

COURIER-JOURNAL EDITORIAL PAGE

The Need for Checking Movies

Several years ago, in an attempt to stress the positive approach to the question of morality in the movies, the Legion of Decency changed its name to National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

The advisability of the change and the alleged effects thereof could be argued endlessly and heatedly, especially in view of a current wider permissiveness on screen of what not long ago was reasonably adjudged to be morally offensive.

The bishops of the Second Vatican Council made it plain in their 1963 "Decree on the Media of Social Communication: In order that those who make use of these media may fulfill the moral code, they ought not to neglect to inform themselves in time about judgments passed by authorities competent in these matters.

On Nov. 1 this year the Motion Picture Association of America came up with its own rating system, whereby admission to films is supposed to be on an age suitability basis.

As a reviewer Renata Adler of the New York Times found the film comedy dirty and joyless. She reports that it contains dirty jokes in the poorest taste imaginable.

It would seem then that the Motion Picture Association of America does not qualify as the competent authority for guidance in the formation of a right conscience.

The more we see, read and hear of today's movies, of both domestic and foreign origin, the more we are aware of the need and value of such a service as the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

(The Tablet, Brooklyn, 12/12/68.)

Two Anguished Leaders

I, for one, cannot help linking Pope Paul and President Johnson in my mind. To me they even look alike. For both, things haven't gone the way they and everybody else expected.

The Pope, being Italian, expresses it ever more frequently and more emotionally. The President, pioneer Texan, bears it stoically but it is none the less evident to the discerning eye.

Both started their administrations with all the omens most favorable. Both are able, energetic and dedicated beyond the usual.

In the nation, prosperity was, as it still is, unparalleled. After the Kennedy-Khrushchev confrontation, in Cuba things began to settle down internationally.

In the Church, in the warm afterglow of the Vatican Council, there was a great feeling of euphoria. Religion was front page stuff all over the world.

But now Oh, my! Crisis and chaos. Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble. Bitterness and division everywhere, in the church and in the civil community.

To begin with, both stepped into the places of men of great personal charm and charisma, which just might have helped to calm the present storms, but which, alas, was not handed on.

Then, among other things, Vietnam happened to President Johnson not for long—rule over bitterly divided domains and both are anguished because of it.

But, in all probability, what most happened to both men, is the surge of events too great for them, or for any man, to surmount and to master.

There is a law that operates in human events that never gets the attention it should and that is the law of rising expectations. It is at the bottom of mighty forces operating in the world today.

The black and other disparaged peoples, have glimpsed the promised land of equal opportunity and human dignity. The colonial peoples have tasted self-government and the use of their own resources.

Maybe, the men before Pope Paul and President Johnson should not have opened the Pandora's Box of rising expectations but the inexorable fact is that they did and that these expectations won't go back in again quietly.

Which accounts for the anguish that has driven the President from office and has driven the Pope to unusual expressions of anxiety.

(Msgr. George W. Casey, in The Witness, Dubuque, 12/12/68)

Vatican Urges Justice As Step to Peace

Vatican City — (NC) — A global program directed toward the promotion of justice as the means of countering the "permanent threat of war" and achievement of peace by channeling military spending into aid for developing nations has been issued by the Vatican to mark Pope Paul VI's second World Day of Peace on Jan. 1, 1969.

The annual World Day of Peace was inaugurated by Pope Paul last January.

The 16-page document was prepared by the Papal Secretariat of State for the 1969 World Day of Peace observances with the theme, "The Promotion of Human Rights — Road to Peace."

The Vatican document provides a suggested plan for persons responsible for the organization of the World Day of Peace on national levels in all countries. It calls for action by individuals, groups and governments and expresses the hope that the Vatican appeal "will find a favorable echo in other Christians and in all men of good will everywhere."

It asks Catholics to join non-Catholics in ecumenical religious services to undertake acts of penance, charity and brotherhood.

The statement says that "the impossibility for individuals or social groups to find on this earth a dignified existence, to insure their family's subsistence by their work and to safeguard their legitimate cultural and ethnic heritage, is a cause of grave injustices and leaves permanent threats of war hovering over the world."

It also urges that individuals, groups and states devote a part of their resources to institutions dedicated to peace and to developing countries. A contribution of 1 per cent of income is suggested.

Highlights of the document:

• Public prayer and Masses for peace and also private prayers. Celebration of Masses by priests of various races, countries and social origins.

• Other religious ceremonies, ecumenical wherever possible, including silent marches outside churches or temples or in a stadiums or large public halls.

• Penitence and offerings, including reconciliation and forgiveness for injuries, fasting in order to share, and "taxes for peace."

• Hospitality and meetings on the occasion of the World Day of Peace, such as Christmas Eve or New Year's Day parties for foreigners, visits to the sick and prisoners on New Year's Day; literacy and language courses, and pilgrimages from country to country.

• A new pedagogy to foster a universal awareness of the demands of peace.

The document stresses that the celebration of the World Day of Peace "must be prepared and pursued in line with a program chosen under the responsibility of the episcopal conferences of various countries."

"In this respect," it says, "Peace Weeks and various ecumenical manifestations, as well as participation in official national or other ceremonies, can be considered and are even desirable."



MADONNA AND CHILD

By Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Seething controversy in the Church, over age-old precepts, amidst accelerating deterioration of moral and physical values, supports my contention that we should not confine all our worries to the population explosion.

Coincidental — but far surpassing the population explosion — is the explosion of inflated wealth, concentration (uneared and unjustly) in privileged hands.

By the President's own report, the pollution rate of air, land and water (if continued unabated) will destroy us in an amazingly short time — twenty years if I correctly recall — but who will deny the perpetrators their profit?

God-appointed substance of starving humanity is squandered on ridiculous luxury and waste. Food and shelter are denied millions of innocent children whom God has sent in order to restore and preserve, in their iniquity, the aged and decadent (the writer included) whom God has called.

—Edward A. Velth 464 Lake Rd., Webster

Editor:

Congratulations are surely in order to Monsignor William Roche for his forthright approach at last to the local Catholic school situation. I refer, of course, to the earnest admonition (Courier-Journal, 12-13-68) he has put to the officials and taxpayers of the area concerning the almost inevitable inundation of the public schools by school children formerly accommodated by the diocesan system.

Far too long have Catholic parents born without public funds the burden of the separate education their conscience demanded. The callousness, indeed animosity, of the antipathetic public must be made to realize the service the Catholic school system has rendered the community.

As a concerned parent and teacher, it seems to me that earnest Catholics have a good deal of rethinking to do at this crisis; the problem is not one that will be solved either by a sudden financially-saving subsidy or the closing totally of our schools. I wonder if we as Catholics ought not to be looking to a different kind of education, focused to those functions and disciplines more immediately spiritual and moral, and so, more properly the Church's.

Then, far from fearing the public school system, we could allow our offspring to bring to it the leaven of their solid Christian example.

—Clarence A. Amann 98 Caroline St., Rochester

Editor:

Having just finished Father Charles Curran's recent book "The New Christian Morality," I want to salute him and say that I am very proud that he is a priest of the Rochester Diocese.

This is an exhaustive and exhausting study of some of the rules of morality which have been accepted widely in the Catholic Church in the light of both history and emerging philosophy and theology.

He has taken the time to understand the times in which we live and to appreciate the interplay of rules with real experience.

When he criticizes, he does so in a loving, constructive way. A wise person welcomes criticism because in this way he learns. Only the insecure see criticism as a threat.

To quote from the book: "I firmly believe that the mission of the Christian and the Church is to serve the world. There is too much suffering and inequality in our country, let alone in a world blighted by injustice, ignorance and hunger, for the Christian to be content with the present situation."

God has blessed Father Curran with a magnificent mind and he has had

the courage to say what needs to be said if true renewal is to take place. It would have been more comfortable to be silent.

—Mrs. Margaret Joynt, Pittsford

Editor:

Recently two articles appeared in the Courier by Bishop Casey and Msgr. Roche on the need for the continuation of Catholic schools.

No where in these two articles did either of these men address themselves to the problem of Catholic education in general.

I ask this from these realities:

- 1. The Catholic schools in most parishes serve the minority — Catholic children.
2. The reason why many children do not go is not because the parents do not want them to attend, but rather— a. there isn't room; b. the child may

have a specific need that the Catholic school readily admits it cannot handle.

This children not in the Catholic schools do not receive full measure of training — let me illustrate:—

Table with 2 columns: Parish and Budget for CCD School. Parish A: Children in Catholic School 650, Budget for Catholic School \$105,000, Children in CCD School 1,000, Budget for CCD School \$4,000. Parish B: Children in Catholic School 600, Budget for Catholic School \$55,000, Children in CCD School 1,400, Budget for CCD School \$3,000.

So, I write this letter to ask if someone somewhere will please write an article on Catholic education in general and of Catholic schools in parishes. And until someone addresses himself to the problem they are REALLY saying "Suffer the little children to come unto me — IF THEY ATTEND CATHOLIC SCHOOL."

—Rosalee M. Reinhardt, Spencerport

Word for Sunday

Wait in Prayer for God To Speak

By Father Albert Shamoun

Whenever Scripture introduces a prophet of God, it generally details the time and the place of his vocation. This was done to show that God always comes to us in the human situation. He takes us in the times and places we are. He does not wait, nor has to, for the "ideal" time. When He calls, that is the ideal time!

In the year 27 A.D., the fifteenth of Tiberius Caesar, the political situation was about as bad as it could be—Caesar was seventy-one, a rascal tyrant if ever there was one; the kingdom of the Jews was split up among foreigners: Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Philip, and Lysanias.

The religious situation was even worse. Luke names Annas and Caiphas as high priests, although there never were two high priests at the same time. What Luke meant was that Caiphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was high priest in name only. In fact he was manipulated by his crafty old father-in-law, Annas, who had been deposed from the high priesthood years before because he was too unscrupulous for even the pagan Romans to stomach.

Often in Scriptures, when things appeared humanly hopeless it was then that God intervened in history. So in those dark days, "the word of God was spoken to John, son of Zachary, in the desert." John did not go into the world before he was sent. Before the word of God was spoken to him, John waited. He waited as Jesus was waiting for thirty years in Nazareth. He waited like Mary after Good Friday. He waited like the apostles after the Ascension of our Lord.

We find it so hard to wait for God. He is so patient, we are so impatient

with everything—our jobs, our homes, our Church. We so want to jump the gun, to hurry, hurry, to get things done. Yet perhaps what we all need most in this life is to wait in prayer as John did. For there can never be fruitful activity without a background of passive receptivity, never His work without His Spirit. Without God's word, John was only John—a nobody in the wilderness. A piano is but a piano, but in the hands of Horowitz it becomes a fountain of mellifluous melodies. A man is but a man, but in the hands of God he can become a burning light.

"Based on a complete misreading of people like Teilhard de Chardin," Bernard Cooke wrote, some people have the nonsensical idea "that somehow everything around us — the profane, material world — is already shot through with divinity in some way ...

a kind of Christian pantheism." They see God in the world. They seek Him there.

John withdrew from the world; he retreated into the desert. God's word came to him there. Then — and only then—did he return to the world, not to find God there, but to bring His message to it.

This too is the advantage the Christian has over the pagan. The poor pagan must seek the Invisible Creator through His visible creation. But not the Christian. He has the Church. There, he can commune with His God—drink in His power in prayer. His life in the wonderful sacraments. Only then, filled with His life and Spirit, can he go forth into the world, not to find God there, but to bring Him to it and, in bringing Him to it, to possess Him more surely.

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The

By FATHER ROBERT McNAMARA

Another of the monthly titles commemorating the history of the Rochester Diocese, written especially for the centennial year by the author of THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, 1868-1968.

The year 1968, which marks the 100th birthday of the diocese of Rochester, also marks the 100th anniversary of the downtown church building so well known to Rochesterians as "the Free Church."

This little parish of Our Lady of Victory has had an interesting history. The year 1968 is obviously a good time to review that story a little more fully than has been done before.

In 1841, after he had made a visit to Rochester (where he was then in his Diocese) Bishop John Hughes of New York wrote: "The large and increasing number of Catholics and French Catholics and its neighborhood encourage them to solicit the presence of a clergyman who could speak to them in their own language."

There was, indeed, a growing number of French-Catholics and French in Rochester. Some of the names of the earliest members of the colony were: Pierre and Joseph Seward, Charles Lamreaux, Edouard Gravel, Joseph Forest, Antoine Lam J. Lavigne, Israel LeBeau, Severo Gendreau, and Ambroise Dupont.

It was the Redemptorist of St. Joseph's Church who few years after Bishop

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Auxiliary Bishop De... ordained Dec. 14... Hickey imparted the CSB, imparting ble



Reti Joseph Mercler (right) new president of R receives Madonna p