

COURIER-JOURNAL

EDITORIAL PAGE

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Where's the Action?

To "get where the action is" may be the driving urge of the "Pepsi-generation" but is it appropriate for the clergy and religious of the Church? Today, I am told, many young Sisters are asking their superiors to assign them to inner-city social work rather than the less exciting schoolroom because "the Church must get out into the streets where the action is". Young priests, blessed with broad vision that every man is a member of the Family of God and deserves the shepherding love of every cleric, are chagrined to have their duties circumscribed by the established boundaries of a parish or the traditional structures of a pastor's mind. They want some "action".

The fashion in activism is to make religion more "relevant" by joining various social and political causes, like civil rights, uplifting the poor and decrying the Vietnam war. No one may rationally state that Christ's way was to sit quietly in the temple waiting for men to find Him. It is unhistorical to contend that the most effective saints and accomplished prelates of the past avoided the action where the society of their times faced its problems or lamented its woes. But has the world really become better when clerics become more worldly?

Recently the staid WALL STREET JOURNAL discussing contemporary religion cited a disturbing paradox: "Much of today's activist clergy is turning away from religion's traditional concerns just as the moment when those concerns seem especially troublesome to the individual man." The W. S. JOURNAL observed that as men move past the social questions to "ultimate concerns", they worry about "What's it all for?" This "human craving for the transcendent" is what men most need satisfied: they seek a sense of meaning and self-worth and order for the jumble of their lives and time.

"We do not know if the truths of religious tradition can be interpreted to satisfy this need," the W. S. JOURNAL said, "but we are sure that in new applications of old traditions, and not in political activism, is religion's path to new relevance."

Religious tradition — "this is the way we have always thought" — has its inadequacies. But it represents the accumulation of man's tested insights over twenty centuries into such questions as the nature of man, the meaning of life, its goals and the individual's role in God's blueprint. Aren't these the questions at the root of man's current restlessness? Should any priest or nun think that religion can be brought into the action-centers of our times without primarily and self-consciously intending to satisfy man's most basic hunger: an answer to his question: "How can I find a loving God?"

—Father Richard Tormey

The Poor Go Home

Resurrection City crumbled ignominiously under the wrecking crews this week only a few days after the successful Solidarity Day demonstration had given impressive notice to the nation that 30-million poor citizens are tired of waiting for the great society.

Many Congressmen welcome the departure of the several thousand squatters who used the tent-city as a base for increasing assaults on Federal agencies and legislators. Rowdy violence and disorganization had unfortunately clouded the rightful cause which brought the Poor People's campaign to Washington. But these are not valid excuses for now forgetting the whole poverty crusade of which Resurrection City was a mere symbol. Out of sight must not be out of mind.

Small advantages for the poor have been reported: Federal agencies are promising improvement in food distribution, appropriations for health and education, consideration of job-programs. But the government must not shelve its awakened concern about the vast unhappiness of the deprived simply because it survived the invasion of the Poor People.

Failure to continue to act for their needs, by immediate agency action and by new legislation, will convince the millions who did not march to Washington that peaceful petition is useless. Frustration and despair will be explosive tools in the clutch of activists who have never ceased insisting that white and Negro poor will never have any of America's abundance until they take it by force.

The Poor People's campaign needs some redirection. Fair-minded Americans would be pleased to hear that the organizations which promoted the Poor People's campaign have established a permanent body of lobbyists to keep their demands legitimately alive on Capitol Hill. The poor have a right to an intelligent, vigilant pressure group as much as the firearms industry, or labor unions, or textile trades or the churches. And as the political campaigns for presidential and congressional elections develop these same groups which have arisen to publicize and activate the mass of America's poor could validly transfer their emphasis to massive political efforts.

Candidates should be made to state their intentions about alleviating poverty, feeding and housing the underprivileged, providing jobs and guaranteeing a livable income for families. In such a drive both to prod candidates to give the poor priorities and to inform the public which vote-seekers deserve support because they honestly intend to work on social problems, the poor could count on many allies.

Well Done! Do More!

This week Father Robert Kanka left the COURIER JOURNAL staff to become assistant pastor of St. Michael's Church, Rochester. His three years as an associate editor have given to this newspaper scores of by-line articles of high merit, hundreds of hours of editing skill on the writings of others, attractive and imaginative layouts and an alert awareness of the tastes and needs of our readers. We are sincerely grateful for his rare contribution to the stature and effectiveness of this diocesan voice.

Serving two different editors and directing the paper alone for several months between their tenures, Father Kanka has been a strength and an inspiration to his fellow-workers. The breadth of his concern for the Family of God in this diocese, the generosity of his broad participation in lay and clerical life in Rochester, and the cheerful, gentle zest which he used to report it, have made him singularly valuable to thousands who knew him or read him in the COURIER'S pages.

We send him off to pastoral duties at St. Michael's with fond wishes that his ever-growing satisfaction as a parish priest in the sacramental, teaching and counseling roles (far more priestly than reporting or editing) will bring joy to his new parish family.

Pope Paul Creates Own Committee on Problems of Peace

By FATHER R. A. GRAHAM, S.J.

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has created his own special committee to study the problem of peace.

Headed by a veteran Italian Catholic Actionist, lawyer Vittorio Veronesi, the able former secretary general of UNESCO, it bears the title "The Study Committee on the Problems of Peace and the International Community."

The body recently had its first exploratory meeting and its existence was publicly noted by Pope Paul who received the members in audience (June 15).

Its mission is to reduce to practical terms and concrete applications the general counsels and directives of the Vatican Council and the goals expressed by the recent peace encyclicals. The meeting was organized under the general direction of Monsignor Joseph Gremillion, secretary of the pontifical commission.

In his brief remarks to the committee, the Pope called attention to the great solicitude, not to say anguish, with which the Church and the Holy See follows the crisis that threatens the peace of mankind.

"This Church," he said, "because it is concerned with man, because its Divine Founder confided to it the unique mission of being the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the leaven of the bread, cannot and should not disinterested itself from anything that concerns the lot of our brethren."

The new study group is clearly the Pope's own and its future work with such high backing will deserve close attention. Inherent in its mission is

the intention of close cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

It is hoped that one of the activities of the group will be to hold in conjunction with the World Council of Churches an international, and ecumenical conference on peace along the same lines as the recent meeting on Development at Beirut which was jointly organized under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace.

Among other practical projects facing the new study commission is the promotion of "World Peace Day" celebrated last January first at the request of the pontiff. Since the Pope hopes that this will be an annual reminder of the duties of men to struggle for peace, the commission has been given the job of stimulating local initiatives on this occasion.

Next December, of course, marks the close of the International Human Rights year. The Pope has been particularly interested in this commemoration and there are suggestions that the close of the year should be used as another occasion to stress the Church's concern for human rights and the drama that the struggle for emancipation implies.

In his brief talk the Pope alluded also to the recent UN Assembly action in approving the text of the draft treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. He said that he hoped that the treaty might be put into practice and that it would lead to general disarmament which, as he put it, is "the indispensable precondition to the creation of a climate of confidence and respect among all countries."

The Study Committee on the Problems of Peace and the International Community has not yet defined its mission in precise terms. But its status as a part of the official Vatican agency, the Pontifical Commission "Justice and Peace," guarantees that its moves are marked with papal authority.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Your report in the May 31 issue of a telephone interview with Father Patrick Sullivan, S.J., on movie-ratings would have been just as enlightening had it been scraped into a wastebasket. I do not take issue with your reporting of it but rather its lack of anything constructive in answer to a very real concern.

I read it in utter disbelief and dismay. For one thing, I kept comparing his answer to the fact that "Gone With the Wind" was reclassified, and if one exception proves the rule, more should follow.

But, really, how can a thinking (or re-thinking), sincere, informed Catholic, let alone priest, hold such a narrow opinion today? The youth of our land rebel at the "Generation Gap" because the older—over 30—generation refuses to see the younger ones' viewpoint.

Certainly in the field of entertainment a bit of logical guidance could be accepted by them. But to refuse to reclassify "B" Legion of Decency TV films into a breakdown of A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4 or B, according to the current NCMOP guide, to miss the boat entirely in a basic area of Catholic youth's education and guidance.

Mrs. F. J. Burke
730 Brookside Circle
R.D. 1, Elmira, N.Y.

Editor:

Congratulations on Mr. Breig's fine article on birth control in the issue of June 14.

I wish to comment on the delicate matter of sex instruction. This must not take place in the school. Here is an area in which the breakdown in modern family life is being promoted by institutionalizing the neglect of a few parents until it becomes the neglect of MOST or ALL parents.

Children do, indeed, need MORAL TRAINING in season and out of season. The McGuffey readers never let a chance go by to teach a moral lesson, even in the simplest story or shortest poem. But, as Pope Pius XII points out, the imparting of the facts of procreation is not MORAL TRAINING, but a very well lead to exactly the opposite!

If immorality is more present now than heretofore then we must realize that it is due to specific causes. Two of these are:

(1) Sin is now being glamorized. We see lurid love affairs in many of our films. These films would never be tolerated by a Christ-centered people or their government.

(2) Next, we have many priests teaching "situation ethics," i.e., the individual may do what he likes as long as he justifies himself in his own mind! It was reported in the Catholic Courier that Father Curran questioned whether morality as Jesus taught it could be practiced! His conclusion was an "eclectic view" which combined the morality of pagans, heretics, and what not.

—Mrs. Sue Benzoni
R.D. 2, Victor, N.Y.

Editor:

Congratulations on your excellent editorial "Movies and Morals" Courier-Journal, June 21.

Many of my Catholic friends and

I am constantly shocked by the new liberal attitudes of some of the clergy toward movies. It seems as if this wave of sordid immoral motion pictures has increased as the influence of the former Legion of Decency has waned.

A few months ago, a local TV station scheduled "Lolita" for an early evening hour — perfect timing for viewing by teen-agers. I called in the late afternoon to protest. The man to whom I spoke admitted that if enough mothers had objected, the policy of showing such pictures would be reconsidered. However, he said the fact that I was only the 28th person to call spoke for itself.

—Marie Porter, Rochester.

Editor:

Congratulations on your editorial, "Movies & Morals" (6/21). An expression of this type of thinking has been long overdue in the Courier.

I am one of those to whom you refer as having been shocked at the U.S. Bishops' film awards and I am continually shocked at the classifications given to some of the current crop of movies by the Catholic Office for Motion Pictures. The A-4 classification seems to be a catch-all for approval for almost any movie which is morally questionable.

Word for Sunday

Follow the Will of God

By Father Albert Shamon

To be one's authentic self, man has two needs. He needs to be loved, and he needs to be able. Perhaps the core message of Christianity is that God loves us. The beautiful Lucan parable of Chapter 15 points out the persistence of that love. With unerring chase and unperturbed pace, He follows us until we know His love.

Next Sunday's Gospel answers man's second need: that of being able. It comforts us because if, with St. Paul, we realize "of myself, I can do nothing," yet we also realize "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." The apostles fish all night and catch nothing. In the morning Jesus tells them to lower their nets for a catch. The results are marvelous: "They filled both boats to the point of sinking."

St. John of the Cross wrote one of the great classics on the mystical life — "The Dark Night of the Soul." In writing of his own mental crack-up, the poet, St. John, Fitzgerald described this painful period in these words: "In the really dark night of the soul, it is always 3 o'clock in the morning, day after day."

Three o'clock in the morning. Is there any lonelier hour? Have we not sometimes been awake when all the rest of the world seemed asleep? Here are the quiet lonely hours that can stir up the old childhood fears that breed in darkness. Here are the hours when all problems become magnified, all out of proportion.

In the spiritual dark night, the soul experiences something like that. It is racked by desolation, anxiety,



Issues of war and peace were discussed at a public session of the Boston College department of theology's institute on "Christian Community, 1968." Participants included, left to right, James Forest of the Catholic Peace Fellowship; Father William V. O'Brien, director of the Institute on World Policy, Georgetown town University; and Father William Connolly, S.J., director of the Boston College Institute. (Religious News Service)

Nuclear Deterrence Termed Necessity

Newton, Mass. — (RNS) — The peace-movement must be realistic enough to accept the necessity of nuclear deterrence in "a conflict-ridden world," William V. O'Brien, director of the World Policy Institute at Georgetown University, told participants in a Boston College conference on "Christian Community."

"War is a fact to be dealt with, not an aberration," he declared. "Conflict-management is as important as conflict-prevention in a world where demonstrably, conflict prevention has proved to be very difficult. Given a true necessity for defense measures war should not be considered a disease. Unfortunately, in the system which shows little amenability to change, war is as common as politics."

He stressed that the central problem in the discussion of world-policy is the question of the desirability and possibility of change in the international political systems. And, he asked, "In what direction will this change take the United States?"

Mr. O'Brien listed four principal positions on the war-peace issue

which stress the desirability and possibility of change:

• The "official" social teachings of the Catholic Church on war and peace, as it has developed from the time of Augustine to the modern Popes and Vatican II;

• Pacifist positions dating from the early days of Christianity now renewed in a number of forms, among which are nuclear pacifism, selective conscientious objection, and the reconciliation approach of organizations such as the Catholic Peace Fellowship;

• Catholic realism, a Catholic counterpart of Protestant and secular approaches to international relations;

• The "My Country Right or Wrong" approach "endorsed by all too many Catholics throughout the world, among whom there have been leading members of the clergy."

The Catholic realist cannot avoid — as Vatican II — the moral dilemma of nuclear deterrence," he added.

"Pending adequate, fair arms control and disarmament measures which maintain the stable balance of the great powers," he said, "nuclear deterrence, involving as it does the threat to engage in retaliatory counter-force warfare, is essential to the defense of the nuclear powers and those who depend upon them. This will be more, rather than less, true after agreement is reached on a nuclear non-proliferation treaty."

The Catholic realist, the speaker continued, "must contemplate, however reluctantly, graduated deterrence. He must, however, in my view, firmly insist on a 'no first-use' of nuclear weapons policy. Deterrence and defense against a nuclear aggressive attack remain the sole defensive reason for the maintenance of nuclear weapons systems."

The institute speaker also noted that the "Catholic realist" rejects "what appears to be a tendency of the Church" to suggest that arms control and disarmament agreements on important security questions might be based on mutual trust alone.

Declaring that verification and the possibility of enforcement or discontinuance of such an agreement is "essential," he added, "neither peace nor salutary systematic change nor anything else that is good for the world and for Christendom is likely to emerge from agreements based primarily on trust, prayer and crossed fingers."

Turning to specific areas in which the church could participate in the peace movement, Mr. O'Brien proposed that the church "with care and not very often . . . throw its weight into political debate and action without regard to matters in which there is profound moral content."



SPANISH COMMUNITY the new Spanish center

Spanish Off to

By MONICA REEVE

If the 250 grinning, laughing, very proud faces gathered at Spanish Center last Sunday indicated, the opening of the Spanish Apostolate headquarters was a rousing success.

Leaders of Rochester's speaking community, civic and hundreds of olive-skinned, of Puerto Rican descent, swapped local small benediction hymns in Spanish, craned their necks to look at the just renovated center of ocean Spanish Apostolate, 4000 Avenue, June 23.

After benediction service, large meeting hall in late Bishop Sheen addressed the gathering of what appeared to be representatives from every age, the Latin community, and respectful men, opened "class abuela" (grandmother) to squirming youngsters, patent shoes and colorful corner dresses.

In his talk, the Bishop indicated that "we are a giving, not merely a receiving Church. The cost of buying and selling the former Concordia at about \$80,000.

The dedication seemed itself as one for imparting, sons, the Bishop continued, gratitude, best expressed by a "gracias" to God; second, unity should stem from the culture of the Spanish-speaking people, cause them to work together for the community; a patriotism, expressed by

Pastoral Appointment

Rev. Robert A. Meng appointed pastor of Holy Church, Rochester, the Past office announced today.

Father Meng, presently home, Africa, where he is serving with the U.S. Bishop Relief Services since 1966, will replace Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty, who in October when McCafferty leaves the past make his residence in the Tier.

Ordained in 1945, Father Meng was assigned to Africa where he was at Corpus Church, Rochester.

Churches Plan Summer Cl

Five churches will join for summer to form an Ecumenical School for children, kindergarten through the 6th grade.

Calvary Presbyterian, St. Episcopal, Lutheran Church, South Ave. Baptist and St. 1 will operate the school at on Tuesday, Wednesday and day mornings, 9:30 to 11:30 9 through Aug. 1.

Registration blanks may be obtained at any of the five par churches.

PAT

Do you have questions bug you? The famous PAT ANSWERS! . . . E write in your concerns . . . Address: PAT ANSWERS will not necessa — or of the Diocese.

Q. Is it a dogma of the Church that Christ's actual body is in the Eucharist? —N. K. L. Ho

A. It is a dogma of the Church that Christ's actual body is in the Eucharist. The Church takes to be a The Acts of the Apostles was lifted up before the Later in the Acts, when St. being stoned to death, he is saying, "I see the Heaven and the Son of Man standing right hand of God." (Acts

Q. —A devout Protestant told me that the word "P

COURIER-JOURNAL

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