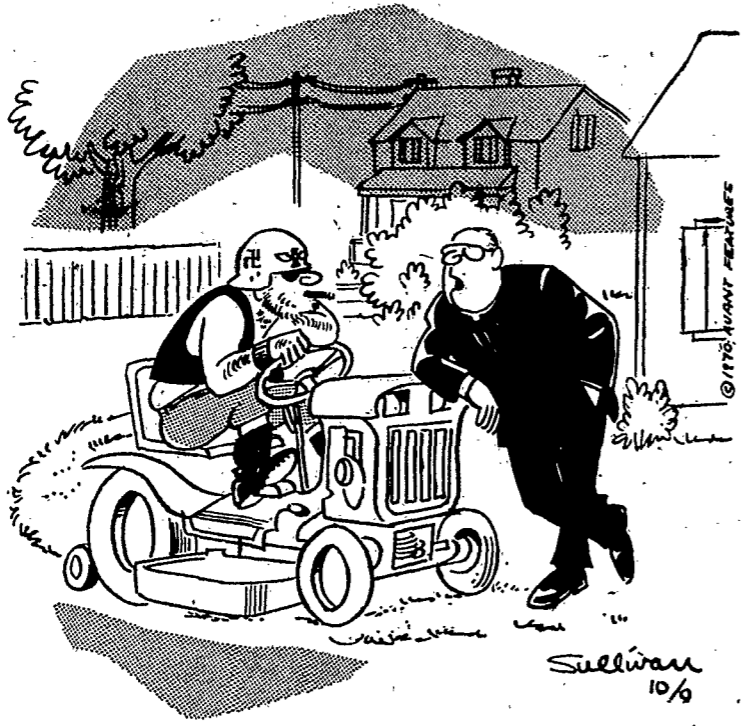


Letters to the Editor



"YOUR WIFE THINKS YOU MAY HAVE A PROBLEM, MR. JENKINS."

Please, Mr. President

As the evil of abortion continues to seep throughout this land, a group of concerned citizens have sent a letter to President Nixon urging him to curtail "government-sponsored and government-paid abortions."

Lest those who think that killing unborn babies is a good idea start their usual cry that "the Catholic Church is the only institution opposing this practice" be it noted that signatories to the letter embrace many persuasions.

The letter stressing that the "abortion on demand" allows one person to make an "enforceable judgment about the right to continued life" was signed among others by Dr. James M. Gustafson, United Church of Christ and professor of ethics at Yale; Dr. Walter G. Muelder, United Methodist clergyman and dean of the Boston University School of Theology.

There were other religious figures but even more noteworthy among the signatories are Dr. Arthur J. Dyck, professor of population ethics at Harvard and Dr. Robert E. Gross of the Harvard Medical School.

When the Courier-Journal polled candidates on their opinions on abortion it included those running for U.S. congressional seats. "Why ask them?" some asked, "abortion is a state issue."

But now the Defense Department has issued a directive allowing abortion as a "termination of pregnancy" in military hospitals in several states where it is prohibited locally.

A presidential task force on the mentally handicapped has called for "voluntary sterilizations and abortions."

And some congressmen see it as a birth control measure.

The letter continued: "We are shocked that your administration seems to have confused abortion with family planning . . . as though they were medical issues on the same level . . . Abortion must not be confused with contraception . . ."

God Bless Our Home

Widely recognized among today's problems is the lessening influence of family and home life.

Its significance is highlighted by an item in the current newsletter of the diocesan Office of Family Life, headed by Father Robert L. Collins. Titled "What Is a Home?", the following is taken from writings of Ernestine Schumann-Heink:

"A roof to keep out the rain. Four walls to keep out the wind. Floors to keep out the cold . . ."

"Yes, but a home is more than that. It is the laugh of a baby, the song of a mother, the strength of a father. Warmth of loving hearts, light from happy eyes, kindness, loyalty, comradeship.

"Home is the first school and first church for young ones, where they learn what is right, what is good, what is kind. Where they go for comfort when they are hurt or sick. Where joy is shared and sorrow eased. Where fathers and mothers are respected and loved. Where children are wanted. Where the simplest food is good enough for kings because it is earned. Where money is not so important as loving-kindness. Where even the teakettle sings from happiness. That is home. God bless it."

Parochialism Opposed

Editor:

Should the government (state, federal, local) support religious schools? While some of the comments mentioned in the report of the "diocesan Educational Task Forces" and quoted in the Courier-Journal (11-11-70) flitted about this question, none grappled with its implications.

If the Catholic answer to this question is "yes", it is not difficult to predict a taxpayers' revolt of most unpleasant proportions. That revolt will come when the sluice gates of government money are opened and poured into church coffers. Of course it must go into every

church, temple and synagogue, to each group that legally qualifies as a religious body. There can be no discrimination, no refusal by any branch of government to any Church, Catholic or not, eligible for government funds.

Once any and every church can secure government aid to support existing schools, other churches can demand similar money to begin schools. In our blessed land where our government places no restrictions on religious institutions, there can arise future religious groups that at present have neither name nor existence. Handouts by the government to religious schools will cause such schools to increase without limit. Since they would be supported governmentally, would not government subsidies be sure to rise? Would there be any end or lim-

it to the tax burdens our citizens would have to bear?

John J. A. Overlander
Wimbledon Road
Rochester

Home Should Not Be an Office

Editor:

This is in response to Sarah Child's column (Courier-Journal, 11-11-70). The last statement, "Set the same scene in millions of living rooms all over the country and you'll know why women are seeking employment in droves" was really a challenging one.

The "scene" described in the previous paragraph was on children literally "in revolt", coffee spilled all over, danish pastry flung across the room, jumping on furniture, yelling, utter disregard.

So mother wants "out", would "move mountains to find child care so that can hold a full-time job."

I'd say she has assumed responsibility of becoming a wife and mother.

These poor kids need direction, love and understanding which their behavior demonstrates they are not receiving.

Maybe Sarah Child thought her article humorous and clever. To be sure it was pertinent to the times but insidious.

Miss Katherine Sullivan
Lilac Drive
Rochester

Communion Story Offends

Editor:

This letter is in reference to the Courier-Journal issue of Nov. 25 "Holy Communion in Hand Vetoed."

First of all, I am very much against receiving Holy Communion in any other way than by tongue. I was an altar boy at about the age of nine. I remember this one elderly priest who once told me that you should always be very careful of the first three fingers of your hand so as to never injure them, for they are the ones you would use to give out Holy Communion if you were ever to become a priest. A priest is the only person to touch the Sacred Host.

The article states that in some countries the body of our Lord is placed in your hands. I cannot ever go along with this change if it ever occurs in our country.

I am very much surprised at Archbishop Philip M. Hannan of New Orleans saying "If they extend their hands to take communion." I always understood that anyone who used the expression take rather than receive communion was either a Protestant or someone using this word in mockery of the Catholic religion.

Joseph F. Murphy
Hoffman Street
Elmira

The Word for Sunday

The Powers Of Darkness

By Father Albert Shamon



Last week we said that the overriding theme of Advent was to watch and to pray. The watching is more needed today than ever before because the powers of hell are being unleashed on our country. And prayer is needed precisely because our wrestling is not with flesh and blood but with the powers of darkness, the spirits of wickedness in high places.

Last month someone sent me a copy of Hair, an American (?) tribal love-rock musical. With the book came a letter protesting that it was being used in one of our Catholic high schools as part of the literature course. Naturally, I perused the book. And I too began to wonder why.

I remember when I taught literature, students used to badger me about giving such scant attention to contemporary writings. My answer always was, time is short. Whether any contemporary writing will gain the aura of classic, I said, only time will tell. In the meanwhile we do have great classics that ought to be studied — if not then, when?

I used to tell my students, I want you to sup with the best, to be familiar with the thoughts and works of the great ones of the ages, to form your own concepts of truth, goodness and beauty so that when you are mature adults and hold the destiny of your home and nation in your hands you can make sound judgments on what to read and not to read, to see and not to see, to do and not to do.

Who reads Gone with the Wind now, or Forever Amber — do you remember them? Yet it was a choice between these and Lord Jim and Pride and Prejudice that confronted my high schoolers thirty years ago. Gone with the Wind is gone with the wind; but Lord Jim remains and will.

So it is with Hair. Brooks Atkinson wrote: "Hair is the freshest and most spontaneous show I've seen—entirely original." It's original all right. Spontaneous, too. Fresh? Sure, in the sense a guy gets fresh with a girl.

In Hair there are two permanent set pieces on the stage. One, right center — an Indian totem pole. The other, left center — a crucifix-tree with an abstract Jesus on it, electrified with tiny twinkling lights in His eyes and on His body. What's the connotation? The crucifix is the neo-tribal equivalent

of the totem pole of ancient savage tribes. Christianity is no more than totemism. Jesus with the twinkling eyes, lit up like a Christmas tree, is a cute little Santa Claus — no more. What blasphemy!

Yes, watch and pray! In plays, as in more and more movies and songs, all our Christian values are being no longer subtly attacked, but more and more openly and brazenly assaulted. Violence, lust, perversion, drugs, blasphemy — all are not only encouraged, but presented in such a way as to allure, which is the essence of scandal.

I don't care the reason. Suppose this is literature (and I challenge this), I simply ask: Shall we contribute to the name and renown of those who aim their deadliest shafts against us? Shall we assist them in fascinating and corrupting our youth? Shall we crown these contempters of our Faith and culture with the laurels of our praises and laud them for the very qualities which alone make them dangerous?

And for what purpose? What difference does it make whether a book be excellent in a literary sense or not, if its effect be the loss of souls and not their salvation? What if the weapon in the hands of the assassin be a pearl-handled, polished pistol or a rusty, old Wild West castaway, if it be fatal? A prostitute is infamous because she ever so beautiful, and the more beautiful the more dangerous.

Shall we praise these writings out of gratitude? Follow these writers in their example, for they are far more prudent than we. They do not study, recommend and praise our great written works of Christendom. They either seek to discredit us or pass us by in silence.

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