

Celibacy No Bar to Vocation

London — (RNS) — Charges that celibacy is an obstacle to vocations were spiritedly attacked by John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster at a meeting with diocesan clergy in Westminster Cathedral Hall.

The cardinal, who made clear his support of the Pope's defense of celibacy, told his priests: "The most specious of all arguments used to attack the rule of celibacy is to call it an obstacle to vocations."

"The Greek Orthodox Church in Egypt, despite a married clergy, has recently reported the virtual drying up of vocations. There are 3,000 vacant posts in Protestant churches in England. Colleges of divinity, both Anglican and nonconformist, are regularly being merged or closed."

"Shortage of vocations comes not from celibacy but from a lack of religious faith and the spirit of self-denial. The abolition of celibacy

would not produce the priests needed by the pilgrim Church. The Church will be blessed by vocations by surrendering not to the world but to Christ carrying his Cross.

Cardinal Heenan also referred to priests who had left the ministry and declared, "It is playing with words to allege that celibacy is forced upon unwilling young men. Nobody is forced to accept ordination and nobody has any right to ordination."

"We are accepted on the Church's own terms. When we were ordained we all knew what we were accepting. It is untrue to say that we are celibates by compulsion."

In his address Cardinal Heenan recalled that the bishops in France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland had all unequivocally affirmed their support for Pope Paul on the celibacy issue, following the failure of the Dutch hierarchy to do so.

In December 1965, he recalled, the Council Fathers, by 2390 votes for and only 4 against, voted for the decree on the priestly ministry and life which re-affirmed celibacy.

"Nobody," he added, "can seriously suggest that less than five years later circumstances have so radically changed that celibacy of priests of the Latin rite should no longer be required."

Cardinal Heenan concluded with a firm warning to his priests that if they once rejected the ministry they could never return.

"Some former priests begin to pine for their lost priesthood," he said. "The Church is compassionate and does everything possible to help these men to find a place in the ranks of the laity but will never allow them to resume the ministry they have rejected. The Pope is very clear on this point."

Shun Pleasure's 'Soft Cushion', Pope Advises

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI deplored the self-indulgent mentality that restricts man's vision "to the sensuous fields," and called for the spirit of renunciation and self-discipline that Christian life demands.

Speaking at a general audience, the Pope said "We are so stimulated by the quantity, the variety, and availability of so many things which we have acquired to make our lives easier, to broaden our experience, and to enjoy life to the full, that it seems absurd to give up anything."

This is especially true, he went on, "if this renunciation concerns training, education, culture and the well-being of man."

The pontiff said everyone was driven to look at his existence in terms of wealth, success, convenience, and pleasure, and noted that such a viewpoint or mentality "penetrates all aspects of contemporary life."

"Even the Christian looks toward the soft cushion of pleasure obtained from civilization," Pope Paul remarked.

This self-indulgent mentality, he said, "instead of improving man, can diminish him by restricting his vision to sensuous fields, to instincts and to epicurean ideals, thus making him hard and egotistical."

The pontiff then pointed out that the diminishing of man does not make him happy, but discontented and inclined to "disillusionment or pessimism."

Recalling that Christ revealed that a man's life does not depend on possession of an abundance of material goods, Pope Paul stressed, "It is necessary to renounce something, to accept discipline and choose to be strong, to be faithful, and to be a Christian — the cross guides our lives."

Priests' Bid For Congress Draws Fire

Culver City, Calif. — (RNS) — The editor of *Ewn Circle*, a national Catholic weekly, warned here that the bids of two priests for U.S. Congress seats will "set a bad precedent" and "stir up hostility" against the Catholic Church in the U.S.

Father Daniel Lyons, S.J., said that the candidacy of two priests — Father Joseph R. Lucas of Youngstown, Ohio, and Father Robert Drinan, S.J., of Boston — will "confuse the faithful" and "secularize the position of the priesthood at the very time it needs more elevation to the spiritual."

Father Lucas, a professor of philosophy at Youngstown University, and Father Drinan, dean of the Boston College Law School, are both seeking seats in the House of Representatives.

"We are unalterably opposed," said Father Lyons of the priests' intentions. "The axiom that priests should stay out of party politics was never truer than today."

613 Million Catholics

Vatican City — (RNS) — More than 600 million of the world's Christians are Roman Catholics, according to data published in the Vatican City daily, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

It gave the following breakdown of statistics on worldwide affiliation in major religious communions: Roman Catholics, 613,760,000; Protestants, 272,018,000; Orthodox, 142,433,000; Moslems, 509,000,000; Hindus, 444,000,000; and Jews 13,960,000.

It'll Cost More To Make More

Hooksett, N.H. — (RNS) — Voters at the annual town meeting here approved a new ordinance providing for a fee of \$500 per showing for drive-in theaters which wish to show "X-rated" motion pictures.

During a lengthy discussion, supporters of the measure claimed it was not an infringement on film establishments but a protection for children of the community against films regarded by many as obscene.

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John H. Davis, manager of the Black Muslim farm near Asheville, Ala., feeds cattle after receiving orders from Muslim leader Elijah Muhammed to continue operating the farm. Although the farm property will not be sold, the cattle on it are being moved across the state to farmland in Greene County where there is a black majority. Ku Klux Klan units have bought property near the Black Muslims' farm. (Religious News Service)

Alabama Bishops Attack 'Crime' Against Muslims

Birmingham, Ala. — (NC) — The spiritual leaders of Alabama Catholicism deplored a "cowardly and cynical" denial of civil rights to a community of Black Muslims and asked that law enforcement officials punish the crime.

"The honor of our state demands no less," said Bishops Joseph G. Vath of Birmingham and John L. May of Mobile in a joint statement.

They referred to the fatal poisoning and shooting of 64 cows on a farm run by Black Muslims near Ashville.

The Black Muslim community bought the tract of land last fall for \$220,000 from Ray Wyatt, a Pell City automobile dealer. Opposition within the white community cropped up immediately. Wyatt's automobile agency building was virtually destroyed by fire.

The Ku Klux Klan bought "buffer" property near the farm, and as KKK-type activity increased, the Black Muslim community considered selling the land and moving across the state to Greene County. After the killing of the cattle, the remaining herd of more than 200 head was moved to the Greene County farm.

Ollie Hall and John Henry Davis, the Asheville farm managers, decided against selling the property because conditions were unsatisfactory.

Bishops Vath and May said in their joint statement that "Alabama has

been again dishonored" and "the entire nation shocked" by the cattle poisoning and shooting.

"In the interest of justice and in the discharge of our responsibilities as religious leaders in the state of Alabama we feel compelled to speak out," they declared.

"We differ with much of the ideological position of the Black Muslims. But we deplore this cowardly and cynical denial of their civil rights in our state. We call upon our law enforcement officials to make every effort to punish this crime. The honor of our state demands no less."

"Our tradition and our law in this nation provide for toleration in case of differences and offer adequate protection and safeguards where any party has solid grounds to anticipate danger to life or property," the bishops said.

"Those who are guilty of such shameful acts are certainly in violation of our laws, and this should be clearly seen by all. Law and order is not a one way street. We hope that these acts and attitudes do not speak for any substantial number of our fellow citizens who must surely see them for what they are: self-destructive of the very interests they seek to preserve."

The two bishops recalled a statement in May 1968 by Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen, who retired last year as bishop of Mobile-Birmingham: "No rights are safe when any one right may be violated in the name of expediency."

Brooklyn Catholic Schools Postpone Registration

Brooklyn, N.Y. — (RNS) — Parochial school officials in the Diocese of Brooklyn, the third largest Roman Catholic school system in the United States, have delayed the registration of more than 21,000 first-grade pupils for the September term.

According to Father Franklin Fitzpatrick, diocesan superintendent of schools, the action was taken "pending the outcome of present legislative moves to provide state funds to non-public schools."

The announcement was made following a meeting of the 228 pastors in the diocese which was presided over by Bishop Francis J. Mugavero.

The registration date, which had been set for April 13, has been delayed until May 5.

"The number of children for whom we can provide an education in the diocesan elementary schools," Father Fitzpatrick explained, "will depend on just how much money is available to run those schools."

Last month, the Parent Teachers Association of the Brooklyn diocese recommended that the first grades in the system be closed and the 21,000 prospective pupils begin their education in the public schools. The diocese, the only completely urban one in the nation, consists of the two

New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.

The PTA also urged that the Brooklyn parochial school system close its second grades the following year and then see how things stand before further progressive cancellations take place. Conceivably the entire Catholic elementary school system could be eliminated in eight years.

Currently before the state legislature in Albany is the Speno-Lerner bill which proposes direct aid to students in non-public schools. It provides for a maximum grant of \$150 for each student in a parochial grade school, with the amount keyed to the parents' income.

At the end of February, the state's Catholic hierarchy warned the commissioner of education that the financial crisis facing parochial schools could cause a serious money situation in public education if Catholic schools were forced to close and send their pupils to already overcrowded public schools.

Terence Cardinal Cooke, writing as chairman of the New York State Conference of Catholic Bishops, told the state education official that any plan of state aid to help parents of parochial school students "would be helpful to all taxpayers."

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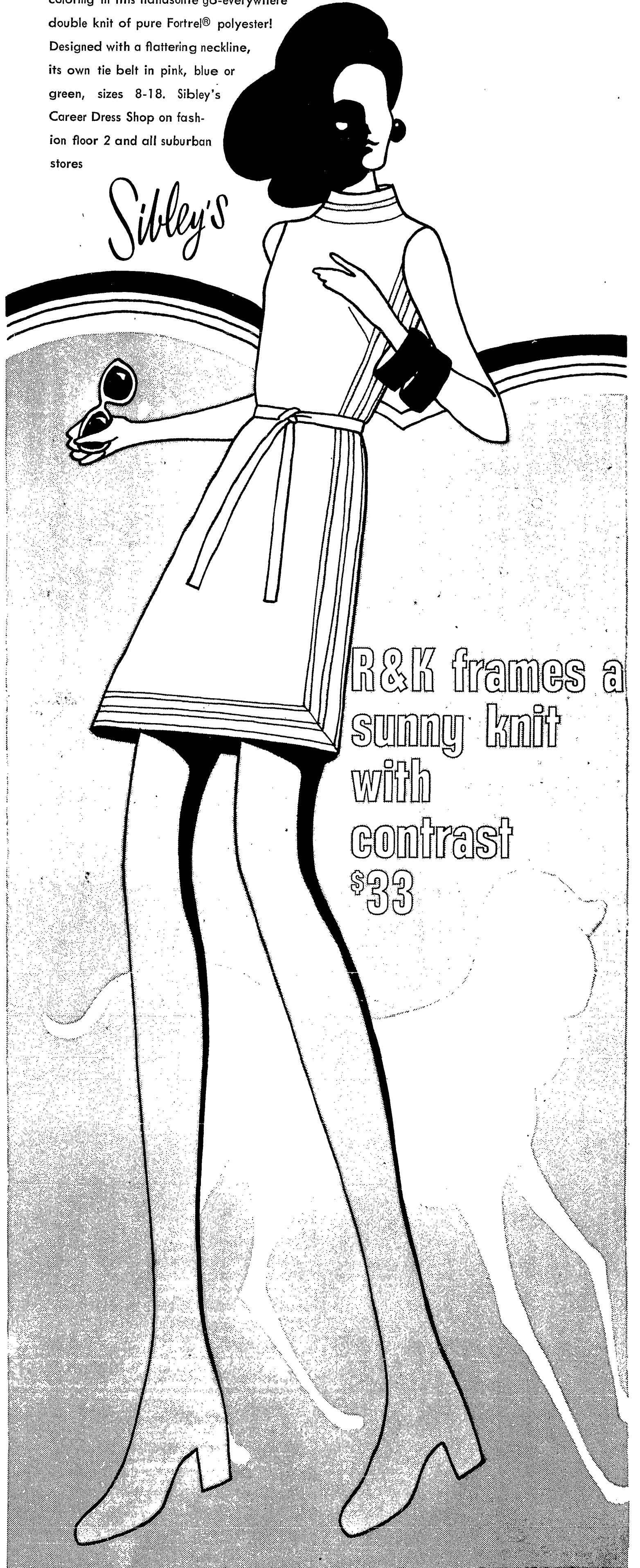
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