

## Regional Move

Regionalism — a process of reorganizing parochial educational efforts by inter-parish groupings for area-cooperation—moved from a word in a pastoral letter to wall-charts in the diocesan education offices last week. It will soon land in the discussion-churn out in the parishes.

Bishop Hogan's pastoral on Diocesan Christian Education ordered the education departments to reorganize their diocesan works on a regional basis. New parish groupings, he indicated, must "transcend parish lines and narrow parochial interests." It was a decision, he said, which the school crisis demanded, because it would "maximize the use of all of our resources" to reach the greatest number of children and adults and thus "improve the quality of education, not only of our schools, but also of all our religious education programs."

The loss of parochial autonomy in the process of assembling parishes into regional groups was mistakenly feared by some people last week. "If a dozen or so parishes in a particular area organized a regional education board wouldn't it affect the independence and responsibility of the individual participating parishes?" Not so if the evolution of the regional organization makes a clear distinction between prerogatives of the parish which must not be touched and duties for total education which the parish cannot accomplish without outside help.

Parochialism and inertia have been as harmful for some parish education programs as lack of funds. And disregard of a neighboring parish's problems in registration, faculty or financing have been quite un-Christian. But a regional organization with delegated representation from 10 to 20 parishes which meet regularly to face issues too large for the individual parish will give innovation, imagination, strength and consolidated concern for the good of every parish in the area.

A most important benefit from regionalism will be improvements in the thrust and the quality of the religious education programs for the public schoolers. One immediate target of each new regional unit should be the careful recruitment for instructions of those 42,000 children of the diocese who presently receive no religious education at all. What one parish cannot do for itself to enroll and please and educate that army of children, regional thinking may accomplish.

—Father Richard Tormey

## Albany Yes Men

High school students, past and present, are taught in their civics classes of the merits of the system of checks and balances inherent in American forms of government.

Both the federal and state governments have power so divided that no one branch of the government can usurp too much power—the executive, legislative and judicial being the three branches.

What has happened to our state government, where Gov. Rockefeller's executive branch seems to be calling all the shots on certain key issues?

A little arm-twisting by the governor and otherwise astute legislators cry, "yes sir, yes sir, three bags full, sir."

Bills to provide parent aid for nonpublic school families and to amend the liberal abortion law stay bottled up in committee as legislators await orders from their executive boss on what to do next.

It is generally agreed that the Parent Aid Bill (Speno-Lerner) has enough votes in the committee of each house to be let out—if the legislators' boss, Gov. Rockefeller, would so allow.

It also is a good bet that the bill will get the legislator's approval in a floor vote. The decision will then be up to the governor who has indicated dislike for this bill although he claims to be generally in favor of some form of nonpublic school aid.

Pleas from around the state are apparently falling on deaf ears at the executive mansion. Where then are our grass roots representatives—the legislators?

Senate Leader Earl Brydges, Assembly Speaker Perry Duryea and the chairmen of the two education committees, Sen. Thomas Laverne and Assemblywoman Constance Cook, all are members of one political party. And they all apparently are taking their orders from one man.

The time to restore the system of checks and balances to our state government is now. If the legislature defeats Parent Aid and abortion changes that is one thing. If our paid representatives are not even allowed to vote on such issues then we are all being bossed about.

—Carmen J. Viglucci

# Letters to the Editor

## Inaccuracy Acknowledged

Editor:

In the *Courier-Journal* of March 3, Mr. Robert Bart of Ithaca takes exception to my RAEL article entitled *The Pen vs. the Sword*. I had said that "no one was captured by the FBI or any other police force." This was inaccurate, and I deeply regret it.

The facts are that the FBI did capture the killers and bring them to trial. However, the charge was not murder but interference with the civil rights of the victims, admittedly a crime with a suitably heavy penalty but not in a class with murder. Again, I know the FBI had no authority to prosecute for murder, which was not a federal offense.

The failure of the Mississippi police to bring in the murderers on that charge was a well-known national scandal. I acknowledge my error, but had no intent to mislead anyone. However, there is more to the truth than just nailing down your opponent's errors and Mr. Bart, who was accurate in that respect, does not advance the cause of truth by implying that

there was no police malfeasance in the case.

George L. Jost  
Gates

## Selective Morality

Editor:

Nationwide moral indignation over U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia is now indicated in the Louis Harris survey for the period Feb. 22-27, 1971. The survey showed that 51 per cent of the people believe that it is morally wrong for the U.S. to fight in Vietnam.

From the beginning, many of us have believed that because our national security was not at stake, U.S. involvement could not be morally or militarily justified.

The reduction of U.S. casualties should not obscure the fact that U.S. saturation bombing has increased, as the war has escalated into Cambodia and Laos. Under U.S. direction, and with U.S. participation, thousands of Vietnamese have been slaughtered, while other thousands have fled from the bombings that have destroyed their homes.

It is regrettable that our Catholic bishops and clergy have failed to focus attention on the moral aspects of the most barbaric and destructive war in history. An expression of their concern and indignation, in this area, might help to bolster the sagging faith of those who see Church and State apply selective standards of morality.

The President, along with many members of Congress, expressed moral indignation when the report of the Presidential Commission on Pornography was released last year. A few months ago, the Catholic bishops of New York State spoke out against abortion.

But the slaughter of innocents goes on in Southeast Asia, without official public expression of concern from the president or our bishops.

John J. Cannon,  
Mumford, N.Y.

## The Light Side Of 'Right Side'

Editor:

"On the Right Side" (*Courier-Journal*) really came into its own on March 10. It is certainly getting us all to laugh at our prejudices. I'm sure the *Courier* could make a claim against that beautiful TV show, "All in the Family," which so cleverly teaches us, by satire, to laugh at our silly, hidden narrowness. Father Cuddy is a genius.

Imagine a priest of God pointing out to us, all in mock seriousness, that people understood Latin better than English; participated better without voice or action (heart-to-heart; which ventricle?) all back before that mean old council. But it was a great inspiration that Father Cuddy would think to top it all off with showing how a person should never forgive his debtor — not even by a handshake in Mass.

I read and reread the column — laughing until I cried: the quote from Hitler, the mention of those popular authors, Daniel Rops and Goethe, of that mass circulation organ *L'Osservatore Romano*, and finally the mean little Polish joke.

You touched all the bases, Father Cuddy, and I give you the Sign of Peace.

Gerald R. Barrett  
Webster

## Father Cuddy Questioned

Editor:

Why does Father Cuddy assume (*Courier-Journal* 3/10/71) that the faithful at Mass before Vatican II — praying in their isolated, missal-bound islands of private devotion — had greater comprehension of the psalms than the faithful today "trudging through the psalms" — lifting their voices together — God's people singing the praises of their God and worshipping Him — together?

Esther Wilkin  
Raines Park, Rochester

## The Word for Sunday

# Redemption Triptych

By Father Albert Shamon



Sunday's Readings form a beautiful triptych. A triptych is three panels hinged together so that the two outer ones can fold over the center one. Generally each panel bears a biblical picture.

Today's Liturgy of the Word depicts three biblical scenes. Were an artist to paint them on a triptych, he could on the right panel picture Israel crossing the Red Sea on dry land with the pursuing Egyptian army being swallowed up in the returning waters — "snuffed out like a wick."

On the left panel he might show the remnant of Israel leaving Babylon. The artist would have to portray them, going home after a 70-year exile, as bursting with joy. "We were like men dreaming" — who could not believe what was happening. "Our mouth was filled with laughter. The Lord has done great things for us" (Resp. Ps.). It was to this group that Second Isaiah said, "Stop looking back to the Exodus from Egypt. God is going to do something new for you. The liberation from Egypt was by violence, but your redemption from Babylon is going to be effected peaceably, simply by touching the heart of Cyrus the Great (Reading I).

Finally in the center panel would be the scene of Christ standing alone with the adulteress — a scene of serenity in sharp contrast to the stormy session that had just preceded it.

The dramatic story of the adulteress exemplifies how easy redemption is since it is Christ, not men, who judges. This incident occurred on the Feast of Tabernacles — the Mardi Gras time for Israel. There were two judges — the woman's accusers and Christ.

How cruel her accusers were! Just to win a point against Christ, they subjected this woman to incredible moral torture. What a superfluous horror the

odious publicity must have been for her, especially unsupportable in the Near East where women lived in close seclusion. "They made her stand there in front of everyone." We can almost feel John cringing as he wrote that sentence. Christ Himself is so sickened by this brutality and so ashamed of these men that He could not bear to look them in the face. To hide His face, He stooped and began to doodle in the sand.

Yet when they pressed Him, He rose. It was but for a moment, simply to say, "Let the man who has no sin cast a stone at her." They glimpsed the glowing blush on His face. Suddenly they sensed, some for the first time, the sinfulness of their own condition and the shamelessness of their own conduct. Silently, they slunk away, beginning with the older. Behold I make all things new: new insights into sinfulness, new insights into God's love for the sinner.

As the sun reveals the flaws on a painting, so in Christ's presence our sinful selves become revealed. As the sun warms and gives life, so Christ touches the heart with love and offers life to the greatest sinner.

Ancient philosophers used to ask the question, "Can virtue be taught?" The answer is, "Yes." But only as Christ taught it — by His life of purity and love. A spirit is not taught — it is caught!

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BISHOP JOSEPH L. HOGAN  
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MAIN OFFICE ..... 35 Scio St. — 454-7050 — Rochester, N. Y. 14604  
ELMIRA OFFICE 317 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. ... RE 2-5688 or RE 2-3423