a hard time obtaining loans from established credit institutions, and this was especially true in rural Ridge in the depression. Except through loan sharks, these people couldn’t obtain funds for current needs, however modest. To make it possible for members to obtain funds to get seed for their farms, fuel for their boats, groceries, or children’s clothes, Horace sponsored the
formation of a federal credit union to make small loans available to its participants at low rates. Obtaining the charter took some doing because the authorities were understandably concerned that the founders might be unable to recoup the start-up costs. The charter was once refused, but Horace doggedly persisted and finally convinced one of the officials of the National Association of Credit Unions to press for acceptance and to advance the necessary funds for the charter and bookkeeping supplies. To obtain this support, Horace used all his powers of advocacy. "I can hardly tell you how deeply touched I was by my visit," wrote Dora Maxwell, an official of the National Association. "It doesn't seem right that a group of people, trying as your parishioners are, should be denied the right to use instruments set up by law just for the purpose of helping them."

As a consequence of Horace's exertions, the charter was granted and the organization, obviously through Horace's suggestion, was named the Martin De Porres Federal Credit Union, after the half-Negro Peruvian saint of the poor. The enterprise was a less than perfect success because the officers allowed one borrower a large loan which neither he nor his family could repay. Losses resulted but, for a substantial period, the credit union performed its salutary function and on its dissolution paid back a major portion of its deposits. While its record was spotty, its organization and operation had taught a lesson in cooperation and economics and J. Logan Tontz, president of the Maryland Credit Union League, had been sufficiently impressed by the members to praise their "very fine spirit of loyalty and friendship." Possibly warmed by the memory of the "very fine dinner" which the politic Horace had sponsored for him on a visit, he wrote, "I admire the indomitable courage and spirit personified by yourself and wish you success in this noble work." This was high praise indeed and the adjectives which this experienced executive used clearly showed how deeply he had been impressed by Horace's dedication and perseverance.

On the whole, Horace welcomed governmental programs
which were calculated to help the average citizen, but there was one federal program which he opposed with all his strength, the work of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which took land out of production by not planting, with a view to reducing the glut of farm products and restoring stability to farm prices. While there might have been benefits to farmers who were land owners, Horace could see the plan only from the side of the farm laborer and he did not hesitate to stand up and vigorously voice his objections in public meetings. Through its operation, he argued, the laborers would lose their wages: "No one paid laborers for not working," and if the limitations went into effect, "labor would have to find something else to do, get some other kind of work."*

This time, his argument was not effective and the agency went along with its plans. In the long run, however, Horace's purpose was achieved since, on other grounds, the Supreme Court of the United States agreed with Horace's conclusion and ended the program, after it had been in operation three years, by declaring the grant of powers in the law unconstitutionally broad.

HORACE COULD COUNT MANY ACHIEVEMENTS IN HIS YEARS AT RIDGE and some, such as the rebuilding of the church, were noteworthy. At the same time, his efforts were not uniformly successful and some projects were marked failures. These unfortunate mishaps found their origins in Horace's character. By nature he was optimistic and filled with faith, and these qualities impelled him to move forward where caution might have seemed more prudent. He was apt to be more concerned with the desirability of the result than with the practicality of its achievement. He shrank from making decisions on a purely profit-and-loss basis. He was intrigued by the novel and experimental, and was willing to try new-
fledged ideas which promised to bring comfort and prosperity to his parishioners.

One such setback developed when Horace tried to reopen the parochial high school in 1937. He made such a proposal to Archbishop Curley and, at the same time, mixed in a fanciful scheme for the resettlement of "some five or ten families on the five hundred acres of [Cardinal Gibbons] Institute land neighboring to the school and church, and a real Paraguay Reduction* might flower where American colonial faith took first root." The archbishop gave only a tentative approval, but Horace pressed ahead, using the confessional room in the basement of the elementary school and teaching classes himself until he fell ill and was hospitalized. Almost two years later, Horace was still pushing and got a commitment of funds from the archbishop which permitted a reopening of the high school. It tottered along from year to year, but never really got on its feet until the arrival of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, who took it over in 1952.

The situation of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute and its land became so disturbing to the archbishop and his involvement so substantial that in 1938 he placed the problem in the hands of a Baltimore lawyer, William L. Galvin. Galvin made it clear to Horace that the archbishop wanted to sell the land—for cash—and was not interested in impractical schemes for resettlement. "The archbishop was taken for a magnificent ride to the tune of over twenty-three thousand dollars," Galvin asserted, "in settling the debts of

*In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jesuits in Paraguay established fifty communal units for as many as one hundred thousand native Guarani Indians. These communities, called the Reductions of Paraguay, were politically separate plots of land, which the Indians cultivated so effectively that their exports competed with the products of neighboring settlers. Eventually, this economic competition led to the expulsion of the Jesuits and the disintegration of the social structure they had created with the Indians.

the Cardinal Gibbons Institute after it awoke out of the dream that Father LaFarge painted.”

Four years later, with his wonted pertinacity, Horace was still trying to obtain the land “to restore family substance to lower Saint Mary’s County Negroes.” The archbishop referred him to Mr. Galvin and added: “I am delighted to know that you are interested in actual farm ownership and are getting away from the ‘share cropping idea.’” Horace believed that he had developed a home-purchase plan which would satisfy a lending bank. His scheme would be “that first flame of hope that will call out to full life all those home-loving desires for a Catholic rural life fostered by Your Excellency among our Negro people” and would provide a basis for what he envisioned as a “necessary post-war reruralization of present day defense workers.”

To Horace’s disappointment, hard cash spoke more effectively than altruistic schemes of financing and the farms were sold to an Annapolis doctor who planned to become a gentleman-farmer. Characteristically, Horace kept on trying and, over a year later, he became involved in another transfer of the Institute farms with the idea that some of the land might be sold off to landless black families. With his help, the transaction took place, but the resettlement project never came to fruition. Neither, it might be mentioned, did Horace’s predicted reruralization of the defense workers. The war with its economic revolution changed the traditional social arrangements beyond any chance of a return to a simple, near-subsistence-level agricultural economy. The introduction of the military bases, the improvements in transportation and communications, and the general elevation of the standard of living made the modest, family farm a romantic anachronism.

With Horace acting as a gad-fly and coming up with new ideas and programs almost weekly which had more to do with individuals’ futures than with financing and bookkeeping, it is interesting to view his activities from the other side of the chancery desk. One gently chiding letter dated January 17, 1944, from the archbishop to Father Walter G. DeLawder, then managing the reopened Institute school,
reveals the perplexity which the prelate felt at times with Horace’s unorthodox management:

I am in receipt of your report for the little mission of Saint James which is attached to Saint Michael’s or, in other words, to Ridge. However, in financial matters, it seems that you are working more closely with Father McKenna of Saint Peter Claver’s than you are with Saint Michael’s.

I see that Saint Peter Claver’s paid you back $400.62 which they borrowed. I see, too, that you loaned again to Saint Peter Claver’s $704.34. At one time, we had a condition in the missions attached to Chaptico that made a crossword puzzle look easy compared to the criss-cross financial transactions in that section. Try to keep yourself and Father Horace from getting into a financial condition where you will not recognize yourself as Father DeLawder and Father Horace will not know who he is. If I owe you $49.11 and pay you back and then I borrow from you $118.97 and keep that on, you and I would not know very well where we stood. However, I am sure that Father Horace can handle intricate matters like that and it is perfectly all right, so long as you are doing God’s work as I know you and Father Horace are.

One can reasonably doubt that the archbishop actually felt the same confidence in Ridge financial transactions that he expressed in his conclusion. But as he said, he did know that they were “doing God’s work,” and that knowledge plus a lively faith may well have dampened any apprehension he felt about Horatian account-keeping.

Horace was very active in the drive to bring electricity to the area through the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) and, with the assistance of Stanley L. Raley, the local store owner and political leader, Horace’s efforts were successful. The parish and Raley each paid ten dollars for the service and all the other users paid five dollars.

Horace’s performance in finance and accounting did not improve with time. In September 1952, when the Jesuit provincial learned that Horace was reporting little or no income, that parish bills were mounting and that the books were in disorder, he sent Father Samuel J. Robb, S.J. to Ridge as pastor to straighten things out, leaving Horace as
Horace was ordered not to sign any checks and his friend, Paul Raley, undertook the spadework of digging through bills, checks, and accounts to bring order out of chaos. He later asserted that to call the situation a “mess” would be a rank understatement.

Horace simply had his own set of priorities. Calvert Biscoe, one of the stalwarts of Saint Peter Claver, testified that Horace was wonderful with the poor people, that he sometimes would give away the Sunday collection—all of thirty-five dollars—to people in need. Robb and Raley found an unpaid bill for books dating from 1936 and an unpaid fuel bill for one thousand dollars. Large sums were due for electric power (now that REA had financed the installation of the lines), but the power company had not taken action to enforce payment. The officials had let Horace’s account go and he knew that they would not cut off the power. The utility had enough money, he thought, and since they were making payments to stockholders in the form of nontaxable returns of capital, he felt free to use the funds due them to help those in need.

Eventually, the records were brought up to date and the creditors—even ancient ones—were paid in full, but the salvage operation did not enhance Horace’s reputation as a manager. Nor was his personal situation a happy one, since he was in a subordinate position and was reduced to begging bus fare to Baltimore or Washington from parishioners.
In Southern Maryland there existed a long-standing and long-accepted antipathy between the white and black races which went back to the days of slavery, and while the legal severity of servitude had been mitigated, the discrimination and deprivation, which in many ways increased after Emancipation, persisted to a real degree when Horace was beginning his ministry at Ridge.

In the outward aspects of discrimination, such as the separation of the races at church ceremonies, the Catholic Church conformed to what had become traditional social customs, but there had been progressives, such as Father John LaFarge, who had seen the inconsistency of the church of Christ condoning racial discrimination while preaching brotherly love. LaFarge had once said that the greatest of all changes is one for which we always pray and labor: "that more and more in our County—as in the whole world—and especially in our own Catholic Church—Catholic, because it is for all men, without distinction of nation, color or class or language—everything that can in any way separate us shall be done away with, and we shall in every way, in every respect show ourselves outwardly, as well as inwardly, to be children of one Sheepfold and one Shepherd. Some of these
changes may be hard to make, or hard to suffer; but better
to suffer the loss of a few pet likes and dislikes, than to
perpetuate division and rancor among the children of the
one God and Father of us all.”

LaFarge had worked heroically in the Counties for the
better part of fifteen years to improve the lot of the blacks
and to better relations between the races, but he recognized
the need to move cautiously and had, accordingly, concen-
trated his efforts on providing vocational teaching to the
black youth and basic instruction in reading and writing for
the children. Horace, arriving five years after Lafarge left,
fully agreed with the older man’s objectives. He was deeply
grieved by the racial mores of a southern community but he
regretfully agreed that progress would have to come slowly.

Clearly, black Catholics had not been allowed their
rightful place in the church by their coreligionists. Even
Evelyn Waugh, in his study of the Catholic Church of the
United States, sensitively noted the problems of black
Catholics in Maryland:

That peninsula between Chesapeake Bay and the
Potomac is one of the most fascinating areas for the
Catholic visitor and one of the things which inspires him
most is the heroic fidelity of the Negro Catholics. The
Church has not always been kind to them. Everywhere
in the South, Catholic planters brought their slaves to
the sacraments, but in the bitter years of reconstruction,
few whites, priests or laity, recognized any special
obligation toward them. Often they could only practice
their religion at the cost of much humiliation.*

John LaFarge, in his autobiography, has called Waugh’s
observation “blunt and exaggerated,” but has agreed that
“the tribute was justified.”**

At the beginning, Horace directed his efforts toward
maintaining the educational structure which LaFarge had

*See note, p. 44.
created for the blacks, but, with the deepening of the depression, this became a colossal task. In fact, as we have seen, the upper school of the Institute, in need of funds, was closed for several years. At the same time, Horace never became reconciled to the inferior role given his black parishioners. He agreed with Evelyn Waugh, that “theirs [the black Catholics’] was a sharper test than the white Catholics had undergone; for here the persecutors were fellow members in the household of the Faith.” “Honor must never be neglected,” Waugh emphasized, “to the thousands of colored Catholics who so accurately traced their Master’s road amid insult and injury.”

Horace realized that he was one of the few swimming against the powerful prevailing tide of opinion, but he tried continually and in small ways to nudge his people into a position of greater equality with their white fellow Catholics. In 1934, at the tercentenary of the landing of the first settlers in Maryland, Horace insisted that there be black altar boys at the celebratory Mass. When it came to signing the new missal at the sesquicentennial of Saint Ignatius Church at Saint Inigoes, he saw to it that half a dozen black parishioners were included. In 1934, he sponsored and, with the sisters, directed a pageant entitled “Glimpses of Negro Progress in Maryland’s Three Hundred Years.” The word Glimpses was significantly modest, as Horace intended to portray the history of black Americans as dignified and meaningful. On the other hand, in November of 1933, at Saint Inigoes, when Horace suggested that a black man be among those who would carry a replica of the cross fashioned by Father White in 1634 in memorial ceremonies, the white parishioner to whom he talked said, “You had better not do it, Father.” And he did not. Instead he carried the cross himself.

Horace’s influence in personal relations was even more memorable than in interracial matters. He knew his parishioners intimately, kept close to them, and, as many said, was “like a father” to them. The history of his relations with Sister Marilyn Hopewell, a black nun of the order of Oblates of Providence and later superior of the convent and school
operated by these sisters at Saint Benedict the Moor parish in Northeast Washington, D.C., illustrates the kinship he had with his people. He knew her, as she has said, “before I knew myself.” He had baptized her and had given her her first communion, and he recognized her potential from the beginning. Her father farmed wheat, corn, tobacco, and tomatoes, partly for himself and partly on shares. The latter was the type of arrangement, according to Calvert Biscoe, member of a black farming family, “where you worked on shears [shares] and came out on scissors.” She was one of eight children and could not depend on family resources for advancement. Horace watched her closely and encouraged her and her sisters to care for the altar linens, vestments, and the cruets used in the celebration of Mass. When she skipped three grades in the grammar school, he knew his belief in her had not been misguided. While still in primary school, she told him she wanted to become a nun and he asked Father Gladstone Wilson, a black priest, to talk with her about her vocational decision.

When the time came for her to go to high school, he arranged for her to be admitted to the school of the Sisters of Saint Francis in Baltimore. Sometimes he would drive her to and from Baltimore himself. When the trip was at night, they would recite the Rosary to keep him awake and prevent him from driving into the Saint Mary’s River, as he almost did once. Marilyn’s mother gave her consent for Marilyn to go off to school in Baltimore only after Horace told her that if she did not approve, she would be “interfering with the work of the Holy Ghost.” Marilyn went on to take her vows as a nun and served as a teacher in various places, including Buffalo, New York, and Mississippi. Her intellectual abilities impelled her order to send her abroad for a period, and she studied in England and at the University of Paris. In the midst of her career, however, she became dissatisfied with what she was doing and felt an overpowering call to leave the field of education and take up work with the poorest of the urban poor, a pursuit she felt Horace would want her to follow.

Once again she faced opposition, and once again Horace
Meeting of Directors of Ridge Purchasing and Marketing Cooperative in Cardinal Gibbons Institute in 1946. Horace, rear, had superintended the purchase of a tractor by the Cooperative.
intervened. Her order was a teaching order and refused to give her permission to go to a ghetto parish in Chicago because it had no school, no other nuns, and, at times, no pastor. Sister Marilyn consulted Horace, who kissed her hands, as he customarily did now when he saw her. When he had heard her story, he skirted the chain of command because his conscience told him that the official decision or policy was wrong. He telephoned Sister Marilyn’s superior and told her that he was sending Marilyn to Chicago with his blessing. “Sister is forty years ahead of her community,” he told the superior, “and I know that God is calling her.”

She did go on to Chicago and spent twelve years in the ghetto, sometimes alone. Among other projects, she labored in association with twelve parishes on a program which was dear to Horace’s heart—making the liturgy relevant to black people. Horace had said that the blessing of the order would come, but it took two years before the official blessing came through and gave sanction to her work in the old churches that had been deserted and left to decay by their former white parishioners.

When Sister Marilyn described Ridge and Horace, she said, “The area wasn’t very progressive, the people didn’t have too much initiative. He had to have all the initiative. These people were without much hope and he was the great white hope for them. They were filled with inertia and it was a very difficult struggle for him during his twenty-two years there. He had to work so hard, but he loved it and, even after he was transferred, in his heart he never completely left Ridge and its people.”

Horace was now beginning to reveal characteristics which he demonstrated forcefully for the rest of his life and which explained the affection in which he was held by the black community. They were respect for the dignity of the individual and the capacity to engender complete trust. These were reciprocated by the love and appreciation which was increasingly his.

As was characteristic, Horace was not without help from the outside. Beside his family and friends in New York, he
kept others aware of his problems and they responded with help. Archbishop Curley constantly gave aid and, every summer, the Jesuit seminarians who came down to Saint Inigoes for vacation were sent over to Ridge to help Horace any way they could. Father Aloysius M. Thibbitts, a former pastor, was a constant benefactor, even after he had moved to New York. When Father W. Coleman Nevils, former president of Georgetown University, was rector of Saint Ignatius Loyola on Park Avenue, he came down to preach for Horace at the 150th anniversary of Saint Ignatius Church, at Saint Inigoes, even though his invitation to preach was somewhat left-handed: if Father LaFarge should not get here in time “from the Eucharistic Congress and the Alcazar.”* The way Horace expressed it was: “But if Father LaFarge should still be at Ellis Island when October 8 comes along, we would not be let down so hard that Saturday morning if we could have some light from Dahlgren Chapel and Our Holy Father’s Temple on Park Avenue.”** He concluded:

So, Father, please come anyway, for seven reasons, and if there is an awkward pause after the Gospel, please preach on October 8 at 8:00 A.M. to round out our 150 years for the greater glory of God.

This was Horace’s apologetic and cryptic invitation to a distinguished cleric to serve as a substitute preacher. Father LaFarge did not arrive and so, thanks to Horace, Father Nevils addressed the congregation.

Father LaFarge, in spite of the many demands on his time and energy in New York City, scraped up a few dollars for Horace from time to time and also, at fairly regular intervals, came down and lent the prestige of his presence to parish activities.

*LaFarge was attending the 1938 Eucharistic Congress in Budapest.
**Dahlgren Chapel is the chapel at Georgetown University, where Nevils had been president, and “Our Holy Father’s Temple” is the church in New York City dedicated to the founder of the Jesuits, where Nevils was rector.
On one occasion Horace told LaFarge that Saint Peter Claver was in debt eight hundred dollars for operating expenses and that he didn’t know how the church would get back on an even keel. The New York priest obtained the eight hundred dollars and wanted to let Horace know it was on its way to him. He decided to telephone Ridge, but, because of the party line, he wanted to be cautious, lest the matter be broadcast over the whole community. Since he and Horace had both spent their novitiate speaking Latin, he resorted to the Roman language: “Horace, habeo pro te octo denarios.”

One of LaFarge’s visits had serious consequences and nearly resulted in tragedy: Horace went to Union Station in Washington to meet LaFarge and, as was his custom, gave over the driver’s seat to his guest. Drew Pearson’s father, Dr. Paul Martin Pearson, who had just returned from his governorship of the Virgin Islands, was also in the car, and, little suspecting the priest’s inexperience at driving, fully expected to give a talk to the students at the Institute that night. As Horace often related it:

“We started down and Father LaFarge put his big foot on the accelerator and he didn’t know what screeches in the tires meant. Especially on curves. We came down to a right angle turn at Helen in Saint Mary’s County. There were two or three road signs there saying ‘Caution’, but they didn’t mean anything to him. He just kept running. I said, ‘Well, here’s that Helen right angle turn!’ By then it was too late for him to make the turn and there was a field in front of him, so he turned the other way and went into the ditch at the side of the road.

“I had learned in first aid class what to do in case of an accident such as this. You call people by name to orient them. So I said, ‘Father LaFarge, how are you?’ He said, ‘I’ll be all right when you get off me!’ Then I said, ‘Dr. Pearson, how are you?’ and he said, ‘Oh, my head!’”

Fortunately, some country boys came along and determined that the car could still run after it was lifted from the ditch and a wheel was changed. Horace then drove the car back home. Father LaFarge and Dr. Pearson were taken to
the doctor and ended up with nothing worse than the “shakes” and a “bump on the head,” respectively, but both required rest and the elaborate evening program had to be called off.

Dr. Pearson may well have lamented the absence of a driver’s education course in the Jesuit curriculum. Eminence in theology or philosophy was surely no guarantee of skill at the wheel. But fifty years ago such were the perils of pastoral life along old Route 5.
HORACE WAS OSTensibly RESTRICTED TO A BACKWATER IN HIS assignment at Ridge, but through his correspondence, his mobility, and the activities of his friends, he developed a persona whose fame and influence extended beyond the limits of Saint Mary’s County, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and the State of Maryland. During the first decade of his pastoral activity, his projects and programs became known to his fellow Jesuits, his ecclesiastical superiors, and the public through articles in religious periodicals and the stream of reports and pleas for support which he generated.

In 1942, however, the publication of a novel called Dearly Beloved by Harry Sylvester increased interest in Horace and his works to a major degree and caused national commentators to turn their attention to Southern Maryland. The author was a native of Brooklyn, New York, a graduate of Notre Dame, who had been a newspaper reporter and short story writer before he had written a series of novels on Catholic subjects. His approach to delicate issues affecting the church was emotional and intentionally controversial. He clearly was not at ease in the bosom of the Holy Mother
and he admitted that his books were meant to be anti-clerical. He thought of himself as an American version of the French author, Georges Bernanos, who wrote *The Diary of a Country Priest*. Like Bernanos in France, Sylvester would lay bare the weakness of the church in the United States, hoping to effect reform. Ultimately, Sylvester ran afoul of hard-nosed defenders of the faith, such as James M. Gillis, C.S.P., editor of *The Catholic World*, and eventually, after detailing the tribulations of a "Catholic writer" in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, he left the Catholic Church. Before reaching this point, he had corresponded with Ernest Hemingway (who referred to him as "a young man high up in the plain clothes Jesuits")* to offer a defense of Franco's treatment of civilians in the Spanish Civil War. The appraisals of *Dearly Beloved* by Catholic publications ranged from praise by *Commonweal* ("beautifully and wonderfully done") to vituperation by *The Catholic World* ("a nasty book").

Sylvester's novel is a study of economic, racial, and social problems of Southern Maryland just before World War II changed the texture of that community. Lewis Gannett, the critic, wrote that the novel "looks at the relations of black man and white" in that area "through the eyes of Jesuit priests." To some extent, this may be true, although the Jesuits on the scene would have dissented violently, but the ultimate viewpoint is that of Sylvester as he develops his tract.

In the early 1940s, a novelist with a critical bone to pick with the church might well have selected Ridge as a setting, since it provided a microcosm in which priests were forced to deal with acute social, economic, and racial problems. Sylvester had read Horace's article about the seafood cooperative in the *Jesuit Seminary News*. He had come down to investigate and had been extended the hospitality of the house and told of the workings of the cooperative. He had considered Saint Mary's County to be a laboratory where an

experiment to solve difficult problems was being tried and, after his study, he wrote an article for *Commonweal* and then wrote his book. The novel constitutes a sincere, if confused, report of his observations, along with the plot and complications which he concocted to provide dramatic activity.

The main story concerns the crisis which gradually develops between the black and white communities at Ridge and its tragic conclusion. Sylvester was prescient in anticipating the general type of racial upheaval which actually occurred some ten years later. The author also correctly appraised the division of opinion in the townspeople, and among the Jesuits as well, on racial matters. Many of his characters are credible and were based upon his visit to the area and his careful study of the people and problems. But the novel contained doses of sex, sensationalism, and homicide which were absent from the real-life drama.

Hardly disguised at all, Horace appears in the book as the saintly Father Laurence Kane of Saint Patrick’s rectory. Kane has the “church for the Negroes,” a solid brick structure he built after the wooden church had burned down. As does his prototype, Kane stutters at times from nervousness induced by overwork and suffers undernourishment because he forgets to eat. His sleeping quarters are over the left arm of the transept of the church building and, in the wall of his bedroom, a small window looks down into the sanctuary and permits him to “make a visit” to the Blessed Sacrament each morning as he awakes.

Kane is devoted to aiding the cause of the blacks in the neighborhood and another worker in this area is his fellow-Jesuit, Father James Cornish, who, with all the impetuosity of a former athlete, is vigorously pressing the development of a fishing cooperative to present a united marketing front to the Baltimore wholesalers and, thus, raise the income of the poor local fishermen who, as individuals, are helpless in the economic competition. Pushing ahead precipitately, Cornish gets his cooperative established, but the opposition is ruthless and resorts to explosives to blow up the fishermen’s quarters, which results in the death of a local boy who is acting as caretaker.
The rednecks in the community resent what they see as Kane's problack bias. "Laurence Kane is the one you've got to watch," one of this group proclaims. "First thing you know, he'll be campaigning for a nigger county commissioner from down that way." The rest of Kane's community is found similarly objectionable: "Fourteen Jesuits in this here county," one of the bar frequenters complains, "and I bet you half of them are nigger-lovers."

After the fatal tragedy, the reactionary forces in the community act quickly to place the blame for the fatality upon the blacks, but Kane moves in and defuses the explosive potential by conceding, against his real belief, that the event was an accident, in return for the withdrawal of any charge "against the colored people." Kane justifies his strategy when he says: "If the charge had been pushed and apparent guilt established, it would set what we're trying to do back perhaps another generation." His colleague, the impulsive Cornish, would have liked to bull ahead with a confrontation and is not happy with the compromise which Kane has engineered. "He moves so slowly," the younger priest says. "But a great man though," he adds, "a great man."

The principal character of the novel is an idealistic, young Georgetown graduate, track star and former Harvard graduate student named John Cosgrave. He has spurned the hopes of his family that he study law and settle down to a traditional career and has come down to Southern Maryland to manage the cooperative. He becomes involved in a series of dramatic incidents, including several amorous encounters with local girls and an affair with one of them who is characterized by the local doctor as a nymphomaniac. He becomes deeply concerned about the local racial situation and this disturbing element plus the emotional dislocation brought on by his worry over the immorality of his illicit sexual relations bring him to the point of suicide. A providentially timed fishing trip helps to return him to sanity, but does not eliminate his concern. A member of the black population is mistakenly suspected of having molested a white girl and his lynching is prevented only by the high-
minded intervention of a scion of one of the historic white families, who dies as a result of his exertions. The frustrations and contradictions in the seemingly hopeless situation finally bring Cosgrave to the point of exasperation. He determines to leave and does so, stopping at the Jesuit house at Chaptico for confession and a renewal of faith.

Before actually leaving, however, he takes the opportunity to unload upon Kane the full weight of his disillusionment and frustration in words which are clearly the editorializing of the author:

"Why do you Jesuits stay here in this county?" he asks. "It amounts to ministering to a heresy or something worse and unnamable."

"We're here out of habit," Kane replies, "because we were here at the beginning with Calvert three hundred years ago and it's been our mission ever since. . . . We are only learning to take a more positive attitude."

"But sooner or later," Cosgrave-Sylvester says, "you Jesuits here will have to tell the whites that they are deliberately and continually doing things that are not only contrary to Christian teaching, but to dogma. And then?"

"I don't know," Kane says. "I really don't know. We mustn't despair."

The book closes with Kane offering a benediction for his black congregation and opening his remarks to them with the stammered words: "D-dearly beloved."

The Jesuits and the residents of Ridge reacted violently to the novel. The strictures on the Jesuits and the sexual passages were too much.

"Who is Harry Sylvester?" cried Father John J. Wynne, the writer, who had been in Charles McKenna's class at Saint Francis Xavier. "He might have done a decent job instead of fouling the nest. Who is he?"

Sylvester did in fact have a reputable background; he was Collier's highest paid fiction writer, and his novels were respectfully reviewed by secular reviewers.

Horace's reaction was equally condemning. Sylvester had
abused the hospitality of Father Edward A. Kerr (the Father Cornish of the book), Horace felt, and Sylvester’s characterizations of both blacks and whites were highly inaccurate. The language was “pure concoction and libel” in its racial slurs. In his complimentary portrait of Horace, the author had “dug up all the Jesuit virtues and distributed them very unevenly.” The characters were “bungalow types for plot and excitement.” Sylvester had “tried to write of the mystical Body of Christ while insisting himself on being a merely inactive member like an atrophied arm.” The characters’ “actions” were “of the sewer,” he agreed, and he burned the copy of the book which his sister had sent him—after Father Kerr had read it.

Father LaFarge’s estimate of the book had uncomplimentary elements, but was understandably more measured, since he was at a distance from the scene of action. He found the pictures of the whites to be overdrawn and he objected to the “priest-character based upon Father Kerr.” While the author did not “present a fair picture either of whites or of Negroes,” nevertheless, LaFarge believed that there existed “more of the brutal spirit than we may perhaps realize, in certain classes and groups.” The novel, he concluded, might be “not wholly harmful in its influence. Something shocking may be needed to overcome the indifference shown to the Counties and to work for the Negroes, by Catholics in Baltimore and Washington, and to a certain extent by our own.” He cited the opposition of wealthy land owners in Saint Mary’s County to the Cardinal Gibbons Institute and what it was “trying to do for the colored,” and added: “For people of that type, a little diet of Harry Sylvester might not be amiss.”

Robert Van Gelder’s review of Dearly Beloved was not only a purported analysis of the novel, but a publicity bonanza for Horace.* The newspaperman was a respected regular book reviewer for the New York Times and a friend and

neighbor of some members of the McKenna family in Suffern. His contribution was presented as a normal examination of the book, but, in fact, it was a paean of praise for Horace, a description of his work and personality, and a strong plug for the annual Ridge benefit which was shortly to be held in New York City. Horace, wrote Van Gelder, was a "memorable" man whom one "recognized under a very small disguise in the novel." Even the Jesuit Missions magazine could not have provided a better puff for the fund raiser, and the column would reach the most sophisticated newspaper audience in the country. Horace was indeed breaking out, as a personality, from the narrow confines of Saint Mary's County.

The reviewer set forth Horace's lack of skill in operating an auto, his fostering of cooperatives, his carelessness about nourishment and sleep. He described Horace's determination to "make the doctrine of the Mystical Body a reality" in that section of Maryland where race prejudice was so strong.

Eventually, Van Gelder did get around to discussing the novel, which he found "interesting" rather than "excellent," with many fine points in style, flexibility, and sensitivity. The best part of the book was that it possessed "one great character, notably interpreted—a humble man who may be able to do no wonders to improve the conditions that confront him . . . but who, with all that he has, is working at it all the time that he can remain awake and with every ounce of strength."

This was a notable encomium, not for Father Kane, but for Horace. The appearance of this overwhelmingly laudatory article illustrated Horace's growing capacity to affect others by his personality, to extend his influence and, through nonsensational methods, to develop a network of supporters who would be eager to provide the resources necessary for his work. His altruism was balanced by strong practicality in this regard.

In a New York Times roundup of recent fiction on March 8, 1942, Drake De Kay, the reviewer, considered Dearly Beloved a "healthily realistic story" and praised "the saintly Father
Kane who is, perhaps, as nearly the ideal priest as one might discover in a month of Sundays."

Now, forty years later, one is inclined to adopt the view of Father LaFarge—that the Sylvester needling was salutary. There were exaggerations and inaccuracies, but they came from the zeal of an advocate rather than from willful misrepresentation. And the gamy scenes could be credited to the demands of the fiction market.

The fictional Jesuits were left in an unsatisfactory situation, but the fictional case was not too different from the factual one, as, ten years later, the real-life Horace and his co-workers were to find when they became involved in a conflict of public opinion over racial matters. At this later time, there were rednecks; there was hysteria; there was an aggressive priest who was impatient at the slow pace of change. Indeed, Sylvester's creation of a central incident showed a prescience that was truly outstanding.

The writer's venture into the field of novel-writing proved to be an unsatisfactory enterprise and he eventually returned to journalism, but this provocative book provided a remarkable literary portrait of Horace and brought national publicity to the unassuming priest.
Fluttering the Dovecotes

Horace was made superior of the Ridge Jesuit Community in 1937 and served in this position for nine years. At first, he found little opportunity to make any alteration in the established pattern of racial relations in the county, but, in the later 1940s, things began to change. The war altered many long-existing traditions and brought sharp adjustments in the South. When black troops served and offered their lives, side by side with whites, denial of equal benefits
The changes meant steady and pleasant employment and a rise in the standard of living. The people were no longer tied to the soil, and they were less dependent in traditional ways upon the programs of the church and the assistance of its priests.

The Society of Jesus was far from united in setting a policy on racial equality. Certain influential Jesuits felt that the society should not get too far ahead of the white majority, lest a hostile reaction irretrievably damage relations between the ministers of the church and their congregations. Others believed that a more forward motion was necessary and that church leaders should give direction to the laity. There were such priests in Southern Maryland and, in the succeeding years, their progressive thinking and consequent actions led to controversy and to dangerous confrontation.

Four of these pastors were: Horace, Father Richard McSorley at Saint James, Father Edward A. Kerr at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lexington Park, and Father Michael F. Kavanagh at Morganza. Their personalities were as different as could be imagined. Kavanagh was small and gentle and, while firm in principle, was reluctant to flutter the dovecotes. McSorley, a recently ordained former Japanese prisoner of war, was by nature combative and abrasive, and he was always eager to toss down the gauntlet and plunge ahead in a frontal attack. Kerr, also dedicated to change, served near the naval station and enjoyed greater freedom of action because his parishioners were more cosmopolitan. Horace, who had seen the issues developing for a long time, was considered by his associates to be a “rock” of right principles, but he was “politic” and a gradualist who had the ability to appease some of the Catholics who were enraged that the nation, and even the church, were growing more open-minded.

Some slight progress was achieved with the democratization of the communion rail and the “opening up,” in September 1950, of the Saint James bowling alleys and dance hall, but the latter change aroused a wave of protest and engendered a no-holds-barred discussion at a public
meeting where McSorley, the local pastor, was on the grill for two hours. Kavanagh brought in black altar boys and a black choir, but he did this at a 6:00 A.M. Mass. Kerr, with the help of a fine musician named Leo Weiland, formed an integrated choir who traveled about the area giving concerts of Latin motets, but their appearances were disturbed by organized hecklers. But the time when such moderate changes as these would satisfy public expectations had passed for ever.

McSorley had come to Ridge to be pastor of Saint James in 1948. He lived with Horace and, in many respects, his racial thinking paralleled that of Horace. "When I came," McSorley later told a friend, "I knew nothing about racism or segregation, but I knew that something was wrong in the place. I couldn’t put my finger on it, but one of the reasons for my feeling was the way the white people treated Horace. They treated him as a saint, but then they talked about him as though he was all mixed up and confused and 'going with those dirty colored people.' Why did they speak so highly of him as being a saint and then talk against him for associating with colored people? That was one of the puzzles which led me to understand the evils of racism.

"I asked myself further, 'Why do white people keep the priest at arm's length so they won’t be very friendly, why do their children avoid close association with the priest, and why do they go to church on Sundays and then ignore what the priest says?' Well . . . they’re worried about racism and they don’t want the priest to get too much in with them or else he might turn them.

"This was part of the process of development for me and in everything I did, I was very close to Horace and we would talk about it. I was very much influenced by him because he was older and he was no doubt influenced by me. Some of the people thought that I was a sort of spy and would say that Horace was O.K. before I came down there as the bad influence."

Hitherto, Horace’s work had been to give the blacks a parish, education, a credit union, and a cooperative, but
with the turn of the half-century, he became “a leading figure opposing racism.” McSorley’s forceful advocacy was clearly an element in this development.

It is possible to pinpoint accurately the time of radical change in Horace’s toleration of racist practices in the church and to detail some of his steps from conformity to confrontation. The beginning came one night in the rectory at Saint Michael’s when Horace sought out McSorley, who later related the story.

‘Dick, do you have ten minutes?’ Horace asked with typical diffidence.

‘Horace, I have ten hours and I’m here in the house with you. Nothing’s going on.’

“Well, I have a problem. I’m a pastor of a parish, I’m a dean of a school. I’m a teacher. I’m running a credit union and a lot of other things. I’m also trying to collect money in New York to keep the whole thing going and I can’t do it all. I need advice on what I should drop and what I should keep and the archbishop is telling me he’s not going to give me any more nuns.’

“So I said, ‘Horace, ... what I think you ought to drop is being a segregated institution and where you start on that doesn’t make much difference.’

“And he said, ‘Well, I’ll have to think about that.’

“And I said, ‘They send you all the poor of the counties and you can’t take them. And besides, you’re really not doing anything for them because you’re keeping them segregated.’

“He went away and in about five minutes he came back and said that he had made up his mind. ‘In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I will no longer be a bandage on the Mystical Body of Christ.’

“By putting everything in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from that moment on, the whole thing was different. He was the main person. And the next day he went to the chancery office of the archdiocese.

“The chancellor thought that Horace had come to make his usual plea for more black sisters and began by asserting
that this was impossible. Horace said, 'I didn’t come for that. I’ve come to tell the archbishop that I’m going to close the school.' The chancellor remonstrated with him and asked him not to be too impetuous. He asked him to change his mind and he would see what they could do for him. They wanted him to keep the school open."

Horace told the chancellor what he had told McSorley. "I’m no longer going to be a bandage on the Mystical Body of Christ. I’m going to let the wound cure by itself." His decision had been reached because of "his deep spiritual convictions" and he held to it firmly in spite of all blandishments.

When he returned to Ridge, he told McSorley: "They want me to keep the school open. They’re going to get sisters. They’re going to do this and that, but I told them I’m no longer interested. I’m not going to collect money for this purpose." This was a turning point for Horace and from this juncture, although the school was not actually closed, he joined his voice and efforts with those who opposed segregation, in the church and elsewhere, and he helped to eliminate the obstacles to reform for ever.

BY 1951, HORACE, MCSORLEY, AND KAVANAGH WERE ACTING ALONG parallel lines in the push for improvements in racial relations, but the hostility and suspicion of their white parishioners hindered their efforts. The priests also knew that many of the other clergy were more cautious than they and reflected the concern of their congregations in favoring deliberate rather than speedy action. Prominent in this group was the Maryland Jesuit provincial. The blunt McSorley called him a "racist," while the more politic Kavanagh said that "he didn’t want to stir things up." Whatever the proper description, he certainly did not support activism or experimentation. The position of Archbishop O’Boyle, now the leader of the newly formed Archdiocese of Washington which included the Counties, was a delicate one. While he had been moving firmly toward desegregation of church facilities and parochial schools in
the District of Columbia, he felt that open support of a similar action in Southern Maryland would create hysteric and thereby adversely affect the Washington program. He went ahead, as he had planned, with his Washington program of liberalization, but he had on his plate, in D.C., all that he could digest comfortably at the time.

In April 1951, the four pastors held Novena of Grace services and each, with the knowledge of the others, gave a talk on racial justice. McSorley’s talk was a particularly explicit and wide-ranging critique which had been vetted by Father John LaFarge and was delivered to a full church without a black person present, and where it was “so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.” McSorley later reported that his sermon had caused a tremendous furor. “People ran out of the church afterward thinking that they would act as ‘Paul Reverses’ and tell about the remarks to others who had not been present. Then, they met people coming from Horace’s church and people from up the road, saying, ‘They’re all talking about it!’”

Then, two days later, on Friday April 20, when Father Merle V. Baldwin, the pastor of Saint Michael’s was away on a visit, McSorley was assigned the early 6:30 A.M. Mass. That left Horace alone to say the later regular weekly Masses for the school children. Previously these Masses had not been integrated although Horace, in reporting to LaFarge, stated that both races had been brought together about a year before when, as he euphemistically expressed it, “There was unwillingness on the part of some Saint Michael’s high school boys to enter the church, and Sister Paul of the Cross had to bring one in by the coat.” Surely Horace knew he was taking a risk, yet he decided to seize the opportunity for accommodation and he ordered the black and white children brought together for one Mass.

A strong reaction would have been expected, but no one anticipated the following events. Parents began arriving at the school to take their children home. Word of the incident spread like wildfire and the activists began talking with one another about what they would do. They set up a public
meeting at the old firehouse and proposed to march over to the church to take possession of the school and demand that “all this stuff” stop. One of the parishioners met Horace and angrily demanded an explanation. After Horace attempted to clarify what had happened, the man announced that a group of citizens were meeting and would require a meeting with the priests that evening. Horace agreed that they would be available. McSorley was gleeful and thought that the prospect of a confrontation was “great.” He wanted to tape record the proceedings and also suggested that they find a way of putting out the lights quickly and of turning off the heat as protective measures. Horace’s reaction was the opposite of McSorley’s. “No, Dick,” he said, “don’t do that. We must be kind to them.” McSorley argued that the prime movers were not asking permission, but were simply taking over. Horace agreed that they should not “just take over,” but said that an effort should be made to get Colonel L.L. Cobb, a level-headed, retired military officer, and other more liberal-minded people to attend the meeting to provide a moderating counterbalance. Colonel Cobb did manage to be put on the managing committee and McSorley telephoned some of his supporters, including members of the Saint Robert Bellarmine Club, which he had formed to study racial problems and solutions, and invited them to attend an “interesting meeting.” McSorley wanted to let the people run “slam-bang against the basic issue of segregation,” but Horace didn’t want to “disturb them to that extent.” McSorley then “yielded” to Horace. “He knew the people,” McSorley later explained, “and they knew him.”

With a confrontation imminent, and some individuals alcohomically fortifying themselves, tension rose in the neighborhood of the Ridge firehouse. The fever of the conversations which Fred McCoy, one of the parishioners, heard, increased and when he heard shouts that “lynching” was the proper remedy for their opponents, he became concerned and telephoned the Jesuit provincial. Much of the popular ire was directed against McSorley and shortly before the church hall meeting, a priest from one of the
parishes to the north arrived at Ridge to announce at the
rectory, "as though it was a judge's decision," that Father
Provincial had ordered McSorley to travel to Great Mills,
twelve miles away, to spend the night and, immediately, to
go to the nearest private telephone and call him. Since every
phone in the neighborhood was on a party line, this
involved traveling twelve miles to the naval base, but Horace
advised McSorley to obey. McSorley later admitted that his
departure was probably the best way to prevent physical
violence.

At the firehouse, the mood was ugly. McSorley had asked
Paul Raley, a young white man with ambitions to become a
priest and convinced of the morality of the desegregation
movement, to attend the preliminary meeting. As he ap-
proached the door to the firehouse, two local women,
knowing his opinions, called out, "Only white people
allowed here!" One man standing nearby cleared his throat
and took a step forward as if to spit on Raley, although he
actually did not do so. Inside the building, he found that
some of the leading figures were not Catholics, but outraged
residents. Speakers shouted as to what they were going to
do, listed the objectionable things McSorley had done,
threatened to run McSorley out of town, and booed the
priests whenever they were mentioned. By the time the
meeting was adjourned to go to Saint Michael's hall, many
of the participants were "overheated," as Raley described it,
although some order had been maintained by Colonel
Cobb and Fred McCoy.

Leo Weiland, the musician, who was also an engineer at
the naval station, had been invited by his friend, McSorley,
to come down from Lexington Park to a "little thing" at
Ridge that night, and when he arrived at the church hall, he
found cars "jammed all over the place." He was directed to
the rectory, where he found McSorley packing his bag to
follow out the direction of the provincial. They got the bag
in Leo's car and then, as he later told the story, "We got out
of there—VROOM—like cowboys in the movies."

When they reached Lexington Park, McSorley said he
wanted to stop and phone, and, since Weiland by this time needed a beer, they stopped at a tavern where McSorley phoned the provincial, who said that he had given the orders because he was afraid McSorley was going to be shot. McSorley scouted this idea, asserted that he was in no danger, and received permission to go back to Ridge. He did return, but, as he later recounted, he “missed the big show which was what Horace did and it couldn’t have been staged better. . . . It was good that the Lord got me out of there,” he added, “because I would have just told them off and said exactly what I thought.” His departure had deprived the objectors of one object of their wrath, but it put the whole burden on Horace’s shoulders.

Back at Ridge, 125 people had gathered in the school hall, filling it to capacity. With the tense mood of the gathering, the noise, and the shouting, Colonel Cobb, who fortunately had been selected as chairman of the meeting, had a hard time bringing the session to order. When some quiet had been obtained, Horace asked if they couldn’t begin the proceedings with prayer. This could not be denied and, “thinking to get them down to fundamentals,” he began with the Apostles’ Creed. With his hesitation of speech and moderate pace, he went through the recitation of the Our Father and then the Hail Mary. Horace hoped the gentle response and slow momentum would absorb the thrust of the protest.

As he looked about the room, he could tell that “the whole sympathy of the meeting was in favor of separation.” All were anti-integration, except for a stalwart band of eight members of the Saint Robert Bellarmine Study Club, open to change, who sat together at one table, braving the hostile glances and remarks of the majority, which was steaming hot.

When the floor was opened to statements, one man shouted, “I don’t want my children to go to school with niggers, and for that I’m prepared to die.” He was loudly cheered by the assembly. Another accused Horace of being a trouble maker from the day he arrived and the crowd
responded with cheers and whistles. Another man said, "I want to ask the priest a question, Who let the niggers into the church?" This brought stamping and whistling. When Horace explained that the shortage of priests had made the combination of the races necessary and that there would be no integration of the school, he was roundly booed as part of what one observer called "an awful verbal barrage." When Horace cited the Holy Trinity as an example of diverse members getting along together, one member of the audience yelled: "I don't want to hear about the Trinity, I want to hear about what's going to happen to our families!" At this point, Horace mentioned the Holy Family and their mutual love and cooperation. One or two of the Bellarmine group spoke words of support and one woman said that her husband was in the Navy and that they favored integration. This unleashed a storm of boos and whistles.

Horace held to his strategy of the "soft answer" throughout the discussion and thus helped to calm things down. Some in the crowd grew ashamed of the tactics of the opposition. Horace was a man they respected. As time went by, Horace's halting and temperate replies and the personal regard which everybody held for him served to lower the temperature of the participants. In the words of Father Francis Walsh, a successor at Saint Peter Claver, "Horace finessed the meeting."

When Fathers Kavanagh and Paul Palmer, who had been alerted about the meeting and its explosive character, arrived to lend support by their presence, the affair had simmered down and, although Horace was the only priest there, the crowd appeared to Kavanagh to realize that they had, as Horace said, "picked the wrong cat to skin." At length, Fred McCoy, who always played the part of community peacemaker, rose and said that the meeting was getting into personalities instead of issues and Horace, seizing this opportunity, suggested that the gathering adjourn, which it did.

Although he did not say so and he appeared to be unruffled, the experience was a searing one for Horace and
he showed personal courage and rare presence of mind to face the hostile crowd as he did. The meeting ended, but the opposition had not been placated. After the close of proceedings, Horace walked up to one man, held out his hand and said, “I hope there are no hard feelings.” The man looked up at the open rafters and said “There’s where you should be hanging from.” Paul Raley, who showed his own brand of courage by differing on the issue with his father, the general storekeeper and politician, was threatened by the red-hots, himself. He sat at the Bellarmine table at the meeting and was horrified at what Horace was subjected to. He described the inquisition by saying, “That night, I witnessed a crucifixion.”

The formal meeting vented much emotion, but it did not put an end to the controversy. The objective—the ousting of McSorley—was not accomplished but other aims were achieved for the short run. No further steps were taken toward integrating the children in school or church. The integration of the separate black and white study clubs was abandoned. The implied threat of self-appointed vigilantes patrolling at night around any building where discussion groups were meeting served to cool the interest of participants.

BUT THE VICTORY OF THE SEGREGATIONISTS, IF THERE WAS ANY, WAS only temporary because the current of change was inexorable. With the action of Archbishop O’Boyle initiating gradual integration in the District of Columbia in 1949, desegregation had begun in church schools and, under the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954, the segregation of any school on the basis of race would be forbidden. The poor, separate, unequal, black schools would exist no longer and all pupils would receive integrated and equal education.

These Jesuits who had concurred in the efforts to achieve progress in improving racial relations were not untouched by the controversy in which they had participated. As Horace phrased it, they had “ridden the cone of the volcano.
which was the restless reaction to our efforts at integration.” Horace’s euphemism, “restless,” was hardly the proper adjective. After the Ridge meeting, when written complaints came through to the chancery, Archbishop O’Boyle requested that taped testimony be collected from people who had been present at the gathering. His judgment on the petitions was that “All the petitioners proved was that they knew how to sign their names.” He did prevent the Jesuit provincial from taking a retaliatory move against McSorley or the others because a quick and hostile initiative would make it appear that he had surrendered to the reactionaries under the threat of force. After the proprieties had been satisfied by a brief delay, however, McSorley, Kavanagh, and Horace were all transferred. The next year, McSorley went to Georgetown University, where his volatility could more easily be absorbed. Kavanagh went first to Pomfret, Maryland and then to India, where he worked heroically for fifteen years among the lepers. In 1953, Horace went to Saint Aloysius Church on North Capitol Street in Washington, where he served on and off for most of the remaining years of his life.

On April 30, ten days after the meeting, Horace wrote to LaFarge: “The lid blew off the interracial situation here.” This was true and the immediate results were disappointing, but, in the longer perspective, the explosion had a more hopeful significance. For the first time, in Southern Maryland, in the “deep South,” on “the peninsula away from the world,” the great issue had been brought out into the open. Horace had stood firmly for the principles in which he believed and his involvement provided a foundation for eventual progress. While emotionalism seemed to prevail over good sense, forcing the priests to move on, they had done their job: the ground had been prepared and the seed had been planted. Horace’s stand had been taken at some real cost to himself. He had been transferred away from the people and the landscape he loved so much, but he had shown the “stubbornness” which was one of his primary qualities. He had pressed his position gently and
with friendliness, but, at bottom, the hard rock of determination remained. As he left Ridge, he could be proud that he had recognized the wave of the future and had done his part to prepare the uninitiated for its forceful arrival. He had been true to his ideals and he left with the esteem of all, even his opponents, but with the particular affection of the deprived and downtrodden whose cause he had championed.
When Horace moved to Washington in 1953, he was asked how he liked city work in comparison with the country work he had been doing for twenty-two years. He responded with a characteristically vivid summation: "Well, it's the same work—chasing sheep—except that the ground is harder." While down at Ridge, he had been called a "bushwhacker," one who beats his way through woods or bushes. Now, on North Capitol Street, in a residential neighborhood of old, narrow streets and passages, he guessed that he was an "alleywhacker."

Not only was there asphalt under foot at Saint Aloysius, but the surroundings were strange and lacked the congeniality of the parish which he had come to regard as his own and to which he had given so much of himself. Now stationed eight blocks from the Capitol of the United States, in the core of an urban center, he was no longer the captain on the bridge of his own ship. He was an assistant pastor, rather than a pastor, and he lived in a community of twenty-five people, fifteen of whom were engaged in the operation of Gonzaga College High School next door.

Saint Aloysius Church had been dedicated in 1859 and its location had been prime in earlier days. President Grant had
owned a house at 205 1 Street, only a block away, but the fashionable residents had long since moved away to Georgetown, Sixteenth Street, and the suburbs. Still, when Horace arrived, the parish remained a viable entity. About eleven hundred people regularly attended Mass on a Sunday and, of these, one-third were black and two-thirds were white. As the new assistant pastor noted, the blacks "kept more or less to the rear of the church." The white parishioners were mostly Irish in racial origin and in their number was the mother of General McAuliffe who had sent the famous "Nuts" reply to the besieging German commander at the Battle of Bastogne in World War II. There were many blacks in the neighborhood since DeFrees Street, the next street to the south, was entirely black. Unverified rumor had it that there were six hundred children on that street alone. On the south side of K Street, one found mostly Irish and German stock, while on the north side the smaller houses were occupied largely by Italians, with some blacks here and there. The houses were like two-story cottages with a little porch on front. The redevelopment which was to sweep away this neighborhood and remove its parishioners had not yet made felt its dehumanizing results.

Horace soon found that the move from Ridge had not separated him from the anguishing readjustments of the integration crisis. The Saint Aloysius parish school had kept to the traditional policy of admitting whites only, some of whom came from as far away as Fort Myer, across the Potomac in Virginia. Horace was quick to make clear his opposition to this exclusionary policy, but his view was far from universal in the immediate community or the order and he had no power to effect a change. He agreed with the pastor of Saint Martin de Porres, the adjacent parish, where the parochial school did, uniquely, admit black children. "You're running an oasis down there at Saint Aloysius," the pastor, Father Bergen, told Horace, "where white children go to school without meeting black children." The authorities at Saint Aloysius were trying to preserve the parish and its institutions as they had been historically and, several years after the order of desegregation of Archbishop O’Boyle
was issued, they decided to close the parochial school rather than integrate. The proffered basis of decision was that there were only six children from the parish attending classes. Horace argued that there were many times this number eager for admission if blacks were to be qualified, but his plea did not change the judgment. He regretted that the integration order had, at least in part, caused the elimination of the parish school. Other factors—the change in the character of the parish, the decline in the number of applicants, and the rising costs of maintenance—contributed to the local decision which was not at all unique, as other Catholic parishes were also closing their schools. Nevertheless, the closing constituted one more break with the community, as Horace saw it, for a parish school typically helped to bind the clergy and the people.

Horace rejoiced when, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States outlawed segregation in the schools of the nation. "It was such a relief," he said, "such a freedom, such a hope for a child to know that you can go to school with your neighbor and look upon him as your brother or sister, and that you can feel an equality with him, and that you can feel a brotherhood with him, you can feel a common interest, a common citizenship, a common local neighborhood. It was a great feeling for me."

Even after the Brown decision, Horace expressed his unhappiness about the pace of integration at Saint Aloysius. In January 1955, he wrote to the Provincial to complain about the de facto exclusionary policy of the school and on November 6, 1956, he wrote to Father Vincent A. McCormick, American Assistant to the Father General of the Jesuits, complaining that "negro children are not admitted on the same basis as white children," and citing specific cases of white admission and black exclusion.

As he settled into the activity of the neighborhood, Horace indulged the affinity for urban life which he had felt as a boy on the streets and sidewalks of New York City. He followed his lifetime custom of reaching out to the nearby residents and learning about their habits and problems. He
interested himself in the problems of the poor—this time the urban poor whose difficulties were different from but no less than those of the the rural poor whom he had left in Southern Maryland. He made it a point to walk through the teeming precincts of DeFrees Street and talk with the people, particularly the children. He felt that his visits “put a kind of priestly presence in there, a religious presence.” From the reaction of the children who flocked to greet him, and of their parents, it very soon become clear that he was making his church a living reality for these neighbors rather than an alien, distant, and somewhat hostile entity.

Horace quickly became aware of the insistent human needs of the area people and the inadequacy of the attempts which had previously been made to satisfy them. When he went up the street to visit the Saint Martin de Porres Hospice, which was operated on a shoe-string by the high-minded Llewellyn Scott, he saw the needy men being fed with meatless stew, a single piece of bread, and a glass of water. He observed the crowding which compelled men to sit on every step of the stairs “from the roof down to the basement.” He felt an obligation to give these men some spiritual fare, but he found this difficult, as he had to compete with nonstop television.

With his single-minded concentration, the conviction of his objectives, and his compulsion to bestow his compassion on the less fortunate, Horace sometimes betrayed an insensitivity to the opinions and values of others. Now powerfully motivated, he tried a method of approach which he had not sufficiently pondered, which was impractical, and which failed adequately to consider the interests and sentiments of his brothers in the community.

“I began,” he later recalled, “by telling some of these men to come up to our rectory at night. The first night, eight of them came up and they were well-washed and they sat in the parlor where I tried to instruct them. The second time they came, though, they were in working clothes and one fellow had a Mason jar with the remains of his ‘dinner’ in it. When Father Alfred F. Kienle, the rector, saw them, he was
shocked. He told me that if I wanted to instruct such people, I'd have to take them two blocks away to Fides House. I thought: How can you instruct people about entering the church, if they can't come into it?"

Horace's response was a typical and straight-from-the-shoulder gesture. He refused to sit and pout over a decision of authority which he considered wrong. "I wrote to the Father Provincial," he said, and when Father Kienle went over to see him, the Father Provincial granted a point for each of us. He told me that I could instruct them, but I'd have to do it one at a time. So I tried to instruct them one at a time and Father Kienle would pass by the door of the parlor to see that I wasn't exceeding my quota."

Horace's self-imposed mission of educating his contemporaries on the needs of the poor had many miles to go and many obstacles to overcome. A warning which the pastor gave to Horace at about the same time illustrated the schizophrenia from which society and the church then suffered. Knowing Horace's racial sympathy, he warned, "The day you celebrate a black-white marriage, you're out!" Significantly, this attitude changed with the changing mores, and the same pastor, at a later date, did, in fact, ask Horace to perform such a marriage.

Such were the complications, innate and external, which beset Horace as he sought to harmonize his drives and ambitions with the new surroundings and the personalities with whom he had to work.

Happily, Horace found an outlet for his energies through increasing involvement with the parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the charitable organization his father had prominently helped. Even though he was not formally in charge of the local group, Horace gradually assumed more and more of the duties of operating the Vincent de Paul program, a responsibility implicitly surrendered to him by his associates in the community.

"Father Aloysius L. Fuller, who was moderator of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, was very generous with me," Horace later explained. "If I saw an eviction going on and
someone’s goods on the sidewalk, I’d tell him and he’d grumble a bit, but he’d give me the money needed to get the dispossessed people back into their house. The first time. But, if I tried him twice in the same day, he’d demur.’” How characteristic of Horace to use the word *demur*! It was gentle and esoteric at the same time. It is interesting to observe how he was going outside of regular “channels” to edge into the activity most congenial to him and in which he felt he most fully performed his ministry.

“We used to give out food orders then,” Horace explained to an interviewer many years later, “and when people would come in and ask for food, we’d write them three or four dollar food orders on a store in DeFrees Street. Then, one day, Father Kienle called me in and said, ‘Horace, you wrote $450.00 worth of food orders in January and it doesn’t come in that way.’” With a smile, Horace added in a soft voice: “This was a gentle reminder that I had to be more cautious.”

There was one eviction matter which Horace never forgot and which illustrated the heart-warming effects of charitable giving. A woman who lived in the one hundred block of I Street was being evicted, and her goods—a few bureaus and a bed—had been put out on the grass. (There was grass there in those days.) “I went by,” Horace later recounted, “but I didn’t do anything. I didn’t offer any help. Then, the second day I saw her, I said to her, ‘What would it take to get you back?’ She said, ‘Eleven dollars.’ So, I went to Father Fuller and got the eleven dollars and she got back into her house. That was twenty years ago and she still writes me gracious letters and she sent me ten dollars this past Christmas.” In the midst of many failures and disillusionments with hopeless or faithless beneficiaries, this was a gratifying exception where his church through his action had been the means of raising a worthy woman from despondency to usefulness and self-fulfillment.

Despite his simple lifestyle and the gentleness of his demeanor, Horace always had a feeling for publicity and a flair for the dramatic. In exercise of these qualities, he took
his message about the needs of the poor and disadvantaged to that neighboring seat of power, the Senate of the United States.

He had read that Senator Wayne Morse, of Oregon, was projecting a tour of the District of Columbia to dramatize the necessity for remedial social legislation. Horace contacted the senator and recommended that he put the North Capitol Street area on his itinerary. Morse did so and, when the investigating senators, staff, photographers, and media representatives arrived in the neighborhood of Saint Aloysius, Horace escorted them to a tenement where a mother was cooking for a family of eight on a one-burner stove in a kitchen which had a hole in the middle of the floor big enough for an adult to fall into.

At the close of the visit of inspection, Senator Morse thanked Horace for pointing out this decaying residence in the midst of the grandeur and wealth of the capital city. The Washington Post, in describing the Morse journey, called this stop “the sourest note of all.” Horace disagreed with this description. “Perhaps, it was the most realistic note of all. It made us realize the desperate need which some people experience for the things we take for granted. We are rarely, if ever, unable to satisfy the ordinary wants of life, but that is an almost constant experience for the poor. We ought to understand this fact and sympathize with them.”

As Horace’s years of service in Washington lengthened, his idiosyncratic style of developing his ministry caused increasing conflicts with those in authority over him. The leadership of the parish were trying to keep the same predominantly white constituency which had been its base in earlier days while, as one contemporary put it, “Horace was singing a different tune,” based upon his perception of the demographic changes which he observed, the needs of the neighborhood, and a fundamentally divergent philosophy of dealing with minorities and the poor.

The pastor of the church, rector of the community, and president of Gonzaga High School—in short, the numero uno at Saint Aloysius—Father Kienle, had spent most of his
ministry in the Philippines. He had shown great fortitude in his missionary work and had achieved outstanding success in bringing Filipinos into the church and was, thus, not an unfeeling man, yet he was not keenly sensitive to the racial changes which had been taking place in Washington and in the nation.

His vision was to bring back the great days of this historic parish and, therefore, his concept of parish policy and program was completely opposite to Horace’s. In addition, a trace of the pompous in him disinclined him to move to the radical or even the indecorous. At any rate, he eventually began to pull back upon the bit with Horace, imposing limits upon Horace’s liberality with money, restricting the derelicts whom Horace wanted to bring into the residence. Finally, he ruled that Horace could not go out and proselytize in the black community, but had to confine his evangelizing efforts to those who came into the rectory of their own accord.

With these two strong opposing personalities, a blow-up was foreordained. Horace and Kienle “knocked heads” and the result was that Horace had to go. He made representations “up the line” to the provincial, but these aroused no enthusiasm. Accordingly, it was decided that he should move to Philadelphia to a parish somewhat comparable to Saint Aloysius, but rapidly becoming almost entirely black. His superiors considered that he would be in a neighborhood where his experience and predilections would fit him for effective service. He had become a man with a mission and a Jesuit whom the provincial would never easily pigeonhole.
The parish to which Horace was assigned was a Jesuit-administered inner-city area in north central Philadelphia. The church was an historic one and was called the Gesú after the principal Jesuit church in Rome. In 1958, when Horace arrived, three-fifths of the parishioners were white, the remainder, black, but, during his term there, he would see what he called the "disappearance" of the whites and the "influx" of the blacks. In spite of the change in racial composition, however, the congregation remained at about five hundred people.

One sharp difference from his Washington parish immediately struck Horace. This was in the style of the liturgy. Always aware of the importance of the liturgy in the services, Horace had usually sided with those who reduced the rites to their essentials so they were brought as close as possible to the people. At the Gesú, however, he found that there was a tradition of pomp and ceremony and, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, he did not fight against the custom, but allowed himself to enjoy it. Much of his favorable reaction was due, undoubtedly, to the high quality of the services. He adjusted to the novel atmosphere and gained inspiration
from it. He was moved by “the elegance of the church,” the grandeur of the sanctuary, the beauty of the altar, and the magnificence of the spatial design of the building which “lent itself to reverence and large scale devotions.”

The quality of the ceremonies resulted from the personal management of a Jesuit brother named Brennan who had a masterly sense of art and splendor. He would have as many as seventy-five altar boys seated in the church after the procession and, remarkably, all would remain devoutly attentive throughout the ceremony. The handsome robes of the priests were made by Brother Brennan, himself, as well as many of the lavish decorations which hung about the sanctuary. To Horace, though, the most important factor was that the devotion of the people remained “sound and faithful and persevering and sincere.” His ability to enjoy this burst of splendor in the midst of rapidly declining surroundings was a surprising tribute to his great capacity to reconcile disparities.

As soon as he was established in the community, Horace followed his natural bent and involved himself with the work of the parish Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Before long, he was writing so many food orders and fulfilling other tasks that Father Coolahan, who had formal charge of the society, turned over that control to Horace. His efforts to arouse large-scale support for the society in the parish body were not successful, but he did find a few willing and loyal souls who proved to be bulwarks of strength in the work of helping the needy. “There were plenty of poor people around in those days,” he told a friend, “but, of course, there always are, if you keep your eyes open.” As ever, Horace kept his eyes open to the poor, and he found them.

The parish did not readily respond to any organizational efforts. He tried to form a Holy Name Society, but failed conspicuously. He wrote 350 letters of solicitation to the men of the parish without receiving a single response. His attempt to start a Boy Scout troop was more successful, even though the rigors of taking to the trail were not part of his
nature. Regardless of his other accomplishments, he freely admitted that he would never qualify for a merit badge for camping. As he explained his reluctance to head for the wide, open spaces: "The little villains liked to stay out at night, wrapped up in blankets in the wintertime. I had no energy for that, even though I did admire the fathers of the boys who went out with them. I don't know how they slept, whether on boards or in shelters or what, but I know that the frailest of them wanted to go out. Perhaps to face the challenge of the weather—like Sitting Bull."

Although he was not responsible for the operation of the parish school, he observed it closely and, remembering the Saint Aloysius experience, he considered it a valuable tool of parish coordination, as it provided a special intimacy with the homes of parishioners. The church-related school system in Philadelphia guaranteed contact with children through high school and Horace felt that this was important because, as he described it, "As they grow older and pass from eighth grade into high school, they become socially resistant and isolationist and questioning. I don't say 'rebellious,' but simply 'questioning.' Then, in order to get some routine out of them where they are not part of the ongoing system, you may be tempted to force or push them—to give them the Faith whether they want it or not—and they don't react so well to that. In other words, from my remote situation, I wonder about the value of compulsory religious education." Few of Horace's religious co-workers would have agreed with him and fewer would have voiced their views. But, again, Horace was ready to follow where his reason led him, even though the destination was unpopular.

Along with its normal religious duties, the parish under the vigorous leadership of Father J. William Michelman, S.J., its pastor, carried on an extensive program of social work in urban improvement and Horace joined his efforts to those of his colleagues. These involved organizing neighborhood clean-ups, physical improvements, and even beautification; sponsoring day camps; starting social clubs,
and fostering other social activities. They also included an increasing number of contacts with government agencies, which were now required to guarantee that the operations of these bodies would benefit rather than injure a neighborhood. Horace learned by experience that dealing adequately with the government involved setting up area organizations which could exert influence on the mayor and on lesser officials to get dilapidated houses torn down, have playgrounds installed, and generally improve the life of the inner city people.

Horace was not personally in charge of these activities, but he kept close enough to their operation to understand their necessity and to ponder their direction and effect. In connection with the establishment of social clubs, particularly, Horace reached the conclusion—which was later to have practical application for him—that the establishment of the traditional "social center" did not, in and of itself, attract people. "Where they only give out stale magazines," he argued to his fellow religious, "they don't create interest. These gathering places have to be somewhat educational and really profitable for the people. Bare walls are not attractive. They don't bring people in or stimulate their thinking or fellowship. You have to have a project focus of some kind—really educational or social."

As he worked with the people of the two principal racial groups in the parish, Horace saw some general progress toward integration, but he was puzzled and disturbed by the attitude of some of the older white people toward the blacks. "While they had sympathy," his analysis ran, "they didn't seem to have understanding." He pointed to one occasion when Rosemont College students had delivered eighteen Christmas turkey dinners for poor black families and they had to be kept in the school overnight due to a snow storm. One of the older women of the parish came into the school, looked over the dinners and said to Horace, "Why can't they work so that they can buy these themselves?"

As a matter of fact, the beneficiaries were unemployed or unemployable or came from families with absentee fathers.
Their needs were real. It was a “strange outlook of mind,” Horace thought, to believe that because a person receives a benefit, he or she is thereby proven to be lazy or undeserving or incapable of doing for him or herself. He added: “The poor soul who said this to me had probably worked all her life and had Social Security benefits and, perhaps, a pension too. On the other side, so many people among the black group are unemployed for several years at a time and, when women get employment, it’s maybe two days a week and it costs them half their money for carfare, and half their time to go to the distant suburb where the job is and then come back home to get their children from the day care center.”

These contacts with ignorance and prejudice deepened Horace’s conviction that whites needed to be educated in charitable matters. He expressed his belief in eloquent words: “We have to learn to love our fellow man in the depths of his spirit, even if he’s in an African village, a Brazilian mountain-top, or some Himalayan valley. We have to realize that as a fellow man, he’s a brother or sister of Jesus Christ, and so he’s intimately related to us, and we must have sympathy for him and must make an effort to help him, whether it’s by prayer, or by teaching, or by social action of some other sort. You have to awaken it and realize it and understand how these people must feel themselves.”

One important result of his deepened conviction was his work with Anna McGarry, the founder of the Catholic Interracial Council, a pioneering effort to bring about a more brotherly association among Catholics of different racial origins.

J. William Michelman, Horace’s rector and one of his warmest friends, has provided an illuminating appreciation of his fellow Jesuit in those days: “A principal characteristic of Horace was his concern about people. He would go out early in the morning to be with them on the streets. On Sunday, he would always be on hand at the first Mass in the morning to meet the working people who would attend. He would get up at 5:00 in the morning and would go to bed at 11:00 or 12:00 at night and would be out in the street all
day. He was always available for confession or even simply to talk with someone. He never got impatient with them and would never cut their discussion short.”

It was from these long hours and intense dedication that Horace developed what came to be a notorious habit—catching cat naps at unpredictable times during the day. At times, he would doze off when he was alone in the confessional. Potential penitents would have to go to another priest and ask him to wake Horace. One fellow cleric, whose person-to-person retreat Horace was directing, was disconcerted to discover Horace happily snoozing through one of the retreatant’s soul-baring sessions. Amazingly, both then and in later days, all agreed that his lapses never prevented him from retaining the thread of any discourse and asking a pertinent question at its conclusion.

From Michelman’s point of view, Horace’s most important contribution was in teaching Michelman “how to be a pastor.” Becoming the shepherd of the flock was a new job for the younger man and Michelman had had no experience in this complicated role. “Horace taught me how to deal with people,” he said. “He knew how to handle people. In supervising the Holy Name Society, he had praise for all. In the rectory, he made it a point to know all the kitchen people who were all blacks. He learned their names and always called them ‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.’ One time when I pointed out that he had known some of them long enough to call them by their first names, he told me, ‘I never want them to forget their dignity.’”

Historians who study the lives of great men assert that one of the essential ingredients to raise a person above the ordinary is an unusually large supply of energy and, whether he was patrolling his street beat at dawn or leaving a warm rectory on a cold night to drive a derelict street woman to a shelter in his old car, Horace was endowed with a reserve of physical resilience far above the normal. In fact, one might have called him hyperactive. This phenomenal response caused a problem for nurses who cared for him immediately
following hemorrhoid surgery during his Philadelphia assignment. After his operation, the effect of the drugs he had been given was so extreme that he tore off all the dressings, despite all attempts to dissuade him. With one less highly energized, this eruption probably would not have occurred. It seemed the drugs had only exacerbated his natural dynamism.

In 1964, with the movement that occurs in all such organizations, Horace was reassigned by his superior to Saint Aloysius on North Capitol Street in Washington. This time, the change was without accompanying overtones of conflict and, while Horace would work cheerfully wherever he was assigned, it seems clear that he welcomed the chance to return to the site of his “alleywhacking.”

Philadelphia had provided a period of development for him; a period of learning the intricacies of a life of service in a modern city; a period of serving his fellow men in an urban setting as he had done for so long in a rural setting, emulating, as always, his Master, Jesus Christ, in ministering to the needs of his parishioners, mindful ever that their material requirements may be as powerfully insistent as their spiritual ones and as important for him to satisfy. With solid achievement and marked personal growth behind him, he returned to Washington, where his career flowered in the accomplishments of the last eighteen years of his life.
Second Hitch in Washington

Horace called his return to Saint Aloysius as assistant pastor in 1964 his “second hitch in Washington.” Perhaps the military overtones in the metaphor were appropriate, for the Society of Jesus reverences the virtues of discipline and obedience. In this instance, undoubtedly, Horace’s affinity with the blacks and the down-and-outers motivated his superiors to bring him back to North Capitol Street. Whereas the whites had outnumbered the blacks when he had served here six years before, a recently completed census showed that there were 740 whites and 1400 blacks in the area. Parish policy had not always been sensitive to this demographic revolution and communication with the new constituency now seemed essential. New techniques and attitudes were required, whether or not all those concerned were happy about it, and Horace was ready to step in.

Economics was the cause of the change in the racial composition of the area population. The whites were moving to the suburbs and the blacks were taking their places. In addition, local authorities were beginning to sponsor and push urban renewal and land development programs. High-rise office buildings were constructed in the...
formerly residential neighborhood. Although welcomed at first as economic saviors, it soon became apparent that these projects were not, from a personal viewpoint, helpful to either the whites or the blacks. By taking their small homes, such redevelopment accelerated the exodus of the former. At the same time, it took away the modest dwellings of the latter, forcing them to move to higher-cost facilities in other locations. “The bureaucrats ‘surveyed out’ the poor homeless,” said Horace. The dehumanizing effect upon the parish was tremendous; high-rise business buildings, which were deserted at night, replaced the friendly small homes.

Horace and his colleagues deplored the results of these massive changes, but decided that if they could not turn back the tide, they would make use of its beneficial aspects for the betterment of their people. Accordingly, Horace, with the inspiration of Georgetown University and the formal sponsorship of the Gonzaga College High School, activated the establishment of a housing project for the area. With his ability to attract valuable helpers, he solicited and obtained the forceful leadership and expert technical advice of Washington attorney Eugene L. Stewart, whose close involvement and enlightened direction proved invaluable in negotiating the intricacies of the bureaucratic process and in bringing the project to fruition.

Since the first housing project of the redevelopment in the city had been located in the Southwest and had, in Horace’s words, “shooed out the poor with no idea of where they could possibly go and had put up houses which they could never possibly purchase,” the backers of Northwest One, as the new housing project was designated, insisted that no one in the newly developed area be displaced from housing without being provided with similar, safe, and sanitary facilities which he or she could afford, and, second, that anyone displaced have priority of consideration if he or she wished to return to the newly constructed units.

The result of this planning was the housing project now known as “Sursum Corda” (the liturgical invitation to “lift up your hearts”). The complex is located between L and M
Streets at First Street, N.W. Horace had seen a study which emphasized the great local need for accommodations for large, low-income families and Sursum Corda was a trailblazer in that it was tailored to this group, eighty of its 199 family units having four, five, or six bedrooms. Rent supplements were also obtained to accommodate these tenants. The original number of occupants was eleven hundred, of whom seven hundred were under the age of sixteen. The McKenna-inspired group also built a twenty-eight-unit "turnkey" project on North Capitol Street.

Unfortunately, the paternalism of the sponsors was used as an excuse for vandalism and rent delinquency in the early days and the idealistic motivation of the patrons was somewhat vitiated. Sister Kate McDonnell, a cousin of Horace and for many years a resident of Sursum Corda, has pointed out that Horace insisted that every person and every family could eventually be brought up to standard; consequently he opposed establishing any requirements for entrance. As a result, there were admissions that were predictably disruptive. The difficulties inherent in managing tenants of this character have not disappeared, but the formation of a tenants' committee, which Horace pushed, helped to improve the situation, proving the need, as he said, for democratic action while teaching a "severe and stern lesson." Exactly how "severe" and "stern" a lesson Horace was willing to have inculcated became a matter of controversy between him and his colleagues when the question arose of compelling families to leave because they were despoiling the premises in which they lived. "He just couldn't hurt anybody," said Father Clement J. Petrik, his former rector. "He didn't want the families to leave and he prevented their eviction. He was 'person-oriented' and not 'organization-oriented.'" This caused a split with associates who believed that, for the welfare of all and the preservation of the property, a lesson had to be taught.

When the project had been constructed and the time came to name it, Horace suggested to Eugene Stewart that Sursum Corda be translated into English, but Stewart disagreed,
thinking that most people would get to know and appreciate the meaning of the phrase. He also felt that if translated to “Lift Up Your Hearts,” people would make a mess of it as they had with the 1964 election slogan of Barry Goldwater: “In your hearts you know he’s right” had turned into “In your head you know he’s wrong.” In any event, the project, regardless of nomenclature, was completed, has always been filled, and has provided housing for deserving people for nearly two decades in an area which might have been a wasteland or a warehouse if it hadn’t been for Horace and his friends. It has done much to justify the hopes of its sponsors and has filled the crying need Horace sought to meet.

Ironically, it turned out that the complex was not located in the depleted parish of Saint Aloysius and therefore contributed no parishioners to that embattled entity. When the archdiocese set the new parish lines in 1968, Saint Aloysius was placed south of L Street and Holy Redeemer parish, on the north side of L Street, embraced most of Sursum Corda. “That’s where our best Catholic families went,” Horace later complained, “and we had cultivated them for over two generations.” When the loss became apparent, he made a half-hearted effort to rectify it. He called Father William F. Danahy, the Josephite pastor of Holy Redeemer, and asked if he would let Saint Aloysius “have Sursum Corda.” “Could you gerrymander it out of your parish?” Horace asked. Danahy’s reply was: “We need it.” Horace then backed off immediately. “I didn’t like to touch anybody else’s domain,” he said. His failure to take more vigorous action grieved Father Michael F. Kavanagh, who bewailed the loss of so many parishioners, but Horace, aggressive elsewhere, could only fight so many battles at once.

The housing unit won several architectural awards for the dignity of its design and the friendliness of its layout. The recognition came because the judges felt that the sponsors, in a manner not customary with publicly supported housing, had created a “village” instead of a “project.” In this
conception, Horace’s humanizing instinct and his inspirational direction played vital parts. As a fitting recognition of his share in the planning and execution, one of the inner thoroughfares of the cluster was named “McKenna Walk.” Horace facetiously described it as “a path to the dumpster.”

**TAKING UP THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY** where he had left off when he departed for Philadelphia, Horace determined that there was a local need for a better emergency food program. In 1968, he organized the daily distribution of sandwiches, which were donated by Winnie’s (Winfield Kelly’s) Chuck Wagons at the end of the rounds of their sixty trucks. The “leftover” food was excellent, but the method of feeding proved impractical. Horace described the complications: “We used to give out three hundred to four hundred sandwiches a day and, at the beginning, we used to give them out from the rectory, but then, some of the brethren crowded the rectory steps on occasion. At one point, one of Father Rector’s friends was coming to make a call and there was a drunken man lying across the front steps. That killed our distribution at the rectory.”

Horace’s loosely controlled and tolerant way of dealing with people in the depressed community endeared him to its beneficiaries. One of his clients was a man who gave his legal residence as “back seat of Father McKenna’s car” where he in fact had his regular residence and from which he vigorously resisted attempts by the parish to remove him when Horace was absent from the scene.

The free-wheeling operation increased the number of participants, but it continually conflicted with the activities of his associates who were not similarly motivated and were charged with the responsibility of managing the normal affairs of the parish and Gonzaga High School. His brothers in the rectory admired Horace’s dedication to poor people and none would have had him abandon his efforts, but some wished that his operations were less disruptive and more orderly.

One of these was a pastor who, as ranking official-in-
charge, bore the brunt of Horace’s open-arms policy and at times was disturbed by its effect on regular parochial routine. “In many ways,” he said in later years, “especially at first, Horace’s work was a mess. Of course, he gave great help to the poor. There’s no doubt about that. He would provide medical help or save someone from being thrown out of his house and he would show some care in the amounts he would give out as compared to some of the requests, but he wouldn’t exercise control over these people. He would let them come to him at any time, and, once it was established that he would treat with them at any time of day or night, it was impossible for him or anyone else to cope with the visits.

“Then he operated with a lot of telephone activity, but he wouldn’t get his own phone because he preferred to go through the Jesuit house at Gonzaga where the switchboard operator would take his calls and he wouldn’t have to pay for a phone. Many times, too, Horace would have told a caller to call him back on the parish phone, but he would not be on hand when the call was returned and a lot of parish time was spent looking for Horace. It go so bad that I didn’t know what to do.

“He just wouldn’t let you organize him. If you would say to one of his phone-callers at night, ‘Don’t come now, and, if you do, we won’t pay any attention to you,’ he would sneak out and receive them at another door. Also, he would take a client into the front parlor and have him wait there, sometimes all day long, and the client would want to use the toilet or want a glass of water or he’d want this or that and he’d be running all over the place. Then, later, with his ‘line,’ people, especially priests, couldn’t go through the street or along the driveway without continually being asked for help, even though the petitioners were in line waiting to get help from Horace.

“Horace was in various fights, too, and he would have to call the police to come to restore order. Once he was hit over the head and severely beaten by a deranged man who erroneously claimed Horace was holding money belonging
to him, but Horace weathered this assault and, displaying characteristic dramatic panache, preached the next Sunday with his head swathed in bandages. So, for these and other reasons, you could not really establish a nice parish office for people who would come in to inquire about the faith or to make appointments for marriage or things of that sort. He was just absorbed in his work and this was a nuisance to other members of the community and, in a sense, was not very thoughtful. At the same time, he was interested in educating the community and in having everybody in it experience some of the difficulties of his job and get a feeling of what these poor people were going through, and come down and help with his ‘line’ of applicants for help. One of the helpers from the order became so disillusioned with the volume of what he considered to be phony requests for cash that he finally quit the job in despair. In the final analysis, it took a person with an out-of-the-worldly viewpoint to be able to work with Horace.

Although he caused his associates some irritation, his ebullience and good humor helped to lighten the resentment. His instinct for the dramatic was sure. One close friend in the Jesuit community offered the following anecdote: “Horace was always colorful—always did the unexpected. I have so many memories of his quaint tactics. I recall in 1955 he was intent on some discussion as we walked across the basketball court at Gonzaga High while the varsity team was practicing. A loose basketball bounced to mid-court just as Horace walked there. Without interrupting his remarks, he picked up the bouncing ball, turned slightly, and threw it thirty feet right through the basket. The players were dumbfounded.” A remarkable combination of luck, poise and chutzpah!

As time passed and the program grew, many of the difficulties were resolved. Horace did get his own phone for Vincentian Society use. Quarters were provided for the reception and processing of petitioners in the basement of the church, at some distance from the rectory and its front door. The Jesuit order came to appreciate the significance of
Horace's activity and made a commitment to its support by providing the services of a scholastic, such as Ray Gawronski, and lay Jesuit volunteers, such as Bernadette Fisher and Chuck Clement. John Mulroy, named St. Vincent de Paul director, achieved success in establishing regular hours for conferences and in carefully examining requests. Guidelines were established to control those who would otherwise make an end run around the staff to reach Horace, who then found it difficult to resist their pleas. At length, the success of the enterprise, due to public recognition of Horace's personality and efforts, only increased his open-handed generosity and eventually brought a need for institutionalization.

An interesting view of Horace's modus operandi came from a physician who saw him frequently in his later years, although Horace was not one, as the physician said, to select and abide by one physician; "He was lovable and admirable and about as impractical as one could be. This was my first impression, but I gradually changed. At first, I felt that he was like the boy who was trying to bail out the ocean with a bucket, but then I later saw that he accomplished a great many things, although he was never overwhelmed with realism."

As the emergency feeding program seemed about to founder, because of organizational difficulties, Horace joined forces with Dr. Veronica Maz, a sociologist at Georgetown University, who had developed an interest in the problems of the inner city and had been referred to Horace by his old friend Father Richard McSorley. She was immediately impressed by him and recognized that he was "a very unusual person who lived his whole life for what he believed." Having organizational skills and follow-through that Horace lacked, she was able to erect a framework for the creation of a viable feeding activity. The operation had staggered from the rectory to the school and then to the old Notre Dame convent, but finally, in 1970, Horace and Dr. Maz brought together Father Ralph Kuehner, Rev. Griffin Smith of EFEO (Efforts for Ex-Offenders), Father Roger
Gallagher and Father James Casey of Saint Joseph’s Church on Capitol Hill, to incorporate an organization which was called SOME (So Others Might Eat), more effectively to provide hot meals for the needy. The first such meal was served on July 11, 1971 (a date burned into Horace’s mind) and, after several changes of location, SOME settled comfortably into a rehabilitated city building at 71 O Street, N.W., where it has become a conspicuous success.

Horace was the potent spark that ignited the fuel to power the organization. As Dr. Maz has said: “He was not a developer or organizer, but he was an inspirer. He inspired everyone he met because of the example his life provided and, in particular, through his genuine concern for people in need. He put every human being on an equal level and would treat a man without shoes exactly as he would treat President Reagan.” He performed one great educational service for Dr. Maz, as he had for so many others, because he considered it to be a vital part of his ministry. “He introduced me to poverty,” she said. Early in his efforts, he had gone to an area Saint Vincent de Paul meeting and had been given short shrift by the officers, who cut him off in the middle of his remarks. This angered him. As Dr. Maz pointed out: “You should see him when he became angry. He was very human, too. Sometimes, too, this anger would be directed at his brothers in the Society who failed to view things as he did and his impatient anger made life in the community difficult for some.”

Horace’s impatience with the slow response of his order to the needs of the poor is evidenced by a letter which he wrote on November 5, 1956 to the American Assistant to the General of the Jesuits, Father Vincent A. McCormick:

Very Reverend dear Father Assistant,

P.C.

Hope you got plenty of rest after such a lightning tour of the Western Upper Hemisphere.

Sorry to keep putting my thumb in your eye, as with the enclosed memorandum.

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What am I looking for? Perhaps the satisfaction of having been articulate if obscure in my frustration frenzy.

My thesis is, among other items previously despatched to the waste-basket last month at Georgetown, that the Poor are the critique of this generation (we no longer have a century to operate freely). And I do not think that the Society of Jesus has her hands up to the elbows in the poor, and I think that the parishes are where the waves of the poor break at our feet and come to us like a daily mission from the Creator, with a built-in mandate.

Father, how about getting us a Visitor, to see if we are throwing enough forward passes among the poor, as well as to inspect other things?

And please pound Fr. General's desk or tap on it, and ask for a “Secretariate for Ministry,” to see how we are living up to the Formulae on which we were approved.

I am so sorry to be haunting you like some urchin Socrates. I had better be like that Fr. Torres whom Xavier took to Japan and who, if I mistake not, buried himself in his work there....

Sincerely in the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Horace B. McKenna, S.J.

This remarkable letter with its resort to authority, its peaceful salutation (Pax Christi), its wry apology, its classical allusion, its knowledge of history and its profusion of metaphors, is typical of Horace’s style. It is further typical in that it carries a powerful message directly to the highest officials of his order to look back at the basic principles of their society and to take concrete steps to harbor and succor the poor.

When Dr. Maz first came to see him, she brought several young women, Georgetown graduate students, along with her. He responded by taking Maz and her students right out into the streets where they could see what he was talking about and learn from example as well as theory. Providing this visual evidence was an important part of his pedagogy and his closeness to the streets and his knowledge of street people equipped him uniquely to provide guidance. In spite of the rebuffs which he suffered in many quarters, he
persisted in what was, in its early stages, a lonely enterprise.

Horace was insistent about the necessity for organs of the church to respond more completely to the needs of the poor and he encouraged Maz to go to superiors of orders of men or women and solicit their help. To buttress his suggestion, he would haul down from the shelves ancient encyclopedias which showed the original eleemosynary purposes of the orders and how, as he contended, they now deviated from these objectives. His encouragement of people such as Maz, and Father (now Monsignor) Ralph Kuehner, who were working in the field, extended to frequent, laconic telephone calls during which he would ask how the person was doing and how the poor were doing before he would end quickly with words of encouragement.

Horace was very proud of SOME and of his part in its founding. He would escort visitors to its premises as if he were taking them to Maxim’s or the Tour d’Argent. Nothing irked him more than hearing someone refer casually to the project as a “soup kitchen.” He stressed that the food was infinitely more varied and of much higher quality than “soup.” To one listener, he happily cited a lasagna which he had been served shortly before, which he asserted was “an inch high in meat.” He insisted on recognizing the quality of the cuisine and on preserving the dignity of the patrons; he felt that “dining club” or “luncheon club” would better describe the establishment.

Not every project attempted by Horace ended as successfully as SOME. The problem of providing emergency shelter for the homeless population of the District was tragically emphasized in 1978, when seven people froze to death. The Gospel Mission had long provided overnight facilities and the Center for Creative Non-Violence and the Saint Stephen and Incarnation Church tried to work out an arrangement at one time, but the undertaking is frustratingly complex since it involves unpredictable and capricious human factors. The pastor of Luther Place Memorial Church, Reverend John F. Steinbruck, developed with Sarah House
a functioning program for women on a modest scale and with some success. Horace and his associates made several starts themselves, but they were never able to establish a permanent and satisfactory facility, and he finally decided that they should leave this field of endeavor to the District, with its converted school-shelters and to other agencies. While he abandoned the project for himself, he never ceased to proclaim its necessity.
Horace firmly believed that the advent of massive governmental assistance had not lessened the need for private charitable agencies. The very ponderousness of the governmental units made emergency aid impossible. “The first line of the welfare application,” he pointed out, “is: ‘You will get a report on this application within thirty to forty-five days.’ I wonder what they expect the poor client to do in the meantime! His cousins and his neighbors are as poor as he is. How do they expect him to live?”

When persuading the city library commissioners to keep open the branch at the housing complex which provided the residents with “inspiration and information,” he liked to cite the valuable help the Center City Community Corporation had given to the Sursum Corda project. “You really need the private agencies,” he argued, “the settlement house, the church, the Salvation Army, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the People’s Involvement Corporation, and all those organizations dedicated to helping the community.”

As long as he was able, he patrolled a sort of beat through the parish and the surrounding neighborhood. As he had years before with the children, he got to know his neighbors,
to listen to their problems, and to give them help where he could. He did this both in his individual capacity and as a representative of the Catholic Church whose image he sought to embellish.

One of these neighbors who became an intimate friend and co-worker was the Reverend Imagene Stewart, pastor of the Church of What’s Happening Now. Stewart, the daughter and granddaughter of Georgia preachers, believed that a church should be about “what’s happening now” and she so described her street ministry of preaching and singing, begun in 1969. Allied to this vocation was her House of Imagene at 214 P Street, N.W., set up as a twenty-four-hour emergency shelter for the homeless and victims of domestic violence.

In 1970 or 1971, as she was preaching and singing on street corners, she occasionally noticed a little old, white-haired man standing some distance away, watching her intently. It was Horace, of course, who had read about her in the papers and wanted to see what made her tick and how she fitted into the community and what form her religious expression took. “He took to me,” she told a friend, “and he’d come around to see me operate.” His first question to her was a practical one. He asked her why she didn’t take up a collection, and she answered that she wanted to be self-sufficient; she worked as a dish-washer to support herself and her work.

She talked to him about evictions where families were broken up—with the man going one place and the woman another and of her aim to provide a facility where the whole family could stay together. He told her that it would be a hard struggle, but that she had to keep at it. “He was the only person to give me encouragement,” she said. “He would help me two or three times a day. He never turned me down.” He told other people about her and they brought sheets and furniture to help her get her center established. “He got me together after I was ready to give up. He provided financial help and spiritual help and gave me the backbone to lift me up.”
Left, Horace at the door of the St. Aloysius Church basement at 17 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., where his St. Vincent de Paul Society office was located and where his “line” of clients formed for interviews and assistance.

Below, Horace in 1981 with one of the members of his “line” at 17 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
Stewart saw Horace’s significance in more than personal terms. “He was a bridge with the down-and-out who don’t trust anybody,” she explained to one visitor. “He didn’t care where you came from or what ditch you got out of. There was no black and white question with him and the blacks just looked up to him.

“Now, a lot of people, both black and white, didn’t like his approach to the homeless. They said, ‘He’s fostering them to do nothing and will give them a dollar a day ’til the day they die.’ But he did a lot of good that way.”

They developed a mutual affection and respect. They would meet frequently and stroll along the streets. At first, “the ‘guys’ would see a black girl and a white man sitting and talking on the corner and say, ‘What’s up?’” But this was temporary and the blacks came to look up to him. “I have had few white men play a part in my life,” Stewart told a visitor, “but I could really relate to him. He was one of the few people that I could really trust. I could tell him intimate things about myself and cry my troubles out. And another thing. He loved to hear me sing and even though he didn’t sing himself he would often ask me to sing for him.”

Even though he grew old and feeble, if a meeting was called in which he was interested—such as one the mayor called on housing for the homeless—Horace would be on hand and, as Stewart said, “if he saw something going on that he didn’t like, he’d be on his feet and wow! he would make his point.”

Stewart felt that “perhaps he thought that I was doing something good” and she, in turn, was “blessed by his presence.”

OVER THE YEARS, HORACE TOOK PART IN OR SYMPATHETICALLY supported a variety of movements dedicated to improving the lot of classes at the bottom of the economic ladder. He backed the Abbey House program for providing an Alcoholics Anonymous organization. Even though he had differences with her on some projects, he backed Dr. Maz’s plan to set up a house for homeless women, called Shalom,
at Fourth and K Streets, N.E. He also supported and named the House of Ruth ("in tears amid the alien corn") a successor to Shalom which provided shelter to socially unadjustable women, and Martha's Table ("Martha was busy about much serving"), a soup kitchen for children under twelve. It was appropriate that, less than a year before his death, Horace, in a symbolic public gesture, concelebrated a memorial Mass for Anna Stivers, a life-long resident of institutions, who had died a resident of the House of Ruth.

On occasion, Horace would use direct action to educate the community in the proper consideration of the poor. When some residents in the neighboring O Street section opposed clients of the "luncheon club," SOME, "hanging around," he and his associates took their case directly to the opponents and persuaded them that the visitors were not loafers, but largely poor men seeking improvement. Consequently, residents changed their attitude and afterwards showed "good will, support and sympathy."

Given his drive for accomplishment and his single-minded dedication, Horace would get frustrated with co-workers who were too much like himself, especially in his younger days, workers who ranked high in devotion and good will, but low in managerial efficiency. "I often had to keep barking at SOME," he growled to an interviewer, "because they would get a grant for one purpose, which was inadequate for their plans, and then go ahead and spend it immediately without regard for the budget period or designation. On another occasion, they tried to change the function of Shalom from a program for homeless women to one for female alcoholic counseling without notice to or approval of the authorities providing the financing."

In his later years, Horace and his associates concentrated the efforts of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society upon his program of providing individual monetary assistance to the needy of the community. This project appraised and dealt with the applicants of Horace's famous "line," which formed a file each day except Tuesday outside the rear
basement door of Saint Aloysius Church. In the church basement an inner room with two old desks and a few ancient filing cabinets served as a simple office where clients were interviewed, the legitimacy of their needs determined, and an appropriate disbursement made. The entrance from outside led to another room, equipped with a sort of bleacher where applicants sat and chatted while awaiting their interviews. Horace attended the morning opening of his "line" as devotedly as he assisted at the noon-day Mass and he would break off any other pursuit at three o’clock in the afternoon to go down to his center. There, with his gleaming white hair, ruddy complexion, bright eyes, and garbed in a woollen lumberjack shirt instead of a Roman collar, he looked like a genial, elderly leprechaun padding quietly about the premises. Although his failing sight eventually made it impossible for him to distinguish features, his hearing was extremely acute and he could quickly identify many of the clients from their voices and would talk with them about their families and their problems.

The help provided to applicants included: emergency rent to prevent eviction, transportation to work, to a hospital, or to a distant home town in time of family crisis, prescription costs, shelter referral, and, on occasion, simple food and clothing. Regulations eventually limited assistance to five times a person per month. At one time up to several hundred dollars was disbursed a day and as many as 160 people were interviewed in a day.

Always eager to lift up the hearts of his people and stimulate their sociability, Horace added a weekly coffee klatsch to the regular aid program. On Sunday afternoons, from one to three in another specially appointed section of the church basement, coffee and cookies were served to anyone, and about a hundred people would come each week to enjoy music, art lessons, cards, checkers, or conversation. Entertainment was spontaneous. One visitor might play a guitar while another would step up to the center of the room and belt out a number à la Billy Eckstine. A dedicated volunteer such as Consuelo Genadio might lead the group
in songs. Ray Gawronski, who helped carry on this social part of Horace's program as well as the main assistance aspect, summed up the purposes and results of this recreational project when he said: "It was humanizing for us all." The coffee klatsch offered an excellent example of Horace's continuing efforts to emphasize the humanity of the poor and to arouse the humanity of the rest of the community in responding to their needs.

Through Horace's efforts, the scope of the program increased tremendously over the years. As its existence became known in the area, the number of applicants increased, but Horace, with his great personal charisma and his growing contacts in the broader Washington community, was able to attract the increased contributions necessary to match the needs. Contributors came from all over the city and from the suburbs. In fact, the local Saint Vincent de Paul unit gradually outgrew its principal, the parish, with the former collecting and administering eighty thousand dollars in one recent fiscal year, while Saint Aloysius, a separate accounting entity, collected approximately forty-five thousand dollars.

Horace's charisma included several ingredients. He was small and not particularly handsome or distinguished looking. One would never feel that his clothes had come from Brooks Brothers—although he had been known to wear a tie at a wedding, likened, someone remarked, to an old nun donning a pants suit. Yet, with his pink cheeks and twinkling eyes, he radiated an appealing benignity and affection and, even though his voice was gruff and his expressions often laconic, he said the right things and asked the right questions. In addition to his overwhelming charity, he was a man of intellectual substance and theological competence who had pondered the great questions of life long and deeply. Finally, his activity was not based on self-interest or the desire for aggrandisement. Donors knew that their contributions would not be spent for executive luncheons or plush offices, but would go to needy people. To cap his other qualities, he had a natural political sense,
an ability to influence people, and a sly sense of humor which was as endearing as it was surprising.

Horace’s clear commitment to the poor attracted the valuable help of many devoted workers. Some have already been mentioned. Others included Deacon Charles Hill, a close friend, former school principal Elmer Kemp, and Jesse Dudley, as well as scores of others. The constant assistance of the Jesuit Volunteers and the seminarian and lay helpers was vitally important. Their involvement in interviewing, financial accounting, and general housekeeping was essential to the continuation of the program, since Horace, with his physical limitations, could never have performed these tasks by himself, or with unskilled volunteers.

From being a semioutcast and one considered an oddball, he had now become a respected figure, who was effectively helping to mold the public opinion of his time in relation to treatment of the poor.
To See How My Brothers in Christ Are Treated

Horace was not immune to the powerful surges of opinion which swept the nation in the 1960s. Always a bit of a Bolshevik, he found himself becoming more left-oriented, meaning he felt more and more passionately that changes in human and international relations were absolutely essential. As might be expected, some of the great protest demonstrations of this period stirred Horace's blood and elicited his vigorous support. He looked favorably upon any activity calculated to nudge middle-class people from their lack of solicitude for the underprivileged. Tending to soften the asperities of zealots, he glossed over the excesses of activists and justified them if he agreed with their objectives.

One demonstration in which he passionately wanted to take part was the great Civil Rights March on Washington on August 28, 1963, but in one of his not-infrequent differences of opinion with his superiors, he was prevented from participating. He was stationed in Philadelphia at the time and the attitude of the local hierarchy was not favorable to the protest or to hasty movement toward civil rights reform. Horace illustrated the position of Cardinal John J. Krol by repeating the story that the prelate had seen both a
Eucharistic Congress button and a Washington March button on a priest’s lapel and had angrily asked what connection there was between the liturgical convention and civil rights.

Horace had received permission from his rector to take part in the march and had also received permission from the chancery office, but, when it was discovered that he had been contacting other priests to urge their participation, the chancery office called and told him: “You no longer have permission to go and you must call everyone to whom you said that you did have it and tell them that you no longer have.”

“That anchored me in Philadelphia,” he recounted subsequently, “but 250,000 other people went on that memorable march, and a crowd from Woodstock College went in a bus that had ‘Woodstock for Civil Rights’ on the side of it. It was a beautiful spectacle. I watched a good deal of it on TV and I remember Dr. King’s stirring sermon: ‘I have a dream—a brotherhood from sea to sea.’”

Horace felt great sympathy for the antiwar protests of the Vietnam War and strongly supported them and their accompanying marches. He deplored the unwillingness of his fellow Jesuits to take part in the protests in any substantial numbers and at times would “walk from end to end of those protest marches to see how many Jesuits I could see.” He credited the protests with having an effect on Congress which “cut off the money for the bombing.” Congress was “susceptible to the marches,” even if the White House, in his opinion, was not.

Since he sympathized with their declared objectives, Horace adopted a mild and permissive attitude toward even the most subversive of the agitators, whom he described euphemistically: “There was a restless crowd,” he admitted, “I guess they called them ‘The Weathermen,’ that wanted to do damage or confront the police, but most people just wanted to move out and listen to the talks and give their vote against the war because it seemed so useless and so unending and so deadly.”
Even at home on his own premises, he could not bring himself to criticize forceful and unlawful self-help action. "We had a crowd here at Gonzaga," he told an interviewer some time later, "who took over the Notre Dame cafeteria for two days, and they did it very well. They were well-disciplined. They were orderly, they were clean. What they did was of interest and I was glad to see that we were susceptible to national needs and national feelings." This was a long way indeed from the traditional Jesuit enforcement of discipline.

He also expressed strong approval of the twenty-four-hour vigil which the Quakers maintained in front of the White House to express their opposition to the Vietnam War. Horace's attitude toward war had changed markedly during his life and was modified even in his last years. From the naive and jingoistic attitude which was typical of World War I days and the supportive, if less simplistic, attitude which was pervasive in World War II, he reached the point in the eighties where his rationale was, frankly, pacifistic.

In a discussion in 1981, he said, "I'm a pacifist, I guess. I must accept that. Where war is so general as it would be now, and putting up a defense means killing on a wholesale scale, that is simply organized murder, and it's all useless because in the same measure, it kills the people on the other side. In purely personal matters, one should perhaps act upon the supposition of the Sermon on the Mount and turn the other cheek, which means relying on the goodness of God to soften the assailant or support the sufferer—but in the matter of modern war, that's not enough. The bishops have to come out and declare against wholesale obliteration through atomic war." In this regard he was certainly prescient as to the action of the Catholic bishops of the United States in issuing their Pastoral Letter in 1983, which expressed their abhorrence of nuclear war.

Even in the midst of this extremely serious exposition, Horace could not keep his humor from breaking forth. "I think we ought to try more people-to-people relationships,"
he added. “My present suggestion is to beg a billion dollars from the Pentagon, which wouldn’t miss it, and send over to Russia a thousand motorcycles, a thousand snowmobiles, two hundred million Hershey bars, and two million pints of vodka!” Evidently, he did not consider that sending vodka to Russia was sending coals to Donetsk.

Horace’s desire to identify with the downtrodden led him in 1968 to seek a share in the experiences of those who came to Washington as a part of what was called the “Poor People’s Campaign.” Bedeviled by execrable weather and bogged down near the Lincoln Memorial in a morass partly of its own making, the poorly directed operation, which involved rural poor people marching into the city with mule-drawn farm wagons, never made much of an impression on the capital. But Horace viewed it as a legitimate expression of grievances and wanted to share in the statement. Four or five times he visited the federally provided site, called “Resurrection City,” and, through Father James Groppi, the activist priest from Milwaukee, obtained an invitation to stay there one night.

When Horace arrived on the scene, garbed in trousers and shirt, he went first to the food center where he found one hot dog, which he left, and a piece of a roll, which he ate. He watched an amateurish entertainment and then went to his tent. There he found people going by continuously and “some harsh words exchanged” when one of the tent-dwellers thought that his possessions had been knocked onto the ground. Horace would laugh in retrospect when he afterward explained his apprehension at the time. “I thought they were going to fight so much that I took off my glasses in case there might be swinging around, but it all quieted down.” The host had a bottle which he was continually “tipping up to his lips” and about eleven o’clock, he told Horace to turn in.

“Well, I went back,” Horace told a friend some years later. “Everything was damp in the tent and the floor was covered with all sorts of things. It was so dark that I didn’t
know whether there was anybody on the cot or not. So, I left my legs on the ground and just got my hips lifted up and I lay back and slept until some kind of daylight.

“When I woke up in the morning, I tried to pick everything up off the floor and hang it on a nail so that it would dry. I tried to put everything in order before I left the tent. This time, when I went out, my host didn’t have a bottle, but had a gallon jug which he was always putting to his lips. He spoke of coffee, but never made any. Then I thanked him and wandered over to the food tent. There was a big food truck, equipped with locks, which was parked there, but it had been broken into a number of times.

“The only food they had there was cornflakes and milk. There were six young ladies—religious of the Sacred Heart from Stone Ridge Academy—offering to serve what there was. They came every day from seven to eight to help serve the breakfast. I was happy to see them. When I got my cornflakes, I couldn’t find any spoon, so I had to eat them with a fork. I didn’t want to go in on anyone else’s food, so that was enough. Then I walked around a little bit more until I was satisfied that I had seen the place fairly well. Then I had to walk from the Lincoln Memorial to Pennsylvania Avenue to get a bus back to the rectory.”

Horace was sixty-nine when he made this inspection tour, but it is apparent that his curiosity and interest in seeing things for himself was undiminished, his concern for the poor undimmed, and his courage unimpaired.

“I was very happy to have had that experience and that companionship with the Poor People’s Campaign. Before I left the grounds, I went over to the registration booth and paid five dollars and they gave me a card that said ‘Poor People’s Campaign,’ but there’s no date on it. I was happy to have that familiarity and confidence in the people. The campaign didn’t make much impression on Washington, though.”

In this instance, it is impossible not to be impressed by Horace’s firm faith, his tolerance of squalor and crudity, his refusal to be disillusioned or side-tracked, and his serene
identification with humanity, however base its manifestation. He was not impatient that the “campaign” was naive, poorly managed, dubiously motivated, and ill-starred. He saw the participants as people stamped with the divine image and was happy to share in their fumbling attempt to seize the attention of the country with their plea for public concern.

The Gospel Mission at 810 Fifth Street, N.W. was another project that aroused Horace’s interest. He had engaged in other altruistic pursuits as part of the yearly required eight-day retreat of his order, but he felt that he still owed the Society of Jesus “one day of spiritual exercise,” so he asked his superior, Father Clement J. Petrik, if he could spend the eighth day as a resident of the Gospel Mission. Petrik gave him permission to carry out his plans. “He usually let me have my way, anyway, and told me that I never did anything I didn’t want to do.” While not denying the truth of his rector’s statement, Horace blandly passed over his own willingness, on occasion, to adopt bulldozer tactics. “I was grateful for his fatherly care and inspiration.” One can imagine the benign smile as Horace dealt with the rector who was four decades his junior.

Horace decided to stay two nights so that he would be certain that he was participating a full day. He relayed his stay in great detail: Soon after he arrived, had been enrolled, and had sat down, one of his fellow residents came over and tried to borrow a dollar. Horace fended him off with the plea that he had only $1.10 and wanted to pay for his dinner the next night and also to make a phone call. After a “fair” supper, all hands went to the chapel where they were required to spend an hour. “The poor preacher exhorted us greatly to cooperation [giving testimony],” Horace remembered, “but I was afraid to cooperate immediately without giving due warning, but I said to myself, ‘I’ll try to cooperate tomorrow night.’”

The next morning, he had breakfast and was served a dish totally new to him—raisins in oatmeal. Thereafter, he inspected the laundry and workshop and hobby shop and
obtained an identification tag. He had a good luncheon and a good dinner. Then, over at the “preaching,” when they asked for people to give testimony, Horace told the men how worthwhile they were in the sight of God, that they possessed grace, were directly related to God, and were of priceless value before God.

His talk seemed to go over fairly well, but after he’d suggested they sing “We Are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder,” he realized he’d made a bad mistake. “I used to sing it without too much trouble,” he said at one time when he was discussing this experience, “because I would only sing it where the congregation couldn’t walk out, but this time I was never worse. I hadn’t gone over it mentally before singing, and I have to do that whenever I’m going to sing. So I made a mess of the whole thing. Anyway, one or two of the men seemed to join in the drone, so we managed to get through with it.

“Afterward I took a shower and, as I looked about, I felt like a piece of white writing paper amongst a lot of carbon papers. Then I went to my cot. We had nice cots and sheets—it was too warm for blankets—and you put your shoes under the bed, although I guess that if they were good shoes, the best place to put them would have been under your head. There was some rumpus during the night. It seems that someone had attacked the Chinaman in the neighborhood, and the police were called in, but, in general, it was pretty quiet and you could rest.

“I was grateful to the evangelical staff who provided for all of us and for me, especially. I looked upon the visit as a pleasant experience.”

In January 1978, during the frightful cold spell when seven homeless people froze to death in Washington, Horace was so concerned about the availability and quality of facilities for these people that he made an overnight visit to the public shelter which had been opened by the Committee for Creative Non-Violence at the Blair School at Sixth and I Streets, N.E. Since the Saint Vincent de Paul Society was sending homeless men there, he felt that he
should have a firsthand look at it. To one man who asked what Horace was doing there and then complained that he was keeping another person out of a bed, Horace explained that he "wanted to see how my brothers in Christ are treated" and then offered to spend the night in a chair. He ended up behind the night desk in a bed which had been dubbed a "bridal suite for snorers." He found the shelter "hard but sufficient for dependent people" and later wrote a graphic account of his experience, which appeared on the op-ed page of the Washington Post on October 28, 1978.
As a Catholic and as a Jesuit, Horace was a loyal member of a church and of an order built upon authority and obedience. Customarily, he was punctilious about following the orders of his superiors and the laws of the church. At the same time, he did not shrink from reaching firm and sometimes unorthodox opinions on sensitive matters. He was proud of his inherited stubborn streak, had great confidence in his reasoning powers, and was willing to differ with his superiors upon matters of morality or policy—even to the point of calling down upon himself disciplinary action. On occasion, he felt the demands of humanity dictated one course of action while the mandate of tradition and legalism required the opposite.

His most radical difference with ecclesiastical authorities, and the one with most severe personal results, arose in 1968 when he declined to follow the official policy of the church hierarchy, as interpreted in the Archdiocese of Washington, on the propriety of church members using artificial methods of birth control.

Prior to the time of crisis, Horace had told penitents that such practices were immoral, but, as time passed, the
“pressures became so constant,” as he expressed it, that he began to say that “the law was doubtful and that the faithful were not bound by it.” His position was not unique, but was supported by several theologians at that time. The Washington area was confronted with the spectacle of associations of priests issuing opposing statements upon the subject. The conflict was not confined to the local clergy, however; it was duplicated all over the world. Because of the contention, Pope Paul VI considered it necessary that a definitive declaration of doctrine be issued to settle the matter. Accordingly, to assist him in his deliberations, he appointed a commission of sixty to study the question and, after consideration, the commission recommended the liberalization of the church policy on birth control. The Pope, however, refused to accept the suggestion of his own commission and decreed against it by the issuance, on July 29, 1968, of a pastoral letter, the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life), which held to the preexisting doctrine that artificial methods of contraception were immoral, unlawful, and forbidden.

There was much speculation as to what or who had persuaded the Pope to reach this controversial and unpopular decision, and it was reported that a French Jesuit had swung the Pope into the position which he finally adopted. But the Holy Father must also have been considering the position of the faithful who, often at great personal sacrifice, had courageously conformed to the law in the past. In any event, Horace believed that “[the Pope] was the prisoner of the Vatican establishment whose members read books of authority which were reprinted, but never edited. They were sticking to tradition and didn’t know anything about the evolving world. For the last two years before *Humanae Vitae*, I had been permitting birth control on the score that the law was doubtful and I felt that it was the right thing to do, but it was a very serious thing for me to be faced with this decision.” Presumably forewarned of the Pope’s decision and foreseeing trouble, Cardinal O’Boyle sent to the archdiocesan clergy a general statement of clerical obligation to
submit to the "authentic teaching authority" of the Roman Pontiff.

When *Humanae Vitae* confirmed the traditional doctrine, heated priestly discussion followed. The cardinal issued "guidelines" to the clergy on adherence to the tenets of *Humanae Vitae* and members of the clergy responded with questions as to the degree of obligation imposed by the encyclical. The result was a sharp division of opinion among priests, and sides were taken on the issue. This turbulence was not confined to priests and religious, but spread among the faithful as well. The media covered the dispute with oceans of words. *Newsweek* called it "Paul’s bitterest pill."

Shortly after the release of the encyclical, a group of theologians, largely North Americans, issued a dissenting opinion. At the same time, a "Statement of Conscience," expressing in general terms the approach they intended to take with "people who were caught in the birth control dilemma," was prepared by the Association of Washington Priests and read from the steps of St. Matthew’s Cathedral. In the newspaper photo of the group Horace can plainly be seen. He was one of the 41 priest-signers who favored leaving the critical decision to the consciences of the individuals, as other prelates throughout the world proposed, rather than applying the rigid, literal application of the law as interpreted by the cardinal.

Cardinal O’Boyle reacted vigorously. This man of good will, who had been in the forefront of the desegregation movement, who was personally charitable, and who had generously provided assistance to Horace in several of his projects, misjudged the sentiment of his constituency and adopted a hard line that made it impossible to resolve the controversy by agreement. He considered the action of the signatories a rebellion against the Pope. The cardinal wrote a ten-page letter to each, arguing his position, and then called them in individually and collectively, reaffirmed his stand, and demanded that they retract theirs.

One of the signatories, who attended a group session, has described it as follows: "Cardinal O’Boyle, with his canoni-
cal advisers beside him, called the meeting to order. He first
gave a talk to the assembled priests, then he had some Jesuit
speak against birth control. After that he asked if anyone
had questions on his request for an affirmation of his
position. And nobody had any comment except Father
McKenna. He said, ‘Well, I’m not a prince of the Church
like his Eminence and I’m not a learned theologian like
Father, but I’m a simple parish priest who for all my priestly
service has been associated with the poor, and I think there
comes a time in the life of every devoted priest when he must
stand up and represent the faith of his people, and I am here
to represent the faith of my people. I know for certain that
there are good people, who are totally loyal to the church,
who believe that in conscience that they can use contra-
ceptives in marriage. And that’s all I have to say.’ Well, it was
kind of benumbing because O’Boyle had this super respect
for Father McKenna and in his mind must have been asking
‘What has happened to our saintly Father McKenna?’"

It was then that the cardinal asked Horace on what
authority he took a different position from his bishop on
this question, and Horace made his classic answer: “Forty
years in the confessional!”

Father McSorley has described the conclusion of the
confrontation: “When Horace left the building, the newspa-
per reporters who had been alerted and were waiting for
him went after him. ‘Do you have anything to say about
Cardinal O’Boyle?’ they asked. He said, ‘Yes. Cardinal
O’Boyle is my superior and he’s a man of God and I wish
God’s blessing upon him in every way.’ And that made the
papers. Then, one day later, I met him at Georgetown and I
said to him, ‘Horace, you’re a ton of bricks because you’re
disagreeing with the cardinal; and he said, ‘I only disagree
with the cardinal because I think he’s wrong. I didn’t say it
that strongly, but I think he’s wrong.’”

In spite of their doctrinal differences, Horace maintained
respect and affection for Cardinal O’Boyle and he always
took pains to make this clear. “He helped me from the
beginning of his incumbency,” he said. “He was always
generous and he knew what one thousand dollars meant to a poor man whose Sunday collection, taken all together, didn’t reach a twentieth of that amount.

“I remember one time when he came down to see us at Ridge. I owed him five thousand dollars. I said, ‘Your Eminence, give me two thousand dollars and let me scratch for the rest,’ but he said, ‘No, I’m going to give you five thousand dollars because these people need the money.’ He appreciated the work we were doing and the education we were trying to give the children. He’s a real man who understands hard work and discouraging work—work that has to be done for the Kingdom of God.’”

The cardinal, perhaps chary of raising the ghosts of the old controversy, declined to be interviewed about Horace, but wrote that he recalled him as the pastor of St. Peter Claver Church, “totally devoted to the care of the blacks in that time,” and pointed out that Horace was the founder of SOME which “I visited on a certain Christmas.”

Horace blandly characterized the cardinal as “firm, but amiable” about Horace’s defection. There could be no question about the prelate’s firmness, but, while he had previously demonstrated affection and admiration for Horace, there was no concealing his unhappiness in the current situation, and the iron of his resolve showed clearly from time to time.

At first, the unhappiness was muted, as on the occasion when Horace was summoned for his individual meeting with the cardinal where the latter directed Horace to sign a retraction and Horace said, “Eminence, I can’t sign that. I would have to look a hundred Catholic couples in the face and say, ‘I know how you have to live and you can’t live that way and be Catholics. I couldn’t say that.’”

Shortly thereafter, however, the vigor of the confrontation increased. The two met at a ribbon cutting for the new housing on K Street, and the cardinal said to him, “Father McKenna, I’m going to hit you hard!”

To this Horace replied: “Well, your Eminence, I’ll have to get an iron jaw.” A bit later at the chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor, where he was present to offer bene-
diction, the cardinal, indicating Horace, said to a nearby cleric, “There’s a priest who doesn’t agree with his bishop!”

Horace, feeling that he “might as well let him [the cardinal] have it,” said, “Your Eminence, it’s just a matter of conflict between authority and supposed experience.”

And, when Monsignor John F. Donoghue, the bystander, queried, “Supposed experience?” Horace responded, “Well, you have to soften it somehow.”

On the same occasion, when they were leaving, Horace knelt before the cardinal and said, “Your Eminence, would you give me a peaceful blessing like Jacob and Esau?”

The cardinal replied, “I’d like to give you a crack on the jaw!” But he did give his blessing. Horace was probably sincere in his request, but he certainly would have been abnormally naive to assume that there would be no irritation on the part of the cardinal who, as representative of the Pope, was carrying out what he considered to be papal policy.

At another of their private meetings, the cardinal, in exasperation, asked Horace, “How did you get this way?”

Horace explained to him: “When I first came to Washington, I followed the strict doctrine, but I found in my experience that it didn’t seem to work. I discovered that there were what I called ‘martyrs of matrimony.’ One lady told me that she had had four children in four years. A man said, ‘I am driven out of the house. My wife won’t look at me after having had five children.’ So, I can’t tell these people that they can’t engage in intercourse without a haunting fear of being driven out of the house or being hopelessly burdened. So I felt that these people, in those situations, were free to do what they thought right and best.

“The cardinal kept cautioning me about pride and self-will, but I said, ‘This is one of the main decisions of my life. I don’t want to go against the Pope. I don’t want to endanger my salvation. I don’t want to lead anybody in the wrong direction, but this is what I think conscience has to say. I didn’t consider the historical character of the question as being the old question of freedom of conscience. I thought it
was a question of being told to do something you couldn’t possibly do and that authority shouldn’t command the impossible. And I certainly felt, with that poor woman and that poor man, that their situation was impossible and that the only way out of it was to break up their marriage or allow birth control.”

WHILE RELYING ON THE WRITINGS OF MORAL THEOLOGIANS LIKE Father Richard A. McCormick, S.J.,* Horace had his own pungent way of expressing the dilemma: “They propose the ‘rhythm system’ as an alternative, but rhythm is Vatican roulette! Almost any family can point out to you amongst their four or five children those that are rhythm children and those that are not.” He added that another alternative, “periodic abstinence,” was not what a loving couple had promised one another. This “affection by timeclock” was not the human cycle.

Cardinal O’Boyle and his advisers examined Horace and the other signatories of the “Statement of Conscience,” querying them on the various implications of their position. Horace recalled the basic inquiries. The cardinal had asked, “What about doctrine?” and Horace had replied, “Well, I have to give them freedom of conscience.” Then the cardinal asked, “What about preaching?” and Horace replied, “Well, I figure that the Pope has a right to his pulpit, so, if I am assigned to preach on the subject, I will give them as doctrine the church’s doctrine.” Then the cardinal asked what his attitude about confession was and Horace answered that he would feel obligated to tell the penitents that they were excused from the law. The final question was about counseling and Horace’s response was: “Well, if somebody asks you how to get downtown, you have to tell them.”

As a result of his answers in his letters of response and his


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interview, Horace was restricted by the cardinal from hearing confessions—exiled from the "peace box" as he called the confessional. Canonical penalties were imposed on the other signers and their severity varied, apparently based on the oral and written answers they submitted to the cardinal. Restrictions from preaching or offering Mass were imposed upon some.

When O'Boyle issued these restrictions, sentiment among the laity boiled over into outward expressions of disapproval. At one church there was an evening candlelight procession of objectors. At another, the cardinal was picketed by one hundred members of the Washington Lay Association when he came to say Mass. In response he circulated a pastoral letter asking support for his position, but when it was read from the pulpit around the archdiocese, many members of the congregation walked out of the church, even at the cathedral where the cardinal was himself the reader. The November 11th Washington Star, under the headline "Giant Pep Rally Backs Dissenting Priests," reported that a "singing, cheering crowd of about 5,000 persons jammed the main ballroom and two other ballrooms at the Mayflower to support 54 Washington priests who oppose Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle on freedom of conscience as it relates to birth control." Senator Eugene McCarthy, Mrs. Philip Hart and Father John Corrigan were the principal speakers.

Horace realized fully what a difficult problem he and his fellow dissidents posed for Cardinal O'Boyle and Horace sympathized with the cardinal and continued to feel friendly toward him. "He just knew it was hopeless," Horace afterward commented in describing their antagonistic positions. "He had this hard case on his hands, and I couldn't change. It was a disagreement like that between Peter and Paul. Paul had to tell Peter that he was wrong.* I never felt that I was questioning the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals because I felt that our position was the

*"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was deserving of blame" (Gal. 2:11-23).
voice of the church. The Negro people, in particular, told me, 'It doesn’t matter what they say. We know what we have to do.'"

Opinion in the Catholic community divided sharply in reaction to the publication of the "Statement of Conscience." Horace found welcome support from some in his own order. Father Francis X. Reardon, his pastor, and Father Thomas P. Gavigan, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, a former master of novices, were Jesuit cosigners who were disciplined. Fifteen of the Jesuits at Gonzaga signed a similar statement of dissent, as did thirteen at Georgetown University. One Jesuit, meeting Horace on the street, took off his hat in salutation and shook hands with him. Another, Father Francis X. Moan, wrote him a letter of congratulations. But the response was far from unanimously favorable. One person wrote that he didn’t see how the order could put up with Horace. He was keenly aware of the harmful effect the controversy was having in the Gonzaga community. He knew that "the older alumni and parents were scandalized and Gonzaga suffered grievously as a result, but the younger were not affected that way. The priests were about evenly divided." Some said that he should submit to the Pope, but he felt that the majority clerical sentiment at Gonzaga was on his side. The general public opinion, he calculated, was "fifty-fifty."

One of his brother Jesuits who admired and respected Horace, but who differed with him in this controversy, recently appraised the elements involved. "Horace was a brain," he said. "He had a great intellect, very good understanding, a great depth of knowledge, instant recall of all the teachings of the church and of any meetings he’d ever been at. And he knew people and what they stood for and he knew the situation. He had always been submissive to the church and the bishops, but on birth control, he just wouldn’t go along. He called in question even the Pope. I bugged him on his stand and he knew where I stood. I remember talking with him about it one time when he said to me of the people, 'They kind of depend on me.' I said, 'Yes. You’re leading the pack against the Pope and the
church. That’s wrong. Stop it now! They don’t have to have you lead them. Let them correct their ways too.’ He never changed his thoughts, even though some of his faculties were recalled. But he was wrong. He was stubborn. Awfully stubborn.”

This same priest concluded that Horace’s motivation for adopting this lonely and controversial position derived from “his love of people and his love of truth. He thought that he had the truth more than the Pope had. He was wrong, absolutely wrong, but he’d die for it. At the same time, he didn’t want to leave the church. He liked to be kind of far-out on radical things, but he was always an optimist.”

Horace considered himself a loyal son of the church who was deeply concerned about his personal salvation and, therefore, he found it extremely painful to persist in a position contrary to the declared posture of the organization to which he had dedicated his life. A priest who was very close to him said that Horace feared that he might lose his soul and that he had such loyalty to the church and to Cardinal O’Boyle personally that his stand was extremely difficult for him to take. It was no matter of theory for him, but of eternal judgment, and, as he said himself, he “didn’t know which side Our Lord was going to come down on.” Yet he was so convinced that he had to speak up and assume the risk that he might be wrong.

The Jesuits provincial, Father James L. Connor, compassionately asked Horace if he would like to be transferred to Baltimore, but Horace declined and said that he “wanted to see the thing through” in Washington. After the restriction went into effect, he wrote half-humorously to the provincial’s office, suggesting that it might be desirable for him to apply for work at the local Welfare Department or Department of Education, but the response was: “I hope that you’ll be in parish work for many years to come.” Thus, even though he was confronted with older lay people who asked him when he was going to join up with the Pope, he felt confident of substantial, if not unanimous, support among his brother Jesuits.

Horace identified himself firmly with the other priests
who were restricted and regularly attended their group meetings. He was not an instigator of the movement, but he was a prominent figure in the protest and his presence gave it prestige which it otherwise would not have had. He was a venerable and respected elder who would not have been in revolt except by principle. He encouraged his associates, especially those who had to leave their parishes and seek temporary posts elsewhere as supernumeraries in make-shift jobs. He urged them not to leave the ship and he stood by them. They speculated among themselves about the potential strategy of the authorities; would they try to knock the dissidents off one by one and then let the few who remained die on the vine?

The restricted priests sought the involvement of a third party to mediate the dispute, but this was not acceptable to the cardinal. At one point he did designate then Bishop Joseph Bernardin as a purported mediator, but the mediator had no counter propositions to offer as the basis for an agreement. Horace did meet with the bishop several times and the bishop indicated that he might be able to get back the withdrawn faculties, but he was not authorized to propose any compromise. Horace, as he often did, used a military metaphor to give his answer. "The Marines don't leave their wounded lying on the field," he told him, indicating that he was not going to take the easy way out of the dispute and that the other protesters should be considered.

Some priests did reconcile themselves, and others resigned from the ministry; Horace left such decisions to the conscience of the individuals.

The priests who had been disciplined began meeting every two weeks. Priests in other cities, such as Baltimore, had reached agreements with their bishops who had not been as rigid as O'Boyle. But in the spring of 1969, since informal attempts at conciliation had proved ineffectual, nineteen priests out of the forty who had been penalized decided to try the judicial route and Horace was among them. The case was entered in the court of the Archdiocese of Washington, but was thrown out on jurisdictional grounds, the basis of
the decision being that that Holy Father was the only one competent to try a cardinal. Horace appraised the underlying motivation of the tribunal: “You can’t fight a cardinal on his own turf.” An appeal to the Diocese of Cleveland, the appellate court for Washington, had the same result. Rather than making a probably useless appeal to the Sacred Roman Rota, the priests sent an appeal directly to the Pope, requesting a quasi-judicial procedure to review the penalties which had been imposed. The Pope “gave the letter to the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, who told the petitioners to ‘see their bishop’”—exactly what they had done to start with. A subsequent letter to the apostolic delegate and recurrent verbal requests for “reopening conversations with their bishop” through a conciliation process produced no result and the whole case seemed to have reached an impasse when, in the midsummer of 1970, Father Joseph Byron, the nominal plaintiff, unexpectedly received a letter from Cardinal Villot, the Vatican Secretary of State, stating that the case had been turned over for examination and decision to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, whose prefect was Cardinal John Wright, an able and respected American prelate, and a former bishop of Worcester and Pittsburgh.

Cardinal Wright devised a procedure whereby the appropriate documents were presented, proxies were named by both sides, questions were propounded, two weeks of hearings were held, and the Congregation made a final evaluation of issues and finding. Cardinal O’Boyle as well as the nineteen petitioners agreed to the procedure. Finally, on April 27, 1971, the findings were delivered to Father Byron.

The Congregation had formulated seven statements of doctrine which, if accepted by the dissenting nineteen, would in its judgment, provide a basis for their readmission to the full exercise of their normal faculties. Given such acceptance, and the cardinal’s concurrence, the Congregation also requested Cardinal O’Boyle to renew their faculties without further oral or written explanations. The principal point of the controversy was covered in a statement which
said that an objectively wrong act may be permissible under certain circumstances. The objectors were instantly ready to accept the seven statements, especially this one which expressed their point of view. The cardinal, they felt, had been refusing them the right to leave the penitent to his or her individual conscience and had sought to force them to place the communicant under the law as interpreted by him. He had made conformity a litmus test of orthodoxy.

Cardinal O’Boyle promptly agreed also to follow the recommendations of the Congregation, and this was the key to the release of the signatories from bondage. Happy with this unique accomplishment, Horace magnanimously summed up the cardinal’s decision: “When he was requested by his fellow cardinals, he had the goodness, humility, and courtesy and love to accede to their request and not to require any further oral or written explanations. Then, the door was opened for us.”

As soon as Horace got the word of the findings, he called the chancery for an appointment and was told: “You will be notified.” When notification came, he went down to the chancery where he found Cardinal O’Boyle and his canonical advisers, Monsignor (now Bishop) John F. Donoghue and Monsignor D. Joseph Corbett. After all the dislocation, emotional disturbance, and administrative turmoil of the past two and a half years, the final act of the drama was mercifully brief. With characteristic curtness, the Cardinal said to Horace, “I’ll ask you one question. Do you accept the findings?” Horace answered that he did. The Cardinal then said “I restore your faculties.” In Horace’s later description: “It was as simple as that. I popped down and got his blessing and ran out. I was very happy to be relieved of that restriction.”

The restriction from hearing confessions was perhaps the greatest cross which Horace had to bear from his punishment. He had always felt a special satisfaction in dealing with the problems posed in the confessional and he was gifted with an undoubted skill in managing them. To be forced to tell a penitent asking to go to confession that he
would get another priest to hear him was excruciatingly painful to him. His unique conciliatory ability was analyzed at one time by Father Michael Kavanagh: "He overlooked human faults. He tried to give edification and to have the right thing to say to people to get them on the right track. It's impossible to exaggerate the depth of his charity and people would feel that quality in him when they were in trouble. They would come to him when they were worried and he could say just the right thing to get underneath their difficulties and put things right. That was the tremendous influence he had with people." Now this was changed and Horace could return to his penitents and to the "peace box" from which he had been exiled for over two and a half years.

From a formal and precedential point of view, "The Case of the Washington Nineteen" became and remains a cause célèbre.* Horace, sensitive to his place in it and to the tides of history, declared that the action would gain "at least a footnote in future books on canon law because they held out for due process." They had pressed for a judicial hearing on their statement of principle and a potentially dilatory Vatican process had been shunned and a prompt and acceptable conclusion achieved which showed a respect for individual rights. The course had not been easy or cheap. At a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars, the case had required the support of a Committee of Concerned Canon Lawyers and the National Federation of Priests' Councils and had involved hearings in Rome and a trip there by Father Byron and two American lawyers who represented the signatories. Of the original forty signers, less than half were still engaged in the active ministry at the conclusion of the controversy and several of the litigating nineteen had left the ministry or the archdiocese. At least four had married. The remainder

received a restoration of their faculties and the case was terminated, as Horace said, “through the goodness of God.” The record in the controversy has become a reference point for chanceries and religious superiors from many areas who consider it a milestone in affirming in canon law the right of the individual priest to a hearing and adjudication upon a complaint.

While he deeply regretted the necessity for going through this painful exercise, Horace never doubted that he and his cosigners were right, and he did not shrink from affirming that he would take the same course again if faced with the same choice. “I don’t see how the bishops can support Humanae Vitae,” he later told one interviewer, “and still maintain their awareness of what is going on, their sincerity and their authority.”

Privately, he said of his dispute with the Cardinal: “That’s what you get for trying to argue sex with an Irishman.”
HORACE WAS OFTEN CALLED A SAINT BY PEOPLE WHO BECAME familiar with his dedicated life and the profundity of his spiritual experiences. For some, this meant no more than that he was a “holy” man in the general sense of the term. For others, the description held more significance. In 1977, when he was named a “Washingtonian of the Year” by Washingtonian magazine, the editors said of him: “He is said to be the closest thing we have to a saint.” This approximate description was repeated by the National Catholic News Service in its news columns, and by the President of Fordham University when he presented Horace for an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters on May 25, 1980. To these commentators, the depth of his commitment to the poor, the tenacity of his devotion to his mission, and the physical sacrifice which his advancing years required, proclaimed a life of more than normal accomplishment and spirituality.

For many competent observers, however, the attribution of sanctity to Horace was not merely a form of words. Even some who have differed with him have called him “saintly.” Father Michael F. Kavanagh, once his pastor, used that
adjective to describe him and added, “I mean it literally.” To support his conclusion, he cited Horace’s capacity to overlook human faults, his example which inspired others to higher achievement, and his capacity to express his counsel to those seeking aid and solace, in arresting and memorable language.

Father Thomas P. Gavigan, Master of Novices at the Jesuit novitiate at Wernersville, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s when Horace visited to make his spiritual retreats, used to ask him to give a spiritual talk to the novices. “It was then that I began to realize that he was a real saint,” Gavigan said later. “He was a very holy man. Always very simple. A strange combination of simplicity and sophistication. For example, in those days, when he made his retreat, he used to read the Scriptures in Greek.” Gavigan insisted that Horace’s insights were not casual and explained that his conclusion as to Horace’s sanctity came from listening to him address the young novices: “The way,” Gavigan continued, “Horace talked about the Lord. Then, this wonderful simplicity; the way he judged things. He had a truly Christian attitude of mind in his dealings with everybody—even people he disagreed with. He was always very kind and patient. He disagreed and people knew he disagreed, but he was just a very charitable man, that’s all.”

Father Richard McSorley, who had ample opportunity to observe Horace, understood and approved the reasoning of those who called him a saint. He recalled an example of the manner in which Horace fulfilled the scriptural admonition to heap coals of fire upon the head of an enemy by loving him. A professor of English had come down to Ridge for a weekend visit and, unused to mission conditions, had complained while eating about the starkness of the accommodations, the lack of heat, and the Spartan quality of the menu. McSorley listened indignantly and Horace listened quietly, but without comment. The next day, McSorley met the young professor on the porch and the latter said: “You know, Horace will kill me with love. While it was still dark this morning, I was asleep in bed, when I woke suddenly at
the noise of someone shuffling around near the wood stove. I said, ‘Who’s there?’ and a gruff voice answered, ‘It’s me—Horace.’ I said, ‘What are you doing?’ He said, ‘I’m lighting a fire for you.’ Here was this old man lighting a fire for me in the cold!’ “And do you know something else?” McSorley answered him. “Horace had to travel fifteen miles to get that steak we had for lunch.”

“That was Horace McKenna,” McSorley commented. “And that’s why they called him a saint. He just had this charity, this love. Of course, sometimes this love would annoy you, as when you’d be in a car with him because he was giving you a ride, and he would stop to talk to or help somebody on the road while he was supposedly helping you. The people at Ridge knew that he loved them too. Love has its own language and he spoke it all the time to everybody. He had that love for the other person which characterized his life—even for those who differed from him. Even though people disagreed with him on some matters, they loved him. He would do anything for them—and did.

Sometimes the reiteration of Horace’s qualities of sanctity prompted an unexpected and humorous response. His younger sister, Betty Fargis, referring to a magazine article that called him a saint, and doubtless with childhood encounters in mind, told an interviewer, “He certainly was not what we regard as a typical, all-round saint, by any means. He had a good temper when there was a reason for it and didn’t hesitate to show it.” At the same time, she praised his simplicity, declaring that he was not a “typical Jesuit,” perhaps remembering the simplicity, even shabbiness of his garb on his infrequent appearances in New York. With some exasperation, she praised his open-handed charity as well: “No matter what we sent him, he would give it away. At one time, somebody told us that he was sleeping under the cope or mantle worn by the priest for offering benediction. So, we sent him blankets and things, but then he’d give them to his people.”

She remembered also the almost heroic care which he bestowed upon his simple and often feckless charges at
Ridge. “When they had a church social, it was necessary to have the sheriff on hand because some of the patrons would get so drunk from sneaking drinks. On one occasion, an old man got so stewed that Horace himself took the man home to his shack back in the woods. There, he got the man’s clothes off, put him to bed, and even knelt down to say his prayers for him.” It was at this time that Betty and her mother had learned that “he was walking, I don’t know how many miles, all over the place every day to say Mass and visit the sick,” and they had driven the old Ford down for him to use.

Dr. Margaret Mary Nicholson, the late Washington pediatrician and obstetrician, was Horace’s contemporary, co-worker and someone he admired without reservation. They had cooperated in hundreds of charitable enterprises, both large and small, and she had innumerable occasions to observe him closely and to appraise his character. Analyzing his quality of holiness, she asserted that he was “a man who was very close to God. He would pray and pray when he started anything and he would induce everyone else to pray. He would ask God if we should do this particular thing and beg that his will be done.”

Less prominent people in the Church and in the community shared this perception of Horace’s holiness. One of his younger parishioners at Ridge, in discussing Horace with a visitor, offered a general judgment. “The people,” he said, “thought of him as a walking saint.” Even though this estimate was tinged with exasperation and, in some instances, with hostility against his policies, nevertheless, it appears to have been a common opinion, even among some who were his opponents in matters of policy.

These appraisals of Horace varied from the simplistic to the analytically sophisticated. One of his physicians, while hesitant to bring him within the technical definition of a saint, attributed to him virtues which constitute the stuff of which sanctity is made. “I never heard him voice ill-will against any person,” the doctor told an interviewer, “he had an enormous tolerance. He met a lot of resistance to what he
was doing and of resentment, or at least frustration, at his impracticalities, but this didn’t bother him. He didn’t react to these attitudes. . . . He was totally motivated to perform for others.” In an order where his attitude was not characteristic of all members, it was important to note that Horace “never threatened anybody’s turf. He didn’t want to be a big shot in the organizational sense. He was willing to let someone else be up front.”

This, of course, was not to say that he did not relish the recognition which flowed to him in increasing volume in his later years, or that he did not enjoy the resulting limelight. He did possess an unobjectionable vanity. Father Petrik, once his rector, recalled that Horace “loved praise and he loved it when people would say to his face that he was a saint. When they would say nice things about him, he would grin all over.” Nor was he averse to maintaining files of articles by or about himself and resumés to circulate, as he did to the late Patricia Harris, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, when the two were awarded honorary degrees by Fordham. He was jealous of his place as a moving force in Washington social service and resented any effort to lessen his influence or his capacity to share decisions—as with his removal from the directorship of one organization—but he did not threaten any other person seeking advancement nor did he seek power for its own sake. As Dr. James E. Fitzgerald, his physician, observed: “He did get a good deal of glory in his last years, but in many cases, the people who showered glory on him were trying to get under his umbrella.”

He was interested in securing his place in history and evidenced this ambition by the pains he took to record seven tapes of his reminiscences with Father Petrik acting as interviewer, all of which were transcribed into volumes of typescript which he sought vainly to have published, in part to provide funds for his charitable enterprises. He also recorded two tape sides for Father R. Emmett Curran and two tapes for the author of the present volume.

Watching the young Jesuits who brought Horace to his
office for an examination, the doctor noted Horace’s “childlike attitude that somehow people would take care of him—that things would get done—that while on the one hand he didn’t seek to impose on others, neither, on the other, did he need to concern himself about getting from Point A to Point B. Somebody would get him there.”

Seen in the terms of Horace’s perceptions, this perfectly describes his abiding faith and trust in the God to whom he talked. He did not pray to Jesus, he said, because, like himself, he was too busy, but to God the Father, who has more time to listen and to whom he confided all problems with the certainty that they would be solved.

These sentiments of respect for Horace’s holiness were not limited by racial differences. Two black women of religion expressed similar opinions in this regard. Sister Marilyn Hopewell remembered her feelings and those of her contemporaries at Ridge: “Even when we were in grade school, we all knew that he was a saint. When you were around him, you had the feeling that he was somebody special, somebody different.” Rev. Imagene Stewart agreed with this assessment: “I feel personally,” she told a friend, “that if there ever was anybody in this age that I would consider a saint, it was Father McKenna.”

To say that Horace was saintly by no means meant that he was perfect and above human frailty. One of his former superiors summed up his conclusions in a humorous vein: “Yes, he was a stubborn old goat, but if he wasn’t a saint, I don’t know who was. He came to be considered a saint in his lifetime. He was really a holy guy. And it was interesting that his prayer life was so simple and ordinary in terms of traditional Jesuit prayer. He read the office, he meditated on the Scriptures, and he made an examination of conscience twice a day. At the same time, he was energetic and active and au courant as to the events and movements of the day and, even though he never moved from the ‘meat and potatoes’ of Jesuit devotion, he was loved by the youngsters and the political activists. He was a ‘contemplative in action’ and a truly great man. Above all, he was always delightful,
so cheerful and chipper. Many people put a guilt trip on you and are party poopers in dealing with the problems of life and religion, but he always used sugar instead of vinegar in his approach. He was always affirming. He cared about people. He was all the good things that count. That’s why Horace was a saint.”

On the other side of the balance sheet, some of his friends have resisted any canonization of Horace, even by implication. “He would be the first to admit that he was a sinner,” one of these associates said recently. “He had his human foibles and weaknesses. Some of his own qualities disturbed him. He would give vent to anger in the impatience and frustration which he felt at the opposition or dullness of his religious brethren. He had his share of ambition too, and he was not without a feeling of pride in his personal achievements. In addition, he was gifted with personal charm which he knew how to use and did use to get the things he wanted. In this he was not devious, perhaps, but shrewd. Some of these tendencies disturbed him. At the same time, I suppose you could say that it’s the mark of a saint, too, to know that you’re a sinner and that you need the Lord, and Horace knew that.” Clearly, he inherited the traditional Irish political skills—the charm, the blarney and the ability to make the soft answer—and it must have been a chore for him at times to keep them within reasonable bounds.

At the furthest extreme from the cautious and the doubters were those who clothed Horace with supranatural qualities. “He had a truly charismatic personality,” said one fellow priest who had known him intimately for over twenty years, “and he had gifts which resonated with people. He was ‘prophetic’ in that he spoke the word of the Lord to us. He was so close to the Lord that he could speak with authority and we could reasonably believe that this was the divine Word.” This glowing evaluation attributed to Horace the qualities of Micah, Malachi, and Zechariah. In short, as this man saw it, Horace was “canonizable,” and no devil’s advocate could prove otherwise.

One speaks with caution of the qualification for saint-
hood of anyone who so recently shared our common life in his earthly existence, yet his virtues were so noteworthy that they cannot be disregarded. They must be detailed in any analysis of the man and a convenient measure may be found in the standards variously established to determine sanctity.

Saint Paul has said that sanctity is "a service in love" and one that "demands a moral effort"; it would be impossible to come up with phrases which would more accurately describe Horace's life. For canonization, the church must be satisfied that "heroic virtue" can be attributed. "Virtue" has been interpreted to mean "conformance to a standard of right," "integrity of character," "moral excellence," and "uprightness of conduct." Another definition has characterized it as "exertion of our faculties in doing good." Since "heroic" is taken to mean "supremely noble, altruistic, or self-sacrificing," Horace's twenty-two years of poverty among the blacks of Southern Maryland would alone qualify him.

While it might be argued that his conformance to divine law was not in line with his bishop's and Pope's interpretation of standards on artificial birth control, the fact was that he conformed to the ultimate interpretation of the law. He had questioned what was not an ex cathedra proclamation, but a persuasive expression of opinion by his superiors.

Without attempting to reach any firm conclusion as to the technical qualification for canonization, it is clear that Horace's record, when measured against many of those who have received recognition as "heroes" of the church, entitles him to be counted among its "great men": his holiness, his love for his fellows, his compassion, his dedication, his perseverance, his cheerfulness, his faith, and what he called his "passionate impatience." Above all, his success in making the church a relevant element in modern society deserves recognition by its leaders. Why not a saint with a New York accent? Why not, as his father had predicted long ago, a Saint Horace?
Horace projected an appearance of modesty, simplicity, and lack of guile. While this image was sincere, it was not indicative of his complete character, since he was proud of his skill with words, widely read, sophisticated, intellectual, creative, and endowed with tenacity and political adroitness. Framed in his perky and abbreviated form of language, his sayings at first seemed throwaways, but the interested listener found that they provided food for reflection or amusement long after they had been uttered. For example, once when he was asked to clarify the meaning of the Jesuit vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he replied puckishly as well as sincerely: “They are very easy to explain. Poverty means ‘everything in moderation.’ You don’t insult your hungry brother by coming to the table with soup stains on your tie. In other words, don’t overdo. Chastity means ‘it’s proper to take lunch with a lady, not dinner.’ Obedience means ‘a mature exchange of views with your superior.’”

His oral and written utterances were characterized by a remarkable brevity; he despised sheer verbosity. He became famous for his well-prepared one-minute homilies, dramatically checked at times from the pulpit with a raised
stopwatch. As he told an admirer, Jack Dempsey's punch had to travel only nine inches to give a knockout blow.

He really was an *auteur manqué* who treasured his verbal creations and continually nursed a hope for publication which dated back to his ill-fated proposal to translate the Greek classics instead of going to the Philippines. Horace easily read the Scriptures in Greek and Latin and chose one or the other for perusal, depending on whether seeking a discussion of “place” or of “person.” His fellow priests often consulted him on fine points of meaning or translation. It was with English, however, that he had a lasting love affair and he enjoyed fashioning arresting clusters of words which would lodge in the minds of readers or listeners.

Along with the preparation of his “slam-bang” sermons, Horace assumed the task, when he was at Saint Aloysius, of preparing brief written messages that accompanied the weekly bulletin, distributed at the Sunday Masses. Each constituted a gloss on the Gospel of the day. In the early eighties, they were quite brief and were called “Bible Bouquets.” They were very much to the point: “Jesus warns us in the most fearsome and urgent words to be ready for a terrifying and destructive end to our world—Matthew 24.”

Other messages were somewhat longer and each was called a “Gospel Glimpse.” One dated March 27, 1977 bears the Horatian trade mark:

> Jesus forgives the woman taken in adultery. Sin is seeking God in the wrong things.
> When everyone condemns the woman, Our Lord sends them away and gives the girl another chance. In his gentle mercy, he does not condemn them. He does not condemn their enemies. He sends them all away to reflect. In his infinite love for all of us, he will soon take upon himself our sins and our punishments in his sufferings and death on the Cross.

The “Gospel Glimpse” for August 29, 1976 dealt with chapter 7 of Saint Mark and reflected Horace’s concern about overenthusiastic self-condemnation:
Our Lord Jesus Christ in defending "a few of his disciples" against the charge of not purifying their hands before food, may be warning us against a false or erroneous conscience. We used to call such persons scrupulous. Some cling needlessly to fasting laws before communion, which now require one hour of fasting from food or drink before receiving communion. Some say, "I missed Mass because I was sick." Such a person is already excused from attending Mass by sickness. Our Lord wants our hearts to be not far from him, but close to him. From such hearts, love and peace and common sense come forth.

It is instructive to see how well he directed this message to this particular congregation, how his tolerance and liberalism shine through and how he stresses his concentration upon the essentials and his impatience with punctilio.

In another "Gospel Glimpse," he wrote with his own leitmotif in mind: the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin.

Human love, yours for another, and that of another for you, is the most beautiful, most fruitful force on earth. God is revealed in it, and felt in it, especially in Jesus Christ.

Horace had hopes of collecting these homilies and publishing them and did some work toward this end with a friend, Angeline Anderson, but the project never came to fruition.

His fondest hopes centered about the publication of the memoirs which he committed to tape in seven sessions in 1979 under the questioning of Father Petrik and with the assistance of Eugene Stewart. In these rambling and uncoordinated reminiscences—which are set down in typewritten transcripts—he ran through many of the highlights of his life and recorded a host of opinions and prejudices, but the lack of chronological order and editorial pruning made their publication in their existing form impossible. Because they were indigestible, they were turned down for publication by one publisher, but Horace maintained his hopes to the end. Not more than a year before his death, when a new volunteer assistant had taken up the task of ordering and clarifying them, he discussed their fate with a friend.
“Do you think they’ll sell?” he asked with almost pathetic insistence. He might have been James Michener buzzing his agent about the market for his latest novel.

Horace clearly had a commercial motive in pressing for publication, but he had no interest in personal profit. He hoped that a successful sale of his memoirs would provide the Jesuits with funds which would guarantee the continuation of the work to which he had given his life. This is not to say that he did not hold a very definite opinion as to the form of the proposed work. Even though revised versions retained the bulk of his language in direct or indirect discourse, he rejected them because they did not continue the exclusively first person singular pattern of the original transcripts. As was said of Mr. Justice Holmes: “He was not without a harmless and attractive vanity” in such matters.

Horace had a flexibility and openness of mind not always typical of older people. Many of his coevals resisted the changes in the church which came as a result of the Vatican Council, but he welcomed most of them as “efforts to make us more intimate with God and to make the Mass more the center of our lives.” He believed that devotion was “not so much a matter of nervous pressure as of spiritual awareness and the response that goes with that—namely the effectiveness of our love.”

He was pleased that he no longer had to offer Mass “with our backs to the people” but that he could pray facing the congregation. “You can now talk to the people without feeling as if you had a bag over your head,” he explained, “and you can talk to the people in a language where they can understand not only the intonations, but the words themselves and the meanings behind the words. Now, all that is necessary to get attention is to ring the opening bell, and even that I don’t like because all those paying attention are awake anyway.”
This very likely would have been his own conclusion, since he held the penitential function in high regard and went to the "peace box" with eagerness and with confidence in his capacity to deal effectively with the problems of the penitents. He had the ability to reduce difficulties to basic terms, to convey a sense of compassion and love, and to strengthen the penitent with memorable, sound, and simple advice. It was no wonder that the poor, the confused, and the weak sought his counsel and reassurance. He gave them sympathy and understanding. With his limited personal sexual experience, it was remarkable that he could embrace a liberal approach to absolution rather than adopt a conservative hard line, but such was his nature. His sister, Betty, once described his attitude to a confidante: "People used to say to me, 'How can he hear confessions? He never had a date in his life. What does he know about things?' But, look at him. He's much more broad-minded than lots that I know who have been around a lot more."

Horace believed that the essence of the Sacrament of Penance—popularly known as confession—had not been affected by the Vatican Council. Once again, his concept of the sacrament was tinted with his own personal coloration: "The Sacrament of Penance is a beautiful thing. It's touching Christ in the depths of your spirit, and it's the real peace, the real Christian psychology. It's the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

"It's not necessary, I think, to go to confession, to receive the Sacrament of Penance for our daily faults, because Our Lord said, 'Whosoever loves me, keeps my commandments and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him.' Which means, I always say, that this is the Protestants' way of getting forgiveness of sins. They may have perfect contrition as we may have perfect contrition. Saying, 'I swore twice' or 'I made faces at my neighbor'—these things are brushed off by your perfect contrition and you don't need to confess them. You only have to confess serious sins which people, as a whole, don't commit."
"I used to say to people that under the law, you didn’t have to go to confession once a year and I would read out of the Number Two Catechism: ‘Confession once a year is only for those who are in a state of mortal sin or who have committed a serious sin.’ But, I would add: ‘You don’t have to take a bath, either.’ But the point is that if you want to refresh your soul and bring it closer to our dear Lord and have his smile, his caress, his encouragement, and his touch, then the Sacrament of Penance is what you want because therein you can speak to him freely. But it isn’t necessary.’

In this connection, the tactile experience was important to Horace. Touching was a means of communication. It was a method of expressing sympathy and love. It brought people closer to one another. That was the objective of the Christian religion and of Horace himself.

Horace felt that the only recent change in the Sacrament of Penance was that the confessor greeted the penitent with a few lines of Scripture and said good-bye to the penitent with a few lines of Scripture. ‘In other words,’ as he expressed it, ‘the Word of God is his greeting and the Word of God is his farewell. Of course, he feels better because the Holy Spirit has been wafted through his soul and he has been instructed by God’s Word, and he feels refreshed, as you would if you had a drink from the pitcher that the lady at the well of Jacob offered to Our Lord. Suppose he handed you the pitcher after he had a drink. You would feel that way after the Sacrament of Penance.’

Horace considered that the ‘dropping away’ of the novenas (the devotions consisting of nine consecutive days of prayers) was due, at least in part, to the ‘nighttime insecurity in the streets.’ The prayer of thanksgiving after Mass had not really been dropped, he believed, but transformed into a more intimate and sustained union with Our Lord. Devotion has been changed into the ordinary experience of one’s daily work. The rosary has dropped out from the devotion of the people and it is to be hoped that it has been replaced by an awareness of the Scriptures. He would advise people to ‘have three Bibles in your house: one in your library, one in
your bedroom, one at your living room table. Be familiar with the words of the Lord because they are so deep, penetrating, and appropriate.

"I always say that the rosary takes too long," he once told a friend. "We don't say the rosary any more. It's all right for a long ride, but I always say that you are as close to the Blessed Mother after the first Hail Mary as you are after the tenth, so the rest is just sitting around. The unity that will be produced by prayer is an instantaneous thing. It doesn't have to be maintained over a ten- to fifteen-minute period. That's the way I feel about the rosary. And, really, the Bible, which I think is the true replacement, is refreshing and it's interesting. It's changing, versatile and suitable; and more flexible for the Holy Spirit to speak with us; and more natural to the restlessness of our minds."

He hoped that the series of home Masses said in domestic surroundings and sponsored by William and Mary Dempsey and other friends would develop into sessions where the Bible would be read and studied, but he died before this project could come to fruition.

Horace's concept of devotion and of prayer bore the stamp of his personality. For example, he found the once-popular cult of the Sacred Heart limiting and exclusionary. When he was growing up, his mother had kept a votive light burning in front of the statue of the Sacred Heart on her bureau. When he was taking an exam, as a young Jesuit, he would ask her to put an extra candle before the image for his intention. Then, in theology, he came to examine the devotion more closely and concluded that it insulated the one praying from the Lord. "I felt that it was a hedge or frame around our dear Lord," he explained, "keeping one from being close to him. In prior days, it was the approach to Christ. Now, Christ is the approach to the Father."

The older he grew, the more satisfaction Horace found in prayer. In trying to explain this mental process, he asserted that, as he learned more effectively to love his neighbor, he learned also to transfer this love to Jesus Christ and to associate with him in prayer. This feeling of intimacy and
identification was a developing experience throughout his regular devotions and, rather than considering that Christ was with him only for the period after communion when the physical host remained undissolved (as the theologians had taught), he came to consider that “Our Lord had a constant presence and intimacy that extends the value and preciousness of the sacramental moments to any moment of the day.”

Horace’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was the outward manifestation of the sacred relationship which he considered the most rewarding of all. From his earliest days in the seminary, he felt that Mary was a real person. To him she became more real and a more constant mother than his own mother and stepmother. At the same time, with typical self-analysis and examination of Mariology in general, he acknowledged that his “characteristic attachment to the Blessed Virgin Mary” might perhaps have been “due to the deep remembrances I have of my dear mother, Laura, and my dear mother, Julia.” Doubtless, the sensitive boy of seventeen, strictly cloistered and removed from home surroundings, required the existence of a mother-figure and this need remained with him and expanded over the years.

His bond with the Virgin made him “constantly feel her presence and her inspiration and her encouragement and her desire that we be perfect images of her Son.” His faith also made him “feel assured of her cooperation and her support and her prayers and her inspiration and her guidance and her attention to our needs and wants.” The sense of a real presence could not be more explicit, and, regardless of whether or not an outsider accepts the authenticity of his belief, it is with wonder and almost amusement that one considers Horace’s deep and spiritual inner life alongside the sordid reality he daily viewed as he ministered to the poor who had never heard of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He found the Mass to be the supreme prayer and the perfect expression of devotion. He always remembered what Father Robert I. Gannon had said of the post-ordination experience of a priest: “Your day is just the same, except that
you have a great deal more to get up for—and that is the Mass.” The Mass became the center of his day and the center of his life. The offering of the rite of sacrifice provided for him “the fullness that your life will have when it comes to an end because the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an eternal act of love and grace.”

Horace’s judgments of historical saints were as personal as those of the Holy Family, though not always as sympathetic. He once told a friend, with a smile, how he had sought out Saint Teresa of Avila, but failed to find the rapport which he had sought. “I didn’t know what I was looking for in her,” he declared, “but I could only read a few pages because when you were trying to speak with her, she never stayed on the subject. Of course, she had vivid symbols. That’s probably what made her so impressive as a teacher. Sins are worms and crocodiles and other things that you hate. If they’re in your soul, you certainly want to purify yourself. But speaking to her was like trying to talk to a woman in the crush of a bargain sale. She wasn’t paying any attention to your thinking. Your thinking was going along in the ordinary way and she was spraying all over the place.”

Saint John of the Cross was another storied figure who won less than complete allegiance from Horace: “He was always purifying himself to the polishing point. And I never liked that. I’m an externalist. Some day, I may have a much different appreciation of the spiritual aims and graces of these two figures, but that’s the way I feel about them at the present time. I simply like to go about my job and do it, as one old slob trying to get a day’s work done.”

This last was, of course, an excessively simplistic appraisal of Horace which he didn’t really believe himself and which was contradicted from his own mouth by his description of his spiritual experiences, by his broad reading and culture, and by his exact knowledge of theology and church history. His description did, however, emphasize again his insistence, in seeking the truth, on cutting through the collateral and decorative to get at the essential.

Horace’s independence of judgment extended also to
contemporaries such as Dorothy Day, the pacifist and social activist, whom he met in 1931. She not only attracted and held his affection and admiration, but exerted an influence upon his way of life and his thinking. He first saw her at her place on Mott Street, on New York’s lower East Side, where her sole impediments were a washtub full of rolls and a coffee urn, set up in a place where poor people could line up to start the day with a mouthful of food and a warm drink.

Day was a confirmed individualist who came east from the University of Illinois to labor in the environs of the Bowery in a variety of left-wing organizations and activities. She lived through several affairs of the heart, licit and illicit, underwent an abortion, gave birth to an illegitimate daughter and, eventually, joined the church. Once within the fold, she was a restive member of the flock. She developed the idea of the Catholic Worker movement and Christian pacifism, founded hospitality centers for the poor, supported Fidel Castro and draft card burning, but submitted to Cardinal Spellman’s authority and the church’s position on birth control. She was termed “a difficult woman, opinionated, tyrannical, inflexible, unforgiving; her charity was not the ready fruit of an easy nature.”

When he looked at her, Horace passed over her sins and her civil disobedience, and saw only the broad altruistic motive operating without regard to practicalities. “It was a joy to have known that patient soul,” Horace said in reminiscence many years later. William D. Miller, writing about Day and the Catholic Worker movement, called his book A Harsh and Dreadful Love.** “I have some idea about how the poor soul loved, but I wouldn’t call it ‘dreadful.’ I would call it ‘peaceful’ because, even when the IRS slapped her with a bill for unpaid taxes for $260,000.00, she could

always hand everything over to the wisdom of God. In that case a lawyer showed up and rescued her from her difficulty.” Faith has been able to move mountains, it has been said, but to move the IRS is something else.

“During the war, she would purposely sit out in the park during an air raid drill and would refuse to go inside because she was a pacifist and was giving testimony of her beliefs. I loved her for her fidelity to her principles, even though I didn’t accept some of them, but I had a deep admiration for her and this admiration caused me to go along calmly and not be disturbed by material needs. Of course, I have experienced very few material wants, but whenever they threaten to develop, her patience and her spirit and her simple life and her progress in all these things have always been an inspiration to me.”

Horace contrasted his respect for her with his reservations about the heavy-handed leader of the Archdiocese of New York. “She must have been a challenge and a reproach and a kind of puzzle to Cardinal Spellman because she lived in spheres of life opposite to him—in spheres of want and helplessness—while he lived in spheres of power and plenty.” Horace then softened the contrast: “He respected her and she respected him while developing the sort of relationship which I would always like to maintain with people whose lives I had to deviate from. I wouldn’t say ‘contradict’ because I don’t know their circumstances, but let us say ‘people from whose lives I had to be different.’” This was as harsh a criticism of the prelate as Horace could bring himself to express, even though his philosophy of labor relations was radically different from that demonstrated by the cardinal in the latter’s dealings with the striking gravediggers in the archdiocesan cemeteries.

Two other notable people played an important part in his life and exercised a significant influence in his spiritual formation.

One was Mother Teresa, the friend of the poor and Nobel Prize winner from India, whom he met at the Eucharistic Congress in 1976. On his return, he reported that he had kissed her hand, “and I had to go ‘way down to do it. I told
her that she was a one-person rice bowl. She had been giving out bread at a session on hunger—piece by piece and mouthful by mouthful. I have a deep admiration for her.”

The other, whom he met at the same Congress, was Bishop Dom Helder Câmara, the noted prelate from Brazil. “I told him that he was a one-man revolution,” Horace reported. “I tried to kiss his hand, but he went ‘way down,’ so I went ‘way down’ too because I had that great admiration for him and a desire to imitate his bold defense of human rights, especially for the powerless. They too are in the kingdom of God in a part that should be as representative and glorious as any other part.”
IN THE COURSE OF HIS LONG LIFE, HORACE HAD TO FACE NOT only the challenges and demands of an exacting vocation, but also the physical problems which would have permanently floored or finished off a less determined man. At the age of nine, he survived an attack of pneumonia, a nearly fatal disease in 1908. In 1918, when three of his fellow novices died of influenza, he pulled back from the brink of death. Five years later, in the Philippines, he suffered two attacks of dengue fever.

Beginning about 1975, symptoms of degenerative breakdown began to appear. In that same year, Dr. Kenneth Cho diagnosed arthritis, indicated by Horace’s swelling wrists. More frustrating for him, his loss of sight, which had prompted him to seek medical assistance as early as 1970, became increasingly more critical. Cataracts, glaucoma, and retinal degeneration cut down his visual perception so that eventually he could barely see a large picture even with the brightest artificial light. He also had to have assistance to write his little notes with a felt-tipped pen. A friend commented that his plight was similar to that of James Thurber, the New Yorker writer and cartoonist, but his name
was not familiar to Horace, who had never found time for the perusal of slick, sophisticated magazines. But he did not permit this increasing blindness to limit his activities. He moved easily about the house, attended meetings with the assistance of friends, used his acute hearing to identify familiar voices and increasingly used the telephone to convey his curt messages and keep in touch with his manifold interests.

Since he did not follow any regular game plan in obtaining health care and his treatment tended to be what one physician called "crisis medicine," the record of his latter years is disjoined and incomplete. He never accepted the fact that illness could interrupt his vital activities and only in his last years did the insistent demands of his aging force him to recognize the need for regular consultation with a doctor.

In addition to the difficulties of senescence, beginning in 1975, Horace met with a series of physical mishaps. The first of these accidents occurred on July 3rd.

"I was working in my room," Horace later told a friend in reconstructing the event, "and I had a closet behind me. I wanted to get something off the top shelf and I stood on my chair, which was a rolling office chair with casters, and when I reached up, the chair rolled away from under me and I came down and hit the side of my head on the oak desk with a bang. I remember lying there crunched up in a huddle for some time, perhaps two or three minutes, because I felt the shock was more than ordinary and I’d better recollect myself before I jumped up. Then, in the succeeding three weeks, I began to drag my feet so that my steps became only about eight- or ten-inch steps and I shoved my feet. Then, one Sunday morning at the 7:30 Mass, I was gathered off the altar by Father Leo Murray and taken to the Georgetown University Hospital. I don’t know what it was that indicated my disability, but Father Kavanagh said that I left everything out of the Mass except the sermon."

He had suffered a subdural hematoma, less technically known as a blood clot on the brain.
This was the beginning of a five-week session of neurosurgery which required two operations. The first, which permitted the removal of the free blood from the brain, was performed by Dr. David McCullough. Somewhat later, on August 10th, after he had fallen in the night trying to go to the bathroom on his own and Horace's hands were seen to "droop" when he held them out, a similar surgical procedure removed the excess blood. Then, after the brain complications were resolved and he was recovering, his kidneys began to malfunction and he exchanged the neurosurgeon for the kidney specialists and stayed an additional seven weeks. Although he was in his seventy-seventh year, Horace expressed surprise at this latter development. "I always thought I had good kidneys," he told the doctors.

Horace's recovery was impeded by an adverse reaction to certain medication, and he went into a coma lasting several weeks, during which Dr. McCullough thought that he was going to die.

Even though Horace was in a comatose condition, Dr. McCullough later mentioned that Horace's brain was working in its usual routine because early one morning in the first part of September, he suddenly roused and surprised his attendants by blurtling out: "Oh, my gosh, this is the first day of school. Call Mrs. — and make sure that she gets her children to school." As Dr. McCullough said, "His caring for people broke through the coma."

When he was conscious, Horace himself could not determine how he was doing. Visitors streamed in. Among them was the Archbishop of Washington, the scholarly Cardinal William Baum, who was later elevated to the post of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education at the Vatican and who had displayed great tolerance of Horace's abrupt and quirky manner of presenting his ideas and recommendations. Horace had described the prelate's sympathetic approach: "He would not prevent me from talking frankly with him when something was on my mind."

Pressing hard for support for one of his programs, there had been one mild passage-at-arms: "I remember one time..."
when he said to me that Christ preached by word and sacrament and I said, ‘Yes, Your Eminence, and he preached by works of mercy too!’ He was very good at letting me infight him in this way.” Listening to Horace, friends wondered whether the gentle cardinal could have prevented frank talk when Horace had something on his mind. Another of these dignitaries was his one-time disputant, Cardinal O’Boyle, and the visits of these ecclesiastics made him think that he “wasn’t going to make it.” At one point when he thought that he was going to die, he wanted to write a letter to his sister, Mary, who was then eighty-nine, and he decided what he would say, but he was too weak to write it out. Then, somewhat later, when he felt better and had become optimistic about his recovery, he got a pen and a big piece of paper and wrote his letter. “The words ran into one another,” he afterward admitted, “and they were slanting up and down and scrawny. I had to practice Palmer Method writing exercises after that to get back my script.” The letter he termed “an interesting exhibition of writing under strain of mind, body, and hand.” Very few could be so detached and dispassionate in describing a reaction to such a personal crisis. Yet it lay in Horace’s character to view events in his own life in a historical and almost clinical way.

The letter read:

Dear Mary:

I love God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the church and you and Helen and Betty and all the family. Please ask [sentence incomplete]. I hope to be out of the hospital in a couple of weeks.”

A bit later, Father Leo Murray, Horace’s rector, said that he would come and say Mass as often as he could and Horace took this to indicate that his superior thought that there would be occasion for his rector’s services in the future and found it comforting. It was a “sign of hope, a sign of brotherly love, and a sign that they were getting somewhere.” He was delighted and further reassured when, a few
days later, a group of boys from the parish came to see him and one of them, after shaking his hand, said, "He’s going to make it. He’s got a good grip."

The boy’s appraisal could not have been more accurate and Horace’s convalescence continued on a steadily rising curve.

From the beginning, the doctors and nurses who cared for Horace realized that they were dealing with an unusual person. Florence Peterson, the nurse who was with him longest and who became a close friend, later described the impact of his personality: "I never had another patient like him. I was usually boss with my patients, but I had to step aside some for him. He was a man of strong character and he forced me to do things I didn’t want to do in our daily routine. He led me a little too. He was involved in so many activities and he was a people’s person who was interested in helping the less fortunate."

Peterson remembered the first day that she came on duty with him. He was alert and observant. "When I walked into the room," she told an acquaintance, "it was a different and unusual experience. I saw him lying there and he extended his hand." When their hands met, his was warm while hers was cold, as he observed. "I said, ‘I have a warm heart.’ He said immediately, ‘I know that you are warm-hearted.’"

All agreed on his self-possession when he emerged from his coma. Helen Hancock, another of his nurses, recalled that "following his craniotomy, his speech was clear, he was quite oriented, and he could move on direction." Peterson remembered that "although he was elderly, I saw no loss of consciousness, no irrationality. At all moments he was lucid."

Soon after she came on, Peterson said, the phone started ringing and it went on ringing as long as she was there so that the calls mounted into the hundreds, it seemed. On the first day, Horace was sleepy and didn’t want to talk, so she answered the phone and was amazed at the character and number of the callers. "They were not educated people at
all,” she recently told an interviewer. “They were people he fed or watched over. I asked him who they were and he said, ‘They’re friends of mine.’”

Rosemary Dluhy, another of Horace’s nurses, recalled recently the invasion of visitors which began soon after his operation: “The visitors streamed in, and he appeared to respond to them as if they were all friends. ‘Who was that?’ I asked him after one had left. ‘I don’t know,’ he said. I wanted to have him get some rest, but he would have none of it and wouldn’t let me stop them from coming in. They came from every walk of life, but mostly they were poorly clothed people needing financial or emotional assistance. Some came with babies. They loved him and he loved them and wanted to see them. I then began to realize that there was more to this man than I had previously realized.”

Hancock had never met Horace before her service with him, but she soon saw, as she said, that “he was well-known, to say the least. His callers went from the president of the university to street people with all they owned on their backs. The priests from Saint Aloysius would say not to let the street people in, but he would not hear of excluding them. The doctors shrugged their shoulders and told us to ‘use discretion.’ I was amazed at the number of people who were calling and at his ‘little black book.’ We’d have to help him as he read this book with difficulty, but everybody he knew was in this ‘black book.’

“When I first came on, he still had the bandage on his head. He was appropriate in his speech, but he tired easily; nevertheless when a caller came in, he would perk up immediately and would recognize who it was by the voice.”

She particularly remembered one caller who came to the door on a very cold day with no shoe on one foot and only the top on the other. She tried to stop him before he could get into Horace’s room, but Horace caught his voice and insisted that he be admitted. “He was always giving out nickels and dimes,” she recalled, “and he gave the man some change. Then, having found out about his lack of
shoes, he asked if something couldn’t be done for him and insisted that we take pillow-cases and fasten them about his feet with adhesive tape.

“Sometimes, I’d try to catch these people in the hall, but you’d be working in the room and turn around and, suddenly, somebody would be standing there in the doorway. How they got there, I don’t know. Most of them came from thirty or forty blocks away. You’d see a street person come in and think, ‘I’ll get this person out of the room,’ and if you started to try, you’d get the order: ‘Let that man stay here. He’s sleeping in my car down at the rectory and they’re trying to put him out and we’ve got to get this straightened out.’”

Obviously, he couldn’t be bothered with his own illness. He had his books and papers and telephone there and the nurses couldn’t make him rest. To Hancock, he was unforgettable. He had a genuine concern for people and “that was total priority for him—over his illness, over anything that had to do with him. In addition, he had a nice smile and a good sense of humor, and he always put something personal in the conversation—about ‘you’—asking how you were or how your night was last night.”

Dluhy observed these same qualities in Horace. “He was totally other-oriented,” she remembered, “to the point where he didn’t think about himself. It just really was not that important when it came to other people. He was the closest to a saint that I ever met. The attitude of the street people visiting him was one of love. They smiled at him and it was a pleasure for them to see him. There was love between them and they were totally accepted by him. He didn’t care what they were. They were God’s people and he accepted them as such. I feel strongly that he should be canonized.”

Peterson, who was with Horace through his convalescence, had the same traffic problems as the other nurses and aroused her patient’s anger when she tried to bar an attorney, with whom he wanted to discuss business. Even when the street people were not on hand, the priests and nuns flowed in and it seemed that there always was a priest in
the room, which was edifying, but tiring, although Horace seemed to find their presence stimulating.

She was with him the morning after he had fallen during the night. The force of the impact of his fall had started up the bleeding and he had been rushed to surgery for his second bout and a repeat of the prior performance. At this time, she had an opportunity really to appreciate Horace’s physical strength. Shortly after the surgery, he came to and began talking coherently. Even Dr. McCullough was surprised. “Look, he’s talking to me,” he exclaimed.

When the time came for Horace to get up, he scorned the usual, gradual “graduation to ambulation.” He immediately put his legs down, stood, and began to try to walk. He refused to admit any weakness. He told Peterson that he had too much to do in the streets and that he had to get out. He leaned on her—so heavily that she hurt her back—and shuffled to the nursing station and back to his room. In the afternoon, he insisted on following the same routine and shuffled to the same point and back. He refused to let her get another person to help them. Then, the next day, he took her hand and walked without leaning on her. She was “overwhelmed by his strength” and it was at this time that she felt the “chemical vibes” of deep friendship between them. This feeling would remain with her and even the arrival of a delegation of street people which afterward caused her to spray the room with cleansing liquid would not diminish it.

HORACE WAS SO EAGER TO GET BETTER THAT HE ANTICIPATED THE prescriptions of the physio-therapists and followed his own pace. He was impatient with therapy which he considered “poky” and which let him do only the “simplest things.” With Peterson, he not only continued his walks, but tackled the stairway which he mounted in successive steps rather than on one foot at a time. Accordingly, when he was assigned to the treatment section with its three- or four-inch steps, he was through them in no time and that was the end of his stair therapy. Eventually, Peterson would “rig him
up" every morning so that he could go down to the chapel and assist at, and even offer, Mass with his hand extended and supported and aided by the coaching of Father Daniel Gatti, the hospital chaplain.

Through his indomitable grit and his recuperative powers, his convalescence stumped the experts. Concurrently with this physical improvement there was a spiritual development which he considered noteworthy. As with many people who have gone through such a physical and emotional crisis, his experience changed his manner of prayer and deepened his absorption in devotional practices. Some time afterward he explained these developments to an associate: "I had some idea at the beginning that mine might be a long sickness and that my mental balance might be affected, so I decided that I would concentrate on just two prayers and I found them entirely satisfying and encouraging. The first satisfying prayer was the ‘Our Father.’ It was so encouraging, so enlarging, so opening up to the divine perspectives of creation and salvation and fulfillment! The second part (I didn’t say the ‘For Thine is the Kingdom’)—the prayer for bread and the prayer for forgiveness from God and towards all of God’s children—was an encouragement to me because it gave a loving attitude towards the whole world. So the first part seemed to put you right in God’s arms and the second part seemed to make you at peace with your neighbor.

"Then, the Hail Mary I loved because it brought me in touch with our Blessed Mary and all her love and care that carried us through. I think that the Blessed Virgin Mary represents the whole church. That’s what the Vatican Council meant when, during their discussion of the church, they were making the constitution and they included several chapters on the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Church and the fulfillment of the church. That’s the way I felt.

"These, then, were the two matters on which I could rest my mind at any time, without labor and completely. Then, there was one other thing. I used to wonder always if God
would come through with another day. I used to look out at the other wing of the hospital and see six floors of brick and wonder if God would put them back there the next morning.

“There was one other result of my sickness. I was so wretched, even though surrounded by every comfort. I was so weak and inept and restless, that I realized what sickness is. So I developed priorities in my prayers. I always had prayed for the poor and for those who helped them because it seemed that both needed help. Then my sickness made me have a second priority—namely the sick and those who helped them, including the nurses and their families and those who helped with the pills. So these two priorities I have kept ever since my sickness. Then, more recently, I’ve added a third priority. I always pray for the missions because the missions are the most neglected and neediest area of the church.”

At length, on November 3, after three months of hospitalization, Horace had improved enough to go home to North Capitol Street. Even after frantic attempts to boost it, his weight, on discharge, was only 113 pounds compared with 143 pounds when he entered the hospital. Since they generously provided him with nurses around-the-clock at first, his return caused some adjustment problems in the rectory, but his brothers met them happily.

They loved him. He was *sui generis* and a “character” in the order. He was already a legend among his associates. All had anecdotes about him which they would tell at the drop of a biretta. Many revolved about his battered old Renault which was parked in the Gonzaga yard, and which he drove long after his sight had begun to fade. The car had been adopted as a dwelling by one of Horace’s street people who resisted all attempts to evict him. Father Bernard J. Dooley remembered an occasion when the Renault was stolen and a call from the police reported that car and thief had been picked up in West Virginia. Father Kavanagh accompanied Horace on the long bus trip to West Virginia to retrieve the vehicle. However, when the crunch came, Horace refused to
press charges, and the thief was released. “The poor man,” Horace said. “Who knows what his problems are and what pressure he was under to do this.” Then, to Kavanagh’s amazement, when they got outside and saw the thief on the sidewalk, Horace asked him if they could give him a ride back to Washington—which they did. “And to add insult to injury,” Dooley concluded, “all the way back, the rascal criticized Horace, his car, and his conduct generally.”

For his part, Horace was delighted to have left the privileged surroundings of Georgetown for the area of his beloved streets. His urge to assert his independence and his diffidence about enjoying the luxury of continuous nursing soon impelled him to dispense with two of his nurses and he retained only his friend, Peterson. As he told friends afterward, “I did improve and God put me back practically to where I was before the accident.” Since his motions were restricted and his mobility was limited, his “practically” covered a lot of ground, but, considering the alternatives, his recovery was nothing short of miraculous.
Perseverance, Strength and Stubbornness

No one can make a final judgment on the effect of any life—and especially one which was as long and many-faceted as Horace’s—until time has exercised its measuring influence. In his case too, as Florence Peterson said, “No one will ever know all about Father McKenna.” No one will ever know the extent of his inner spiritual life. No one will ever know all his corporal works of mercy—the souls saved, the families kept together, the hope given to the hopeless. Nevertheless, the existing record and the collection of his expressed ideas permits an acceptable and reliable appraisal of his stature as a man and the extent of his life’s achievement.

Horace once provided his own standard for making such a measurement. Toward the end of his life when he was in a reflective mood, he confided this conclusion to one of his friends: “I guess that’s what life is—an effort to make this clod do something for the glory of God.” Armed with the “persistence and perseverance and strength and stubbornness which I have, for good or for bad,” and which he first absorbed from his “Mother Julia,” and seeking throughout his life “to love everybody with whom I had dealings,” it
cannot be denied that he superbly achieved his stated objectives.

He developed a dedication to his goals which was all-encompassing and unique. His selflessness was phenomenal. At Ridge when someone gave him a piece of cake at a reception, he wrapped it in paper and saved it to bring to an old black woman, ill and helpless in her poor, rural cabin. The problems and needs of his people were always with him. There was no let-up for him.

His great objective and his great achievement were to make society at large aware of the poor in its midst and to proclaim the dignity of every individual, however lowly. To be sure, Christ had proclaimed these purposes nineteen centuries before, but Horace knew that they needed regular reassertion, particularly in a society dedicated to comfort and pleasure. His commitment to these goals was complete and it was the degree of his involvement and its persistence which gradually won him the support of the Society of Jesus and the admiration and backing of the community at large.

He made his own ministry and developed its guidelines and it was different from the teaching, writing, or preaching of his fellows, but it was to the credit of the order that its officials permitted him to roam freely and to make real Christ’s teachings in his own way. His preaching had an effect far beyond the ranks of his Society and, while he was not the only one spreading the message, his concentration on its import made many a person view differently the outstretched hand of a beggar on the street. He made a broad segment of society painfully aware of the personal problems of the poor and he encouraged them to work for their elimination.

Reverend John F. Steinbruck, a Lutheran minister and warm friend of Horace, was pastor of the Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington when Horace visited there to lend his presence to worthy causes and to pray with those assembled. In his view, Horace “provided a “vision” and a “gospel feel.” “He was God’s spokesperson in clarifying the
difference between right and wrong and love and callousness. He may have been a bit ‘off-beat’ and may have ‘spoken an octave too high’ at times, but he made people ask questions about themselves. He was an ‘aged prophet’ who saw the plight of the people and responded."

Another major achievement of Horace, described by his nephew, Father Tom Ambrose, was to make the church real to people in a time when the relevance of the institution to modern society was seriously questioned. “He showed that the church was not only a building,” the nephew explained, “but it was the Body of Christ. Through him it was serving people and going out to them. In Horace’s person, the priest was socially admirable, nondogmatic, and worthy of esteem.” He cut away the formality and the dogmatism and brought the church close to the people it was founded to serve.

It must be recognized, however, that many people, including social workers and clergy, disagreed with Horace’s open-handed approach to charitable giving. They considered him impractical and a compulsive donor. He had a horror of hurting anyone and shrank from the possibility of being a nay-sayer. Therefore he would give money to derelicts even though he knew that they might use it to buy liquor, and he would fight against evicting from public housing tenants who were disruptive, destructive, and nonpaying. In these cases, his compassion exceeded reasonable bounds and he refused to admit that figuratively sparing the rod in such cases could and did lead to frustration of the very purposes for which he was working.

“Love alone is not enough,” observed a prominent and distinguished social worker and friend of Horace in discussing this aspect of his philosophy. “Love is praiseworthy and essential as a motivating force, but it must be discriminating. Simply giving money with love does not serve a purpose. Charity must relate the need and the gift and it must have improvement as its goal.” Even though Horace disagreed with this analysis in practice and to some extent felt that the giving rather than the improving was the
important element, the statement of the social worker was valid. Horace’s impulse was not that of one spreading largesse so as to be known as a good fellow, but was an irrational, passionate small-scale attempt to eliminate the poverty and despair which he saw all around him. To put bounds on this campaign was to him unthinkable.

To some observers, Horace’s work was like attempting to bail the ocean with a bucket. For his part, however, Horace was not impatient with the pace of progress. While he was persistent, he was always relaxed and at ease and took things as they came. Nor was he unaware of the limitations inherent in his type of ministry. He told his provincial at one point that he knew what he was doing was a Band-Aid operation. He also saw the urgent long-term need for modern technology and expertise. Father Connor remembered that Horace continually pressed his superiors to send Jesuit scholars—“young men with a heart for the poor and a mind for the structure,” he described them—to study anthropology, economics, sociology, and city planning so that they might help the public look at the structural causes of poverty rather than its unattractive manifestations. Despite his claims to the contrary, he was too intelligent to rely entirely on the Band-Aid approach.

Horace easily rationalized the inability of mere humans to effect change overnight: “Our Lord did his miracles instantaneously at a word, but his church, his priests, his sisters, his fathers and mothers have to do their miracles slowly. You can’t make a child read instantaneously. Maybe six months’ kindly and daily encouragement to read monosyllables, and then two-syllable words and putting words together in a sentence, and you will really open up that child’s mind. In that way, you do a miracle slowly. You enable him not only to see, but to see through and to understand. This is the characteristic of the work in which God has placed me, and I am very hopeful that the work will go on to the end of the kingdom on earth.”

Horace was not an organizer or an administrator and, to a degree, this lack of ability may be considered a defect. He
was an "inspirer" and encouraged others who were better endowed to perform such tasks. It was not in his character to sit quietly in an office, working out organizational details. His personality pushed him outside and into the streets where he could deal with his people's problems on a one-to-one basis. He was so passionate to inform others about what one friend called "Horace's World" that when the provincial came to make his prescribed, annual, one-hour visit with each Society member, Horace would take his superior through the streets in his old car, to see the squalor and disarray, to visit the elderly and the sick, to see the nuns, the housing project, and the soup kitchen. Between stops, he would talk about himself and make his "manifestation of conscience" for which the provincial had come. Horace's explanation for varying this visit from the norm was: "You can't understand me if you don't understand my people."

Horace was "hard to corral in a team effort," as one of his superiors once said. Perhaps this was a defect, too. Certainly, there were times when his superiors must have thought so. One provincial described him as "charismatic." "There are two kinds of people," this official told a friend. "Some are 'company' people and others are 'high-flyers' who are 'charismatics.' For example, you can't imagine Isaiah playing on a team. Horace was one of the latter group. There are 'solo' voices and there are 'chorus' voices and they don't blend. Horace was definitely a 'soloist.'"

In the church structure, Horace was not an "organization" man in the old political sense. With his Jesuit superiors, with his bishop, and even with his Pope, he was not "down the line," but sought the dictates of reason to justify his support of church policy. This made him a difficult and prickly subordinate for those making and implementing ecclesiastical procedure. Philosophically, he was in a faction of the church that was termed "radical"—people who were "progressive" on blacks and black customs, on changes in liturgy, and in the manner of prayer. He advocated the opening up of the organization and a seeking out and cultivation of the people.
He also supported the proposal to make women priests, and this did not endear him with the more traditionally minded. His rationalization was characteristically oblique. “Mary was the first priest,” he told a brother Jesuit. “Who else but she could lift Jesus?” If she could perform this priestly function, he reasoned, then other women should be authorized to do the same. In this instance, as with birth control and the introduction of nuns to the ghettos, he was “ahead of his time.” In the first two cases, public thinking eventually came abreast of his. Whether the same will be true of the last matter remains to be seen.

Regardless of their adoption as approved church policies, Horace’s consideration of them demonstrated the open and unorthodox quality of his mind. In view of the physical quality of his ministry, it was amazing that his knowledge should have been so broad and his interests so extensive. One clerical friend remembered an occasion when a group of priests were riding in a car to attend a lecture by Father John Courtney Murray on the then new “Resurrection Theology” and during the drive, Horace, fresh from the ghetto, explained to them what the basis of the new teaching was. How he acquired this information, no one ever learned.

Similarly, as early as June 1976, Horace had been urging the merits of the now much discussed liberation theology upon Cardinal Baum after the Chancery office had informed him that funds would not be available for day camps and community work. Such activities, he wrote, “bring the Church into the midst of the community” and provide “an ideal setting for revealing the Gospel message, and showing fellowship and service. . . .” “The Church is made free and strong in the mid-twentieth century by Liberation Theology in an ecumenical and humble spirit,” his letter to the Cardinal asserted. “The whole Church is eager for the call to witness in Word, Sacrament, and Works of Mercy. . . .” He regretted the loss of the proposed social programs because of the effect of their absence on evangelization. “Now in a
swarming world, united and disunited, her (the Church’s) witness to Word and Sacrament is through her works of Mercy. With her Liberation Theology, she proclaims the Paschal Mystery that God is Man, and so He will win, and that Man is God and so he will win.”

Probably, Horace could not have foreseen the controversy which would arise in the church between the Pope and the Latin American clergy, but it would be certain that his judgment on the merits of the dispute would be reached by a dispassionate review of all the facts and sympathy for those claiming to be helping the poor.

Even in his eighth decade, Horace showed this curiosity and openness. Father John E. Adams, who became a close friend and part-time chauffeur, found him “always surprising.” Just a short time before his death, Horace called Adams one Friday night to bespeak his taxiing services. He wanted to attend a workshop the next day which would study the ministry to the gay community. “He just felt it important for him,” Adams commented, “to be more informed on the morality of this question. It was amazing to see one so open as he was at his age. He was an old priest, but he was so with it at the same time.”

Although he did not purport to be an expert in international problems, Horace did have strong feelings about the national policies of the United States in world affairs and, here again, his thinking diverged from the accepted, bipartisan strategy of the United States. He lamented what he came to see as a disproportionate allocation of national resources to weapons systems as opposed to hospitals and shelters and other instruments to satisfy insistent human needs. He was alarmed at the growth in the stockpile of nuclear weapons and was horrified at the devastation which they could wreak, but he did not see what preventive or deterrent function the adequate armament played. In his pacifism, he opposed the use of conventional as well as atomic weapons. Those who differed with him felt that he did not adequately judge the danger to our country of
Russian adventurism on the international scene and the threat of aggression, or, if he did, that he failed to offer a proper method for countering this peril. His proposals were humorous and amusing, but hardly set forth the specific strategy which a responsible president would be justified in pursuing. Horace's expertise, however, was not in the field of international relations, and when his deficiencies are measured and weighed, they are far outbalanced by the heroic qualities that raise him above the level of his fellow men.

He was exceptional, too, in his ability, in the midst of squalor and degradation, to live a life of heroic sanctity. He was remarkably selfless and scornful of personal comfort. He had no time for the attractions which other men find necessary to relieve the tedium of their lives. He had no recourse to music, to radio comedians, to movies, or to the theater. He was methodically prayerful in a traditional way, but added to his devotions were the concern for the poor and the acts of mercy which stimulated the admiration of the young clerics who were otherwise critical of many long-accepted devotional practices.

He was charitable in the truest sense of the word. One priest friend told of a gathering of the clergy where all agreed to throw money in a hat to buy books and comforts for an ailing associate. He saw two priests open their wallets. One had fifty dollars in his and took out and contributed five. Horace had five dollars in his and tossed the whole amount into the hat.

As part of his episodes of prayer, he experienced the sort of intimacy with God and affinity with the Blessed Virgin and the saints that have traditionally characterized true mysticism. He found comfort and encouragement in these associations and blithely disregarded the doubts of the skeptics who lived in a world of materialism and scientific explanations for all phenomena.

His determination was so strong that he permitted no setback or disappointment to disillusion him or deflect him from his course. He never gave in to despair as to the
possibility of human improvement. In spite of many apparent evidences to the contrary, he possessed an unshaken faith in the goodness of God, a very personal God who armed him with an all-encompassing serenity and a confidence as to the future. Christ was his model, and his objective was to live as close as possible to his Master. This purpose was supremely ambitious, but so was his achievement.

It was Christ's love for humanity which Horace sought most to emulate. In many instances, his gift of love was not reciprocated or was trivialized, but that did not deter him; it only encouraged him more. This quality, with all its attendant pitfalls in practice, was perhaps his most noteworthy and unusual characteristic and one which called for imitation in a society filled with so much hatred, self-seeking, avarice and parsimony.
Throughout the last decade of his life, Horace became a nationally known figure and received the praise and affection of an immense circle of individuals and groups and, ultimately, the respectful eulogies of notable public officials and distinguished institutions.

In 1971, he received his first degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, from Gonzaga College, of Washington, D.C., an honor which he particularly appreciated because of his close ties with that institution. George Meany, for many years head of the AFL-CIO, was a fellow honoree on this occasion. He was a strong figure whom Horace had admired over the years and to whom he gave credit for uniting the two major labor organizations into one powerful force. Another basis for Horace's admiration may have been Meany's upper-East Side origin and his unmistakable New York accent.

Horace told the labor leader that he applauded the labor movement for having developed the middle class in the United States, but he seized the opportunity to complain that the unions had so much "goonism" and racial prejudice that it took a presidential order to move them toward
equalizing employment opportunities. Meany defended the unions strongly, but Horace had struck a blow for his beloved black workmen.

In 1972, he received another honorary doctorate from Loyola College of Baltimore, whose president praised Horace's fight to prevent depersonalization of the poor. In 1978, he was named a "Washingtonian of the Year" by Washingtonian magazine, whose editors lauded Horace's work for the community and called him "the closest thing we have to a saint." Later in that same year, he was cited for his efforts in the housing field by a formal action of the Neighborhood Development Center of the Center City Community Corporation of Washington. At almost the same time, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, by the University of Scranton, with a citation which described him as "a man of God who empties himself daily in assistance to the poor."

In the year of Horace's seventieth birthday, Marion Barry, Jr., the mayor of Washington, proclaimed July 15, 1979 "Horace McKenna Day" and termed him the "Apostle of the Poor" whom he praised for his "outstanding contribution to the welfare of all, particularly the oppressed and underprivileged." A month later, Governor Harry Hughes, of the State of Maryland, awarded Horace the Governor's Citation, for the care of his fellow human beings, especially during his twenty-two years in the State of Maryland.

In that same year, his peers in the Society of Jesus gathered in celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood at the novitiate at Wernersville, Pennsylvania, to express their corporate pride in his accomplishments and their love for him as a brother in the Ignatian band. The affection and esteem which these associates felt was expressed with notable eloquence in a free-verse letter which Father J. William Michelman, S.J. wrote for the occasion and delivered:

Dear Horace:
Jesus humanly stumbled into our lives
the day you walked in ours,
put your chapped hand into ours
and your "look" into ours.

You tried your best to inform us
where in the world your God was, is, will be.
You didn't say where,
rather who God is:
God is man in need.
You located him on the curbstone
just plain played out of life.
We could smile at this crypticism
only afterwards to have it settle down
in our gutsy selves.

You taught us brevity of prayer, its sharpness
and the length of love on many roads,
all the sad muddy ones in Saint Mary's County
leading to dilapidated shacks
leading into sparse tobacco fields
with wide white eyes gleaming through windows,
and all the side city streets
up to the third floor rear
where some old person sat with messianic hope.

Grocery stores were built for one thing:
to hold Horace McKenna's bills
until some forgotten archbishop
bailed out you and yours.

You informed us of every superior's job:
Spray the house with praise.
You nurtured our human love
as our passage to God,
Jesus as the escalator.

With the pace of a circuit rider,
You hospital-hopped, sick bedroom-hopped,
rectory-hopped to see us; you popped
into every church passed, with a greeting.

Your black book contains the litany of the saints—
every one you ever met with phone and address.
You made us question what manner of man you were,
as you dozed amid the buzz of the best of rhetoric,
as you with your one-minute homilies
watch in hand, high-lighting Jesus;—
all you had to do was stand there.

You made us think of the servant of Isaiah:
Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,
Upon whom I have put my spirit;
he shall bring forth justice to the nations,
not crying out, not shouting,
not making his voice heard in the street.
A bruised reed he shall not break,
and a smouldering wick he shall not quench,
until he establishes justice on the earth.
I, the Lord have called you for the victory of justice
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you
as a covenant of the people,
a light for the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind,
to bring out prisoners from confinement
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.
For all this we thank you.

Gratefully in Our Lord,
All of us

—Michelman

This was a warm tribute, indeed, and to Horace the most satisfying of all, since it came from his brothers with obvious love and deep perception of his mission.

Horace felt as warmly about his brothers in the Society of Jesus as they did about him, and he valued their corporate support. Perhaps they were less militant than he would have wished—for example, in their minimal participation in the Vietnam anti-war demonstrations; more cautious than he might have hoped—as in Georgetown University’s reluctance to sponsor teaching programs in the inner city; or too conservative by half, for example, in their anti-discrimination efforts at Ridge. But he was deeply grateful for their cooperation and backing in general.

“I always enjoyed their companionship and was supported by it and found it encouraging and stimulating and idealistic. Even when I was in conflict with the authorities in the church, while all my brethren didn’t agree with me, I experienced sympathy and support. In my charitable work,
Horace becomes a doctor as the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa is conferred upon him by the University of Scranton on May 28, 1978. At right is Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., then President of the University of Scranton, later President of The Catholic University of America.
Right, Florence Peterson, R.N., nurse, admirer, and friend of Horace, who cared for him after his brain surgery and during his subsequent convalescence.

Below, Horace at 82 during an interview in his room in the rectory of St. Aloysius Church. His personalized filing system may be seen in the background.
they are very encouraging and appreciative, although many don’t join in it—perhaps because my work involves the giving out of money. So, they’re not able to associate directly in my work because they’re not acquainted with the precise needs, just as I wouldn’t be acquainted if I walked into a biology class or a history class, since I wouldn’t know the background of the day’s work.”

He knew that he had gradually, and with effort, earned the admiration of his order for the depth of his commitment to improving the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor. “I do have their spiritual and their religious support,” he asserted. “We are a real apostolic community. We are a group of individuals, each trying to do the work of the Lord, but as a group we are apostolic too. We appreciate each other’s importance in the harvest of Christ and one another’s sacrifices and good will to maintain fruitful activity. . . . We are united in heart and in the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of his Father and the Holy Spirit. We are united with all the Saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the whole Church in an effort to make Christ come alive in every moment that God gives us.”

This moving peroration expressed not only the purposes of the Society, but the goals which he had set for himself and which he realized so completely.

ON MAY 25, 1980, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY CONFERRED UPON HORACE its degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. The accompanying citation stressed that “the key word in the academic title was ‘humane’” and placed him with Francis of Assisi, Albert Schweitzer, and Mother Teresa in the “minority—who can embark upon a sea of troubles, and, in the course of the rescues they make, deepen in spirit, humor, compassion, and understanding.” Horace was pleased that at the Fordham commencement, the late Patricia Roberts Harris, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a black woman, gave the principal address, and he took care to send her newspaper articles and writings concerning himself and his work so that she would know
who he was when they met. In a touching adjunct to the main event, Fordham Preparatory School, Horace’s alma mater, conferred upon him membership in its Order of the Maroon Key.

The most august of those who noticed Horace’s achievements was President Jimmy Carter who, on December 23, 1980, sent him advance birthday greetings and good wishes for the anniversary.

One measure of his standing in the community was his intervention in the 1979 hunger strike of Mitch Snyder, the Washington activist, against Holy Trinity parish. Horace was chosen as a credible intermediary and brought the Sacrament of the Sick to Snyder’s bedside, but more importantly added his persuasive powers to the effort to get Snyder to call off his fast, which he then did.

Horace accepted these marks of esteem with a mixture of humor, self-deprecation, and unalloyed pleasure. He enjoyed being among the world’s great. Principally, however, he took these honors as a mark that the world had changed and that he was one of the few who had been able to influence the attitude of the society in which he lived. As in the case of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Horace was pleased to realize that after his death, through his work, men would “be moving to the measure of his thought.”
Florence Peterson, Horace’s nurse, retains a vivid memory of the days of his convalescence at Saint Aloysius in November 1975. Although black and not a Catholic, she became a member of the Gonzaga family, and her admiration and affection for Horace deepened with the passing days. She had been amazed by his performance in the hospital; she remembered especially the day when, against her wishes, he had convened a special meeting of the board of directors of SOME in his hospital room in order to have an influence on a policy action. Now, back downtown, her experience was of a different character, but no less amazing.

“He really didn’t want me or the other nurses,” she later told a friend. “He didn’t want to admit that he needed help. He was the one who was accustomed to helping and he was too proud to be seen with nurses.” Nevertheless, when he started to get out into the streets, he did permit her to come along, even though she had to walk somewhat behind him to make clear that she was not assisting him. Sometimes she would take her car and Horace would tell her where to drive as he resumed his patrols of the neighborhood. He took her
to places the likes of which she with her middle-class background had never seen.

She described one visit: "He carried me to a place on Hanover Street, off North Capitol. He told me to stop in a little alley at a dilapidated building where, he explained, he had to check the status of the people. I went in with him and there was a dark room in which there was an old woman whom he greeted. There was also a mentally retarded man and two young men in the back who sat and talked. The smell in there was overpowering. I was frightened to death. I had never been in such a place in my life. He detected my uneasiness and we soon left, and, afterward, he would let me stay in the car rather than come into such places with him. After meeting some of these derelicts and being in their homes, the smell would stay with me and when I got home, the first thing I'd do would be to take a bath."

When she arrived, early each morning, he would already be up and washed and waiting for her and they would soon be out in the streets where they would spend the day (perhaps with a lunch at SOME where he might criticize the soup) meeting people, buying and delivering food, checking on medical visits, and eventually giving away whatever money he had. She shared the puzzlement of many others that a man with Horace's talents should sentence himself to such an existence.

"It was hard to understand," she said, as she later analyzed his mission, "why he would associate and work with these dirty people, but that was his life and he enjoyed it, every bit of it. He had to be a saint to go in with people like these. They are the throwaways. Society doesn't want to be bothered with them. But he never tired of trying to help them. He dedicated his life to them. He never had what we would call a normal life, but he was never anxious, never overpowered, and never tired of helping others."

Peterson was particularly impressed by the policy of the Jesuits in letting Horace go his own way. As she put it, they "turned him loose" to go out into the streets and "do his thing" in the expectation, if not certainty, that he would
survive to return to the roost each evening. She did not know that support for his mission had not been unanimous, but she made a penetrating analysis when she wondered if "perhaps they saw him as a street person too." At any rate, this was the life that he loved.

The visits of this odd couple were not confined to derelict homes. At times, they would attend meetings of organizational boards—such as Sursum Corda—on which Horace served. Here Peterson observed another side of her patient, one who sought to push and pull his fellow directors into policies not congenial to their more conservative minds. In this setting, she considered that he was "too advanced for his times."

Especially in the first days after his return from the hospital, Peterson saw another side of Horace. He never boasted, but he enjoyed praise and appreciation. As they strolled up North Capitol Street, people would see him and would rush over to convey their congratulations on his recovery and he would receive them like a movie star or some other notable. She saw him as a "showman" in this display.

Peterson summed up Horace by saying, "I call him a saint. I never met one before and I never expect to meet another like him." And she added with great acuteness: "No one will ever know all about Father McKenna."

Certainly Horace needed no more traumas, but he was not fated to enjoy a long respite from bodily blows. At regular intervals after Peterson had left, he traveled by bus from Saint Aloysius to the hospital in Georgetown for appointments with Dr. McCullough. Somehow, during the course of one trip, he must have been knocked down, because when Dr. McCullough saw him, he was "scraped, dishevelled, and upset." McCullough realized that it was dangerous for Horace, with his infirmities, to be traveling such a distance by public transportation, and he told him that in the future he could relay his progress reports by telephone; but he never heard from him again.

One would have hoped that Horace would have been
spared any further physical problems, but during Holy Week of 1979, prior to Mass in the upstairs sanctuary of Saint Aloysius, Horace, vested and on his way to the "peace box" as a preliminary, missed a three-inch step and fell onto the marble floor. At first, he thought he could concelebrate the Mass from a seat below the altar, but he found that he couldn't move and it turned out that he had broken his hip.

This time, the operation and the recovery were without complications. By now, Horace was becoming something of a medical and surgical expert. "The operation was a simple one," he told a parishioner when he returned to the rectory. "They just put a new knob on where the other had been broken off and I was only in the hospital for eight days. Luckily, I had no cast and it is the cast which often causes fatalities." Dr. Kenneth Cho had done his part skillfully and Horace's convalescence proceeded so uneventfully that he was soon able to get around the rectory and the church and to attend the daily formation of his "line" with only a slight restriction of movement.

Whether or not he was accident-prone, as was alleged by one of his rectors, Father Joseph A. Newell, may be a matter of dispute, but his adventurous spirit plus his visual disability added risks to those faced by the average person. In 1981, he fell at the Loyola Retreat House, in Faulkner, Maryland, as he was getting out of his pajamas one morning. This time, however, there was no fracture and he merely had a sore back for a few days afterward.

BUT AS HORACE MOVED THROUGH HIS NINTH DECADE, HIS PHYSICAL condition deteriorated at an increasing rate. He had at last begun to feel the weight of the years and to long for some respite from the demands and cares of his vocation. He had experienced moments of depression before, but he had always been able to dispel them and to move on to new challenges, but now the pressure was continuous and unrelenting.

While his mind was as active as ever, his physical dis-
abilities limited his activities and caused him great frustration. At the same time, his general bodily deterioration led him to think of death and there were moments when his customary optimism and certainty deserted him. Father John Adams remembered how terrible Horace felt about the weakness of his body and the apprehension which he experienced when he thought of his own passing: “Death upset him and I recall one time when he was talking about it with me and he began to cry as he talked. As I saw it though, if he was afraid to die, this showed that he was human and thus a real saint.”

The problems of the “line” seemed to increase rather than diminish. Some of his brethren in the order felt a greater doubt about the value of his enterprise and initiated controls on its operation and his activities. At the same time, in addition to external difficulties, his customary bodily resiliency had disappeared and he no longer found it possible to snap back from weakness and take up the battle.

Although Horace publicly made light of his injury and emphasized his recovery, in fact he was beginning the decline which ended in his death. Florence Peterson, his former nurse and friend, saw him when he was recovering from the surgery in the hospital. When she went into the room, he “cried ‘Oh, Florence,’ and hugged and kissed me.” His appearance, however, told her that he was beginning to fail. “In the first place,” she subsequently explained, “he was in bed and that alone indicated that he was failing. He was definitely not a ‘man of the bed.’ He was one to get up and out. Still, some of his drive remained. I asked him if he was looking for someone to help that day and he smiled and said, ‘As a matter of fact, yes.’”

He struggled to maintain his independence and battled attempts to limit his freedom of activity, but he began to suffer disabling attacks—pressure-loss blackouts—which would leave him senseless on the floor of the bathroom, where he would be found by concerned brother Jesuits. These were episodes of coronary insufficiency when the heart
was not able to pump enough blood through the circulatory system to meet the demands of the brain and other organs. At least once, he was discovered sitting on the stairs, unable to move, yet refusing to call for help. In 1980, he was rushed to the George Washington University Hospital after one of these attacks.

He did not permit his growing incapacity to curtail his efforts in behalf of his friends. In April, the month before his final heart attacks, he went to court to act as a character witness for a member of the Young Dillingers, an inner city self-improvement group, who was charged with a criminal offense. Horace was so weak that he fainted in the court room.

He recovered from this onslaught and was able to go home, but the attacks became more frequent and when, in early May of 1982, he experienced severe chest pains, he was brought once again to his familiar place of refuge, the Georgetown University Hospital. An electrocardiogram indicated to Dr. James E. Fitzgerald that Horace had probably suffered a heart attack, but it wasn’t clear when it had occurred. Horace was placed in the cardiac intensive care section for observation. He was, as always, sharp and alert mentally and was upbeat and cheerful, continually thanking the nurses and doctors for their work, thinking more of them than of himself. Rosemary Dluhy, who was attached to the hospital staff, again saw him and observed how brave, how independent, and how understanding he was of his condition when the nurses talked with him. Because of these characteristics, he required very little of the support from hospital staff that more self-centered patients regularly need.

As was his custom, he received visitors, including his brothers and sisters in religion with whom he discussed his many projects. On May 6th, Father Francis Walsh, who was then the pastor of Saint Peter Claver, visited him in the hospital and read for comment the 160-odd pages of a new history of the parish which he had prepared. Horace listened
intently to the reading and made a few corrective suggestions as they went along.

When it was determined from the electrocardiogram that the heart changes had not been acute, Dr. Fitzgerald concluded that Horace might be allowed to go home in a few days. Then “out of the blue” Horace suffered a massive coronary thrombosis. His team of doctors and nurses labored heroically to bring him back, but the efforts proved futile. His powerful heart had stopped beating. It was May 11, 1982 and he was nearly halfway through his eighty-fourth year.

Years before his death, Horace had talked of it: “I guess I’ll be thankful when these cares have been taken out of my hands. I will thank God for having mixed me up for a number of years with, and for having blessed me with the knowledge and appreciation of, so many families involved in these difficult situations, and with the support of my dear brothers in the Society of Jesus, and my sisters throughout the church, and with generous benefactors who have kept my hand open all these days, and who have encouraged me so that my heart is unafraid, and who have enabled me to stay as an image of Christ doing good amongst the people.

“Then, in my dream of the Last Day, Our Lord will come back and reward us for having, by his grace, straightened the world out, and having the poor competent, and the rich thoughtful, and the well-protected kindly and generous and involved, and the educated enthralled with the kingdom of God, and the spiritual able to perceive him in such a way as to make him visible to us.”

This was the concluding summary of Horace’s beliefs, the distillation of his idealism, his eternal optimism and his unshaken belief in the divine plan. It was a peroration in which he poured out his thanks for his opportunities and his gratitude for the rest which would be granted him when his work was done.

“I’m very grateful to God for having put me here and for
maintaining me here through the grace and love of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and for the health and spirit and strength of the Holy Spirit and the grace he works in the whole church. I am ready at any time to surrender myself to the arms of my heavenly Father. And when God lets me into heaven, I think I'll ask to go off in a corner somewhere for half an hour and sit down and cry because the strain is off, the work is done, and I haven't been unfaithful or disloyal, all these needs that I have known are in the hands of Providence and I don't have to worry any longer who's at the door, whose breadbox is empty, whose baby is sick, whose house is shaken and discouraged, and whose children can't read.”

Indeed, he had done the work supremely well, he had been eminently faithful, and he had heroically earned the respite to which he had looked forward so longingly.
The results of charitable efforts are usually not transformed into any permanent structure. However, the organizations that Horace inspired or created have continued after his death, usually in stronger form, and new ones have been created because of his inspiration.

SOME, the hot meal facility, whose genesis Horace sparked, has experienced remarkable growth. Under the able management of Father John E. Adams, its director, this vibrant organization occupies two buildings on O Street, N.W., and has a staff of 40 and 3,000 volunteers. It operates a thrift store, a residence for senior citizens, a senior center and a residence for young women, at various locations, besides continuing its original project of providing nutritious meals, now totalling 650 to 900 per day, for the deserving. Its financing has long since proceeded from sporadic, individual support to assistance from foundations such as the Robert W. Johnson Foundation; from organized charity through the United Way; from Georgetown University through the provision of a dental clinic by its Dental School; and from the City of Washington through its Department of Human Services for the operation of a
program to combat drug abuse. SOME’s budget is now in
the hundreds of thousands of dollars and its nonsectarian
programs have broadened and deepened in places of need in
the city of Washington.

The House of Ruth, for homeless women, and the House
of Imagene, for displaced families, continue to function.
Sursum Corda, the housing project, operates actively and
even though it is, in some respects, a modified jungle, it is no
worse than most other comparable housing projects and can
boast library facilities and two devoted nuns in residence,
due to Horace’s efforts. His encouragement also stimulated
the interest and involvement of more affluent individuals. At
Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown, a Horace McKenna
Center has been established and a Social Concerns Com-
mittee set up, which, within one year after Horace’s death,
collected forty thousand dollars for SOME, the Saint
Vincent de Paul Society, and other charities in which Horace
was interested. Moreover, new initiatives have come in whole
or in part from the stimulus of his example. When Father
Thomas Gavigan was given a present of fifteen thousand
dollars on the fiftieth anniversary of his entering the Jesuit
order, he turned it over to the Saint Vincent de Paul Society
of Saint Aloysias parish—now located in a newly named
McKenna Center—for the purpose of continuing Horace’s
work. Martha’s Table, devoted to the care and feeding of
children, has been expanded and its adjunct, McKenna’s
Wagon, carries sandwiches and hot soup through the inner
city to provide food for the needy. And recently the program
inaugurated a new facility in Colorado.

The Archdiocese of Washington has also forthrightly
assumed a major responsibility and is supporting a center
for homeless men, named the McKenna Center (the third
facility so named), on Park Road, with its own commitment
of at least a half million dollars in capital investment and
running expenses of seventy to one hundred thousand
dollars per year. In this case, the Franciscan order has
provided the full-time staffing of three friars for counseling
and management, thus giving the facility a remedial as well
as a custodial function. In 1983, significantly, the District government, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, sponsored the opening of a massive one thousand-bed facility to provide emergency accommodations for homeless people at public expense.

All these developments would have gladdened Horace's heart. He had been a member of the original District task force on the shelter problem and he would have been happy that the public consciousness had been aroused to such a degree that the mayor, the city council, the archdiocese, the Capuchins, the Jesuits, the federal government, and people of good will generally had come together to deal with the problem he had been fighting all his life.

The transition after Horace's death was not accomplished without some trauma. One unfortunate instance was the case of his closest offspring, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society at Saint Aloysius Church. In Horace's latter days, the broadened scope of the Vincent de Paul program, coupled with his declining health and lack of management skills, had prompted his superiors in the Jesuit order to increase supervision, place limitations upon the amounts which he might disburse without approval, and assign operational assistants. These measures made the operation more efficient, but they added to the tension, which was contained as long as Horace remained on the scene.

Horace's death exacerbated this tension and immediately raised questions about the continuation of his program, its method of operation and the character of its management. The first major question was answered affirmatively when the Jesuit order decided that Horace's memory and his great achievement left no alternative but to carry on his local work.

Unfortunately, there was a delay in implementing this judgment and, before a well-organized succession could be arranged, ambition, injured feelings, poor communications, racial perceptions, and bad judgment combined to explode a burst of harmful publicity which made the change to a new management unnecessarily difficult.
Fortunately, events proved that the support of the parishioners remained unweakened and the disaffection had little effect. The Jesuit authorities moved cautiously and, knowing that they could not replace Horace, found a man who is eminently qualified to superintend the continuation of the work of the center: Father David Hinchén, S.J., former social worker, Peace Corps teacher and director of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in the northeastern states. Not only has he had formal experience, but he has a deep interest in the poor and their problems, and he is dedicated to assisting them.

He was joined by two Jesuit Volunteers, a counselor, a maintenance man and many volunteers. Thus, in spite of an unpleasant and unnecessary interlude, the facility continues on a sound, permanent basis with greater efficiency. Financial support which, for the most part, comes from voluntary contributions outside the parish, has grown substantially and has permitted an expanded program. The customary assistance in emergency rent payments, food donations, nonlocal transportation, medical and utility aid, has been increased. The almost automatic provision of small cash payments, which brought on abuses, has been greatly limited. New ground has been broken with the expansion of the daily drop-in program and, one of Horace’s fondest dreams, the institution of a night shelter for elderly men. Shower and toilet facilities have been installed and a washer and dryer are available for laundering shirts and underclothes. The complex is dedicated more than ever to Horace’s belief that humane treatment of these clients will stimulate some of them to return to the battleground of everyday life.

The final stamp of approval was given to the renewed program just a few days after the first anniversary of Horace’s death, when Archbishop James A. Hickey came to Saint Aloysius to join in commemoration of Horace’s death and thereafter dedicated the Father McKenna Center in renovated quarters in the church basement. Horace would have been delighted to know that his work was in such good hands and was proceeding apace.
Horace was not solely responsible for the great change which had taken place in the public attitude toward the poor, but he was in the forefront of these activists and his efforts substantially affected his order, his church, his community, and his nation at large. His efforts helped spread knowledge and rouse compassionate action for America's less fortunate citizens.
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