

A Slow Blackout

Religion does not enjoy the favor with the press which it had a few years ago. In the early 60's the vibrant spirit of the Vatican Council, startling ecumenical events and church forays into social action never before approved, made a "religious story" important in the news-weeklies, the daily papers and the air-waves. The news media wanted to cover everything the Church did; it tried hard to be comprehensive, accurate and objective.

Today organized religion is suffering from a reassessment by all the communication media. TIME and NEWSWEEK have noticeably downgraded the prominence of their formerly aggressive religion departments: coverage, depth and layouts show the emphasis of religious news. Periodicals like the POST, LOOK and LIFE consistently carry religion features only to shock and stir controversy or reveal aberrations supposed to prove the demise of theology, worship and virtue. Within the past few months the major radio networks, despite protests from New York Protestant, Jewish and Catholic broadcasting groups, changed many long-established programs, like The Catholic Hour and The Eternal Light, to less favorable Sunday times, an obvious shuffle toward audience obscurity. The daily press, in the nation and in this diocese, have gradually been treating religion and the churches only routinely, with less sympathy and community concern than it once showed.

The simplest guess why religion has lost status with the media is that church-members are making such reevaluations in their own lives that religious concerns mean less even to the ordinary believer than they did five years ago. Church attendance hasn't kept pace with population, religious magazines are exploring diocesan newspapers struggle against declining circulation unless artificially promoted by chancery orders, books on religion multiply but are not read by the masses. If the mind and life of the Church are labelled by so many as irrelevant to man's struggles, incredible in his search for values and unnecessary for his brand of happiness, the press-and-air media cannot be blind to such public apathy. Their contents instinctively and commercially reflect the public's interests.

The Church is in trouble when the news media treat it with indifference or with distrust. For the right image of religion, even its propagation to non church members, needs frequent exposure from secular news facilities. When the Church was a big news-maker in Vatican II days, and when the public was hungrier for news of religion, reporters came looking for stories. But now newsmen are not knocking on rectory or chancery doors: their indifferent editors, listeners and readers have taught them there is no pressing call to cover the religious angles in the flow of daily news. And another reason they will not seek out more than the very sensational story is that chancery and rectory treatment of the press-radio men has been in too many areas unhelpful, half-truthed, evasive and contradictory. When the city-deck black-balls the Bishop or his staff, the credibility gap leads to general disinterest, if not cool ill will about what the church is doing on a parochial or diocesan level.

The painful truth is that the Church cannot convince the news media that its life is worth reporting well until church leaders and teachers convince the very people whom religious news should concern that it is important. But how does the Church universal or the local diocese make its own people hungry for secular reporting of the doings of the Family of God?

It seems to me there are two partial solutions: 1) The democracy-minded laity in today's church must have a larger role in parochial consultation and advice, must know that it can help make news about some diocesan events, must have it proven that the laity and lower clergy are being taken into the Church's official confidence during various steps in the birth of news. Then the general public, believing it somehow belongs to the news will be more anxious to know what is going on. Press releases issued from remote ivory towers will not be welcomed today.

Second, it seems that the pulpit must become a stronger tool for adult education, with preachers demonstrating to Sunday listeners how much there is still to be learned about the faith, how the mind should be awakened to read and absorb the good news of God's presence in their small section of His earthly kingdom. Preachers should try deliberately to check the quickening drift toward total mental indifference by turning their listeners into readers when they go home from Mass.

Doomsday Issue

"In a secular society and in an ecumenical age, Catholic and Protestant editors find themselves confronting virtually identical problems. So we profit each year by eavesdropping on the annual meeting of the Catholic Press Association. When the Catholic editors met in Columbus, Ohio, last month they found their speakers preoccupied by the nation's urban and racial revolution. Monsignor John J. Egan of Chicago declared that the press's role is crucial in interpreting that revolution to the 'middle group,' people who are neither pro nor con on many issues, including the racial.

"We do not share Egan's romanticism about converting the middle group through the religious press; hardness of heart has already set in. But however little hope there may be, the editors of the religious press must try and try for a breakthrough. In the denominational and diocesan press they will often meet hostility from sponsors and readers: what business do the churches and the church press have meddling in such a moral and social issue? Either we tend to pontificate and propheticize or we repeat ourselves, become self-assured, and turn out to be merely boring.

"The pace of change in the revolution in recent months, however, has led to so much bewilderment that we all — editors and readers alike — are groping for new handles on the issue. As problematic as the matter has become for society and church, there is certainly no excuse for self-assurance or boredom. We are all scrambling back to basics and beginnings, trying to keep our heads as we struggle to arrive at new understandings and new solutions. We are glad that leaders of the Catholic press have called for new resolution, are determined to keep trying, to turn from incoherent churchy talk and to face up to the urgent 'doomsday issue.' We too are called to new resolution, to seek to meet the challenge at their side."—The Christian Century, editorial, 6/5/68.

The Loyal Opposition

The Courier-Journal recognizes that many diocesan and parochial polices are not happily approved by all the laity and the clergy. We acknowledge the existence of "the loyal opposition" and respect their desire to be heard. When space permits we will gladly give critical spokesmen a platform to present minority opinions or state issues which they regard as misunderstood or undervalued by the average Catholic. To allow free expression is to stimulate pro and con thought and hopefully clarify debated issues.

A recent article in Ave Maria magazine (May 11, 1968) by Kenneth Peters characterized the plight of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in these words:

"The Church's chief instrument for the religious education of more than half the Catholic children in the United States is existing on a hope and a dream."

The Courier-Journal asked Father Daniel Holland, assistant CCD director in the Rochester Diocese to comment on this observation, especially in terms of our own diocesan situation. His response is as follows:

"Vision and tactics" marked the thrust of last month's San Francisco meeting of the National Conference of diocesan directors of the CCD.

"Vision" was provided by a free-wheeling exchange of views on the future of religious education stimulated by a blend of experts in Theology and the Social Sciences.

The conference theme was "70s — Decade for Decision." Scholars from several disciplines provided the stimulus for discussion. These included James Laubacher (Vatican II peritus), Eugene Bianchi (religious studies and contemporary values), Robert Theobald (sociologist), John Noonan (law scholar), Joseph and Lois Bird (psychiatrists), Theodore Mackin (theology) and Rocol Caporale (religious sociologist). Fortified by these offerings, the CCD directors dialogued for hours on the topics of "religion and secularization," "education in the 70s," "new and creative structures" and "the Christian in the 70s." This is where the vision opened up.

The conference's last day was devoted to the delicate problem of tactics: how to implement new ideas and programs, the fruit of vision.

The day's discussion opened with the announcement of the preliminary report of the recent National CCD Survey. More than 80% of those responding indicated agreement that "most parishes do not understand their responsibility to provide adequate religious education of all their members." More than 90% said that "a great number of Catholic children in public schools are not being given adequate religious instruction." The survey also showed clearly that there is much confusion about the very goals of religious education.

As assistant CCD director, of the Diocese of Rochester, I was present at this conference. Having had direct personal contact with about 140 of the 175 Parish CCD Programs of our diocese I can emphatically state:

CCD Rochester exists on the same hope and dream as does CCD nationally.

In the present school year (67-68) 38,139 elementary school age youth are in CCD classes in the Diocese of Rochester. No one knows the number who are not attending CCD or Catholic Schools, but a calculated guess gives a figure of 5,150. On the high school level, 13,369 attend CCD classes. Here an even less-calculated guess indicates that 5,550 Catholic high school students in public schools receive no religious education. Again, no one knows the exact figures.

In tabulating these figures, the Diocesan CCD office depends completely on the accuracy of individual parish figures. It is evident that many parishes do not know how many youth are being reached by any program of religious education. How we can make "decisions" on the future of all Catholic education in the

Diocese without accurate statistics, I for one, do not know.

Of the 75 parishes in the Diocese, 13 have full-time professional personnel to conduct their CCD programs of religious education. The Diocesan CCD Office has one (that's correct—one!) full-time professional religious educator: Sister Gilmory of the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart.

If religious education really is one of the chief missions of the Church, something is seriously out of order.

Recently 810 laymen in the Diocese completed one year of formation as catechists. They were instructed by 30 priests and 36 religious — who received no salary. None is available. These 810 laymen have been well prepared but they know they are not yet religion teachers. They are the first to admit they need continued guidance, supervision, further study and experience. There is presently no money or personnel to give to them that guidance or to supervise their experience.

Yes, CCD Rochester Diocese presently exists on a hope and a dream. The great temptation that constantly challenges CCD people on all levels — from the Diocesan Office to the parish boards (only 35 exist) to the individual CCD teachers — is the temptation to give up. Over and over again CCD people contact the Diocesan Office with the same problems: no cooperation, no permission to use adequate materials and programs, no understanding of the magnitude of the problems from those who apparently could do something about it. Yet, the enthusiastic presence of 800 laymen at the May 4 CCD Institute indicates that, despite the frustrations they face, the CCD adults are not ready to give up.

Typical of informed, alert, and dedicated CCD people is Mrs. Flora Rockburn of Wolcott, who, with others, traveled 45 minutes one way to a Catechist Training Program in Newark for 30 weeks.

Typical too, is Mrs. Ann White, executive secretary of the CCD Board of Holy Trinity, Webster, and a member of the Greater Webster Board of Religious Education. Mrs. White operates on the planning and policy-making level: hours on the phone, planning and conducting meetings. Typical too is Charles Dvorak, of Immaculate Conception, Ithaca, chairman of Religious Education Division of the Parish Council. His hours are spent handling the delicate task of keeping Liberals and Conservatives talking and laughing — together!

On another level is Sister Bernard, full-time principal and teacher in St. Mary's Parochial School in Corning. In the summer of 1967 Sister Bernard spent six weeks preparing to be a Methods Instructor in the CCD Catechist Training Program for Corning. Despite her full schedule as principal and teacher, Sister Bernard made time to prepare and teach adult catechists every Tuesday evening since last September.

On yet another level are Fathers John Glogowski and Gerald Connor, full-time assistant pastors, but area CCD directors of the Eastern and Southern Vicariates respectively. Much of their "day off" each week centers on CCD work. This list of CCD people is far from exhaustive. By mentioning these names, I am gratefully acknowledging the same about 2,500 men and women of whom they are "typical."

Because there are about 2,500 informed and dedicated CCD adults, because there are so many who need religious education, CCD Rochester Diocese is far from dead.

Though its problems are serious (money, personnel, time), CCD Rochester comprises a people with vision, willing to give up many of the "false gods" that too long have occupied the Church's attention. Their hopes and dreams will be sustained by the Spirit, despite their lack of this world's resources to get a job done.

Their hope and dream cannot be impossible: the future of religious education for hundreds of thousands demands that it not be.

—Father Daniel Holland, Assistant Director, Diocesan CCD Office.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Like many of my American counterparts who daily read the papers, I frequently overhear that "morning after" version of views and comments on current events which, when subjected to a dispassionate appraisal of the specific issues involved tend to become more of a pretentious appeal to the emotions of others... rather than a conviction that can be viewed as having been founded in reason.

The recent riots... demanding of decision... and crying of commitment... present to the American Public, I feel, not so much a problem for the future... as an area in which to resolve neglected problems of the past.

In regard to one controversial aspect of a socioeconomic clash between "Classes" I have attempted to epitomize my own reflections on a question of (occasionally) confusing import. I shall consider it extremely kind of you if you will assist me in this expression:

Is it not ironic how heralds of hate can with calculated accuracy

Predict for next summer... last summer's fate

While in the Winter of my youth I see

Those clamorous clouds lag in lieu of rain.

And gentle Shepherds urging sheep to turn

Not with gun or club, cattle-prod or chain

Nor with sibilant sounds of burn... baby... burn...

But with pencil and paper... chalk and crayon

(Books bound with the blood of our infancy)

People... proud... but to be American

Echoing joyous claims of liberty while... to you who think this road is without turn

Listen... to you we say: learn... baby... learn.

—E. Earl Johnson, Monroe County Hospital



"MAN! I'M GONNA MISS HIS CCD CLASSES NEXT YEAR!"

Quotes from the News

How About Peace Talks Under Battle Condition

One thing could almost guarantee the end of the war in Vietnam in a matter of days, possibly even hours. And that would be to take the entire company of negotiators out of their elegant quarters in Paris, set them down in the middle of the war in Vietnam, and order them to negotiate under battle conditions until they arrive at an agreement.

They would be ordered to hold their meetings in foxholes in direct line of fire, or in villages under air bombardment. And they would travel on foot from one site to another through fields sown with mines or poisoned bamboo shoots. Under these conditions, it is possible that the negotiators could find all sorts of avenues for agreement that now are made to seem so elusive at Paris.

A new day is dawning in the world. In an atomic age, new instruments and agencies must be fashioned to keep the peace and provide men with

the confidence that comes from knowing that justice is operable not just between man and man, but between nation and nation. If this be the idea, we had all better make the most of it before war makes hash out of the human race. — Norman Cousins, Editor, The Saturday Review, 6/1/68.

Self-Respect Important For Developing Nation

If I were a developing country, my first concern would not be how to feed myself or clothe myself, but how to maintain my self-respect, my dignity. I would feel that aid must come to an end, that I must be an equal partner, not kept constantly in a posture of holding my hand out.

If I were a developed country I would not want to give all the time. I would want to find that I am a man expecting all men to be equal in life. — Al Noor Kassam of Tanzania, secretary of U.N. Economic and Social Council.

Word for Sunday

A Community of Love

By Father Albert Shamon

Judaism was not a missionary religion. However, during the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews did proselytize. When they rebuilt the Temple, they added the Court of the Gentiles. Despite this fact, they were never too successful in making converts. Pagans just could not accept monotheism. They could not see how a one God could be a happy God. If he was one, he was alone. If he was alone, he was lonely. If lonely, how could he be happy?

When the ancient mariner in Coleridge's poem sought to express the horror of his experience, he spoke of his loneliness:

"Alone, alone, all, all alone
Alone on a wide, wide sea"

Few punishments can rival solitary confinement. It is not good for man to be alone. What was not good for man was not good for his gods—So pagans peopled their Olympus with gods and goddesses.

Christianity answered the pagan's riddle by the doctrine of the Trinity.

Almost every Sunday of the year we recite the Preface of the Holy Trinity. We say, "We always and everywhere give thanks to you, O Lord, Holy Father." And do you know why? Because our God is "one Lord, not in the unity of a single person." We thank God because He is not solitary, sad, and sour, like a Buddha contemplating his navel from all eternity.

We thank God because He is not alone and lonely, but several and many. He could not be Father all by himself. Father demands Son. He could not be love from all eternity, unless from all eternity He had Someone else to love. Love demands another: the beloved.

And what of the love between Father and Son? When joyful, thoughtful love passes from parents to children, and when love, respect, trust, admiration and joy goes back from children to parents, a family spirit begins to take shape — a spirit that draws the family together and molds and intensifies the individuality of each member.

Something like that happens because of the love that is eternally exchanged between Father and Son. Their love issues in a Spirit of Love. A Spirit far more tangible than the reality of family spirit, for their Spirit of Love is a Person like Father and Son.

How wonderful! God is a community of Persons, a community of love! What a beautiful image of what we ought to become.

Because God is a community, it is not good for man to be alone. Because God is a community of love, man is most a person when he is loving and is loved. That is why what the world needs now is, as the song put it, "love sweet love... not just for some but for everyone."

Lord, we don't need another mountain

There are mountains and hillsides enough to climb,

There are oceans and rivers enough to cross, enough to last until the end of time.

Listen, Lord, if you wanna know
What the world needs now is love
Is love sweet love
It's the only thing
that there's just too little of...

COURIER-JOURNAL
BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN
President

MSGR. JOHN S. RANDALL Managing Editor	REV. RICHARD TORNEY Editor
REV. ROBERT KANKA Associate Editor	CARMEN J. VIGUCCI Associate Editor
ANTHONY J. COSTELLO Advertising Director	

MAIN OFFICE: 35 S. 5th St., 664-7050 — Rochester, N. Y. 14601
ELMIRA OFFICE: 317 Robinson Bldg., Lake St., RE 2-6608 or RE 2-3401
AUBURN OFFICE: 144 E. Genesee St., AL 2-444

CHICAGO SIDEWALK changed observation

STIR:

By JOHN DELMO
The ecumenical Strate in Renewal (STIR) program to place Catholic and seminarians in "the art has completed its first year

From almost any venture has to be rated

"A good way to put some high priority direct day's Catholic theology," Father Edwin B. Metzger recs the field work pro Bernard's Seminary. He ecumenism, cooperation and increased apostolic work of the fruits of the STI

The STIR program, which both St. Bernard's St. Colgate Rochester Div. (CRDS), was developed Urban Ministry Offices of Next year, its administration taken over fully by the ating seminarians.

"We'll continue to work program," commented th



Hospital M

Holy Mass offered in noon marked Bishop S. visit to Northside General He celebrated the Euc rounded by patients asisted by Father Mich with Father Daniel T. pital chaplain, leading gation in praye

PAT

Do you have question bug you? The famo PAT ANSWERS!... write in your concern... Address: PAT... answers will not come — or of the Diocese.

Q. You've been helpf gestions of churches to northside of Rochester. some southside churches a quiet Sunday afterno

J. P. W.

A. South of the city, it will prove special treat St. Ann's on Mt. Ho built with the clean lines Colonial. There's a stirring of the church's patr the main altar.

St. Louis on Main S is a unique treatment of windows and old-world a

Our Lady Queen of Pe Ave. to Edgewood to War is bright, functional an cool grove of trees.

Q. We've been arguing long ago the church rela about mixed marriages, when it became possible Catholic minister to be the sanctuary.

G. S.
A. The Bishops at Va 1968 discussed revision o mixed marriages. Then, 1968, the Vatican issued tion on mixed marriages these revisions into effect permental basis.