

Survey Shows Need To Change Minds

Diocesan officials were neither startled nor comforted by the results of the investigation of parishioners' attitudes in the recent School and Society Survey. Reading the responses, purportedly reflecting the mind of 26,161 different households in the diocese, the School Office and the Pastoral Office confirmed a judgment painfully noted before: Catholics want to keep their school system but a large percentage of them will not pay any more money for it.

Across the diocese the survey discovered that reactions against the proposals of more generous Sunday-giving, increased school tuitions and the restructuring and consolidations of schools, were strongly opposed.

It seems incredible to assume that the laity were unaware that rising school costs foredooming many parish schools hangs over the entire system. But the respondents gave the diocese little hope that its intentions to embark on an imaginative renewal to save Christian education would be heartily approved. Parishioners who want to keep "things as they are", do not really know how bad they are.

The diocese has no intention, in these times of rapid change, to act impulsively nor to legislate for the future in precise detail. It knows that "majority rule" of cold statistics cannot be an infallible criterion in decision-making. Parish wishes and human values may upset the clearest figures.

But it equally appreciates that values honored several generations ago and narrow interests jealously guarded must be weighed against the times, assayed in terms of available finances and personnel and focused on the question of how best to form Christ in today's children. The survey results proved that a continuing, massive informational program for the adults of the diocese must be launched to win support for the educational reorganization best suited to the spiritual and temporal needs of the entire diocese.

With many schools reporting declining registration, the survey question about what to do with the empty seats was significant. It exemplifies the need for "a new mind" on the use of our schools. In Monroe County 42 percent felt vacant places should be offered to non-Catholic children, but only 23 percent said the same vacant desks should be offered to children from minority cultures. This was in harmony with the fact that only 29 percent of the households of the diocese believed that "contact with other races is essential for the education and maturing of all students." This subtle tinge of discrimination here was that while many parents would be willing to mix their youngsters with non-Catholic children there was a large reservation about the value and propriety of having non-Catholic black children welcomed to the Catholic schools.

—Fr. Richard Tormey

Legend in Trouble

Now it can be reported. Nothing is sacred anymore. The townspeople of San Juan Capistrano in California have turned on the swallows.

Back in the 1930s when the town was a sleepy nowhere, an imaginative newspaperman came up with a plan to feather the community's nest. He promoted the annual return of the swallows as an attraction and over the years it little mattered whether the birds actually winged in exactly on St. Joseph's Day, March 19, or not. A legend was created and they are hard to bring to earth.

There is no doubt that the promotion worked. The swallows did their part to the extent of not forsaking Capistrano. The town prospered on the wings of tourism.

But now NC News Service reports that the swallows have been extending their habitat from the cliffs to the town and such urbanization has caused businessmen and homeowners to degrade the town's No. 1 attraction as earthly pests. "A terrible mess," they cry, and have taken to noisemakers and more direct means of attack to scare off the birds.

Even some swallow nests at the 194-year-old mission have mysteriously tumbled to the ground but the good Franciscans lay this to rain or other natural calamity.

Not all the local residents agree; some have asked for a town ordinance protecting the birds. But nonetheless Capistrano is clipping the wings that feed them.

But judging from the fruitless efforts of any other city that has attempted to get rid of birds of varied feather, the odds against ending the legendary relationship of the swallows and Capistrano are sky-high.

—Carmen Viglucci

On the Line

What Is The Majority?

By Bob Considine



We've been hearing a lot from the Silent Majority of late, but there still seems to be some doubt about just which category of Americans really represent the land.

Political analysts Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg will say in a forthcoming book, "The Real Majority" (Coward-McCann), that it is the political center that rules.

A teaser from the publisher:

"In 1968 we were told that 'the young, the poor, and the black' were the key voters, that Vietnam and U.S. imperialism were the key issues, that Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy were the political heroes.

"One year later we were told that the key voters were really the people who sit around in T-shirts, drinking beer and watching television, that at their sides were cocked rifles ready to blast away at the first black man they saw, and that it was George Wallace and Spiro Agnew who were the stars on the political horizon."

Mr. Scammon, top elections

expert, and Mr. Wattenberg, who worked under LBJ, dissent. Wielding facts and polls, they trace the reactions of Americans to riots, dissent, war, student revolt and racial turmoil. Those reactions relate to voting trends; "the deep concerns of moderate, decent Americans who are seeking moderate, decent government in the White House, in city hall, and at political way stations in between.

"It is the political center, then, which emerges from this study as the only viable political position in American life."

A somewhat related tract is a Blue Cross Association booklet entitled "Generation in the Middle."

"Only about one-fourth of the people in this country are between the ages of 40 and 65, yet they indisputably call the tune for the other three fourths," writes magazine editor Clifford Hicks.

"In government, in business, in the world of entertainment, in statesmanship — in all these segments of society, middle-

agers make most of the basic decisions, earn most of the money, pay most of the taxes, and ironically find themselves, in many cases, subsidizing the revolt of the Nows.

The 50,000,000 Americans in the middle-age category

- Earn more than half the nation's income.

- Hold more than 40 per cent of the stock in U.S. corporations.

- Account for more than 40 per cent of the female labor force.

- Have a median income of \$10,433, against a median of \$8,632 for all U.S. families:

U.S. Chamber of Commerce president Jenkin Lloyd Jones, 50-ish, believes middle age beats any other period in man's ever-lengthening life:

"No social workers poke into his affairs; no age-group organizers incite his self-pity; politicians shrug him off and direct their promises at the old and the young. The happy fate of middle age is to be left alone."

The Word for Sunday

The Devil Is Chained

By Father Albert Shamon



I am sure one can now begin to see the purpose of the Church in restructuring the Sunday readings. What biblical exposure we have had during the month of June! There was Genesis, Ezekiel, Job, and now this Sunday, Wisdom. The Old Testament speaks God's message just as truly as the four Gospels — and what it says is just as relevant.

Wisdom speaks of death and destruction. Death and destruction are all about us. Millions are killed in war, millions murdered, and beginning in July in New York State unborn children will be murdered by the millions. But what does Wisdom say?

"God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living."

Then where did death and destruction come from? If God is in his heaven, why is not all right with the world? The inter-Testamental writers (that is, those writing in the two hundred years between the Old Testament and the New) gave a one-word answer: sin. But the persistent and growing success of evil seemed more than human. There must be some superhuman evil powers at work.

During the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews were in contact with the Persian religion. Its founder, Zoroaster, saw reality in terms of a struggle between two spiritual powers, symbolized by light and darkness. The powers of darkness and evil were ruled by a demonic prince Mainyu, who with his hosts of evil spirits fought perpetually against the forces of light and

goodness, controlled by Mazda, god of light (hence Mazda lamp). The varying fortunes of the battle determined the course of human history, and would continue to do so until the forces of evil were conquered and destroyed.

The men who edited Genesis in the fifth century B.C. borrowed a good deal from the Persian religion. They, however, could not go all the way with the Persian religion. They did not doubt the reality and efficiency of the evil spirits, but they could not permit their existence to threaten the universal sovereignty of God. Thus when the authors of Genesis described the origin of evil in the world, they attributed it to a bad man, but a man incited by an extra-terrestrial demonic power. They portrayed this demonic power, not as a god equal and opposed to a good God, but as a snake crawling on the ground.

Thus Wisdom, one of the

books of Scriptures written near the inter-Testamental period, explains evil in terms of the devil — "by envy of the devil, death entered the world."

A note of joy ripples through Sunday's Mass, because it was death that Christ slew by dying and rising. Thus after the first reading, the refrain is, "I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me." The Gospel dramatizes this rescue by showing Christ's power in the face of death. With a touch of His hand and a tiny command, He restores a child of twelve to life.

"O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin." Satan still rampages the earth, seeking to destroy man by sin. "But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." By His death He has chained the devil. No need for any man to be bit by a chained dog.

COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

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