

LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, 35 Sco St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Father Cuddy Column Disputed

Editor:

I am writing in response to the article written by Father Paul J. Cuddy which appeared in the Courier-Journal (5-26-71). Since few of your readers had the opportunity to attend the conference, "The Patient, Death and the Family", it seemed important to clarify some matters of fact.

Father Cuddy stated that "the conference was thoroughly secular". Not being certain of Father Cuddy's definition of the word secular, I would not debate that point. His thought, however, "This is the tender, compassionate care one might give a pet dog, easing its last days before extinction" must not go without comment.

My most generous response, although admittedly not my first, is one of concern that all our efforts in developing this conference have gone for naught when a distinguished and sensitive cleric carried away such an impoverished understanding of the conference aims and accomplishments.

Beyond our possible failure, however, I feel your readers should know something of the speakers that Father Cuddy, in his disappointment, failed to mention.

The opening presentation was offered by Prof. Huston Smith, a philosopher. Prof. Smith, as I am certain Father Cuddy knows, is the author of one of the best known volumes on comparative religion, "The Religions of Man". This text is used widely, I am told, by colleges, seminaries and schools of religion.

Another of our principal speakers, whom Father Cuddy failed to mention, is a clergyman who is a faculty member of a distinguished school of religion. Also speaking briefly, as Father Cuddy did note, were two clergymen from our own area. Thus, with perhaps a fifth of the conference time devoted specifically to speakers of theological background, I cannot agree that the conference was thoroughly secular.

It should be noted also that three of the ten committee members who organized this meeting were clergymen. Your readers should know that a generous portion of the motivation in developing this meeting was because of our sense of the lack of spirituality that Father Cuddy also decries. I feel that our aims are similar.

Father Cuddy, however, in his zeal to impart his feelings

has done a great disservice. That his point of view regarding the recent meeting is not necessarily the dominant one we are assured. We have received in person and by mail expressions of congratulations and endorsement from theologians, laymen and educators of all faiths.

I recently had the privilege of appearing on two consecutive radio programs sponsored by this diocese in which our program was discussed in some detail and during which I had the opportunity to share certain personal views with the distinguished moderator and the radio audience. My experience has convinced me that few Catholics and, indeed, religious leaders were so distraught as Father Cuddy.

I would submit that spiritual expressions are not a unique or exclusive capability of the theologically trained. I heard and perceived much of religious quality and truly spiritual nature from a majority of the speakers.

The readers should know that professional medical personnel, more than ever, are concerned with these issues and the fundamental dignity of man. We share Father Cuddy's concern. I regret only that he got so little from our meeting.

Stanley B. Troup, M.D.
Chief of Medicine,
Rochester General Hospital

Commandments Unchanged

Editor:

"An RACL Viewpoint", (Courier-Journal, 5-19-71), was presented with such an air of Divine Infallibility that perhaps one should have grave reservations about yielding to the temptation to question any part of the Holy Scripture!

To begin with, this churchgoer is not faced with a new group of commandments. As St. Augustine said, "It avails not what I say, what you say, what he says, but what saith the Lord." All of the teachings in the Bible remain unchanged, including the ten commandments. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8

As for "Thou shalt not participate in an unjust war", I assume this is a reference to the Vietnam war in particular. Since neither the United States nor the South Vietnamese started the war, neither is guilty of the sin of injustice or aggression. The South Vietnamese are fighting for their "rights" and the policy of the United States has been that of a willingness to

"lay down our lives for our friends."

To many of us, it does not seem that withdrawing all U.S. troops immediately would be a very good show of "love for our less fortunate neighbors", since an estimated three million of them would be slaughtered. We can end our involvement in the war, but this will not end the war. The peace we can bring about will be a peace that will destroy many.

The United States was founded as a Christian nation, and has been a stronghold of freedom and justice that the rest of the world relied on until recent years. Today, one of the few things all of us are well protected from is God.

As for the reorganization plan, I can't believe that very many parents will really allow their children to be taken over by the state for any reason. Whatever else one hopes to gain by such a plan, it is bound to separate younger and older brothers, sisters, and friends, from each other, breaking up traditional family and neighborhood "groups". It will scatter the children, making it impossible for parents to be part of their children's schools, to know the faculty, or to get to their children when they are ill or in trouble.

As Bertie Wooster might say, "I think I'd give it a miss." To the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen, I would have to say "Judge not, lest we be judged."

Betty Jean Lindsay
Hampden Road
Rochester

Celibacy Not Crux of Issue

Editor:

It is my opinion that many people have confused the charism of priesthood and the charism of celibacy. They are not dependent on each other nor are they co-related. Indeed in any given individual they may be mutually exclusive.

The problem is one of free choice and the need to stress the true meaning of priest as it was defined in the early Church. Putting a stress on a non-essential life style only confuses the issue and throws many red herrings in the arguments.

The essence of a priest is that he stands as a sign of unity. He symbolizes the unity of God and man, of man with his fellow man, and of the new and old man within himself and within every man. The priest must be able to identify with the people he serves and vice versa. The married priest could serve as a sign of Christ just as much as a celibate priest for he imitates and follows Christ in the quality of his dedication and not in a non-essential style of life.

If there are problems with the married state, abortions, and extra-marital freedom, then celibacy and married priests cannot be blamed. Rather it is the climate in which we live. If the climate is to change, then a constant rethinking of the meaning of holiness and dedication must be taking place. Without that rethinking, the life of the Church is stagnant and the vitality of the Church is lost. And that is impossible because Christ Himself promised to be with the Church to the end of time.

Faith in God is important. Hope in God is important. But most important is the love of God.

David J. Ambuske
Manorshire Drive
Fairport

Wednesday, June 9, 1971



"THAT'S CORRECT! CANCEL THE WATER BED!"

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



In the Middle Ages a Sister, Juliana of Mont Cornillon, had a vision. She beheld a full moon, disfigured by a dark blot which partly obscured it. Puzzled and deeply troubled by the vision, Juliana prayed to know the meaning of it. In the depths of her soul, said Juliana, Christ spoke to her saying, "The black blot symbolized the lack of a feast in honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament. I want this feast for three reasons: to strengthen faith in this divine mystery; to help the faithful live virtuously; and to repair by sincere worship the irreverence of those who neglect this Sacrament."

The man who had helped Juliana to persuade the Bishop of Liege to institute this feast in his diocese later became Pope Urban IV. As Pope, he established Corpus Christi as a feast for the universal Church in 1264.

Pope Urban commissioned St. Thomas Aquinas to author the liturgy for Corpus Christi. This saintly genius produced "an immortal masterpiece in which poetry, piety and faith vie for the palm." It contains such poetical gems as the "Lauda Sion", the "Pange Lingua," and the sparkling bit of poetic prose "O Sacrum Convivium." Down through the centuries these hymns of Aquinas have become the household words of the Sanctuary.

It is significant that one of the greatest theologians in the Church is one of her greatest poets. For poetry is the expression of deep thought and feeling in figurative language. A poet is a seer; one who has x-ray eyes that pierce beneath the surface of things and grasp the underlying reality. This vision evokes an almost ecstatic response in the heart of the seer. But a poet has more than seeing-power; he has also great saying-power. A poet is able to express what he has seen and felt in language so rich in rhythm and imagery as to elicit in the reader an experience similar to his own.

Thomas could write the poetry he did because his eyes of faith could "see" the truth of the Eucharist. The stupendous "vision" of the true, real, and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist so touched Aquinas that he could respond only in poetic adoration, "O res mirabilis," he wrote. "O wonderful thing that lowly man should feed upon his God!" "O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee, who truly art within the forms before me."

And though Thomas perceived the great mystery of faith with a clarity greater than that of any other man, yet his sublime hymn—the "Adoro Te devote"—is but one rhythmic plea for faith. Thomas knew the key to the Eucharist is faith. "Sight, touch and taste in Thee are each deceived, /The ear alone most safely is believed. /I believe all the Son of God has spoken, /Than truth's own word there is no truer token."

In a word, Thomas believed Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist because He believed in Christ.

And why is Christ present in the Eucharist? Not just to be adored. He is present there for the same reason He became bodily present on earth thousands of years ago—to do for us that which will save us. And what is that? In the beautiful sign language of the Eucharist: to nourish life and to nourish love. To nourish life, He offers us divine food: "Take and eat." The Cure of Ars called the Tabernacle "the pantry." To nourish love, He offers us Himself: "This is My Body." It is yours to have in a communion of love.

Our Blessed Lord is present in the Eucharist to nourish our life — our life with God and with each other. To nourish it by love. For communion with God and man is more than living together — it is living together in love. Corpus Christi—the Body of Christ. Why? To make the body of Christians come alive.

Courier Q & A

Q. — Students from a Catholic high school told me that they believe it is no longer a sin to miss Sunday Mass if they do not feel like going or if they expect to be turned off by the parish liturgy. What about that?

A. — The traditional and still majority opinion of canonists and moral theologians is that the obligation of attending Sunday Mass is a serious one. It is not merely a church law, which calls it a "grave sin" to be inexcusably absent from the entire Mass. The obligation to worship God comes originally from the natural law which requires every human to give regular worship of praise and thanks and contribution to Almighty God. The duty also comes from the very meaning of Christian life which is a union of Christ and the community of believers which is the Church. Some people forget that attending Mass is not an action to receive but to give. The person who deliberately absents himself from this community action without justifying reason is failing to show belief in Christ and charity towards the members of the Family of God. Deficiency in the liturgy or atmosphere or sermon, or a person's lack of mood and disposition, are not considered valid excuses for ignoring the law.

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