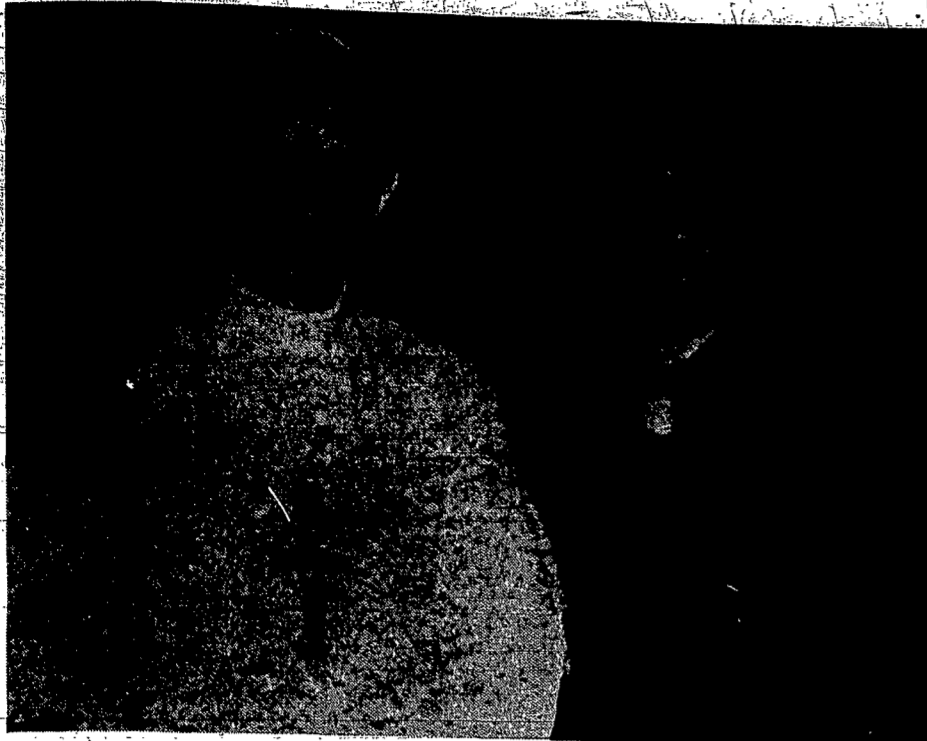


PEOPLE AND EVENTS



Mrs. Coretta King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is shown with Pope Paul VI following a private audience at the Vatican. The Pope expressed admiration for the slain civil rights leader's "untiring and self-sacrificing struggle in favor of the rights of man." (RNS)

"Every human life is sacred," stressed U Thant, United Nations secretary-general, in commenting on self-immolations in Czechoslovakia. He reportedly was "saddened" by the three instances of self-immolation in that country which have resulted in one death. Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger has strongly denied "the strange rumors" that claim he is disillusioned with missionary work. He reaffirmed his intentions of serving African lepers.

Sen. Eugene McCarthy has been named the first Senior Class Fellow at the University of Notre Dame. The award replaces the traditional Patriot of the Year citation which in past years has gone to Gen. William Westmoreland, Adlai Stevenson, President John F. Kennedy, J. Edgar Hoover, Sen. Everett Dirksen, Robert F. Kennedy, and Richard Nixon.

NOW HEAR THIS ... Citizens Should Protest Corruption of Neighborhood

By Father Richard Torrey

The pride of a neighborhood to protect itself from vulgar and obscene intrusion has won a significant but perhaps only momentary victory in Rochester.

Complaints about a series of movies allegedly containing nudity and perversion which "contaminated the neighborhood" led to a police raid on a self-styled art-theater in a nearby neighborhood about three weeks ago.

A film was seized, without warrant, by the assistant district attorney and vice squad detectives after they viewed it at the theater, and a grand jury swiftly hit the out-of-town owner of the theater with an indictment charging "possession and promotion of an obscene film."

Not these facts of the case, but some of the words spouted in the daily press by principals involved will serve as text for comment.

The theater chain official indicted admitted that the condemned film was "a lousy picture" he "wouldn't go to see." He added, obviously piqued by the harassment of losing one film, spending hours with law people and knowing the neighborhood heat had been raised against his business: "I have a right to play this kind of picture if I want to. But we will give 'legitimate' films a trial run because we don't feel like getting arrested every 15 minutes."

The district attorney said that the theater's decision to run "nudities" was "a victory for my office and the entire community. We have challenged these people and they have backed down."

A mother of five children who organized a protest picket line outside the theater claimed that the string of "obscene shows" had attracted undesirables from all over the city into a quiet residential area. "If we continue to let this go on we're importing a lot of trouble here, that's what we're doing," she told reporters.

"What can we do to protect our community from the flood of filth that is threatening public decency these days?" This question comes from parents and teachers and priests

in every corner of this diocese.

Every town has a store or two which openly sells magazines more explicit in flesh-photography than even a sensual man can approve. Drugstores and markets in every neighborhood have racks of paperbacks offering a mixture of quality with the vilest trash whose covers titillate and suggest and lure the curious.

There are about six theaters in this diocese which as a matter of cold, money-grabbing policy consistently play films containing nudity, immoral conduct and indecency unjustified by any interpretation of "art" or "literary necessity."

Law enforcement officials have given the COURIER JOURNAL these concepts of neighborhood action:

a) — Every citizen has a right to object to whatever assaults his sense of propriety and decency, whether he is concerned with his children's morals or the debasing of his neighborhood or the decline of virtue.

b) — Police and district attorneys are obliged to hear complaints of questionable obscenity and investigate them when a citizen makes a formal and intelligent protest. The more

petitions for investigative action against a theater or a store for gross contradiction of neighborhood standards the better the case for the law enforcement agents.

c) — The citizen must appreciate that the wording of present statutes concerning "obscene" writing or films is so "vague" that conviction in cases of dirty movies or indecent periodicals is extremely doubtful.

One court magistrate said: "Obscenity laws have been practically written out of the books by the interpretations given by our highest courts. These courts are guilty of utter abuse of the principles of morality which have held for generations."

d) — There is danger that the disturbed parent or group who makes complaints and/or the district attorney and police could be charged with false arrest or "malicious persecution." Every alleged obscenity-charge involving law action which might result in a thrown-out court case does open up possibility of law suit for "abuse of process."

e) — But if there is a violation of decency and modesty, no citizen

should hesitate to complain to police and to demand that the issue be investigated and tested in court.

f) — The slow change of the public standards to tolerate the off-color (ask yourself what we considered "indecent" 5 years ago) is accelerated by casual indifference to the current encroachments on decency.

There is probably more long-range harm done to a community by continuing impact of an improper philosophy in certain movies than by the individual scenes or dialogue which are considered harmful. The pervasive pattern in picture magazines and some movies that a woman's body is a toy and that her role is for pleasure only have a corrosive effect on young people's minds.

The defenders of freedom of expression are fighting every effort to curb the movie-houses or the book-stores from peddling anything they wish. No matter how trashy it is to all fair-minded observers, they say censorship must not be used. It must be "business as usual" no matter how vulgar, nor how many it soils, nor how it insults a community's standards.

COMMENTARY

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ON THE RIGHT SIDE

T. V. Can Make Mockery of Church

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

I have not been much of a TV watcher, but after last Friday's Merv Griffin Show, I intend to be. I had heard indignant remarks at times about this particular show, and one other — but wasn't familiar with the stuff.

After watching a mockery of "the contemporary Catholic priesthood," and a sickening travesty of Confession, it's time to be aware what sponsors are paying for, and to let them know that we are dead set against such sponsorship. Here is a letter to the broadcasting system.

"Gentlemen: "I surely don't know what you have in mind, presenting the skill I saw on the Merv Griffin Show Friday night. I surely don't know what your sponsors have in their minds to pay out good cash to support contempt for the religious convictions of potential and real customers. The answer must be that the show pays. Presumably the advertisers are satisfied as

long as they get business returns.

"I have waited 48 hours to let the supercharge of adrenalin recede from my blood system. It has, I calmly present these thoughts to you, and to your sponsors.

"The Friday night (Jan. 24) Merv Griffin show presented a mocking skit on the formation of a "Catholic priests' labor union." The actor went through his dramatic monologue skillfully enough. But skilled or not skilled, the travesty of the Catholic priesthood is poison to me. The mockery of the Sacrament of Confession is triple poison to me. I think these sentiments are shared by many of your viewers who are your sponsors' potential customers.

"After the monologue, Merv Griffin asked the monologist: "Are you a Catholic?" The reply was: "Yes." I suppose that was an adroit bit of back-passing, which doesn't in any way lessen the shame. The "Yes" brought an applause from the audi-

ence who seemed swept away in that mob psychology which stifles intelligence.

"I think that mob would cheer a skit on abortion as a humorous modernization of Herod's slaughter of the Innocents. I think they might cheer the burning of the nation's flag or a picture of our national heroes — to prove I don't know what!

"I belong to the school which occasionally writes to a newspaper or a radio or TV station to commend an article or a program, and to thank the sponsors. However, in your case, 48 hours after that dismal exhibition of cool disregard for the religious convictions and for the reverence for a Catholic sacrament, I write to you to register a perfect zero for the Merv Griffin show."

If we remain silent about these attacks on religion, morality, virtue, we give comfort to the enemy; we give no comfort to the Heart and Body of Christ.

CHURCH AND THE CITY

What Must Be Done in Ghetto

By Father P. David Finks

The "revolution of rising expectations" among the disadvantaged in our cities is hitting Catholic Church officials hard these days. Clergy and militant lay groups are firing of glacial-like Chanery procedures and token responses to ghetto human problems.

Frustrated, angry, "unwilling to listen to pleas for gradualism and patience from ecclesiastical authorities" these groups are airing their demands in the public forum. Headlines appear in the daily newspapers with distressing frequency: Inner City Priests Charge Archbishop with Racism (Newark) Catholic Archdiocese Charged with Racism (Washington) Two Cleveland Priests Suspended.

Whatever our own views concerning the advisability of such tactics, it would be foolish to ignore the increasingly sophisticated complaints being made by these dissidents.

A recent diocese-sponsored survey of Baltimore inner city parishes prepared by the Strategic Planning Corporation, a professional consulting firm, includes most of the complaints voiced in the other cities. The Baltimore survey, carried out over a 14-month period, involved 28 parishes in poor areas and over 800 personal interviews of clergy and laity.

The overall demand articulated by both professionals and dissidents, is bluntly clear: "Either prepare to make dramatic changes or forget about the church in the inner city altogether."

Among the various recommendations the following are stated most frequently:

- The present staff assignment method in ghetto areas is inconsistent with the needs of the people. Instances have been uncovered where the assignment or retention of certain staff has done more harm than good to a parish.

- Policy making is generally not shared with the parishioners and sometimes not even with the associate clergy staff. The latter has proven disastrous to the outlook and morale of the younger clerics and squelched any creativeness that existed.

- Diocesan financed programs are generally planned without sufficient resident participation, are mostly token in scope, and are often excessively publicized.

- The Diocese must be prepared to make the school system better and set the example for the public system. Despite the cost of these ghetto schools they are some of the strongest ties that bind the parish together and bind the neighborhood to the parish.

- Training programs should be developed to prepare priests and seminarians for specialized ministry in areas of poverty and racial tension.

There are no easy answers to such honest complaints. The Catholic church in the United States for all its institutional conservatism has re-

sponded in the past to massive human needs with less resources.

Our privately financed school and hospital systems, development of national parishes to serve particular immigrant groups, church sponsored benevolent societies, and credit unions, all these have been a part of the ministry of the church in her recent past.

The newspaper headlines mean that revolution has now begun within the church in several troubled cities. This in some places is already escalated into an emotional standoff between bishops and disgruntled younger clergy.

Such a family battle can be expected within a healthy active community from time to time. The danger is that the servant Christ cannot be heard in the tumult and the shouting between intransigent bishops and dissident clergy.

It has been a recurring plea in this column for more serious planning for the church's mission involving the professionals and the on the spot "experts," clergy and lay, in the areas of poverty and racial tension, urban and rural. This will cost more money and unearth many weaknesses in the church structure that must be attended to.

The alternative is to continue the "hard-aid" apostolate based on a missionary developed during the colonialist days in Africa and Asia. This will bring forth increasingly frustration, anger and someday, blood.

VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

Building the Foundation for Marriage

By Father James McHugh

The basic components of success in most human endeavors are knowledge and experience. A person accumulates information, which he interprets and refines by a process of experimentation. This holds true for marriage and family living, except that most of the time the order is inverted: and we expect people to derive knowledge from their own experience. Despite our tremendous advances in education, there is little done in any systematic way to prepare young people for marriage and family life.

In less complex societies, when conditions did not change so rapidly and dramatically, preparation for marriage was often supplied by parents. To some degree, the whole community took a part in preparing the young, evidence of which can be seen in the commonly accepted "rites of passage."

Our society has organized the educational process, making the home and the school cooperative partners. But the old adage — "what is every one's responsibility becomes no one's responsibility" — seems to be an accurate characterization of the general pattern of marriage preparation in our country.

The American Bishops, responding to this situation, their recent pastoral letter, commit themselves as pastors to increase their efforts in this important area, and outline what is admittedly an ambitious program. However, the Bishops realistically acknowledge that their own efforts, and those of the priests, Sisters and

Brothers who are involved in the work of education will not be sufficient without the help of married couples who will see this educational work as a specialized apostolate.

During the past 25 years much has already been accomplished by pre-Cana and Cana conferences, by the Christian Family Movement and Holy Family Guilds, to name but a few of the programs. Once again, though, the demands of the present day require an increased training and competence on the part of the couples, doctors and priests, whose efforts have been completely voluntary and the result of self-education.

In order then, first of all, to teach the teachers, the Bishops "endorse the establishment of family life centers throughout the country" where interdisciplinary courses may be offered that will give priests, religious and married couples the latest information from the physical and behavioral sciences within the overall context of the theology of marriage.

The Bishops also call upon medical schools to provide special courses for doctors. Such specialization can be of immense value to social workers, teachers, and as shown in a pilot project in New York, to policemen also.

In regard to schools, however, the pastoral calls for wisely planned programs of education in human sexuality. Noting the primary responsibility of parents in this area, the Bishops recognize a serious obligation to assist them, and to marshal the re-

sources of the Catholic school system, the CCD, and the parish itself. Unquestionably "the necessity for greater communication and cooperation between parents and teachers is highlighted, and the consequent role of parent-teacher guilds and similar home-school associations is apparent."

The recommendations of the Pastoral are both wise and realistic. Sex education has a variety of meanings, but it is an empty term if it is narrowly interpreted to mean only a recitation of the facts of procreation. On the contrary, education in sexuality helps the child to understand that God is the author of the sexual difference between man and woman; that the sexual expression of love between the spouses is a special sign of the friendship of marriage; and that the human love of husband and wife is meant to be continual witness to the love of Christ for His Church.

Such efforts at sex education complement the work of the home, and are the special focus of the grade school. As the young person enters high school, the attention shifts to personal relationships, i.e., friendship and dating patterns.

The later years of high school should provide more information on courtship and marriage. Throughout the adolescent years, the concept of vocation must also be kept in focus, based on the realization that some will choose a way of life that will be challenging and rewarding, but may not lead to marriage and family.

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