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Interview no. 507

Bishop Emeritus Sidney M. Metzger

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Bishop Emeritus Sidney M. Metzger (1902-)
INTERVIEWER: Oscar J. Martínez, Anne Reidmiller, and Sarah E. John
PROJECT: Class Project
DATE OF INTERVIEW: August 8, 1978
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

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TRANSCRIPT NO.: 507
TRANSCRIBER: Irene D. Ramírez
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

(Bishop of El Paso, 1942-1978)

Born in 1902 in Fredericksburg, Texas; studied at St. John's Seminary in San Antonio, Texas, and the North American College in Rome, where he was ordained in 1926. [See biographical sketch following transcript.]

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biographical data; how he became interested in the priesthood; studies and experiences in Rome in the 1920s; experiences as a priest in San Antonio, Texas, in the 1920s and 1930s; experiences as Asst. Bishop in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1941; experiences as Bishop of El Paso, including WWII era, labor issues from the 1950s to the 1970s (especially the Farah Strike), the lack of financial resources; the Church and Mexican Americans (including acquiring vocations for the priesthood); discrimination; the Chicano Movement; illegal aliens; the organization of the Catholic laity in El Paso; the Charismatic Movement in the Catholic Church; the Equal Rights Amendment; abortion; ordination of women to the priesthood; contraception; Black Catholics in El Paso; integration.

**Also included are a biographical sketch, newspaper articles, and notes concerning Bishop Emeritus Metzger.

Length of Interview: 3 1/2 hours Length of Transcript: 91 pages

Bishop Emeritus Sidney M. Metzger
by Oscar J. Martínez, Anne Reidmiller, and Sarah E. John
August 8, 1978

AR: First of all, Reverend, I wanted to begin with background information about your life--where you were born, on the day, your parents.

SM: Well, all the biographies give that. Fredericksburg, Texas, and on July the 11th, 1902. You know where Fredericksburg is?

AR: Yes, but why don't you tell us about where it's located?

SM: Well, fine. It's an old German colony that started in 1846. And my grandfather came there from my father's side during that year when the colony was founded. They came from the Rhine country in Germany, not far from Koblenz, and they were stone masons. This is quite an interesting colony. And so they all settled there. It was a colony that had people of all faiths, and they had the trades and professions and everything very thoroughly organized. And the person who was the head of it was a German nobleman named Freiherr Von Meusebach. Freiherr, of course, means...it's a title of nobility. And one of the very first things he did was make peace with the Indians. The Comanche Indians were in all those places. So that is the background. It has remained rather German to this day. If you go from here down /to/ Austin, you can drive through there. It still has the atmosphere of the old days quite a bit.

OM: It's a very pretty town. I've been through there.

SM: And also from my mother's side, the same. My grandfather came from Germany, so they were old-timers there. And my father had a farm and retired then. Really, I spent very little time in Fredericksburg. I went through the grade schools and St. Mary's, the parochial school there. It's quite a parish, a Catholic parish, St. Mary's Parish. And then I went to what we call the high school seminary where /you went/ if you were boys that were thinking of becoming

a priest and so on. That was in St. John's seminary in San Antonio.

AR: And you went there at an early age, didn't you?

SM: I was about 13 when I went. Yes, I had finished, I guess, my grade school a little bit ahead of time or something. And so I thought that I'd like just to find out if I wanted to be a priest. I went down there and I really did want to be a priest because I very much loved the Mass, and I thought this is what I wanted to do. So then I stayed that way and I went to San Antonio to seminary there for seven years. And then I went on to Rome.

AR: I wanted to ask you, when was the first time that you seriously considered becoming a priest? Was it when you went to St. John's?

SM: Yeah, well, it was when I was serving Mass. In other words, it was, as I would say, the sacredness of the Mass that really attracted me.

AR: Your family was Catholic.

SM: Yeah, that's right.

OM: Was there anyone else in your family who had become a priest?

SM: No, nobody.

OM: Was your family very Catholic, very active?

SM: All very Catholic. Oh, yeah, very active. Oh, yes, they were. But nobody ever told me to become a priest.

AR: So your parents didn't influence you.

SM: No. Absolutely not. Nor did anyone...oh, when I told them that I would be, they said that it was very good. But no one has said, "You should not," or "You should," one way or the other. I did all this myself. And so the pastor was a good man, he was a wonderful example. He was an elderly priest, also from Germany. That was rather inspiring to me. And so that's the way.

OM: I wanted to ask you about the founding of that town in 1846. Was that during

the time of the Mexican War, or was it before?

SM: That was before the Mexican War. I think the Mexican War, really, it didn't last very long. It was over in 1848.

OM: 1847, really. They signed the treaty in 1848.

SM: It really had nothing to do with the Mexican War. The people left Germany especially at that time because there was a lot of unrest over there. And some of them didn't want to serve in the Prussian army, you know--that type of thing. Of course at that time Germany was not united. You had all kinds of provinces and so on. That's why a lot of them left.

AR: Were there many Mexican people who settled in Fredericksburg?

SM: No, not at that time. There're not very many people in Fredericksburg now, as far as I know. I remember there was a little parish that was started when I was a child. But as I say, I left, you see. I was off to school all my life. So I can't give you all those details. But I do remember, yes, there was a... By the way, we did have a priest from Mexico. Let me see, his name was Father Galarza, a very lovely man. He came over from the persecutions and he came up to Fredericksburg. And I know they had the chapel and all these things, and he used to say the mass for them and so on. Now that goes back quite a long way. But it was rather a small group.

OM: How far back are we talking about, with this priest doing that?

SM: About...oh, must go back to around 1915, as far as I remember.

OM: So there was a small colony of Mexican people.

SM: Oh, yes, it was at that time apparently. I think they were people that worked probably on the ranches and things. But they had mass in town. And I know that Father Galarza, his name I remember very well. And he was a very, very fine person. I think later on he passed away then. So I don't know much

about that history. After that I left, of course. And I don't know even right now whether they still have a Mexican parish there or a mission or not. I'm not sure. But I can look that up, see what's in the Catholic directory, if there's a mission there that would be it.

OM: There's only one church.

SM: /Yes/, St. Mary's, which is the old parish. If you go there today you will see there are actually two churches. There's the old church, which was built by the oldtimers. I'm sure my grandfather and those people who were builders, they helped to do that. Which by the way has been considered quite a monument of architecture, and they're trying to preserve it now. And then the other, the new church, was built somewhere in the early 1900s. I guess I was baptized still in the old church. Then when I was very small I remember that they built the new St. Mary's Church, as we call it, and that's now the parish church. The old one is just standing there.

AR: Do you go back very often? Have you been back to Fredericksburg?

SM: Oh, yes, I go back for a little while. My family are practically all...of course, remember, in my own immediate family, my parents are gone a long time ago. I still have, however, some /relatives/. I had a nephew living there who passed away, and lots of other relatives. You have to know, in these colonies, they started from these few old-timers who came in 1846. The name Metzger is very well known. I don't know how many there are now. You can see how that spread out over this time. Even today, this young fellow who /played/ shortstop for the Houston Astros (he's now with the San Francisco Giants), Roger Metzger, if you remember, he comes from that town, the whole family.

AR: Oh, is that right? He's from your family?

SM: Yeah. But I don't know, I have never traced all the distant relationships. But he's from Fredericksburg. And if he's from that clan, that means that's what it is.

AR: Did you all share a love of baseball?

SM: Yes, I like baseball very much. But I, of course, I don't know this boy really. I only heard about him when he was going down to St. Edward's College some years ago. That's where he went, to St. Edward's University. And somebody told me, they said, "Gee, he's a crackerjack shortstop. Probably go into professional ball." And he did. And he's a very fine shortstop. Hits lightly, though. His batting average is not very heavy. But for playing short they say he's absolutely tops. I've listened to the Game of the Week /program here, and I've heard the announcers tell that, you know. They size up the ball players.

Well, now, that's how the whole clan originally /began. Starting in 1846, now that's a hundred and some years. So you see, we have spread out. And so I go back; and however, the many, many people whom I do not know anymore, some of 'em are quite closely related to me. But I have been away. I don't spend much time /there. I go there maybe for a week or so and I go out to where my nephew lived. He has this little ranch not far from Harper, and I go out there and stay awhile to get some fresh air. And I'll go around a bit and then I'll leave again. I'm not involved in any local affairs or anything of that kind.

AR: There were five children in your family, is that correct?

SM: That's right, yeah.

AR: Are they all living still?

SM: No, they're all gone except one. My brother lives in San Antonio, he still

lives in San Antonio. I have a nephew stays there with him. He has two boys. One of the children died and they had two boys. One of them is one of the librarians at SAC. You know what SAC is? San Antonio College. That's quite a big place. I guess there's about 20,000 students there. So I also go there and visit him. That's about it. But as far as background is concerned, the whole area, I'm quite familiar with it, and I love it very much. I think it's very lovely. I rather like the hills; they have very nice, graceful lines. It's rather quite nice. And it kind of reminds me of a lot of things that go through my mind.

AR: Why don't you tell us about some of your childhood experiences?

SM: Well, really, I don't know. There were not any outstanding childhood experiences, except I guess that I did what children did in those days. Remember, the world was rather a quiet place at that time. We didn't have anything that we have now. We couldn't think of anything. We lived according to the, well, the customs and the facilities of the time. And I really wouldn't point to anything that was a terrible, outstanding experience that had struck me. I simply went through the seminary and thought that this is what I wanted to do. I was, however, quite happy when I was selected to pursue my studies over in Rome. I didn't expect that.

AR: And how were you selected?

SM: Well, on scholarship, really. Plus other things. But they go on that, they go along that. It's a general thing. They size up all the, I guess, facets of one's character and see whether you're good material or not for that. So then I spent six years in Rome.

OM: How old were you when you went to Rome?

SM: Let's see, I went there in '22. I was just about 20 when I went to Rome, and

then stayed there for six years. It was in 1922. Incidentally, the year that I got to Rome was the time that Mussolini started. Mussolini had just made his march on Rome, if you've read back history on that. And we were in the North American College, which is a seminary for the United States, students from the United States who want to prepare for the priesthood in Rome. So they're American boys, you see. And when we got there that time, the American ambassador told the rector not to let the boys go out on the street. We were inside for a whole month because they were rioting out in the streets and so on. That was Mussolini's march on Rome. And the first real walk that we took in Rome was on a Sunday, and Mussolini had captured Rome. And he had all of his Fascisti, the fascists were all there and they looked like a pretty tough outfit. They felt like they had sort of conquered it. That was the beginning of fascism in 1922.

OM: Were you afraid?

SM: No. We didn't think they could harm us very much. They really didn't. No. If you left them alone... Now, I wouldn't do anything to provoke 'em, of course. They could be pretty rough on you. But I lived in Rome then for six years, and Mussolini had by that time kind of settled down. Mussolini was really in many respects a very, very remarkable person. I personally think that if he'd never got mixed up with Hitler he would've done pretty well. But then also in his own life he got to be very immoral and so on. Mussolini never was a...he was a Catholic, of course, but he had been a Communist, you know, and was kicked out of Italy. And then when all those post-war difficulties arose after the First World War, he came back. He fought the Communists, and that's how he founded the Fascist Party. He went to the other extreme.

But as far as his faith was concerned, the Church, it didn't mean anything

to him. Not a thing. He did want to go down in history, he was very ambitious as a statesman. And one of the great things that he was always working for was to make peace between the government of Italy and the Vatican. /If you go back into the history, there were the Papal States in Italy at one time. And of course when the king of Italy and all that came, and Garibaldi, they took all those away. And so then the Pope was simply in St. Peter's and just that little Vatican area there, what we call the Vatican. And he was really, technically, a prisoner from that civil viewpoint. And so later they wanted to adjust that, and in 1929 I believe it was they finally drew up what they call the Lateran Treaty. And so that set up the Vatican state that you have today. And Mussolini did all that.

But getting on to myself, I don't think there was anything tremendously eventful or earthshaking in my youth. We were boys, seminarians and so on. And we had a pretty good ball team. I played shortstop myself for a long time. So that's the way things went. And then of course when I went back, when I came and went to Rome in 1926, I was ordained a priest.

AR: I wanted to ask you, did you date while you were going to school?

SM: Very little.

AR: So you didn't have the type of social life that the average teenager had?

SM: No. Really, I did what I wanted to. It wasn't that I was deprived of anything. I could do anything I wanted as far as that was concerned. I had all the social life I wanted, in that respect. Yes.

OM: How did you spend your time in Rome?

SM: Well, mostly in school. However, we had vacations and we had a villa up near Carstel Gandolfo that you read about these days, where the Pope's summer place is. It was not occupied in those days, but there was a villa that they had

bought for the students. Rome gets very warm in the summertime, and that's why the people go out for two months and so on. They go where it's a little cooler. So, otherwise during the year, that's about it. We went to school and had quite a heavy schedule. Oh, we had our, of course, holidays here and there, but that was a bit. And then during the summer we usually could travel for about three weeks. Then we had to come back, and we even had a program, a life study program, during the summer. So you see, we had our nose to the grindstone.

OM: You could travel independently?

SM: Oh, yes. Yeah, we students usually together...several of us got together as a rule. And in those days travel wasn't very expensive unless you wanted to travel in luxury, but we didn't care about that. We used to travel in third class trains and in all of that. I got to know Italy very well that way. I know Italy almost from top to...from the top down to the boot.

AR: Did you learn to speak Italian?

SM: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, I learned to speak Italian, so much so that... You didn't read it in the paper, but they asked me /in/ Sunday's. What's his name? Craig Phelon? He came up here to ask about Pope Paul and so on, whom I really didn't know very well. But I had a private audience with Pope John in 1959. And in those days we all had to go in for a private audience. And so the person who arranged the audience said to me, "Well, you speak Italian well enough, why don't you speak in Italian to Pope John?" He said, "You'll catch his personality only if you can do that." And he said, "You speak it well enough." I was rather frightened, of course; I'd forgotten so much. And I said, "All right, I'll do it." So I went back to my hotel and I got myself a little Italian dictionary and kind of paged the words, you know.

And so the audience came two days sooner than I expected. But I went in and talked to him. And he said, "Well, if you speak Italian like this, you must've spent a lot of time here." And I said, "Well, I did. Six years." Then we talked about a lot of things in Rome.

And then the humorous part of that audience really was that, you know, Pope John, it was always known that he was trying to study English, learn English. Well, he never got a speaking knowledge of English. He was one of those people that could read a language, but he spoke it atrociously, really. And we had a ceremonial at the North American College in 1959, the centennial of that seminary, and Pope John came up, presided and so on. And then he gave first a long, formal talk. He couldn't stand any formal things at all, but this was the protocol that you had to submit to. And finally he picked up a few papers and he started saying a few words in English, and they were very bad. So, what does he do when I was in the audience there? He suddenly threw a question at me. He said, "And what did you think of my English, son?" Well, I had to think very fast on that one. Now of course, Pope John knew that his English was lousy, he must've known that. He just didn't care about that. But I had had too much respect for the Holy Father to tell him, "Well, your English is atrocious," you know. So all I said to him, and this was in Italian, I said, "Well, Holy Father, really, the whole world admires your courage."

OM: (Chuckles) That was in the paper. I read the article.

SM: When I told him the story he was so amused, Craig was, and he said, "Maybe I'll put that in." I said, "All right."

So, yes, I learned Italian. In fact, when we were just young priests we used to go out in the outskirts of Rome where there are what they call

the Roman campagna. That's the area there. That's where a lot of the farms are and little missions and so on. And I used to go with another student who was a student in Canon Law, and he was a Vietnamese. He was from Indochina, as they called it in those days. So I was from Texas, all the way from Texas, and he was from Indochina, and we were going to these little missions out there saying mass for the Italians. (Laughter)

Yeah. Then of course I came back. I got my doctorate in Theology and Canon Law in Rome, in those six years. And I was told to teach in St. John's Seminary in San Antonio, which I did. That doesn't exist anymore now. The bishops have changed some of it.

OM: What year was this?

SM: That was...I came back in 1928.

OM: Were you glad to be sent so close to home? Did you have a choice of where you would go?

SM: No, I came back to a diocese. See, when you're ordained for a diocese, that means...for instance, when the bishop ordains priests here for the diocese, that means they belong to this diocese.

AR: Oh, so they return when they're through with their studies.

SM: Yeah, that's right. So I was only returning to the diocese to which I belonged. And therefore there I could be sent to anyplace in the diocese, wherever the archbishop wanted to send me. But he thought I ought to stay in the seminary.

AR: And how long were at the seminary teaching?

SM: I was there till 1940, and then I was made a bishop. Also I was connected with St. Mary's University Law School.

AR: Yes, I have here that you were governor of St. Mary's Law School.

SM: Regent.

AR: Regent?

SM: Yeah, they call it that.

AR: For five years, 1935 to 1940.

SM: Yeah, I guess that's about it. That was a very interesting experience. It really didn't require much work. I've always told them I was only window dressing, really. (Chuckles) But as regent of the law school, I think they did it because I had a doctorate in Canon Law and probably thought it would give it a little prestige since it was also under the Society of Mary, the Brothers of Mary and all that. And, well, I'm not a civil lawyer. If I had gone into civil life, that's what I would've done. I probably would've studied civil law. I'm very attracted to it. I don't know what would've happened to me if that were the case, but I enjoyed that very much. I could give a lecture in the natural law, you know, which is really ethics. They still believe in the natural law; they did. So I served there, and one of the brothers, the registrar, was the one who did all the detail work of organizing. We had a very fine law school, made up of San Antonio lawyers, and the best. And the school has a splendid reputation today. There's some lawyers here, I guess, that went to it. It's a small school, it has this advantage.

AR: I understand they have a rigorous curriculum there.

SM: Very much so, yes. They always did. The lawyers whom I knew, I thought they were splendid people. Really fine, devoted men, professionally. And God knows, they didn't get paid very much, you know. It was really their own project. They did it for the love of the students, they thought. You see, it was a case of, well, Texas University is close by, but these large schools have so many, many, many, many. They become factories almost. And that's why

the lawyers taught. Also they thought it was easier for the boys who couldn't afford to go down to Austin to stay home and take a law course there. It was properly accredited and everything.

AR: Were there many women there?

SM: Yes. I also lectured in Psychology and Ethics in St. Mary's, and that was coed at that time. They were just beginning around that time. They had teachers and so on that were taking extra courses. I don't remember any women entering the law school in those days. I think they were all boys.

AR: What about Mexican Americans? Were there any Mexican Americans that were enrolled as law students?

SM: Oh, yeah, there's plenty of 'em got in later as it developed. Yes, oh yes. A number of 'em.

OM: Do you remember any particularly interesting incidents or anecdotes from your days teaching there?

SM: No, I don't know that they were really so interesting. I enjoyed it a great deal. I guess I was a sort of a curiosity to some of the women students that were there when I was lecturing and all.

OM: Why is that?

SM: Well, they were non-Catholic people who never had a priest as a teacher, I guess. (Chuckles) It was very interesting, some of the questions they asked me. And I remember one girl asked... 'cause we were talking about the institution of marriage and so on. I did mention I guess at the time that not everybody has to get married, has a duty to get married. It's not an obligation. There may be other reasons why one wouldn't -- for instance, if one has a very definite calling, like the priesthood and do on. So one of these girls said to me, "Is that the reason you didn't get married?" I told her I didn't

want to make any woman unhappy. (Laughter) Oh, yes, that rocked the house. Then I was very sorry I said it, because she was terribly embarrassed, you know. But she asked the question so quickly and she got a quick response.

But they were fine students and very fine...some of those teachers, they /were/ teachers in the San Antonio public schools. You know at that time the education was beginning to change a lot, the methods and so on. And some of them were not very happy with what was happening in the schools--methods and textbooks and so on. I guess they were a little, maybe I would say they were traditionalists in their way, in the old-time teaching. They thought they weren't doing too well anymore. I remember they used to tell me all those things. The Brothers of Mary are really very fine teachers. They're very much like the Christian Brothers here. They are in every sense of the word what I would call old-fashioned pedagogues. And they mean business! (Chuckles) The Brothers are very fine and they have some very fine scientists and mathematicians and so on. It was very, very well done. It's a small university, but it's a good one.

Well, anyway, I went through that in San Antonio. Also I worked on the marriage court in the archdiocese, the matrimonial courts, if you know what that is. We have those, you know, to find out about marriages, whether they should be declared null when people want them declared null and void, invalid. So I had quite a lot to do. Then /I/ taught my classes and I was busy, busy, busy, busy. I taught Canon Law, too. Then all of a sudden I was told that I should be auxiliary bishop up in Santa Fe. And that amazed me, I couldn't believe it. I of course didn't know anything about it until I got a letter from the apostolic delegate. And I really was not too happy about it, to be honest. I had all my friends and all my background and everything /around

San Antonio⁷; and to go up to Santa Fe, New Mexico, which I had never seen. I only knew about it, that there was such a place. In other words, tearing up all your roots, this is not easy. I was 37 years old at the time. So I had to go down and see the archbishop of San Antonio. I was permitted to consult him, and we talked about that. And he said, "I'm really...I hate to see you leave." Of course, he was playing right down my alley then. And I said to him, "Well, that's very good," I said. "I didn't ask the Pope to be bishop." (Laughs) And then he said to me, "No, you didn't ask him, but he's asking you. That makes the difference." (Laughs) So anyway, I told him yes, I'd go under obedience. And I went to Santa Fe for two years. That was a kind of a, I would say, novitiate as it were, to get my feet wet. And then of course I came down here.

Now, during the time that I was in San Antonio I went to school with some boys in the seminary, Mexican boys, and we studied some Spanish and all that kind of way they do it in those places. So when I came to El Paso this was not anything new to me.

OM: And San Antonio has a large Mexican American community.

SM: Yes, and I knew a lot of them. I knew a lot of all the priests down in the Cathedral. Now they were Spanish, but they had the Spanish masses there and all that. And we used to go down to the Cathedral for all the ceremonies. So when I came to El Paso, it's nothing new.

OM: Did you mix in much with the Mexican American community of San Antonio?

SM: Quite a bit, yes. I knew quite a number of 'em.

OM: How were conditions in the Mexican American community there at that time?

SM: Oh, they were not so good. They were...they had a lot of problems then. And I think, however, that that has improved a lot. I think that was true

practically everywhere in those days where you had a lot of Mexican people. Now I can tell you this, something that rather shocked me when I was in the seminary and later on when I became head of the seminary. There were paractically no vocations for the priesthood. And now those boys that I knew, I thought they were surely good; but there was a sort of an idea that, well, they just didn't have the background to be priests, if you want to put it that way. I could never quite understand that. I think that was probably a European tradition that came over here. And so that's one of the reasons why vocations for the priesthood among our Mexican people are comparatively recent, really. At that time, oh, they didn't think that they were fitted for that type of vocation. At that time.

OM: Why is that?

SM: Well, that was the thinking that they had. They were wrong, of course.

OM: What was behind that thinking?

SM: Behind it was, they said, well, they came from families that had no background and all that type of thing, and they didn't think they were able to do it. So when I came here...and when you're made bishop of a diocese, that means that you have that responsibility. And I thought to myself, "Well, look, this thing is entirely wrong. I'm gonna do this the way I see it." And when I was here in El Paso, Cardinal Miranda used to come up through here. He was a very good friend of mine, the Archbishop of Mexico City. And he said, "Well, do you have any Mexican vocations?" I said, "We have no vocations period." Anybody, really. But he said, "How are you gonna do that?" "Well," I said, "I have no great skills or anything, but I feel that this should be done just this way. For a diocese to have vocations to the priesthood, they should come from the native people,

whoever they are. Now if the people here are Mexican people or whatever other, they're all the same and everybody counts the same, and that's it. If they belong to this diocese, there's no distinction made about anybody wanting to ever be a priest or anything like that. There'll be none of that whatsoever." And Cardinal Miranda, he was then Archbishop, he said to me, he said, "You know, you're gonna succeed with that."

And I have always followed that. I have never been in any way discriminating against anyone. I can honestly say that. I never heard any nationality discussed in my own family at home, you know, about any,,, casting any aspersions. Just never spoke that way. And I believe that a lot of our discrimination and that feeling of those prejudices, they come sometimes from homes where children hear those things at home. That's where it all starts. Fortunately, I never had that. I might've been as narrow-minded as some other people. And then of course the education in Rome does something for you that no other place can do. You can learn from books anywhere, you can go to classes anywhere. But Rome is probably, from the point of view of the Church, the most cosmopolitan city in the world. And this is something that we learn when we spend our youth there, as I did mine, you know. You learn that the Church is universal. And this question of this nationality or that nationality, the comparisons, you don't do that.

AR: But yet the Mexican Americans weren't involved in the institutional Church, even though you're saying that they were international.

SM: Oh, they're all involved. But what I mean is...you don't get my point, I'm afraid. What I mean to say is that everybody is the same in the Church, when you study in Rome. There is no distinction whether you're Mexican or whether you're German or Irish and that. The Holy Father receives everybody.

OM: And you see people from everywhere studying with you.

SM: Everywhere, everywhere. When I went to the university in Rome there were 48 languages spoken among the students.

OM: But how many people have that kind of experience to broaden their perspective?

SM: I admit that's true. But that certainly was a great thing for me. So I cannot understand these things when I hear them. I just think it's absurd. And that's the way /I thought/. So when I came here, I had never had any prejudice against anybody. I just wasn't brought up that way, fortunately. So black or white or yellow or whatever they were. In fact, when you meet all those people, those different nationalities of the earth, /you think/, "Yeah, sure, we're all the same. There isn't a great deal of difference," no matter what colored skin you might have or anything. Now that's being cosmopolitan in the good sense of the word. And I have tried to follow that here, that sense. Nobody can ever say that I have ever discriminated against, for instance, a Mexican American person. I dare 'em to.

OM: How was your experience in Santa Fe? Did you enjoy it up there?

SM: Well, yes. Now, I'm glad you asked that. I went to Santa Fe, and this was quite different from San Antonio, of course. And there's one thing about the people in New Mexico, you know, especially Santa Fe. Now they were not like our Texas Mexican people were. And when I went up there, the archbishop who was there, he had been bishop of Amarillo and so on, and of course he knew Texas and he knew San Antonio. And he said to me, "Now, look," he said, /you've/ been in San Antonio all this time and we talk about Mexican Americans and so on. Don't use that word up here. They are Spanish." So he said, "Get it out of your vocabulary." (Laughs) And I really don't think that there's so many of 'em were Spanish except those

few families probably that came way back. God knows there were few of those. The rest of the people came from Mexico and so on. But somehow or other they got up to the area there and they were Spanish, not Mexican Americans. And so one day I got a little bit vexed about something and I told the archbishop about someone. "Well," I said, "Archbishop, I'm going to be very glad when I go back to my Mexicans. I don't want to be around you."

(Laughter)

AR: How were they different from the Mexican Americans in San Antonio?

SM: Well, they were quite provincial for one thing. They live up there in those mountains and they do have, I guess, some of the background that /has/ prevailed up there. They were different in that respect, and very, I would say, ultra, ultra clannish. Yeah. I got along well with them myself, but I surely could tell the difference. And the approach that you have to use up there is quite different. Now for instance, well, I might tell you the story. There's a parish in New Mexico--I won't tell you the name, now--but those people have all their Spanish names and so on, but they are New Mexican. A change of pastors had to be made there, and there was some Franciscans there. And the Franciscans said, "Well, we can send somebody from the Mexican province." They resented that because he was Mexican, from Mexico. Well, you tear your hair out when you see nonsense like that, you know. But it is a fact, they said so. "We want somebody else." Now they would take somebody with a Spanish name, yes--but not from Mexico. Those prejudices are there.

AR: I wonder why.

SM: Well, I don't know what it is, but that's the way it is. Somebody said... one gave one reason; how correct this reason is, I don't know what about it.

But he said, "You know, one of the reasons is that they have heard a lot about how the Church has been persecuted, for instance, in Mexico, and so they associate Mexico with that." Now how objective that is, I don't know. But the fact is, it's there. I experienced all this. And they didn't really like Texans either. But I managed to get by. Oh, they don't like Texans at all.

OM: No, there's been a rivalry there between Texas and New Mexico.

SM: Well, yes. And when I came to Santa Fe, some of the older priests were still French. You know they had French archbishops there for a long, long time. Lemi was French. He was the famous Archbishop of Santa Fe, the first one. And then there followed French and French, and so it all... And in fact, the first one who was not French was Archbishop Dager, who was a Franciscan, and he died only a few years before I got up there. Archbishop Gurkin was the archbishop then, and he was from Texas. But these French, old French priests, knew the situation very well and they said that one of the reasons why they didn't like the Texans is because they came in and bought up the land. And on the other hand, you know, they said these old-time Spaniards that came up here and had all the land, they weren't very provident about how they were handling it, and they had to sell. And you know, one of them said, as an example, "Why, for instance, doesn't Santa Fe have a railroad?" It doesn't. Santa Fe Railroad is called Santa Fe, but it's about 30 miles out where there's a little station called Laime. The old-timers didn't want it.

OM: Why not?

SM: It would spoil their town, it would spoil their way of life. Well, that you find in a lot of places. You find that to some extent in El Paso--but I'm

not gonna talk about that. When I first came here somebody told me...who is now long gone. This man was rather humorous. I guess he talked about certain people who were controlling, I guess, the finances and everything. And this man said, "You know what they need in this town? About 20 good funerals." Now, you find that type of thinking in practically every community. It's human. And this man happened to be an undertaker, and I said, "Well, that's the way you look at it." (Laughter)

OM: He wants the business.

SM: But that's the way. I love Santa Fe very much, I really like it. And I got along very well with the people. When I came down here I was...the first parish I ever had was that Cristo Rey parish up there. Were you ever in Christ the King Church, the symphony of mud they call it?

AR: /No./

SM: Yeah. That was built in 1940 to commemorate the fourth centennial of Coronado's coming. I came there in 1940, and then the archbishop made me the first pastor of that famous church, Cristo Rey.

AR: This is in Santa Fe?

SM: It's called the symphony of mud, the symphony in mud. And inside is the famous Raredas that was taken from the chapel of the Spanish governors. And it's a magnificent thing, beautiful. I don't know how many tons that weighs, all stone. Probably it must have been done by Indians, I think. And the date of that would be something like 1769 or so. And that's the background for the alter in that church. So that was the first time I was a pastor there and I had very, very humble people. I loved them very much. And that was my first job as a parish priest. I had always been doing something else. So much so that some people, when they want to be smart,

they tell me that I've only been a career man in the Church. (Chuckles)
However, well, of course, when you're a bishop of a diocese, there're many things that's not like being a pastor. Now, of course, I'm free of all those burdens and all those constant problems and I don't mind doing...I'm very happy to go down and say mass like a newly ordained priest in some place.

AR: When you were in Santa Fe, did you ever deal with the Penitentes while you were there?

SM: Yes, I did deal with the Penitentes at that time. And really, I had no difficulties with them. I was told, I was told beforehand; I was briefed, you know. They said, "Now they have all these exercises, Holy Week exercises and so on. But if you understand that..." I know I confirmed, I gave confirmations in a lot of those places like Mora and all those where they... that's filled with Penitentes. But I never had any problems with 'em. And I was received well, and they were friendly. And then I don't know what happened, later on something happened. But in the time that Archbishop Gurkin was there, I never heard anything.

AR: And the Church didn't seek to change their views?

SM: No, the Church didn't really seek to change them. Well, there isn't anything wrong about the Penitentes, really, except that they simply...it's a realistic renewal, as it were, of the passion. Now some people don't like that, but there's nothing morally wrong about 'em. And as long as they have the proper faith, and surely they have the faith in Christ and they're all, you know, _____ Hermanos de Nuestro Señor, that's the whole basis of it. I never saw anything particularly defective about that. And then you have to understand, again, the culture. That's extremely important. You

have to understand that. When you put yourself in the position of people's culture you're not gonna make too many mistakes.

Now I wouldn't myself be a Penitente. I would hardly...it's not my disposition or anything. But I can generally well see that the way these people have grown up and everything, and the traditions they've had, why sure. I wouldn't condemn 'em for it. But now if they asked me myself to go through the exercise of the Penitentes, well now that I don't think I would do.

AR: You were up in Santa Fe for a year?

SM: Two years.

AR: And then you came down El Paso.

SM: And I came here and I was the co-junior bishop.

AR: And when did you come here?

SM: In 1942.

OM: Now that was quite a time here in El Paso, during World War II.

SM: Yeah. I was here during World War II.

OM: I've done a study of Ciudad Juárez and the early '40s was quite an exciting time down there. It was a period of great growth, and much of that was stimulated by the presence of a lot of military here. And conditions were wide open in Ciudad Juárez for these troops who used to go down there to the tourist strip nightly. How did you find the moral atmosphere here when you first arrived?

SM: Well, now, that Juárez situation, of course, it was...it's in another country. And this had a lot to do with the military and it was therefore really more a problem for...the bishop [of the military forces] could tell you a very good story about that. But the bishop of the military forces, of

course, has always been for many years the Cardinal Archbishop of New York. And at that time this was Cardinal Spellman. And the war...let's see, I came here in February. Roosevelt declared war I think in December of that previous year. In fact it was the feast of the Immaculate Conception. I believe it was December 8th. And Cardinal Spellman came here; and he would travel incognito then. He was the military ordinariate, as they call it. And a lot of these questions were discussed. He stayed up at the Fort Bliss. But he called me one Sunday morning and he said, "Would you take me over to Juárez?" I said, "Sure." He's dead now; I can tell the story. He loved to tell everybody that he was in every bloomin' country in the world, you know; he was like that. Very adventurous in a way. He said, "You know, I can't go back to New York and say I was in El Paso and didn't go over into Mexico. They'd say, 'Well, what's wrong with you?'" I said, "Fine, Archbishop."

So we started out and we walked across the bridge and all of that. And he went in and bought, oh, a stock of souvenirs for his nephews and nieces and all. And then he saw the prophylaxis station. And he said to me, "What's that for, now?" "Well," I said, "this is what it is, Archbishop. It's a prophylaxis station that is, I guess, an institution--very much needed, they think." Oh, he was very, very disgusted about it. Then he said, "Can anybody do anything about that?" And I said, "Gee, I don't know." I said, "You're the archbishop of the military forces. Maybe you can tell the government. But nobody else has ever been able to do anything about it. And it's there." So I knew these things were of course in existence and all of that. But it is true at that time that El Paso began to change and grow. It grew really more right after the war ended. Then all of a sudden it

mushroomed like this.

But as far as our own people were concerned here, I didn't find any particular moral deterioration among them. I certainly didn't. And a lot of the things that were going on in Juárez, they were the military, and they had all the military problem that's the world over wherever there're armies. That's what it was. And I know that some chaplains came here from back east, you know. Some of 'em, they were very disgusted about some of the things that were happening. You know, the men were going over to these houses of prostitution and all this type of thing; and I said, "Well, they're gonna do it."

Now one of the first things that I did here when I came to El Paso...

/PAUSE/

I got a call one day, I had just arrived here. When I came, Bishop Schuler was still alive, the old bishop, but very feeble; and so I had to take over, really. So General Swift sent word that he wanted the Conference of Christians and Jews to go through all the military installations, and they asked me if I would come. So I did. And we traveled all over that desert for about a week or maybe even more, from one place to another, and gave talks. The head of the Conference of Christians and Jews, he was I think a former Presbyterian minister from New York, and then there was a rabbi from Denver. And so the three of us made the rounds and talked to the boys wherever they were, and it was quite interesting. Only one bad thing about it, I got a horrible sunburn out of it. This was in April, and you know I drove around in a jeep all over the desert. And, oh, I just got...it was terrible. I had to go to bed!

OM: What places did you go to?

SM: All around the camp here, then out to Orogrande and all those places. They had artillery practice back there. We were going to all these...you know, the local area here. We went to about five, six different places that was all concentrated /at/ Fort Bliss and...what's the other place right across from it?

OM: Biggs Air Base?

SM: Yeah, that's right. We went to all of them. It was a very, very interesting little tour. I got to know something about El Paso, met some of the people there that were very prominent here.

And then, well, then of course I had to build up a diocese. Now that's something that pertains strictly to the Church. And that was not an easy thing to do, either. We had a heavy debt here.

/PAUSE/

So then, of course, I did find out here that the labor situation wasn't very good. That of course, as you know, is when I got into a lot of trouble a thousand times. (Laughs)

OM: Back in those days you were sensitive about that, you realized the situation?

SM: I'll tell you, yes. I was sensitive about that for one reason. The people don't know that. When all this Farah strike came and it became a national issue, I was, you know, in all kinds of limelight. Not that I wanted to be, but I had to. So one day I was asked on a panel, they said, "How did you ever become interested in this type of thing? Were you related in any way to a union or were your people union?" God knows in those days there were no unions! (Chuckles) I said, "No. I became interested in that when I was a student in Rome." I was a young priest in Rome, and in the course in Canon Law Pope Pius XI prescribed that there should be a course given in

social justice. And the course on social justice that we have, if you have any familiarity with it, is based largely on the encyclical letters of Pope Leo XIII on Social Justice, on the condition of the working man and so on. And one of those, the famous one, was written in 1891.

And Pope Pius XI brought down a Capetian, of all kinds of people. You wouldn't think a Capetian would study that because that's really a strict kind of order and you wouldn't think they were going into social justice. He was a Belgian. But he was quite a famous name in that field and he brought him to Rome, and we attended his classes. That's how I learned. And I recall him very well. He was a very lovely man, elderly man. He had a long beard and he spoke with a French accent, however. And all those courses were in Latin, you know, then. So everything was fine. One part of the course I didn't like at all because it was the history of all that, and I wasn't so much interested in that. But when it got to the explanation of these encyclical letters, he was absolutely superb. That was my background. I had that when I came back from Rome.

And so when this thing came here, a lot of it came to my attention and I got to know some of the labor leaders here. You know, they think that the only time that I ever had anything to do with labor was with the Farah strike. It's not true; that just happened to be a culmination, that happened to be a big, big, big thing. But I had been connected with that for a long time. One of the men who was the head, the representative of the American Federation of Labor here, was a member of St. Patrick's Parish, and he was a very good friend of mine. And one of the first encounters I had about labor, I really fought the Mine and Mill, the Mine and Mill and Smelter Workers, if you know anything about them. Now they used to be here in El Paso and they were up in

Bayard, /New Mexico/ and those places. And some of the men that belonged to that union belonged to St. Patrick's Church. I'll not mention any names, you may know some of them. I think some of them are gone. But they came to tell me about this thing, and they said, "We should join another labor union. This is Communistic."

OM: The one at ASARCO?

SM: Yeah. The Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers were Communist; their leaders were Communist.

AR: What year was this in?

SM: This was about '52.

AR: And this was your first encounter with labor on a grand scale?

SM: With that type of thing, yes, where it really got... During the war there wasn't much of that, you see. During the war people kept their nose to the /grindstone/ winning the war. But that's when some of that came up. I had heard a lot about local situations, too. But that was the first major one. And so I told them that they should join another union, and I actually fought the Mine and Mill and Smelter Workers, fought them openly. And what they wanted was somebody else, of course; and then finally as it turned out, the Mine and Mill and Smelter Workers simply deteriorated. They had, I think, so many legal expenses and everything, they couldn't exist. And then the steelworkers came in. Now with these huge steelworkers unions and so on, they take care of themselves. But I'm interested in the poor little guy that needs help.

But the man that was causing a lot of the trouble at that time is a man named Clinton Jenks. They had a strike up at Hanover, I don't know for how many months. And Clinton Jenks was a card-carrying Communist. There's no

question about it. And then later on he was tried in the federal court here. Judge Thomason was the presiding judge here, and he was convicted. And then, however, finally it went to the Supreme Court because they said there was some form of evidence not introduced which would violate his constitutional rights. But he was absolutely and out-and-out Communist, a professional. There's no question about it. And the story goes that he went up, came back up to Silver City and those places after the acquittal, and the people told him never to come back because they'd shoot him if he did.

OM: Who told him that? The workers?

SM: Yes. Oh, yeah.

AR: So in this particular case you were on the side of the workers against the unions?

SM: Well now, though, some of the workers, the workers who were against the union, yes. But I was not against...I told 'em to change this union and join a good union. I didn't say which, I couldn't very well. But George Webber was the head of the AFL here in that time. He said to me one day, he said, "You don't realize, you have positively split that thing in the middle, that whole union." He said, "Someday they're gonna feel that." And they were also at the works in Carlsbad, the potash mines. And they were voted out there, too. Then finally of course they just had to give up because they owed too much money.

Now, that union at one time was highly respected, many years ago. But then after that it got into the hands of all those Communists, strictly Communists. Now Phil Murray was the national head of the American Federation of Labor and CIO. He kicked 'em out because of that, because they were Communist.

OM: How long was the issue alive here in El Paso?

SM: Oh, a couple of years. Well, then there was another time I was involved.

Oh, when they had the Peyton strike down here, I was kind of in that. But you know, nobody ever published anything in those days--not very much, anyway. But I fought for the workers.

AR: When was this, the Peyton strike?

SM: What year? I don't recall the year anymore. It was after this other thing.

AR: After the Mine and Smelter.

SM: And then of course there was another one here, the strike down at the Hilton Hotel. You know, the bellboys and the maids and so on, they were striking and they were picketing the place. And I also got into that because it so happened that at that time they were thinking of building Jesuit High School, they were gonna have a drive. And they had booked a dinner there long before the strike, you see. And then Father Donnelly said, "What will I do?" I said, "Well, don't have it. Don't have a dinner there." I said, "If you have a dinner there, keep me out. I never cross a picket line." He understood that. And that got into the newspapers. Oh, boy! I was giving confirmations out at St. Joseph's Church that night, and I got there and the evening papers said, "Bishop Refuses to Cross Picket Line," or something. There I had my foot in it again. And, oh, there were a number of those things.

Then of course, the Farah strike. Well, that was very unfortunate, but...

OM: Before we talk about the Farah strike, let me ask you about the other two.

SM: What was the outcome?

OM: Well, yes, I want to ask you about that. But I'm curious about the pressures that you got in the Peyton strike, in the Hilton Hotel strike. What pressures did you get from the business community, the conservative elements in

El Paso?

SM: Oh, they wanted to boycott everything I was doing. Many people boycotted me completely as far /as/ trying to keep this or that going, programs going. /They/ just wouldn't contribute.

AR: This has been true in all these particular cases when you've been involved?

SM: Yeah, that happens. And that's the pattern, it usually goes that way.

AR: It's the more affluent people.

SM: Yeah. The people that don't understand that properly, that's the first thing you see: "Well, I'm not giving anything." Oh, that's happened to me. I've lost a lot of personal friends on account of this.

OM: Financially, was it a big loss?

SM: Oh, I suppose it was in a way, but we got by. I wasn't afraid of that.

OM: Could you mention some specifics?

SM: Yes. For instance, we had problems with our newspaper and so on that we needed help with. And also different contributions for drives when people said no they wouldn't because of this. Yeah. I won't mention any names.

OM: Did anybody try to twist your arm to stay out of it completely?

SM: Look, you want to know the truth?

OM: Yes.

SM: They were practically all scared of me. Nobody would come and talk to me personally, and I dared 'em to. One man did a long time ago, and he didn't get very far. He just didn't know what he was talking about. And all they were doing was, they were telling somebody else, "Why don't you talk to the bishop?" I said, "Well, I'll talk to anybody. I'll take 'em on." There was one very prominent man in this city. Somebody said, "Well, he'd like to come and see you." I said, "I shall be delighted to see him, discuss

everything very calmly with him." You know, I had to be sure of my ground. And furthermore, I didn't ever butt into anybody's business. It's only when I was asked.

OM: What about within the church hierarchy?

SM: Well, some bishops were probably a little more conservative, but I think they rather admired what I was doing. As a matter of fact, in the Farah strike, that ended up in the bishops' meeting in Washington, and /no one/ ever knew that. That's a long story. But anyway, Willie Farah flew them up there and they started lobbying during the bishops' meeting.

OM: Who did he fly up there?

SM: He flew a fellow named Oneidas. He was his public relations man. He was a Catholic guy from Dallas, and he hired him in order to ruin me. I think /it was/ Oneidas; one of those names it was. And then he flew...well, he flew some ministers up, and we won't mention their names, but they suddenly appeared. And they were lobbying in a kind of way. I don't know whether some of the Conroys were with them or not. And he had flown to different places and visited people and said that I didn't know what I was doing. And then of course you know a number of local ministers had put out a booklet about it, saying that I didn't know what I was talking about and so on. That's somewhere all in black and white.

But anyway, to talk about the hierarchy. When all this thing got started up in Washington, finally one of the bishops said to me, "Look, would you do us the favor and ask for permission?" This was not on the agenda or anything like that. "But let's ask Cardinal Kroll," who was the head of the conference at the time, "for permission to let you talk and explain the Farah situation." I got permission from the Cardinal. I don't think the Cardinal

was so happy about labor unions either, but he was very fair. And I gave a 20-minute talk to all the hierarchy of the United States that were there. And God, I got an ovation--such /that/ I'd never gotten anywhere in all my life. Now I'm saying that to give you an idea of what the hierarchy were thinking. And there were probably some of those that didn't like the idea, but I guess they thought I had guts anyway, if nothing else. (Chuckles)

AR: In talking about the Farah strike, what was it that you felt was unfair at Farah?

SM: Well, let me put it just briefly. In the first place, there was not a sufficient living wage. When this first came up and they first appealed to me, I wrote a very innocent kind of letter which was meant purely for the local situation. And then a bishop from the east wrote to me and wanted me to make an in-depth study of this, which I did. And I closed everything here practically for two full weeks, and that's all I did from morning till night--got information and all of that. All documented, too. And then /I/ wrote him a letter saying, "This is the result of my study. I think this is not conducted in accord /with/ what we would call the principles of good social justice." And that letter then was made public. The National Catholic Reporter got ahold of it and published it verbatim--the whole works!

OM: How long was it?

SM: God, it was about three pages.

OM: That was a summary of your study?

SM: Of my study, yes.

OM: Now, what about the original study, what did you do with that?

SM: That was the original study.

OM: Oh, that was the whole thing.

SM: Yeah. And then of course, that's when it got into public hands and everything else, and then I was really in it. But what I was doing, telling 'em basically, was that the wages were not fair and /that/ they should have been better. One of the worst things was that in order to get an increase in pay, they demanded tremendous quotas which those women couldn't fulfill. And you see, if they didn't fulfill that, well, they were apt to be told, "You get out." That's not the way to do things. Those were the two basic things. There's much more to it than that. I don't recall all the details.

AR: Now you brought up the idea that you thought that they would have the right to collective bargaining.

SM: Well, surely!

AR: That was another thing.

SM: That's right, that's the basic thing. He didn't want that. Now way back, I can tell you this, that from way back when Mr. Webber was still here, living in the cathedral and was with the A F of L, he talked to me many times about the Farahs, how hard they were. I didn't know the people at all. At that time I was not actively involved. And he said that he had tried many times to tell them to do differently. No. They didn't. So you see, I had grounds. And when the people came to me I had to make a very difficult decision. I knew it was gonna cause some difficulties. But Lord, I had no idea it was gonna just plummet into national prominence all of a sudden and create almost a national controversy.

OM: Well, it was!

SM: It sure was, all right.

AR: At the same time I read that there were like 600 workers who had been formerly employed by Farah that picketed your home.

SM: Yeah.

AR: They were unhappy that they no longer had jobs and it seemed that they were blaming you.

SM: No, it wasn't quite like that. Farah had in his working force a certain group called the Happies. Now somebody kept the Happies in good humor and they were kind of brainwashed. Now some of those, they got pretty good wages. And they were the ones whom he used against me. And they were sore at me, of course, because I was fighting Farah. That, you see, made the strike all the more difficult.

AR: These people hadn't been laid off?

SM: No, I don't think so. At the time. They were up here, sure.

AR: Well, I remember some of the things I read said that they'd been laid off.

SM: That probably was on later on. They may have done that, I don't know. But when they were up here Farah told 'em to do that, and they were willing to do it because they were mad at me. Now, I know who some of those people were. They weren't getting any small wages, some of those. There was a lot of differences--discrimination if you want to call it that--whatever the source of it was. In the company some were getting paid poorly and others much better. There was favoritism and all in it. And these people that they would call the Happies, Farah kept them happy, as they say.

AR: This was 600 is what the newspaper said.

SM: It must've been, could've been about that many.

AR: That's a lot of people.

OM: And they came up here?

SM: Oh, yeah. I don't know how many came up here, but a lot of those came up here, yeah.

AR: Well, as I was gonna say a while ago, I recall reading that they said that they felt like they did have the right to collective bargaining and that had wages been so low and their benefits so poor that Farah would've been unionized long before, and that there wouldn't have been the controversy that there was at the time. And this was their stand--that they had voted and they had voted the union down, and that they were unhappy about your joining in the controversy because they felt like the Church funds were being used.

SM: The only reason I came in is because I was asked to come in by the workers. Yeah. Now I knew there was that division of opinion among the workers, and I was concerned about that. And some of those people that were against it, they were really not suffering. Yeah.

AR: Well, they said that there were other plants in town that were clothing manufacturing plants, who had lower wages than Farah.

SM: Well now, that could well be, but there was no strike. I'm not going to every business in town, you know. If they had come to me... That probably is quite true, there were. But here the people struck. Oh, yes. And then they were taken up by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers did not come in; they were asked to come in by those workers.

AR: But I understand it was just a small group of workers that asked them to come in initially.

SM: Well now, how many there were initially, there were quite a few.

AR: I think it was something like 276 or something like that.

SM: Probably, could've been. But they had rights, too. The matter of the fact was, objectively, there was a lack of social justice in that whole business. And there were some men who came down, a committee from the bishops' meeting, from the conference, who were experts on that. And I told them to go in and

visit it and see what's going on. Now you see, what Farah was saying to everybody, "Go through my plant, and it's beautiful." Well you know, we're not that stupid. You can have a very nice-going plant and everything is under control. But what's underneath? Sure you could go through that and never see anything wrong just when you went through it. And I'm surprised that they were so amateurish that they did it that way, some of them. They fell for that. I would never fall for that.

AR: Now you didn't go through the plant?

SM: No, I did not. I didn't think it was necessary to go through the plant. I was willing to discuss with Mr. Farah anything he wanted, but they were just foolish. They could set that thing up and say, "Look, here it is." And that's not where the social justice shows up. Social justice shows up outside what actually happens.

/PAUSE/

/When/ questioned about these things according to the requirements of social justice, it was quite clear he was not observing them. And the committee that came down here came from Washington, and they went through the plant and they talked to him and they saw through it right away. And they reported back to the bishops.

I might add to this that I knew from very reliable people here in the city, attorneys and so on, about the very...well, we say unjust things that had happened to people who for instance were let out of Farah, who lost their jobs and so on, all because there was no collective bargaining available. That is where the social justice or injustice will show up. And this was known, and they talked about it. And I heard it, for instance,

from attorneys here in the city, whose names I don't want to reveal. But they said that there was no doubt about it, that some of the people came to them for advice, about how they had been let go and so on without proper compensation and all that. Now that's social injustice right there. And for all these reasons I surely didn't think that it was necessary to go through the plant. I didn't have to go through the plant.

OM: Did you remember the name of the person who came here? Was it Arthur Goldberg?

SM: Yes, yes. That's right.

OM: Could you give us details of that meeting with him, what was said?

SM: Yes. Arthur Goldberg came through here a few years ago when they had the Mayor's Breakfast down at the Civic Center. That was during Mayor Henderson's time. And they asked me to give the invocation, I believe it was, or the blessing or whatever. And Arthur Goldberg was the featured speaker for that. He came here from Washington. And when Arthur Goldberg came into the hall, he came right over to me. And he practically told everybody, he said, "I want to sit down and talk with the bishop." He wanted to talk to me and he sat at my table during the whole time. And he discussed this whole situation, the labor situation and the Farah strike, with which he was very familiar. And he was very happy to meet me--he said so.

/PAUSE/

OM: You were telling us about your conversation at the dinner table.

SM: Yes. And he talked about the Farah strike and so on, and he was so happy about the whole thing. And he said...this was really a marvelous thing he said. I said, "Well, you know, Mr. Goldberg, I don't get very much credit here in the state of Texas for this." "Well," he said, "pay no attention to that." He said, "You have to expect that." But he said, "You did the right

thing." And he said, "I am very happy to meet you," and so on.

So then we sat together, and finally he got up and he had his prepared speech. I don't remember what it was. Before he got to that, he told the people that he was very happy to come here and that he was very happy to meet me. I suppose with all the gentry there, they were quite surprised at that, but probably didn't like it too well. And then this is what he said. He said, "You know, there're all kinds of issues that are before the public these days. There is the question of living wage, for instance; how the workers should be paid. There's racial discrimination and all such things as that. There's housing, and all the things that we're supposed to do. Now," he said, "some people consider those political. They may be political issues in a sense, but there is an element of justice involved in all of them. Whenever justice is involved, religion has its function. And therefore if your rabbi or your minister or your priest speaks out on these issues, even though you may not personally agree with him, do not persecute him or anything of that kind. That's his duty." They couldn't get it more clear than that.

OM: That's pretty straight. How did you feel about that?

SM: I certainly thought I couldn't have said it as well myself! And this is what he told the public. I never heard any reaction. Probably most of them have forgotten it, but I surely didn't. And this of course is quite true: because there is justice involved in these things, we should have something to do with them. We're not trying to run somebody's business. I've always told people that whenever I got into labor things... By the way, the very first trike that I was in here when I came in /was at the/old Mead Bakery. That's a long, long time ago.

OM: When was that?

SM: This was back in probably 1943 or '44. And one of the men came to me from the AFL-CIO, and they were having practically a...it could've become violent. This man came and he said, "These people are looking for better pay." And God knows they weren't paid very much. And he said, "They are practically all Mexican people, Catholic people. I think that probably you could help them out." "Well," I said, "I'll be glad to help them out. I don't know just how I can. But I don't know who runs this bakery or anything." And he gave me the person's name, and he said, "Would you talk to him?" I said, "Yes, I surely will." Gave me his telephone number. And I called the man up and I told him who I am and so on. And I said, "Now I understand that you're having quite a bit of trouble." This labor representative thought that the people would get worked up and probably do violence, you know. And I said, "Maybe I can help you some. Now let me make it very clear to you, I'm not gonna tell you how to run your business. But if you want some advice, I would be very willing to give it to you."

Well, he came to see me one evening about nine o'clock, and I was living in the old Hotel Dieu in those days in two rooms. And he went home around one in the morning, I guess. We went over that whole thing, discussed it and all that. And I think later on they did have a union there. I don't know what's happened since. Anyway, that one blew over. Thank God nothing happened. But I told him what the reason was and so on. I said, "If you don't do that, don't be surprised if people get upset emotionally. And when they become upset emotionally they do a lot of things that are unreasonable, that are bad, even. That's what people do when anger sets in and despair sets in and all of that. This is what you're up against." And I told him at the

time, I said, "Now probably what this man is asking you is more than you can pay at this moment because your wages are so low, and then all of a sudden to jump up to that other scale." I said, "You couldn't do that economically for your own business. But what you should do is to begin to plan from now on and little by little go on up so that you can meet it." He listened to that; he seemed to accept it. Now I know nothing more about the Mead Bakery after that. But that was my very first experience right here. It must've been in 1943, '44. I wasn't here very long. I came in '42.

OM: Why did they come to you?

SM: This man?

OM: Yes.

SM: Well, I think he came to me because I was the bishop. I believe this man himself was a Catholic, if I remember now. His name was Hardesty, he was from Oklahoma City. Yes, he was an Irishman; Hardesty I think is an Irish name. And he told me what parish he belonged to. But he said, "I come to you for advice." It wasn't that I had established a reputation in particular or anything like that; not that. But he had heard about me for some reason, I don't know why. But he said, "Maybe you can help me." "Well," I said, "I would like to help the cause, the situation, if we can do something for it." And I don't know what happened later on, but at least that was avoided. But I believe that the men, the employers, many of them, if this thing is put before them reasonably and they aren't all of a sudden burdened with something they can't meet, that's when they throw up their hands. And I told them, I said, "Now the idea is not to put you out of business," I said. "For one reason, then you're killing the source of support that these people have and it'd kill you and kill them. And you should stay in business. But

let's do it this way." So I believe they came to some kind of an agreement about having a scale. And Mr. Hardesty accepted that and he said, "If I can convince the men. And if I tell the men that I saw you," he said, "I think that will do it." Apparently they accepted it. That was the Mead Bakery. I don't know where the Mead...is there still a Mead Bakery here?

AR: /Yes./ I think it's under another name though. I can't remember which one.

SM: Probably is. It probably has gone under another name, but it was an old-time institution here then. Yeah, that was very interesting. But I did appreciate Arthur Goldberg's comments.

OM: What about Sargent Shriver? You told us that you had a conversation with him also.

SM: Yes I did. Did I tell you about that?

OM: I don't think you gave us details about that.

SM: Yes. Now, Sargent Shriver, he knew about the Farah strike because the year that it became so public and all was when he was on the vice presidential ticket, I believe, with McGovern, wasn't he? And he came through here and I think he talked with the workers and found out about the strike. And then of course I had written some things. I had written that letter that was published, all of that. So he knew about it. And then finally when he came back through here it was when he thought he might have his eye on the Presidential nomination. He asked to see me. And he said, "Not politically. I know he's really not interested in that type of thing, but I just want to see the bishop." And so I talked to him and he told me that he was very, very happy about it, that he had read everything I wrote. He thought it was very sound, this was the proper thing to do. And again I told him that it was not at all well received here. I said they were very upset about it.

Rather bitter, many people were." He said, "You pay no attention to that either." But he said, "I want to tell you that back east you're a hero." And he said, "You're one of mine." Then he said also, he said...this is very, really very personal. He said, "When I saw your name, Metzger, I knew that you wouldn't give up." And it's a German name, of course.

AR: What does it mean? The name Metzger, what does it mean?

SM: Metzger really means a butcher in German. If you go to Germany, in some parts of Germany you see a place that says metzgerai, which means a butcher shop. And he said, "My name is really German. Our family name originally is Chreiber, which means author in German, writer, somebody that writes. But I guess here they made a "v" out of Shriver, I guess." He said, "We've been in this country 250 years." But he has always spoken about that. He thought that it was a very great thing. So that's the way people feel in other places. And I was very proud of that, with a man like Shriver. After all, he's quite an outstanding person and a very good person.

AR: We were talking about Farah's decline right now in business. Do you think that the boycott in any way had anything to do with his current problems?

SM: Indirectly it could have. I believe that if Farah had settled the strike and accepted the union in due time instead of creating all the fuss all over the United States and naturally also making it difficult for the people with whom he was dealing, I don't think it would have hurt him much at all. I frankly think that he himself was the one that was responsible for a lot of the damage that was done to them. Now they will probably say that the boycott itself did it. They boycott, that could've been certainly avoided if they had come across and settled it. But I also, after the strike was over, I wrote a letter to all the bishops of the United States and told them that

now this had been settled and that if in anyway they felt that they could encourage trade with this company, that I thought this was the Cristian thing to do. And as a matter of fact, I met one of the Farah executives one time who happens to be a Catholic. I better not mention his name. Yes. I met him down in the bank after it was all settled. And I told him that anything I could do for him, let me know. Never, never called back.

I believe that /the boycott/ did hurt him, of course. Now, however, I believe that subsquently these other dealings must've hurt him. He could've quite easily recovered from that boycott, the effects of it. But I don't think Willie played the game that way. He kept all the time...the people all knew that he was very unhappy about this situation, I'm sure. He didn't want the settlement. He didn't keep that any a secret. And then you see, the men with whom you deal, they begin to wonder. They would say, "Well, now, if he feels that way about it, perhaps one of these days there'll be another breakout of some kind." And that could very easily hurt his business. Now he probably doesn't realize that and doesn't think that way. But I would by no means say that the boycott ruined Farah, because they were on the way back when they began to decline. They were actually making money, I believe. And this decline has come about because of the business deals that he made himself. Had nothing to do whatsoever with the boycott or anything else.

Furthermore, I don't know whether you read all that in the paper when all these changes were taking place in the administration. When Willie came back to assume the reins, I understand there was one man suggested that they sue the Catholic bishop. Did you read that in the paper?

OM: Oh, really? I wasn't here when that happened.

SM: That's right. It was in the paper, I saw it myself. And the paper simply

said it was not accepted. Now I know that somebody was in the stockholder's meeting and heard this whole thing. And this man evidently is very bitter against me.

AR: Mr. Farah is bitter?

SM: No, no, this man that...this was a stockholder. Oh, Mr. Farah is bitter against me, of course; always was. However, he may be a little afraid now, I'm not so sure. But when this was all settled and Willie Farah was back in the saddle, as we say, that's when this stockholder said, "Now what about suing the Catholic bishop, the Church?" And they said Farah looked at him, he said, "No. Let bygones be bygones." Now that comes from a person who actually heard it. But it was in the paper that that was suggested. So there are probably still many people here who are very unhappy. As a matter of fact, I got here and there anonymous letters. Of course, we pay no attention. People who write anonymous letters are first of all cowardly. It's the most cowardly thing you can do. You're just ruled out of court with that. But we have received those things. And when Bishop Flores came, somebody wrote me a letter and said, "Well, he was just like you are. He's just like you were here." And this came from a Catholic woman. Evidently a lady wrote it. The way she betrayed that--didn't sign her name--she said, "Why, nobody is proud of what you did. We're all thoroughly ashamed." Of course, that isn't quite true. That's the sort of, a manifestation of paranoia when people do that type of thing. We can't pay too much attention to it.

AR: Do you feel like the employees out at Farah have it better now than they did before? Do you think the changes have been made?

SM: I understand that they have. I haven't really followed it up. I think the union had done the best it could. It may not have achieved all that it really wanted to. Of course, remember, he is continually fighting it too. He's

given it no cooperation. He's made it very difficult. Now that may blow up again some time, you never know. But yes, if the plans that the union had set, if they could carry those through, that would certainly benefit the union. And for one thing, one thing about the benefit that the union has that you can't just fire somebody and throw them out as you could before. You can have any kind of an excuse. The laboring man has to have collective bargaining. Otherwise, who is he? Just a little individual who's at the mercy of somebody that says, "I don't need you anymore. Get out."

AR: In talking about collective bargaining, I read an article written by Friar Robert Getz in the Diocesan Newsletter in 1973. He talks about the fact that the Church doesn't have unions, that their employees aren't unionized. And he felt like that they didn't have collective bargaining and that he felt that they should have it. How do you feel about it?

SM: In the Church?

AR: Yes.

SM: Well, now, that question of course, now, what people for instance are saying very often, why doesn't the Church have unions? Well, now you must remember one thing: the Church is not in business. The Church has just about enough to get along with what it needs. This idea that the Church is wealthy and has a lot of money, this is altogether wrong. And this is quite true, that in many cases we should pay more, and will, if we can. But we're dependent on what the people give us. We haven't got any secret amounts of wealth hidden away somewhere and say, "Here, we can hand all this out." That is a very common erroneous idea that's abroad about the Church.

Now the question comes up for instance these days, you may have read about it, teachers in parochial schools and so on. And that question has

been argued. Now the Church does believe in social justice and so on, but there's also another thing. The Church is a spiritual institution, and when you go into the Church you go in there for an apostolate. That's what you're supposed to do, and at sacrifice. Now we're getting into a different realm there, you see.

AR: Well, do you also include the secretaries and janitors and those people as apostolates also?

SM: Yeah. Yes, all of 'em, as a matter of fact. We're not like an industry. If we were in business, yes; but we're not. You see the difference. But we should pay them better and we have tried to raise things as best we can. And we couldn't meet the wages, for instance, that people would get where they are properly paid in a large business, because we just don't have that kind of money--certainly not around here. But the Church should also follow social justice as far as /it/ possibly can be done.

AR: In talking about just the different political issues, I wanted to talk a little bit about social issues, as far as the church supporting social welfare programs. I have here the name of a group of Spanish-speaking priests called the Padres. Are you familiar with that?

SM: Yes; oh, yes.

AR: And they said that they felt like the Church should function more in urban as well as rural barrios. They should participate as far as helping the people...

SM: With housing programs and so on.

AR: Right. And getting more health care and that type of thing.

SM: That's correct. I believe in that. I think that's all right, that we really should. Now we haven't been quite able to do it the way we wanted to in our

diocese. This is not as easy as it sounds. The theory is perfectly okay.

But in housing, for instance, you then become involved in with the government and everything, and all these different legal things. Some places have done very well. We just were not able quite to swing it. And we had many, many discussions about that here.

AR: With the mayor?

SM: No, not with any persons. I'm not talking about any persons. The obligations that you had and everything else. And you know, also, there's another side to that. It looks somehow or other that the government was using the Church to do its work that it's supposed to do. That's another way of looking at it.

OM: Sure. All the social programs that the Church is involved in.

SM: And then all these programs, there is so much politics involved, you know. You have the change of administrations, and all of a sudden you sit there left holding the bag. You have to also consider that. I remember when a lot of these things came out, it must've been during the Johnson administration. Oh, some of them maybe during Kennedy's, around that time in there. And we considered it from every angle. I know all dioceses did, and some of them could do it probably, and that was fine. I must admit that we felt that we were not quite, we weren't ready for it. Maybe someday we will be. I have no objection and understand the principle. I'm all for it.

AR: What do you mean by not quite ready for it?

SM: I mean the financial obligations and everything that are involved, we were not quite ready for that.

AR: In talking about the Church's leadership, I wanted to ask how you feel about the Catholic Church's role in the Mexican American culture? What part do you think it's played? Has it helped maintain the Mexican culture?

SM: Well, I think so, yes. I think it has. Yes.

AR: You received an honorary award by the Spanish government in 1957.

SM: That's right.

AR: For working preserving the Spanish culture in the Southwest.

SM: Yeah, that's correct. Now I didn't ask for that, you know. Somebody got that for me. They thought it was a nice thing to do. Of course, there're a lot of Spanish priests here in the diocese--from Spain, I mean. Quite a number of 'em. And because of the fact that there was... The Spanish government, you know, still takes a great deal of pride in the fact that Spanish is spoken in so many areas which they started, you see, their own colonization programs originally. So that's the way they feel about that. Now the interesting thing about that is, that was in the times of Franco, you know. And some people wrote me some very bad letters about that, that I was accepting an honor that was given by a government that was led by a dictator. Well, I sure never thought of that. And I'm sure that Franco had nothing to do with the honor. (Chuckles)

OM: What were the programs that you were involved in that led to their giving you the award?

SM: Well, I guess it was largely because of the religious programs starting to promote vocations from among our Mexican people here, vocations for the priesthood and all. The whole thing in general. And this, very true, I've done that.

OM: Have you seen a growth of young people who have become interested in the priesthood?

SM: By all means. Oh, yes.

AR: There hasn't been a decline?

SM: Well, let me put it this way--there has been a decline like everywhere else. We've had the problems. Some of our priests have left the priesthood, for instance. Now that's happened here, it's happened all over the world. As a matter of fact, Pope Paul referred to that one time in one of his talks, I remember. I have a copy of it here. And frequently, whenever he talked about that, he called that his Crown of Thorns that this was happening. Now that had nothing to do with whether you were Mexican or American or German or Chinese or what you were, it was just something intrinsic there that was happening. Yes, we've had that problem. But our diocese now, I think, has more native Mexican vocations to the priesthood than any other diocese in Texas.

AR: Well, have you actively gone out and encouraged this?

SM: I have actively gone out. I don't know whether I told you this story or not. I thought we had mentioned something before about that, about getting vocations to the priesthood from our own Mexican people. Usually a diocese should have the vocations that come from within the diocese. That's the first duty of the bishop to do. And when I came here, that was my first task. We had very few priests here when I came. And Bishop Miranda, who later became the Cardinal of Mexico--he's now retired, he's quite up in years--he used to come through here, and he said to me one time, "How are you gonna get vocations here from the Mexican people?" I said, "Well, I have no secret at all except that I think that we should look at a vocation as a very spiritual thing and everybody is equal and the same. You have no questions asked, what nationality do you belong to or what language do you speak or what color do you have or anything. We're supposed to get vocations from the families and the people who live in our diocese."

SM: So I told the Bishop there would be no distinctions made of any kind. This I followed through all the way. And he said to me, "And you'll be successful." And most of our students now are students of Mexican parentage.

AR: From here in El Paso?

SM: Oh, yes. Well, in the diocese. Not necessarily from the city, but within the diocese. And that has grown. There's no question about it. But then of course with this kind of a critical situation in the Church, we also suffered from that. But I foresee it's gonna work out very well. I think there's an upswing now.

AR: Do you have any numbers as far as how many Mexican American priests that you have now?

SM: Students? Right now, oh, I must have over 20 anyway, I think it is, that are actually working now, those that are actually working at it. Probably more. Some have left. But I have no exact figures on that available right at the moment. But some have left, like they did everywhere in places.

OM: About what percentage of all the priests in the area are Mexican American?

SM: At this time, oh, I would say probably 10 percent, at least. There was a time when there were zero. That doesn't look like very much, but when you look at it that way, that's quite an improvement. It's a slow process to do this, you know. I remember one of the men here told me one time, he said, "When you talk about getting priests for a diocese and get them trained and all, my heavens, it's like planting a tree. You have to watch it grow up. It takes so long to go through all the various stages." And that's true. And I started from zero when I came. There wasn't anything like it.

OM: When you first came to El Paso, did you perceive a general attitude among Anglo Americans toward Mexican Americans as not being capable of doing

academic work, holding professional jobs, advancing economically?

SM: I guess I met some people that thought that. They didn't come right out and tell me; they wouldn't dare, you know. But there were some who did. I will give you an incident without, again, mentioning names, that gives you an idea of what some people were thinking about. There was a lot of prejudice here. There's no question about it. Very shocking at times, and it came from our own Catholic people, I'm talking about. I don't know much about the other people because they did not enter into this question here. But one time a man came to me and he said, "What about these Mexican children who are going to our parochial schools?" And this kind of was rather strange to me. I said, "Well, what about it?" "Well," he said, "you know, we have lived here a long time." Now this was the attitude of a lot of old-timers. "We have lived here a long time and we know these people." That's the expression that was used. In the meantime, I must say my fever was rising a little bit, you know, when I heard all that. And I said to him, "Now wait. You just, you can't have that kind of thinking. The children of Mexican parents are as good in the parochial school as yours or anybody else's. That's the way it's gonna be. Now if you don't like that, you just go and lump it." I told him exactly that. And then later I called up his parish priest and I asked him, I said, "So and so was down here, tells me this. I'm amazed. Do you know about that?" He said, "You know, I sent him down purposely so he'd get a good scolding." (Laughter)

Now that was the type of thinking. These are true stories. And I believe, yes, in so many Anglos that feeling was there. However, that has been overcome quite a lot. I'm sure it has. Otherwise you wouldn't have people in political jobs and professions as we have now. And one of the persons

who kind of turned things around politically here for Mexican people was Raymond Telles.

OM: Did you know Raymond Telles very well?

SM: Very well. I know him very well. As a matter of fact, when Raymond Telles came back from the war, he came to see me. I think he was a major or lieutenant colonel. He had quite a nice career in the war. And he talked about the Mexican people and he talked about politics and so on. And I said, "Sure, I think you ought to go into politics." I said, "And now is the time to do it. You've come back with a fine record and everything. You can show yourself to the public," and so on. He said, "You think I ought to run?" I said, "Yes you should. I don't know what the outcome will be, but you better try it." Well, he ran for county clerk, I believe. In the first election, he won. He didn't win it by very much, but he won it. And from there on his stock went up, you see.

Now that was one of the first of the kind at that time of the young Mexican people who came into prominence. And so it was in many other fields. So a lot of that I think has been changed. You may still have a few around that are mosbacks you know. And you can never change a mosback, it'll always be that, that still think along those lines. Yes, but there was this kind of an anti-Mexican attitude. From what I'm just telling you, that is an example. And naturally I fought all of that. This is not...just won't happen. Now there were sometimes people said, some Anglo Catholics said, "Well, the bishop cares only about the Mexicans." (Chuckles)

OM: Really?

SM: Oh, yes; they've told me.

OM: Recently?

SM: No, no. Years ago.

OM: Long time ago.

SM: Yes. They never told me personally. Nobody ever would come to me and face me with these things, but I heard them all. Oh, yes. And all I was trying to do was to balance things and do what's right. God knows I have nothing against any Anglos. I'm one myself, if we classify people that way. But this kind of thing, I just don't understand this, because it's all so terribly small and so unnecessary. Well, just to put it bluntly, it's very stupid. But that's the way the world is. So I think on the housing thing, I wish we could've done better. But I hope now Bishop Flores will be able to carry on some of that. The diocese is in better shape now, too, financially.

AR: I wanted to ask you, weren't you one of the founders or the founder of a seminary?

SM: Here?

AR: I thought it was somewhere here in Texas. I can't recall the name.

SM: Oh, I started St. Charles Seminary here. That's only a high school seminary. Yes. I started that precisely to get vocations from the diocese. And the students who are there, they're nearly all, nearly all Mexican boys.

AR: What year was this that you started it?

SM: Must've been about the early '60s. We built that. St. Charles Seminary. Do you know where it is?

AR: No, I don't

SM: You know where St. Margaret's is, St. Margaret's home?

AR: Yes.

SM: All right. That building is right in with that group of buildings there. That's St. Charles Seminary.

OM: What part of town is that?

SM: It's down...what part of town do you call that? You go down the valley.

AR: The lower valley.

OM: The lower valley.

SM: It's the lower valley, yes. Yeah. St. Margaret's Home, you see, that was one of the first things I built. In those days they still had so-called orphanages. These of course are outdated now. But we're using the home, St. Margaret's Home. And if you want to know about that, go down and see Sister Alice. She can tell you all about it.

AR: But you helped start St. Margaret's also?

SM: Yes, I started that, and I started the seminary.

OM: I'd like to ask you about Sacred Heart School. I graduated from there, and a few years ago it was closed. What happened in that case?

SM: It just couldn't swing it anymore, that was it. Just simply...for one thing, Sacred Heart parish became a lot smaller. A lot of people moved out. I think the time that the Chamizal deal was going on and all of that. And it was just impossible to keep it up. That was exactly what it is. We kept it up as long as we possibly could.

OM: When did it close?

SM: I don't know. Call Father Gafford, he can tell you. If you want to know more about Sacred Heart school, call Father Gafford. Do you know him?

OM: No, I don't.

SM: Well, he's the pastor. Father Bob Gafford. He's an El Paso boy. He's a Jesuit. And Father Gafford, Gafford is of course an Anglo name, but his mother is Mexican, I'm sure. He's been a pastor there long time. He can tell you more about the situation, the whole question of our Mexican people

here, probably than any priest around. And in fact, he has been my representative for many, many things. And he is a solid citizen. No question about it. Been here a long time. But he can give you those dates. I'm not good at dates. I forget the dates soon as they're over. (Chuckles)

AR: I wanted to ask, when was the first time you heard the word Chicano?

SM: When was the first time I heard it?

AR: [Yes.]

SM: I never heard it anywhere before I came to El Paso, and I was here a long time before I heard it. It was when that movement came here, the Chicano Movement. I remember some years, when it was in the papers. I never heard it before. And I've asked some people about this. And I remember there was an article in the Herald-Post one time that gave I don't know how many meanings of the word Chicano, so many senses in which it was used. Now I know one person here told me that they remembered that Chicano meant somebody from Chihuahua. Some Mexican people who came from Chihuahua, that was a word which referred to them. They were Chicanos. Not in any derogatory sense at all. So I have always felt that a lot of that came out of the state of California, that type of thing--the political part of it--and then it kind of spread. We did not have Chicanos here. I never heard the word Chicano until the '60s, and I came here in '42.

AR: Do you think that this movement has helped the Mexican American people politically and socially?

SM: Yeah, I think it has in some respects. Yes, I think so. Now sometimes they may not always do the wisest things, but I think they have helped. I wouldn't condemn anybody because he's a Chicano. But it's like all the other movements. You find some people in it that are not exactly suitable. That's natural.

But the purpose of the Chicano Movement is, I think, very good. Now I happen to know also that there're many Mexican people here in El Paso who do not want to be classed as Chicanos. You probably know that. There're plenty of 'em. So I keep quiet about that. (Laughter)

OM: It's the wisest thing to do sometimes.

SM: I have nothing against Chicanos at all. But I know I have been in these circles when some of this was discussed, and they said, "Oh, no, yo no soy Chicano por nada, nada, nada." Nothing doing. (Chuckles) Then you better keep your mouth shut.

So these are the differences that you find. On the other hand, I think it's more among the younger people that the movement is, and even some of the younger ones don't want it. They're divided on that subject.

AR: Do you think maybe the Chicanos may feel an alienation here in America, an isolation from the American culture? Do you think maybe that's why they started this movement?

SM: Well, they started it basically because they felt that the Mexican people in general were discriminated against. And that's correct; I think they were. I think I mentioned that before. They were. And so they started then on these various things and they tried to get the political side of it and so on. But I think basically that was the whole thing that inspired it. And then along with that they wanted to preserve their own culture--which is, naturally, the step that would follow logically once you take that first step.

AR: You don't think they ought to assimilate into the American culture more and give up their heritage?

SM: They try to keep their culture, I think. Yes. Now there are some Chicanos... this may be the bad feature of it, that they do not appreciate other cultures.

That of course isn't good. And the danger of the movement, of all movements like that, is there is so much polarization. You polarize groups so much, the first thing you know you set groups against groups. And that's what you have to watch. There may be some that are doing that in the movement. Yes, and I know there's even some of the clergy talk about that. There was a person I know gave a talk, not here in this city. Well, in fact, New Mexico State University. And he represented New Mexico. And he referred to the corrupt Anglo Church. (Chuckles) Now that, you see, is going overboard. He was very severely criticized for it. I got letters about it, and I told them to send them to Archbishop Sánchez, because he was not from my diocese. (Chuckles)

AR: Do you have any politically radical priests that consider themselves Chicano in the El Paso diocese?

SM: Here? I think some are. Yes, they're Chicanos, but I would say moderate. I don't know of anybody that's really radical, can't think of anyone. Some of 'em have a reputation for being so and some perhaps are quite misjudged. I think they are. No, I have nothing at all against the movement as such if it's conducted properly. Now there are things that for instance are said on these different programs, who have 'em on television and so on. A lot of people are furious about those, I know that. And some of the Mexican people.

OM: Have they come to you about that?

SM: Oh, yeah, they've told me about 'em. (Chuckles) Surely they have.

OM: "Aztlán Sin Fronteras."

SM: Yeah, that's one of them; yeah, I think so. And I said, "Well, I don't particularly approve of those either, but I'm not going to go out and tell 'em, 'Here, you can't say these things.' Because then you're interfering with freedom of speech and all that kind of thing." I said, "I believe that some of it is

not the right way to go about it." You know, if you build a grudge for things that have happened, God knows, a hundred years ago, and keep the grudge and building it up, you're not building up any positive relations that are good. And that's what some unfortunately are doing. It's so negative. They should try to build good relations with the Anglos or whoever else they are. That's the positive part of it. And that may be in some cases where the movement is at fault. I know I have met individuals like that, that talked along those lines, and I thought they were just quite wrong. But I wouldn't say that about the movement.

Oh, I've had everybody here. I've had the Brown Berets sitting right around here.

OM: Oh, really?

SM: Oh, surely.

OM: Can you tell us about that?

SM: Oh, no. Well, they discussed all their problems. Surely.

OM: Why did they come to you?

SM: They wanted advice. And sometimes, of course, they made requests that I couldn't give 'em, and I so told them. I said, "Now look, I'm gonna be very honest with you. There's certain things we just can't do."

OM: They were seeking advice on what?

SM: On about the use of buildings and all this type of thing, Church buildings possibly. And then of course they had some of the instances of discrimination and things of that type. Some of it was...they had a very good reason to be upset.

But now also you have to remember, these are youngsters that belong to that. And I always have a great sympathy for young people. They're gonna make a lot of mistakes, but that's the way they learn. And don't condemn 'em

ever for that. If you condemn 'em, you kill their initiative. And so when these young fellas come here and they...the way they talk, sometimes, if you wanted to get upset, you'd tell 'em to get out, you know. And you can't do that. That's the way they are. And when they leave, "This is all right. Está bien." I never had any fights with them. But I just very nicely told 'em. Yeah, they would sit down here. There were sometimes so many of 'em came they didn't have enough room in that place. But I never refused anybody that wanted to come here--includin' the History Department. (Laughter)

OM: We're very happy about that!

AR: I wanted to ask you about how you feel about the illegal alien situation right now.

SM: Oh, dear, yes. That's such a complicated thing, and I just have not any clear ideas what really should be done. This is a very complicated thing. I've heard so many angles. Of course, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has made some recommendations about amnesties and all that type of thing. Now this is ideally and spiritually the proper thing to do. There's no doubt about it. But I don't know that the governments will do that. And probably not. But that is probably the only way from a charitable and spiritual viewpoint that that can be done. It should be done in such a way that these families that are torn apart and all of that--that's very serious--that that can be handled so that they get together. That's about all that I can tell you. Just how, I don't know.

OM: Over the years have you encountered any particular cases with families who were here illegally that wanted your help?

SM: Well, we have of course Mr. Velarde's office down there that handles that, so I'm not familiar with the details. That office is put there by the bishops of

the United States. And Cleofas Calleros had that before. Did you know him?

OM: Yes, I did. In fact, I interviewed him.

SM: Oh, well, good. Oh, yes, now there's a character, you know. Yes, this thing has been going on, there's no doubt about it. And they at that time didn't think of any solution, as far as I could make out; they just kind of let it go. It's only in the last few years or so that they're trying to solve the problems.

But it's so complicated. Well, they do break the law, I know they do. But really, in a lot of that case, if you boil down about these aliens coming in, it's almost a law of natural necessity that they're bowing to, something they really need. And they're in need and this is... When you put people in that kind of a position, they do those things. Now that's a situation that shouldn't be, of course.

But I have heard about this question, I have listened to all kinds of talks and everything. I can only tell you the ideal that there is; how they're gonna do it, I don't know. But that question of the families that are being broken up, you know what I mean. That does happen. And the family, once you start fooling around with the family and breaking it up, you're in trouble.

AR: But you never had any dealings with a specific family of illegal aliens?

SM: No, not personally. I always did that through the U.S. Catholic Conference. Sometimes they would ask me how to handle a thing or so. The families themselves, that all went through official channels.

OM: What about in the schools? Did you have kids from families that were here illegally enrolled in Catholic schools?

SM: We probably did, we probably did.

OM: Did you ever come across any situation or any case that you had to look into?

SM: No, not personally. But I think there were probably some.

AR: Do they allow the children to stay in the school?

SM: I don't know what they do now. No, I think probably not. Because they have to check on it then. That's governed by the Department of Education. If you want to, any information about that, you call Sister Clarissa. She can tell you. She's head of the Department of Education. Msgr. MacDonald used to be, but she now is.

AR: I wanted to ask you some questions about you. We hadn't had a chance to touch on some of these topics. Have you ever done or held any other position with a private business firm, or did you have any other kind of job other than with the Church?

SM: No.

AR: You've always been in the Church.

SM: Except when I was regent of St. Mary's University Law School. That's a law school, but that's a Catholic law school. No, I never had any other position.

AR: I also noticed as I went through looking for information about you that you were the youngest bishop in the U.S. hierarchy.

SM: At that time.

AR: Did you feel any special need to prove yourself because you were so young?

SM: Well, really, it was a bit of...I was a bit frightened when I first went up into Washington to the bishops' meetings among all that group from all over the United States. Rather a formidable group of people, you know. But yes, I had to, you have to kind of establish yourself. They expect you really to deliver the goods, as they say. But they were very fine and very sympathetic to me at all times. They really were. Now the bishops may disagree on a lot of things and so on, but there is a very fine esprit de corps among them. There really

is. And that's a kind of, I guess, a loyalty by the fact that they're, well, brother bishops. And we try to help each other as much as we possibly can. We try to be charitable, in other words.

But I had no problems with that question of youth. I can tell you a very funny story about that. When I was getting ready for my consecration, ordination as a bishop, we all have a retreat before it. And being in San Antonio, I went out to Our Lady of the Lake College; they had a lot of room out there. And one day I was walking down the corridor, and along came a very pontifical-looking gentleman (if you know what I mean by that), a monsignor. I was never a monsignor in my life, I skipped that. But at any rate, he saw me, and I was dressed just in black. You know, I wore a black cassock. And he was very curious and he wanted to know, he said, "Are you on the faculty here?" "No, no, I'm not on the faculty." "I haven't seen you before." "No, I guess not." And so, well, he got so bloomin' curious and finally I told him, I said, "Well, look, I'm getting ready to receive consecration as a bishop next Wednesday." "Oh!" he said. He looked at me, he said, "Yes, I read about that." He said, "Well, it looks like the Pope robbed the cradle." (Laughter) Now there I was paying...I was paying the price of being young. And I said, "Well, never mind, monsignor. You know, there's an old axiom in the old Roman law, in the Canon Law, that malice makes up for age." (Laughter) But I didn't have to do that with the bishops of the United States. They accepted me very well. The fact that I was appointed, that was enough.

So, yes, I felt it, though. I felt it was such a different way, and things I had never done before. You get a large, much broader viewpoint about things, and think about the Church at large.

AR: Were you ready for it?

SM: Was I ready? I don't think I was. But I had to get ready, as they say, PDQ.

AR: Why was it that you weren't a monsignor before you became a bishop?

SM: Well, the monsignor is...that's an honor that you get for priests, the bishop gets it for priests who have done excellent work and so on. But the archbishop thought I was too young. But what happened was...he told me that himself. Let me see, this was in October and I was appointed the following Christmas to become a bishop. And he said, "You know, I put in your name to be a monsignor and I got that, and then I wrote back to the apostolic delegate and told him." He really didn't think it was necessary to do it because this was in the books. So that's the reason.

AR: In looking back in your service to the Church, what's the biggest boo-boo you think you ever made?

SM: What?

AR: Boo-boo. Are you familiar with what that means? The biggest mistake?

SM: Oh, the boo-boos! (Laughter) Well, now, let me see. There're quite a number of those, it's hard to tell! (Laughter) Oh, dear me. Yes, I've definitely made mistakes, we all do. Sometimes I don't know whether I would change policies again, generally. I think I was pretty much in the right direction. But I have made mistakes sometimes in misjudging people. You have to be very careful of that, especially in the beginning. You've got to get a lot of experience to do that. And as a result, as I went along I became very cautious, which I am. But some of those things have happened to me, and I used to say to myself later on, "Well, if I had to do that over again, why was I so stupid to do it that way?" That's human, you know. But I don't know that I...I haven't made any major mistakes that would wreck the Church, you know. (Chuckles) Hasn't gone that far. However in Rome, the authorities, all the reports I got, they

seemed to be very highly pleased. As a matter of fact, the letter that I got when I celebrated my golden jubilee here a few years ago, I got that from Pope Paul. It's really...I looked at that and I wasn't sure whether he really knew me. And he spoke about the work towards helping the workers and the poor and all of that, you know.

AR: I noticed that one of the titles that you had was Assistant at the Pontifical Throne under Pope Paul.

SM: Yeah.

AR: Was that just a title or was it...

SM: That is a title...let me put it this way. I suppose they make a priest a monsignor, not necessarily a bishop. But the Assistant fo the Pontifical Throne they generally give you when you're 25 years a bishop, provided you have done reasonably well. (Chuckles) So that was it.

AR: I asked you what your biggest boo-boo was. How about your greatest accomplishment?

SM: Well, now, that's something else. /Pause/ About what would I consider the greatest thing that I had to do, naturally I consider that from the viewpoint of a bishop, of a Catholic bishop. And I think the greatest thing that I have attempted, and have to some extent succeeded, is trying to build up a native clergy, and also the organization of the laity. I have spent a great deal of time to organize the Catholic laity. We have a Council of Catholic Laity and all of that.

I don't know whether you read about it or not. We had the Congress, we call it. And at that time we sent out 30,000 questionnaires to all the Catholic people in the diocese, asking them what they thought was needed in the diocese. What were we not doing that should be done? Or did they think this wasn't done right? They could say anything they wanted to. Of course, not deny the Trinity,

you understand. But we got about 15,000 replies on that. And it took about two, three years to get all that thing boiled down. But out of that came what we have now, we call it the Council of the Laity. And we have a Pastoral Council of Lay People also with priests in it. And the Council of the Laity is one of my...I will put it this way, one of my pet organizations. And that means that the lay people are taking active interest in the Church in every way--in consultation and in recommendation and helping make decisions and all that. And that's what we're building up. Those two things I would say, then--building up a native clergy and building up our Catholic laity as members of the Church.

OM: This laity organization, when was that put together?

SM: Well, that was about 1974, the latest. However, we had the nucleus or the foundation for a lot of those things. We always had what we called the Council of Catholic Women and a Council of Catholic Men and all of that. And of course we had the Catholic Youth Organization, too--the CYO. I will always work hard on those things over the years because I saw always the need of the lay people. After all, they're the Church. If there's no people, you got no Church. And I think that we laid the foundation pretty well. So when we had our Congress to be organized, as we call it, that worked out very well.

Now I call this a congress, and I was only following out the Canon Law. Every 10 years or so in a diocese, a bishop is supposed to call what he calls a synod. Well, I put that in all the modern ways in accordance with the thinking of the Vatican Council. And we didn't call it synod. Nobody understands the word, you know, except ecclesiastics. And so we called it a congress, Diocesan Congress, so that everybody would understand. That's what that was, really. And the outcome of it was this Council of the Laity. We have a diocesan meeting every year, we have quite a board and they represent it from all

over the diocese. The board meets, oh, maybe three months or so. And sometimes if something critical came up, they would meet. And I think it's worked out very well. They've been a tremendous help to me. And this is not an easy job to do, I can tell you. You have to nurse that kind of a thing along like a baby. You gotta have patience. And when you deal with organizations, sometimes they look like they're just about falling apart. Then all of a sudden they pull together again. And that they have done very well. I'm very proud of that organization. And I know that we're the only one in Texas that has one like it.

AR: Oh, is that right?

SM: That's right. The others have councils of men, they have councils of women, and they have all this type of thing, but not like we have it--the whole laity put together, men and women and youth and all. That's what I was shooting for. And I think we have succeeded in doing that. Bishop Flores I think, himself, has said that to somebody. He said, "I didn't know you had this." He said, "Nobody has that around."

OM: Where did you get the idea?

SM: I got it from...we talked about it, some of the priests. We talked about what we should do, and they mentioned that.

OM: Had you seen anything like that in operation anywhere else?

SM: No, I haven't. We did it ourselves out here. Out here in the desert, the mountains, where we can sit and think and look at God's blue sky instead of the bad clouds.

AR: They didn't present this idea at the Vatican II Council?

SM: No, the Vatican II wants this type of organization. It came out of that, really, trying to follow the thinking of the Vatican II. Oh, yes. And there were some people who wrote me letters, some of our Catholic people. In fact,

they wrote 'em to Rome. They gave me the letters later. They said that I was really renouncing my authority, abdicating my authority, by letting the lay people do all these things. Yes. They're very conservative people, you know, some of them are. And they couldn't understand that, that this was going on. And I know one person wrote and he said I'd abdicated my authority. And when I went to Rome one time they gave me those letters. They paid no attention to it, of course. But they said, "Don't ever use the letters." I never would, of course. These people that wrote 'em don't even know that I have 'em. They also wrote to Rome about Farah, too, many of 'em did.

OM: And you have a stack of letters about Farah?

SM: Oh, I destroyed 'em. There's only one letter that I've kept. I think I still have it.

OM: Can you tell us about it?

SM: Yeah. I think it's very funny. It was written by a lady who is a social worker. She had a degree in social service and so on, and she worked, you know, for Welfare, Human Welfare and all that. This was addressed to Pope Paul. She sent me a copy of it, you see. And then she went on to tell the Pope how my stand was disgracing the Church. And so I read through that. To make a long story short, I kept it for this reason: at the end of the letter was a punch line. She said, "Holy Father, what are you gonna do with a bishop like that?" And I thought that was it! I think that's really funny. (Chuckles)

OM: You were a hopeless case.

SM: Hopeless! (Laughter) Surely, she thought I was! Many other people did, I guess. Some still do. But it didn't bother Pope Paul. As a matter of fact, I got lots of recommendations for what I did from Pope Paul. Oh, that's the one letter that I kept, the others I destroyed. They were bad. They were

bitter, and you don't keep those things.

OM: Did you ever get letters with profanity in them?

SM: No, I don't think that I did. Real profanity, no.

OM: Were people generally respectful, proper?

SM: Generally, oh, yes. The letters that were written, as we would put it in American slang, they were cussin' the hell out of me, but they did it in a rather nice way. (Laughter) They didn't call me an SOB or anything like that, or use any of those things and so on. No, not that. I don't think I ever got one like that. If I did, I probably tore it up and forgot it.

AR: Now that you've retired, does this mean that you can no longer hold a higher office in the Church?

SM: That's right. When you retire, that's where you stay.

AR: Had you ever aspired to be more than a bishop?

SM: No, purely didn't. Had no idea I wanted to.

OM: Do you give up your title of bishop when you retire?

SM: Oh, no.

OM: We can still address you as Bishop?

SM: Oh, I'm a bishop. You're a bishop forever.

OM: So it's proper to address you as Bishop.

SM: Oh, yeah, the only way. Now here is what they put in the paper. I think sometimes they put in the "former bishop," or somebody put in "the ex-bishop." My God, I didn't get a divorce, you know. So and so's ex-husband. Well, people don't know that. But the proper way that that is done, the way is to write Bishop and Emeritus. Could put a "d" in the front of it if they want to-- the Demeritus. (Laughter) But I know that some people saw that in the paper. It really didn't bother me, but somebody said, "Now, that isn't right." Well,

I said, "Go ahead and tell 'em, I don't care."

Yeah, but some people have asked me, some of our very good, simple people, a lady asked me in Cruces the other day, one of these good Mexican ladies up there. She said, "Ah, Excelencia, todavía es obispo, ¿verdad?" I said, "Yeah." Then she said, "I will call you bishop, obispo, como antes." "Sí. That's right." That way you can understand that. I don't expect people to understand those things, it's kind of a technical thing.

Well, you know, as far as aspiring to anything higher is concerned, after all, the Pope's really a bishop you know. He's the Bishop of Rome. And there isn't anything in the sacramental orders that you can get that's higher than that. The other things are just titles. As far as being a bishop is concerned, we're all the same. Once we have received the orders, that is the ordination. No, I really didn't...I was never interested in that.

AR: You had your hands full here.

SM: I sure did, that's exactly right! I hadn't time to think of it. And when I came here and I saw how difficult it was, I said, "Well, fine. If this is what God wants me to do, I'm not asking for any change." Or ask to be promoted or demoted or anything. I just stayed put. I think that's what God wanted me to do, and that's what I did.

OM: Did you ever hope to get transferred elsewhere?

SM: No.

OM: You were happy here?

SM: I was. One time, oh, I was gonna be an archbishop in San Antonio and I just was ...this was just a lot of gossip, you know. But that was when the See of Los Angeles was vacant, and they said that Archbishop Lucey was going to Los Angeles and I was supposed to go to San Antonio. I really wasn't too happy about it. I

didn't say anything to anybody, but thank God it didn't happen. (Chuckles) Oh, I would've gone back home really, in a way. But I was just at that time getting things started. So that happened this way, then--that Archbishop McIntyre came from New York and became the archbishop of Los Angeles, and Archbishop Lucey stayed in San Antonio, and I stayed here. And that is okay with me.

AR: I read that you like to go incognito sometimes and go to some of the local bars and listen to some of the local talent.

SM: Well, no, that's really...no. That's quite an exaggeration.

AR: Is it?

SM: Yeah. I don't go to any local bars ever. But I have gone when I've travelled. And I think the reason for that was that one night we were driving back from Santa Fe to El Paso, and it was late. Oh, it was after midnight, and had driven all that distance. I think that was with Father Madden. And I said, "Gosh, can we get a cold drink or something somewhere?" Everything was closed except one place looked like a kind of a joint, you know. And he said, "Well, look at all the roughnecks in there." "Well," I said, "let's go in, they don't know who I am." And we did. But if anybody has the idea that I'm visiting bars incognito, around here I can't go incognito.

AR: I was wondering when I read it what you did.

SM: No, no. That's altogether wrong. I wouldn't be that stupid. Pretend that I want to go somewhere here in El Paso and not be known? No. So, no. But that has happened. I've gone that way if I travel, sure. There're a lot of times. But we stopped that night. This was a stopover for the truck drivers, you know. They were not bad people, but it's kind of a rough outfit. And if you listen to the lingo there, it wasn't exactly what you read in the Bible!

(Laughter)

OM: Not exactly.

SM: But, well, it was, I would say, very picturesque. But I don't go to local bars]. Yeah, Father Madden enjoyed that. He said, "If these guys only knew who you were." I talked to them just nicely. They didn't ask me any questions. They didn't tell me I didn't fit, either. (Laughter) No, somebody wrote that. You know, when you're in public life a long, long time there're a lot of legends arise about a person.

OM: What other legends are there about you?

SM: I don't know, but that's one of them!

OM: I jotted down some things as you were talking, and I want to come back to some of these things. I'm curious about how the Depression affected you personally.

SM: You mean back in the '30s?

OM: Back in the '30s.

SM: Well, it didn't affect me personally a great deal. Of course at that time I was teaching in the seminary. But we realized there was a Depression. And it was hard to keep things going and we tried to limit things as much as we possibly could. But I didn't suffer on account of it. I didn't really need very much. All I needed was shelter and enough to eat. I never had to starve, I want you to know that. But I remember the Depression very well from San Antonio, and all the problems that people faced and people out of work. That way, yes, we were concerned, of course. But I had no personal hardship on account of it.

OM: What about the seminary itself?

SM: Well, the seminary, yes. We had to cut down. We had a certain budget that was assigned by the archdiocese. But we got by. Yeah. The Depression was a

very, very serious thing. One of the bad things about it at that time, there were some persons I knew committed suicide on account of it. Now they had made investments, probably in the stock market in one thing or another. And you know of course that thing that we read about today even, the Black Friday, when the stock market crashed, there were so many people that lost money at that time. And that of course hurt everybody. I knew several men very well who committed suicide on account of that. It was a sad, sad time. And then of course the one who sort of gave new hope, that's when FDR came on the scene. And there's no question about it, he did magnificently in many, many ways.

OM: In San Antonio there was a strike back in the '30s, pecan shellers. Do you remember that?

SM: Yes, yes, I surely do, yes. Yes, I knew some of them.

OM: What do you remember about that strike, and did you have any personal involvement in it?

SM: No, I had no real personal involvement in it at that time. It was a question of wages, really, that's what it was. And also collective bargaining, really, that's what it was. It's the basic thing that happens in the problems of labor. Yes, the pecan shellers, that was quite a strike for a while. I don't recall anymore how it all turned out. I think finally they got some relief. Yes, I remember that very well. I knew some of the pecan shellers and the people. A lot of Mexican families were involved that lived out on what we call the west side in San Antonio. Many of them used to go to San Fernando Cathedral and all of that. That's how I knew a lot of people.

OM: Do you remember identifying with the aspirations of those people, empathizing with them?

- SM: They knew that, yes. I'm sure they did. I was not a public figure or anything, or official, but a number of 'em I knew I was kind of...well, you know, I was just kind of starting out at that time, I had to get my feet wet. And then later on I got into things more.
- OM: Could you tell us about conditions in the Mexican American community of San Antonio during the '30s?
- SM: Yes. I can't tell you many great details that I remember, but I think it was very bad, really bad. It was bad on account of the low wages and everything, and the horrible housing and all that type of thing. It was real poverty-stricken. There's no doubt about it. And I think gradually they have bettered that now, I'm pretty sure. But it was not good.
- OM: Now when you came to El Paso in 1942, these conditions in South El Paso, how did they strike you?
- SM: They were pretty bad here, too. Well, really, it didn't strike me as anything new because I had seen so much of it in San Antonio. And from that viewpoint it didn't shock me anymore because I had already seen it. But I knew that it was very bad. Thank God at least something has been tried. I think it has improved some.
- OM: What about conditions in Juárez? When was the first time that you crossed into Juárez?
- SM: That I don't remember. Well, I went over one time with Cardinal Spellman, you know, and I wasn't here very long. I didn't go to Juárez very often. You must remember this: in the beginning of my career here as the bishop I went out to beg most of the time in order to pay debts and everything that the diocese had. And so I spent a good part of my time in Chicago, for instance, and other places; New York and all of that. So I didn't have time

to go to Juárez. I don't remember, I must've been here quite a long time before I went over. Oh, once in a while, maybe. I don't remember too much about it. Frankly, I wasn't interested.

OM: Well, one of the things that shocks a lot of people is the poverty that is over there--seeing people begging on the streets and kids running around hustling, all kinds of things.

SM: Oh, yes.

OM: I was wondering what your first impressions of that might've been.

SM: Well, I was not too surprised. Shocking it all is, indeed. But it wasn't any great surprise. We didn't have it quite that bad on this side. But heavens above, a lot of things had to be done here. Yeah, I don't know. Is Juárez better now, you think? All these other things that have come in, people have come in, so many of 'em. That makes it worse, I think.

OM: Yes, large-scale migration. It really has created a lot of social problems all around the city. What about relations between the Church on this side of the border and the Church on the other side?

SM: Well, we've had good relations, I would say. Now of course, there is a difference of approach, you know, in methods in one thing or another. And there're a lot of things for instance in Juárez that they would do there that wouldn't work out too well in here. But basically it's the same. I'm sure now Bishop Flores is interested in a lot of the Mexican problems, too, and he probably will have closer relations with Bishop Talamás. He expressed that desire that he would like to know him better. But we've had no serious problems.

OM: What's the difference in total membership?

SM: Oh, heavens above, they must have a half a million people nearly in that

area that are in the diocese. And I don't think they have more than about 50 priests. Now here we have about a quarter of a million Catholics, and God knows we have about all together 150 priests, all of 'em. You see the difference?

OM: It's quite a difference.

SM: Oh, yes. And I've heard that all along. And I recall one time that Bishop Talamás; when he first came he talked and I talked to him he asked me what you are asking now. He said how many priests did I have, and I told him. He said, "Usted es rico."

/PAUSE/

OM: I'd like to ask you about your own feelings regarding recent changes that have come about in the Church--the changes in the Mass, for example, and groups that have come about in the Church. What's this group that I was thinking about?

SM: Archbishop Lefebvre? Lefebvre, the traditionalists? They want the Latin Mass and the old.

OM: Right, right. That is part of it. But I was thinking of a group here locally, that's not only a local group. But what's the name of this group? The Charismatics. And groups of that type.

SM: Oh, yes, the Charismatics. Yes, that is a movement. Well, this of course goes way, way back to the old-time charismatic movement in the classical sense. Now what were they? That was a sect, a Protestant faith. Now, then, charismatics in the Catholic sense, in the sense of the Church, then, kind of started after the council did. This is in itself a good movement. Many people don't like it. However, we do not condemn it; I would not condemn it by any means. Now I am not a Charismatic. I want to tell you that right off.

SJ: What does it involve exactly?

SM: It means they have their own way of praying, it's a very emotional type of thing. And of course what they concentrate on is that everything depends on the Holy Spirit, you see. Which of course the Holy Spirit guides the Church, Our Lord said that. This part's all right. Now, what they have to do is take all the other things in the Church, too, and not concentrate on one thing and leave the others out. There is a lot of the emotionalism in it. If one isn't accustomed to it, it could be almost...some priests I've heard describe it, they say it could be a Holy Roller meeting, you know, this type of this emotional thing. Now I wouldn't say that, but I know there is that charismatic, that emotional thing in it. And there's some very eminent people who belong to it. One of the leaders in the Church in that is the cardinal of Belgium, Cardinal Suenens. But they have that way of praising and, "Praise the Lord!" and all this type of thing. Now, I'm not that emotional, you see.

There's one thing about emotionalism: if your religion depends on emotionalism and the emotions die down, you hit rock bottom. It has, however, its good points. Not everybody should join the Charismatic Movement. Some people wouldn't fit. But some it helps a great deal.

OM: It's a matter of personality.

SM: Correct. A great deal. And a matter of balance. And some people are harmed by it, I think. They just should never have joined. Not everyone should. But Pope Paul acknowledged the Charismatics as a movement. The fact that they prayed so much, this he praised very much. And they do. Of course they

make things very long, and they have sessions for three, four hours and things like that. Well, I'm not that pious, I can't pray that long. (Chuckles) But that's the way they do these things. It appeals to certain people. And I've been through it. And I say, "Fine, you have a perfect right. You can pray any way you want to as long as you pray right."

OM: I think Hector Bencomo was involved in it.

SM: Yeah, Hector is, I think, surely. And he's a good man. They know that, they know that I'm not a Charismatic. I honestly told 'em so. I wasn't pulling any punches about it. I said, "Well, I will never join this," after my long years as a priest and everything and so on. This is a movement and /it/ has its merits, but I just couldn't...it's too noisy for me and everything else. And it does a lot of good to those people. And it brings them closer to God, to our Lord; that's the important thing.

OM: What about the changes in the Mass, the language issue?

SM: Well, now, I might tell you that before the Vatican Council started, there was a kind of a movement in the Church to have the vernacular, as they said, for the Mass. I never cared much about it in those days at all. But when I got to the Vatican Council and there were 2,000 bishops voting and they made talks about these things, then you get a view of the whole general church in the world. And the basic idea was that this was participation in the Mass such as we really never had. This is quite true. And I voted for the vernacular. Now I knew that to me personally this was a great inconvenience. Because after I had been saying Mass and in Latin a certain way when ever since I was ordained for 35 years or so at that time, and then to change to the new thing, this was very inconvenient. But these are things we have to do for the general good. Now, of course, I don't mind anymore at all.

This house right across the street here, there's an elderly lady lived there, Mrs. Freimouth. And she's passed away since. She was quite conservative, she was a convert, a member of the Cathedral parish. But she used to come over here and visit Gussie, my housekeeper, very often. But she came here one day after that and she was so upset by this. She said, "What am I gonna do? I don't know what to do." A lot of people were like that. It took a lot of instruction first in order to make 'em get used to it. Perhaps in some cases the priest didn't instruct them sufficiently and it was thrown at 'em so quickly. That may've been a mistake in some cases. But anyway, I had quite a long talk with her, and I told her as I saw it. And I said, "Now don't just put it aside and say, 'No, I don't want it! Give it a try. And I think that you will find that you'll get along all right.'" And she went to Mass at the Cathedral every Sunday, and she came back about a year later and she was quite pleased with it.

Now there is no question about it, this has made people participate more in the Mass. There's no doubt about it. And that's what it should be. So I think that was a very good thing. Now there are always people who do not take change. Some people never do. And so you have, therefore, a group within the Church that want the Mass the way it was always said in the last 300 years since the Council of Trent and all that. We have some of those here in the city. They come here and they say the Mass, as they call it, the Tridentine Mass. That means the Mass as it was put in order by the Council of Trent. Before that Mass had been said all over the world for centuries and centuries. But at that time the Pope was Pius V; Saint Pius V, he was later canonized. He got all these things together and coordinated it that way. And this is what those people want. And then some of them said

/that/ now the present Pope had no authority to change what the other Pope did. And the reason they say that is because in the document that they read, they have a certain form, and they say, "for the perpetual memory of things," and so on, "we decree this and that and that." And they therefore think that one Pope puts an obligation on another. No Pope puts an obligation on another Pope. They all have to follow the same doctrine, of course. This is not a matter of doctrine really, it's a matter of discipline and so on. And the Mass really is not changed; the nature of the Mass, the essence of it is not changed one bit. But you know, some people don't get that through their noodles. That's where the problem is.

And no, I am not at all unhappy with that. Now maybe in some cases some people /are unhappy/. Some people get very upset with the guitar masses.

OM: Yes, I was gonna ask you about them.

SM: Well, I'm not really upset with guitar masses. I really love very fine music and have a choir and all these things. And all that's very good. But guitar masses have their own merit, and usually those are the young people and they love this very much. They want to do it. And if they want to do it for the Lord, why not? I may not like some of the music they play, but that's okay. That doesn't concern me too bad. /I'm/ just glad when they're through with that particular thing (chuckles), and you forget it. But I believe really that this has done a tremendous lot of good and so on. Oh, I got all kinds of letters about the guitar masses.

OM: Pro and con?

SM: The letters I got were con, I'm afraid, most of 'em, when they first started that.

OM: I think that was a big shock for a lot of people.

SM: Yeah, it was a big shock, and they said they didn't have the reverence anymore and all that type of thing and so on. And, well, these things all have to take their route and seek their level, and you just have to be patient and wear it out. And this is what Pope Paul did. That's one of his greatnesses, the tremendous patience he had. Now he got those reactions from the Church throughout on many things he did and so on. But look at all the things that he faced. And Pope Paul really had a very fine mind, beautiful mind. And he had a world view of things and how all this had to gradually seek its own level. In the meantime, he was riding the crest and he got all kinds of brick bats. (Chuckles)

AR: In talking about changing sentiments, I have read in the past that many young Catholics have left the Church because of the Church's stand on the Equal Rights Amendment and on the abortion issue. How do you feel about the Equal Rights Amendment?

SM: Well, I don't know. Right now I'm very much doubtful about it, frankly. I think there ought to be equal rights. Whether it should be this particular amendment or not... It is a very controversial thing.

AR: Are you familiar with what the amendment says?

SM: Yeah, I've read some of it, and God, I've got all these people come up here, women come up, our own women who are against it and those who are for it and all of that. We hear all sides of it. I don't know whether all these things that are said would really happen. They predict all kinds of disasterous situations. But I don't know, this is so political, very political. That's what it has become. But there ought to be more equality, there's no question about that. Whether this is the best way to do it, the way that's worded, I don't know. Some of the lawyers, constitutional lawyers, say it wouldn't be good. And again others say, well, no, they see no problem with it. So I

really have not gone out on a limb to make any public statement on that. There is a division of opinion among our Catholic women about that, quite. Some are very much for it and some are against it. They way it looks right now, I doubt that they'll get it through. And I don't know what happened, but something happened. Look, they got so many states to ratify that, and gosh, all of a sudden it stopped.

AR: I had read that the Catholic Church was contributing quite a bit of money to the anti-Equal Rights Amendment groups; and that these women, the pro-ERA women, are blaming the Catholic Church for interfering and propagandizing it.

SM: I don't know. I don't think that's correct. I don't think the Catholic Church would give anything, any money for this. I doubt that very much. I know I've never been asked for any. What I mean by that is, that if there is a movement of this kind, they usually ask a diocese, don't you see? No, I think that's exaggerated.

AR: Does the Catholic Church give any money towards the anti-abortion movement?

SM: For the anti-abortion movement, yes. Now that is a strictly moral issue. That's an entirely different category. Yeah, that's right, it is. That's not anymore political, that was a very serious situation when that thing happened. It was unfortunate, I think. Now it's a question of basically whether abortion is murder or not, will they be taking a human life. That's what it all rests on.

AR: And you don't think the Church will change it's stand?

SM: The Church will never change that, no. Oh, never, never, never. That was one of the things that shocked me in our modern day. I never thought we would have this kind of situation in our country, and that of all people the Supreme Court would do this type of thing.

AR: So you don't think it's the woman's right to determine whether or not she wants

to carry the baby?

SM: No, she has an obligation. You mean to destroy the baby?

AR: /Yes./

SM: No. Now, there's a question. You're taking a human life? Yes? Definitely not.

AR: Even in the case of rape?

SM: Now in the case of rape... Once there has been conception, then it is a living thing, the organism is. You're never allowed to take that directly, a human life. But I believe what they have done frequently in case of rape, they have performed I think what they used to call a _____. Namely, they would scrape the womb because the conception takes place only after a certain time, and they do that immediately. Well, that's okay. But again, you do not destroy a human being.

AR: Well, this leads me to ask then about contraception. Will the Church change its stand on contraception?

SM: No. No, I don't think so. Now Pope Paul got an awful lot of static on that. That is, now, artificial birth control, as they call it, use of contraceptives. And he, however, took the stand that the Church had always taken. And you know, one thing you have to remember is that famous letter that they call *Humanae Vitae* in which there's this one little item. That's the thing that people always pick out. This is a letter on the value of human life. You have to study the whole thing, for that matter. And that's gonna be a great document someday. And it is true. He said there, yes, he took the traditional stand that we had. And I know that he has been very bitterly attacked, he has been attacked by Catholic people, by priests, some of them (I don't know of any bishop attacked him), and they had a so-called committee and all that type of thing. But you know, there is an element in the Church that people don't ever

realize that we believe in with faith; there is something like divine guidance. You can call a committee together, a whole bunch of guys, and they tell you this and tell you that. There is also the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what is right. And when the Pope teaches that with that authority, he has guidance.

Now all I know about Pope Paul /is/ what he personally said about it one time. A friend of mine who is a bishop in the Church has been in Rome, and when he issued that letter, why the theologians rose up and everything else about it, some 300 theologians and so on. And when this bishop came to see Pope Paul, he said, "You know, I'm so sorry about all this, but I prayed and everything else. I did what I thought was the right thing to do." He said, "I realize this is a hardship." As a matter of fact, if you read the whole letter, there's a lot of sympathy and compassion in that letter. People have never read it, probably, /and/ they're criticizing it -- even about this. But he said, "My conscience is at peace." Now those are the words of the Pope himself. And also, some of the contraceptives are not exactly the best thing to take evidently, from what we read, medically. Time is proving that. So maybe in the long run, long after Pope Paul is gone, they may say, "Well, you know, that Pope wasn't so stupid after all." But the letter, the *Humanae Vitae*, it's 10 years ago that it was issued. And just about the tenth anniversary of it, that's when he died. And he took all that, everything else, and he bore it patiently.

SJ: You were talking about changing attitudes in the Church, and one of the things that's coming up now is women who want to be part of the priesthood.

SM: Oh, yes.

SJ: What ideas do you have about that?

SM: Well, I don't think they should. That's a question that's being argued and

discussed and so on.

/PAUSE/

Not going into any theology or anything, maybe the Church will change. I don't see how they could very well. Now people base a lot of things on sociology. In the time of Christ the women weren't rated very high and all that. These are not the reasons that are given for it. But recently there was a document issued to that effect, and they said no, they were not ordaining women, they should not be ordained. Now do you know...let me put one angle about that. A lot of people say, "That means therefore that women are only second-rate members of the Church," and all this type of thing. That doesn't enter into it at all. You know who Mother Theresa is? Famous Mother in India that does all the work for the poor? You know.

OM: Yes.

SM: Well, she was here in El Paso some time ago, about a year or so ago, and she was talking to some Sisters, some of our local Sisters. And this question came up. And I was very much amused at the way she did it. She's a very simple woman, a very holy woman. Very great woman, too -- no doubt one of the really great spiritual people in the Church today. And what she said to those nuns was very interesting. She said, "I know you're bringing up that question." She said, "No, I don't think that women should be ordained priests." She said, "You know, the Blessed Lord did not ordain his own mother." He didn't, of course. We must remember, Christ just wasn't a man, he was also God, and therefore had knowledge of what he wanted to do. He wasn't just a blind duffer that was doing this and /saying/, "This is the way it's gonna be, now." And he must have had in mind what he wanted to be the rule for the priesthood and for the church and what he was doing, and he was laying the foundations. "Well,

now," she said, "he did not ordain her." And of course, the Church always followed that apostolic tradition. It comes down from the apostles. And to us, when there is an apostolic tradition, this is practically a revelation, and we can't do much about that. And this basically, to sum it up in a few words, is what really the Pope said in the...they said in the document, which he did not issue himself but he approved of it. It comes from the Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.

And she said, "Some women think that this is a kind of insult, that they are not worthy of this." She said, "And that's the way the Lord wanted it." And she said, "You know, after all, our Lord came into the world through a woman, and there's nobody else could do that." Which of course is very true. And she says, "She is the highest creature." And it's true. Next to the Lord himself, it's his own mother. And she said, "Now, women are not inferior, but we are different." Now that's the way she talked about that and certainly from a matter, really, of faith.

But now they bring in sociological things and all of that, and they still want you to leave the thing open. The Holy Father hasn't said any more about it. He hasn't told anybody to shut up about it or anything, they're still talking about it. I don't think it'll happen.

AR: It doesn't seem, though, that the Church openly encourages women to become leaders in the Church.

SM: Oh, yes, it sure does! It openly does. They have their leadership very much in the Church. But what you mean is, to be in positions of authority. Is that what you mean?

AR: /Yes./

SM: Well, more and more, there are people involved in these Roman congregations and

all of that, religious women and so on. Much more. Oh, yes. The Pope made that very clear, that women had a very special place in that, especially in modern times, and that they should be given the opportunity to use it. So it's not any reflection on womanhood. Not at all. It's not the point. That's what Mother was trying to tell them. She is quite a great lady. Oh, yes, I know some nuns here that want to become priests.

OM: Have they come to you at any time?

SM: Oh, they've so told me, yes. And I said, "Why do you want to become priests?" And they said, "Well, I'd like to say Mass, I'd like to give absolution and confession." "Well," I said, "sure isn't a darn thing I can do about it." (Chuckles)

But there is one thing about it, now. The Episcopalians have done that, and I noticed how the bishops and the Lambeth Conference or whatever they call it in England have adopted the ordination of women. But golly, it's causing so many problems in the Episcopal Church, too. There're many of 'em /who/ simply do not believe in that. Well, you have a case right here in town. Are either of you Episcopalians? No? Well, Father Grubb, do you know Father Grubb? He's at St. Alban's. He says, "No, it's all wrong." As a matter of fact, when they ordained the lady here in St. Clement's, he had an ad in the paper. They had a public service of reparation, practically, in St. Alban's Church. I know Father Grubb quite well. He was a very close friend of Msgr. Burke.

But that's the way those things are. You know, you can always talk about the Church; you have to be open, open, open, open, open, open all the time. But there's also a limit to things.

AR: There's something that comes to mind, some films that I've seen talking about women in the Church. And I have read and have heard that in countries like

Ireland and Mexico, that these people indeed venerate Mary more than they do Jesus.

SM: Now, look, there may be some Catholics who forget about Jesus. And now, if you understand this right, they go together. It's the way it should be. Mary without Jesus in nothing. Doesn't amount to anything. It's on account of him that she's being honored. So if they have the right understanding of the faith, they wouldn't be doing that. And they may have some wrong ideas, this is quite true. And as a matter of fact, the Church has often issued directives and said that the devotion to Mary as the mother of God should be properly directed and understood. Now if somebody, for instance, as you say, worships...worship is the word that you use only for God, for the Diety. But they pray to Mary, the mother of God, and forget about our Blessed Lord, it's perfectly ridiculous. Just doesn't work. Now it may be that in their simple emotion, ways, after all, it's easier to understand that than to understand all about Christ. So maybe that's where some of the errors might come from. They're not properly instructed. That's their problem. That's not the way the Church works.

But the Church has always had a great... You can go right down to the catacombs in Rome where the Christian church was underground for 300 years, and you can see some of the old fescoes still, just bare remains of 'em. And there's always that the mother of God is the one who gave birth to Christ. And that is of course a mystery. All these are the mysteries of faith.

SJ: Is there a large population of Black Catholics in El Paso?

SM: Not very large, no.

SJ: Were you aware of any conflict between the Anglo and the Mexican American population and the Black Catholic population here? Was there ever any trouble? You were talking about prejudice toward Mexican Americans by the Anglo, but I

wondered if there was any prejudice on the part of both Mexican Americans and Anglos against the Black Catholics.

SM: Yes, I think there was some. I think there was. However, this is very interesting. We have always had Black children in the parochial schools. Now of course one could say, "Well, it's only a token," because there aren't very many. Supposing that you had half; now that could be different, I don't know. But now we are in the field of just supposing something. But the fact of the matter is that we've always had /Black/ kids in our parochial schools.

One time back in the days, however, one went to Loretto, and this little girl was a child of an officer. And so the head of Loretto Academy came down to see me, and she thought that these women wouldn't like that, mothers of those students. She said, "What'll I do? Shall I take the child?" I said, "By all means. And if any of 'em say anything, you tell 'em to come down and see me, and I'll throw a tea party for 'em and explain it." I never had any problem. (Chuckles) But there is that...yes, there is that feeling. Now some of the Mexican people were rather prejudiced in some ways because the Black people here went to every Catholic church. We really didn't have enough Black people to form a Black church, a parish, and so they went to Mass wherever they were. And I understand that down in some of the churches here, our Mexican people didn't like that. One of the priests told me that. "Well, now," I said, "look. Isn't human nature quite something? Now they are victims of prejudice, and now they should be a little kinder to others, too." Isn't that right?

OM: Human nature being what it is, you always want to harass somebody else.

SM: I guess that's it. But there was never any trouble. Never had any trouble at all.

SJ: No blocking of the people from the churches or anything like that.

SM: No; oh no, never, never. And also they were amazed here when the Supreme Court gave the, you know, the school decision and all of that. And the newspapers at that time, I think, called me about it. And I said, "Well, I'm not /going to/ make a great deal of that. We've always had it." They didn't believe it. I told them, "Yes. We've had /Black/ children in our parochial schools." There was never any trouble. That little case about Loretto, I think the head of Loretto was just a little bit frightened. She came from St. Louis and she didn't know how to figure out what the El Paso people would think.

OM: What year was that? That was before the Supreme Court case?

SM: Oh, yes; long before, long before, yes.

OM: So all along there was integration within the Catholic schools locally.

SM: Yes, definitely, definitely. And also for the Black people here, you know that they could go to theaters and all of that sort of thing. That happened during the time of Mayor Seitsinger when that was being promoted. And Father Burke helped me a great deal with that. And I wrote a letter to the city council, to the mayor, that they should pass this.

OM: The ordinance.

SM: Yes. One of the reasons why Ted Bender is such a very close friend of mine is, when he saw that letter, he said, "I made up my mind I was gonna vote for it, no matter where I was." And he was out in San Diego or somewhere on a vacation when this thing came up for a vote. He told me himself. He needed him, and he flew all the way from San Diego to vote for that ordinance. And he said, "I give you a letter of credit for doing it." He tells me that.

OM: What did you say in the letter?

SM: I don't remember what I said exactly, but I said that this should be done, this

was the democratic thing to do. The letter is on file somewhere. It's a long time ago.

OM: This was in '62, somewhere around there?

SM: Probably. But I recommended it and said I thought this was the proper thing to do in these days. Now Ralph Seitsinger didn't vote.

OM: He was they mayor?

SM: He was the mayor. Now I know Ralph Seitsinger very well, he's a good man. I don't think Ralph maybe understood it too well, and he got bad advice somewhere. Somebody told him, "Now you better keep hands off." Now the Black people have never forgiven him for that. They've always mentioned that about him.

OM: Had you been involved in this issue beforehand, of promoting integration locally?

SM: Well, only to that extent, yes. Integration in a sense. Oh, yes, you have to have that sort of thing.

OM: Is there anything else that you would like to add, Bishop?

SM: No. I will tell you, I think my conscience has been picked and examined as it never has been before. (Chuckles)

OM: We want to thank you very much for this very enjoyable interview. We've learned a great deal. Thank you.