

Women Deacons?

Major Report Leans That Way

Washington, D.C. —(RNS)— In a report which characterizes the permanent diaconate "the most significant structural innovation" of Vatican II, a group of top U.S. theologians leaned heavily in the direction of ordaining women deacons.

Stressing the importance of the reinstatement of the diaconate, the report also favored the idea that former priests be considered for active service as deacons, noting that there is "no theological objection" to a priest being restored to the function of deacon.

The 11 theologians, members of the Catholic Theological Society of America, submitted their report to Bishop Ernest J. Unterkoefler of Charleston, S. C., who heads the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate.

The prelate called the report "a major contribution to the deeper understanding of the office of deacon that has come alive in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council.

Noting that the change in allowing women to serve in the diaconal ministry would have to be decided in Rome, Bishop Unterkoefler said, "the Holy Father and the bishops will surely include the attitudes of lay people as indicative of where the Holy Spirit is moving us."

In 1968, the U.S. Catholic bishops requested permission from the Vatican to restore the diaconate. The permission was granted within four months and Bishop Unterkoefler's committee was established. As of Feb. 15, 1971, 12 diaconate training programs, with 425 candidates were in operation.

The theological study, upon which the current report was made, was begun in May 1970.

Urging a lifetime commitment to the diaconate but noting that, for good reasons, the deacons may be called to continue their Christian service outside the Church office, the report said the diaconate is still to be considered permanent in three senses:

Speaking of women in the diaconate, the report said, "it is the privilege of the Church to have within its community not only men with spiritual and professional qualifications but also women who have proved their competence in various fields and are eager to share their talents . . ."

"The Catholic Church must be open to the Holy Spirit in this field as it is elsewhere, for many women experience a desire to serve in capacities of spiritual leadership and sacramental service not available to them in present structures and institutions of the Church," it said.

"The Church should be at-

Fun City May Buy Yankee Stadium

New York — (RNS) — On the very day that New York's Board of Education was announcing that it might have to lay off 6,500 teachers and halt the hiring of an estimated 10,000 substitute teachers, Mayor John V. Lindsay announced plans for the city to purchase Yankee Stadium, the 50-year-old "House that Ruth Built."

The teacher crisis was brought about because the public schools are \$40 million short of meeting their budget.

Yankee Stadium, meanwhile, would cost the city \$24 million—but it would prevent the New York Yankees baseball team and the New York Giants football team from leaving Fun City, to go perhaps to New Jersey.

Courier-Journal

Notre Dame to Ask 'How Catholic' Is It?

Notre Dame, Ind.—(RNS)— University of Notre Dame alumni dinners slated for 110 cities this Spring will feature university representatives speaking on a single topic, "Notre Dame — How Catholic Is It?"

Abortion Reform Stalled in Iowa

Des Moines — (RNS) — Iowa's House of Representatives has rejected a bill that would have liberalized the state's 112-year-old abortion law.

The measure was defeated, 55 to 45, following a day-long debate before galleries crowded with women. Iowa's law prohibits abortion except to save the mother's life.

Avoid the Old Car Wash.

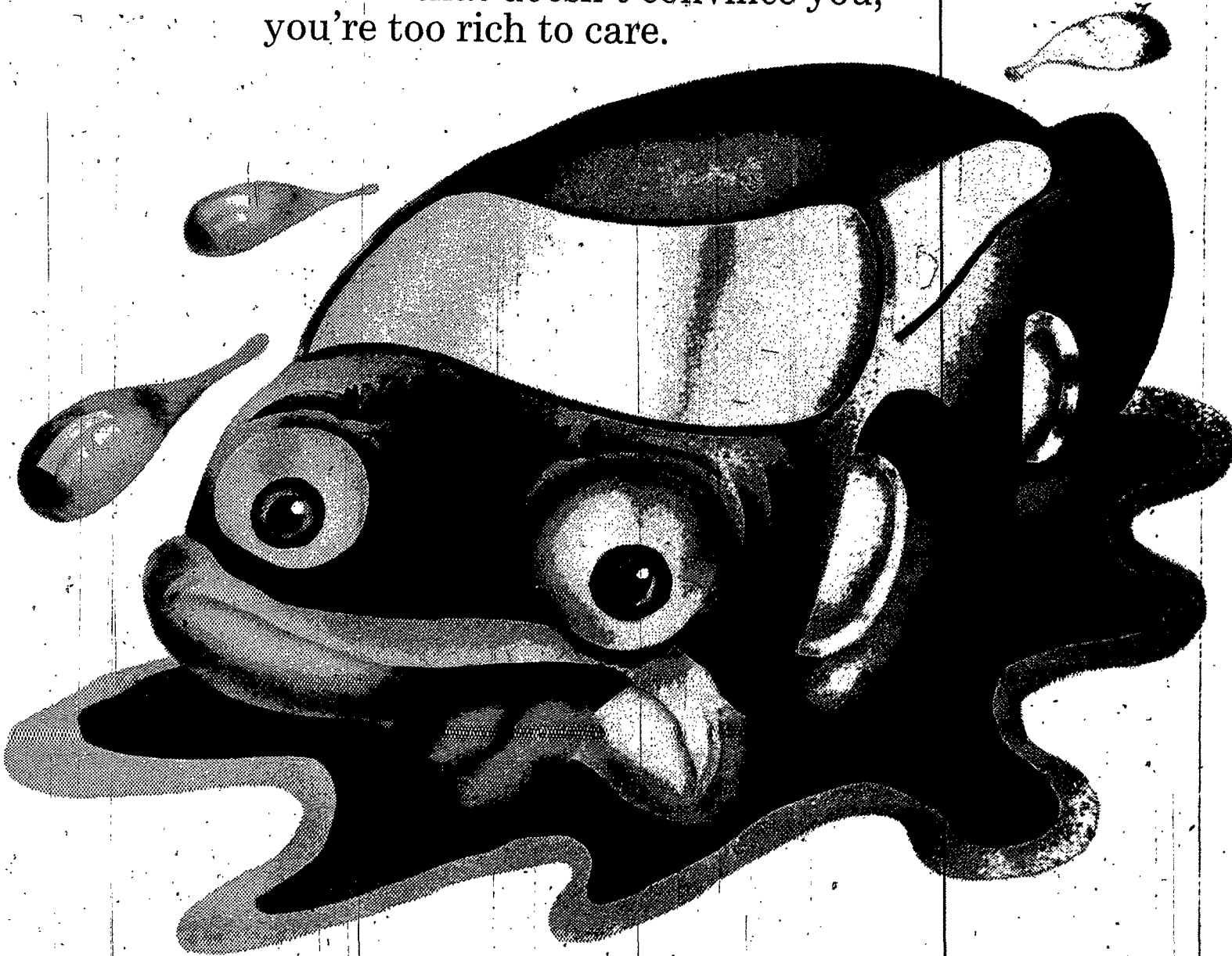
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