

LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut 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.

Law Permits Meditation

Editor:

In your picture editorial Courier-Journal, (11/3/71) you ask, "Regardless of the principles, can such violence be justified?"

As long as we do not seek first the Kingdom of God violence will continue, justified or not.

There is a new State Education Law which permits a teacher "if so authorized or directed by a board of educa-

tion . . . at the opening of school . . . to conduct a brief period of silent meditation . . ." It is clear that this "is not intended to be, and shall not be conducted as, a religious service or exercise, but may be considered as an opportunity for silent meditation on a religious theme by those who are so disposed, or a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day."

The vote was: Assembly 115 for, 22 against, and the Senate 42 for, and 9 against.

On Oct. 7, 1971 the Rochester School Board unanimously authorized "classroom teachers at their discretion to conduct a

brief period of silent meditation or moment of silent reflection at the beginning of the school day."

I must question the apostolic mission of this paper for its failure to purvey the news to its readers concerning this legislation.

This poor busy-dizzy world needs to have every possible opportunity presented it in which to pause and reflect, meditate, or pray as to which road to walk.

I have asked the Penfield School Board to enact a policy such as the city has done. I have not had the courtesy of a written, or oral reply from the board since 9/13/71. Ironically this same board has used three religious holidays to avail themselves of the best advantages for state aid attendance purposes.

Mrs. Herbert J. Schuhart
Whalen Road
Penfield

Coupon Drive A Success

Editor:

Quite some time ago you helped by publishing our need for Betty Crocker coupons for a passenger van for the retarded children age 3-16 of LaKemary Center, Paola, Kan.

Thanks to you for helping, and thanks to all those who mailed coupons, the drive was a success. The children have their passenger van. May God bless and reward you!

Mrs. Walter Vitt
Route 1 Box 5
St. Paul, Kan.

Beautiful Yule Cards

Editor:

You mentioned last week that the Corning Right to Life Committee is selling Christmas cards to raise money for their anti-abortion work. I ordered cards from them sight unseen and was delighted with the lovely simplicity of the sample card that arrived today.

Your readers may be interested to know that the card was designed by Mrs. Jo-Anne Piro Streb of Avon who attended St. Agnes High and Nazareth College. Jo-Anne taught in the Henrietta School District but is now a full time housewife and mother of Tom, 3 1/2, and Greg, 1. Her sister Mrs. Rosemary Austin, is active in the Corning pro-life group and will be happy to get your orders (567 West High St., Painted Post, N.Y. 14870). The madonna cards are \$2.50 per 20.

Jeanne D. Sweeney
Rochester

Volunteer Drivers Needed

On Tuesday, Dec. 21, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. about 50 drivers are needed at the Christmas Bureau to deliver special gifts to the elderly and infirmed in the Rochester area. Each volunteer driver will receive about five small packages to deliver in a geographical area. If interested in volunteering, call Paul B. Schmidt at the CYO, 454-2030.

Wednesday, December 8, 1971



"NO KIDDING, TINA, THAT'S THE SADDEST STORY I'VE HEARD IN THE FIVE YEARS I'VE BEEN TALKING WITH THE KIDS, HERE!"

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Is. 35: 1-6, 10, (R2) Jas. 5: 7-10, (R3) Mt. 11:2-11.

One thing in Sunday's Gospel startles us: that John the Baptizer should have asked the question about Christ that he did. Imagine the Baptizer, who had pointed out Christ as the Lamb of God, asking Him: "Are you 'He who is to come' or do we look for another?"

Such a reaction to Christ, when you think about it, was typical of John, exactly what you would expect. John was a strong man; he had his own ideas about what the Messiah would be like. No doubt John had patterned both his appearance and preaching on what he thought the Messiah would be. Thus John came out of the wilderness clad like a prophet and thundering judgment. He branded hypocrites "a brood of vipers." He proclaimed a wrath to come, an axe being laid at the root of the tree of wickedness. For John, the coming of the Messiah was the coming of judgment.

From John's view; therefore, Jesus was a "letdown." He was so meek, so mild. He was working miracles; but He was not setting the world on fire. He was announcing the Kingdom of God, but the world went on as usual. There was no judgment issuing in the destruction of the wicked. So John asked, "Are you 'He who is to come'?"

You're not at all what I expected and have been preaching you would be. Must we look for another — another kind of a Messiah? A totally different kind from the one I have preached?"

Jesus told John to reflect on the evidence. Jesus pointed to His deeds. He knew John would immediately grasp their significance, for these were the signs of the Messianic era as foretold by Isaiah. "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb will sing" (R1). Because the signs were miracles of healing, they would help correct John's misconception of the Messiah. Loud and clear, they said that He came not to judge and destroy sinners, but to heal and save them.

After answering John's question, Jesus went on to defend him, in the greatest eulogy ever heaped upon a man. Some people might have drawn the wrong conclusions about John from his questioning.

God's coming always upsets for the simple reason that He shatters our preconceived notions. We think we have God "figured out." This is evident from such remarks: "How can God do this to me?" Or "How can God let this happen?"

Jesus invited John to take Him as He is, not as John had preconceived Him. To be patient (R2). To wait and see. By doing this, John would be blessed.

The same uneasiness persists in the Church. Whenever we take Jesus at face value, He surprises us. So, we whittle His ways down to ours, his thoughts to our thoughts. We fashion a comfortable Jesus. For instance, we often tend to identify Christian social and political activity with the salvation brought by Jesus.

Christ's healings were only a sign of the healing He had come to bring between God and man! Social service, attempts to bring about a better world, must be a sign, not merely of human concern and care, but of that healing salvation. If we are content only to clothe the naked and feed the hungry and forget to lead them to Christ, then we are giving only half the Gospel and missing the punch line — which is to bring all mankind to Christ! Blessed is the man who finds no stumbling block in such a Messiah: one who comes to save, not just bodies, but men.

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Courier-Journal



REVEREND MONSIGNOR EDWARD T. O'MEARA
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

DICKENS' "A MISSION CAROL"

One of the most loved stories at Christmas time is Dickens' A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Dickens was a social satirist, and because we are not living in 19th century London, we miss some of the underlying "sting" of his writings. We do, however, grasp the conventional moral message of "good conquers evil," but can we apply this to our day and age?

IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL, I find three subjects appropriate to our own day which can be applied to the story of today's missions and today's Christmas.

First, of course, is the character of old Ebenezer Scrooge whom nobody likes — he is selfish, miserly, cranky, and definitely anti-Christmas! We may have our faults and pet peeves, but we certainly don't identify ourselves with a Scrooge — nobody can be that hardhearted! But then, Dickens created Scrooge, not so much as an individual character study, but as the personification of People's Indifference to People.

Secondly, the people Scrooge is confronted with are not just "people in general." Dickens makes them POOR people. And Scrooge is indifferent to their needs, their feelings, and their lives. As poor people, including their spirit of joy.

And finally, Dickens chose "Christmas," not because it would be a familiar and colorful setting, but because Christmas, more than any other season, expresses the spirit of giving — joy — and brotherhood, so completely opposite to the characteristic Scrooge.

Let's try to apply these (Indifference, the poor, and Christmas) to our day. Everyone today can identify with the Christmas spirit — even Dickens' 19th century "old fashioned" Christmas. But what about the poor? We can identify with the poverty around us; we can identify with the needy families in our home town, the orphans, the sick in hospitals, and the lonely. But can we identify with the starving, homeless refugees of Pakistan? . . . the leprosy patients in an African mission clinic? . . . the cold and hungry in a filthy slum of Latin America? . . . the crippled beggar lying in the streets of Calcutta? Can we identify with the spiritually deprived? . . . with those who have not heard the Good News,

Truthfully, no! We cannot really identify with the poorest of the poor because our life styles, values, problems, social and psychological make-up are so different. Scrooge couldn't identify with the poor either, but the point is not that he didn't identify, but that he didn't care — he was indifferent.

Our world today and our responsibilities to it, are not the same as the world of Charles Dickens, but the "change of heart" in a Scrooge, the joy which comes from "giving," and the "reality" of Christmas are still very much with us. And so are the poor.

We may not be able to fully "identify" with the needs of the mission-poor or the needs of the missionaries serving them, but we do share with them, and find them, in the Love of God, who GAVE HIMSELF to us in Christ and made us all brothers.

This is the message of Christmas — the message of the missions — and, we pray, YOUR message of peace on earth for all men. Please share your love with the mission-poor this Christmas; please do not be indifferent to them . . . please send your gift for them today.

Please send a generous sacrifice for our missionaries today because you are their only means of support, but even more, because you are their friends! (Please enclose your gift with the coupon below).

SALVATION AND SERVICE are the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Please cut out this column and send your offering to Reverend Monsignor Edward T. O'Meara, National Director, Dept. C., 336 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or directly to your local Diocesan Director, Rev. Joseph F. Reinhart, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

12/8/71

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Page 4-A