

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.

Sunday Sales Not Right

Congratulations on a fine editorial concerning the Sunday Selling Law! Evidently a lot of us so called devout Catholics seem to think that "Thou keep holy the Sabbath Day" means only attending Mass on Sunday. I'm sure the large amounts of people who were patronizing these super-markets were not all Protestants.

So many small businesses already have been forced right out of New York State and now ALL small grocery stores are being threatened by money hungry super markets who are merely being greedy. "Mom and Pop" grocery stores will simply be put out of existence as most of them rely on evening and Sunday business.

Another thing! Most of us lost loved ones in one war or another and it is disgusting to see unnecessary business being done on Memorial Day — SOME TRIBUTE TO OUR VETER-

ANS! The Fourth of July is becoming a "money day" instead of a day to commemorate our independence.

I think this is the time for some positive Catholic action by our people instead of hypocritical lip service. If we just refuse to shop on Sundays and holidays, we could put some respect back into these very special days.

Eleanor C. Loveland
(Mrs. George R.)
Rochester

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



"Snoopy looks kind of cold, doesn't he?" says Charlie Brown to Linus as the two of them trudge through the snow bundled up in warm clothes and spy Snoopy lying on the ground looking forlorn and slightly frozen.

"I'll say he does," says Linus. "Maybe we'd better go over, and comfort him."

"Be of good cheer, Snoopy," says Linus to the shivering Snoopy.

"Yes, be of good cheer," chimes in Charlie Brown. And the last frame in the episode shows Charlie and Linus trudging off with Snoopy sitting there, still shivering, with a question mark over his head.

The "moral" of this Peanuts "parable" is clear, but it is amazing how many Christians have missed it. Christian charity is more than words and beautiful cliches.

Sunday's Readings present two domestic scenes — one in a tent (RI) and one in a house

(RIII). In both instances the women are in a hurry to look after the unexpected guests. Sarah has to sacrifice her siesta; Martha has to prepare for twelve or thirteen unexpected visitors. Their comfort is more than words. Their action serves as an idyllic example for Christian hospitality.

Christ's example and his teaching were the root from which sprang a hospitality to others that neither pagan humanism nor benevolent Buddhism has ever been able to reach. After Christ's ascension, the Church instituted the order of deacons to care for the poor and widows. When the savage persecutions of Rome left widows, orphans, and maimed men and women, the Church stepped in with charitable works so great that pagans exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another."

After the persecutions had ended and the Church had been granted legal status, the Church's works of charity extended beyond money and gifts

to hospitality in every form. Thus Bishops added to their homes the xenodochium — a hostel offering food and shelter to strangers, pilgrims, the poor, orphans and widows. "Hospital" was simply a house of hospitality.

It is amusing today to hear some imply that renewal in the Church is the discovery of her social mission, as though such a mission had been completely neglected in the past. This month alone we celebrate the feasts of three great social apostles: St. Vincent de Paul (social works); St. Camillus de Lellis (hospitals); and St. Jerome Emiliani (orphanages). Their works only continued a tradition that goes back in unbroken succession to the time of Christ.

Our social welfare programs today could learn much from the social works of the Church in the past. St. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (370-379), set up a complex of buildings outside Caesarea that cared for all — sick, poor, widows, etc. — and that was self-sustaining. The able-bodied were given work and training which at the same time provided for the needs of the establishment by preparing food and clothing and shelter.

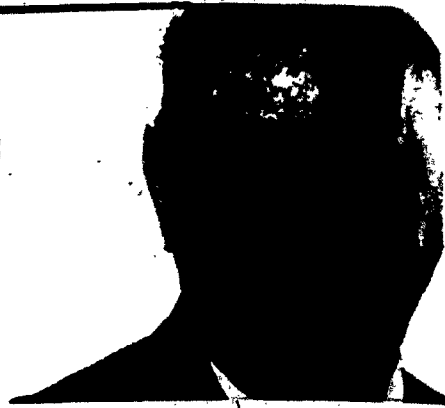
Talking of hospitality, it might be well to dwell upon the word "host," for it occurs often in the Mass. The word "host" comes from two Latin words: hospitare (to receive as a guest) and hostis (an armed force as an enemy). Thus the word "host" has a double meaning at Mass. At Holy Communion, Christ is our "Host" — He receives us to feed us. At the Consecration, Christ is our "Host" — the Victim who offers Himself to the Father for our salvation. This meaning derives from hostis (army).

In the time of Judges, the concept of the "holy war" was prevalent. The Lord was regarded as the war leader of His people (1 Sam. 1:3). Thus David retorted to the taunts of Goliath: "I come against you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. 17:45). Today little of this original sense remains. Now "Lord of hosts" is a title for God, reflecting His power. Hence the expression "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might."

To show our hospitality to a host (an enemy) is to fulfill Christ's injunction to love our enemies. Sarah served three visitors and Martha, Christ — both were serving God.

BOB CONSIDINE

On the Line



Even if there had been no leakage of the Pentagon Papers, President Kennedy's role in the Vietnam war would have been spelled out quite completely — and without court actions — by Facts on File.

The informational organization's latest Interim History ("The Bridge Between Today's News and Tomorrow's History") today publishes a book, edited by Joan Galloway, political science professor at Hunter College, which offers details not hitherto leaked. It is titled "The Kennedys & Vietnam," and includes the activities of the late Robert Kennedy and of his brother, Sen. Ted Kennedy, as well as JFK.

The introduction reads, in part:

"A great deal of the material written about the Kennedys... has dealt with their relationship to the war in Vietnam. Most of the information published comes from people closely identified with one or more of the Kennedys or from persons seemingly intent on destroying the Kennedy reputation. In neither case can the reader expect the degree of objectivity and fairness that characterizes true scholarship. An information gap has, therefore, been created on the subject of the Kennedys and Vietnam.

"This book attempts to fill that void, at least in part... This volume seeks neither to praise nor to damn the Kennedys."

JFK displayed unusual interest in Indochina from the time he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1947, at the age of 29. His first speech in the House — he was given one minute by the speaker — concerned itself with the downfall of Chiang Kai-shek. He concluded his brief stand on his feet by denouncing the Truman Administration's China policy, and he predicted that "This house must now assume the responsibility of preventing the onrushing tide of communism from engulfing all of Asia."

The president-to-be and Robert made a 7-week trip around the world in 1951 and spent 10 days in Indochina. The Korean War was on and the mood in Washington was to help the French in Indochina, fighting somewhat the same sort of aggressive communism we were fighting in Korea.

JFK was received by the French commander, Gen. Jean de Latre de Tassigny, and he asked him how France had the gall to expect the Vietnamese

people to fight Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh just to keep their country part of France. The French general protested the young congressman's impertinence in a note to the U.S. minister.

Shortly after he was elected to the Senate, JFK proposed a bill that would have given aid funds to Indochina to help them achieve independence. It was roundly defeated.

He adopted the "domino theory" in 1953 and believed in it to the day of his assassination: if the Communists took over Vietnam they'd bowl over the rest of Southern Asia.

As president, JFK sent his vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, to Saigon in May 1961, to assure Ngo Dinh Diem of our continuing interest in him. LBJ hailed Diem as the "Churchill of South Asia." LBJ returned and reported, "the battle against communism" must be joined in Southeast Asia with strength and determination to achieve success there — or the U.S. inevitably must surrender the Pacific and take up our defenses on our own shores."

Charles de Gaulle told JFK, shortly thereafter, "For you, intervention (in Vietnam) will be an entanglement without end. From the moment that nations have awakened, no foreign authority, whatever its means, has any chance of imposing itself on them. You are going to see this. For, although you find officials who, by interest, agree to obey you, the people will not consent and moreover are not calling for you."

That following December, JFK ordered the aircraft ferry-carrier Core to Saigon with 33 Army choppers and 400 air and ground crewmen to operate them in behalf of Diem's army.

That was it.

Robert Kennedy started off as a hawk. In a Saigon news conference in February 1962, a British reporter said, "American boys are dying out here. Do the American people understand and approve?" Kennedy answered, "I think the American people understand and fully support this struggle." By the time of his assassination, RFK was the foremost dove in the 1968 presidential race.

The saga came full circle on April 3, 1970, when Sen. Teddy Kennedy, speaking in Peabody, Mass., asserted that the time had come for the U.S. to begin "to militarily get out of Southeast Asia, lock, stock and barrel."

Q & A

Q. — I've always believed that "once a priest, always a priest." How can priests be allowed to leave their vocation promises and eventually get permission from the Church to marry validly?

A. — The spirit of man's thinking on many subjects has changed radically in our times. A person's outlook at 35 or 45 may be very different from what it was at 25. This is one reason why priests are resigning and leaving their ministry: they have changed their mind, they say. Most who want to leave the active life of the priest do petition the Church to be made laymen again with permission to marry. Canon Law has always provided for this — but until a few years ago the general public did not hear much about the unhappy priests who wanted to leave. Those whom the Vatican has laicized remain Catholic in good standing while free from their previous obligations in the priesthood. Like Baptism the Sacrament of Holy Orders cannot be erased. But a priest who is freed from priestly duties can also be dispensed from the impediments which Holy Orders placed upon him.

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"HERE'S A BRAND-NEW ONE CALLED 'TITHING'. ALL THE LOSERS GIVE TEN PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME TO THE HOST AND HOSTESS!"

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