

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.

Child Bill Criticized

Editor:

Msgr. McHugh, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Family Life Division, endorsed the "child development" provisions of the OEO bill (Courier-Journal, 12-15-71). It seems strange to us that he would support this anti-family legislation.

Congressman John Schmitz of California, in commenting on the comprehensive Child Development Act, said:

"It sets up all the machinery and financing for a massive governmental invasion of the home. The fact that the new programs are not immediately to be made compulsory is hardly reassuring to those of us who have watched so many new state and federal programs begin as voluntary and then, once established, become compulsory. The bill lists 13 separate purposes for which federal child development funds may be used, such as utilization of child advocates to work on behalf of children and parents.

"No facet of a child's life is omitted. The intention is clearly to put government in place of the parents."

The President has wisely vetoed this bill. The Catholic Church has traditionally upheld the responsibility of educating and caring for children to be that of the parents. "Big Brother" should be kept out of private homes.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Hober
Lapham Street
Rochester

Hospital Gains Praise

Editor:

Recently, I had the opportunity to be hospitalized at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell. It was an opportunity because of the UNHERALDED CHAMPIONS in one Father Cuddy and Sister Aldophine of St. James.

Father Cuddy's assuring personality comes through the P.A. system each morning in way of weather reports, hospital census, a brief prayer, said ending with a laugh-provoking joke. This "extra touch" is resplendent throughout the en-

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tire hospital staff of doctors, nurses, L.P.N.'s, and aides. The great spirit of St. James Mercy Hospital, coupled with its extra clean and well organized service, make a hospital visit a pleasure.

S. L. Houghton
West Lake Road
Geneseo

A Word Of Advice

Editor:

In light of the recent controversy at St. Andrew's Church, perhaps the parties involved could settle their grievances by reading an excerpt from an 83-year-old pastor's letter to his parishioners announcing his voluntary retirement after 37 years as their pastor:

"You can pay no higher compliment to a departing pastor than to turn in warmest welcome to his successor. Work with him in the same generous and united spirit that has distinguished you as the true family of God and no one will rejoice more than I, as you rise to new heights of spiritual endeavor under his guidance. He comes as I came long ago, in the name of Christ and with the love of Christ in his heart. Priests come and go like mortal flesh but Christ remains forever and to His undying love I commit you."

John W. Norton
Penfield

Hungarian Relic May Be Lost

Editor:

The December Cardinal Mindszenty report asks "Will the Reds Get St. Stephen's Crown?" This question is a challenge to people of the still-free world.

The beautiful crown of St. Stephen was given by Pope Sylvester II to Emperor Stephen of Hungary in the year 1000. It is the oldest symbol of freedom and authority in Europe. This wise and holy man was canonized in 1083.

The Mindszenty Report states, "The most sacred of all Hungarian relics was kept until World War II under the constant supervision of a Crown Guard in a special building. In order to keep it out of the hands of advancing Russian Armies in the final months of the war, Hungarian patriots entrusted it to American troops under General Patton. The Hungarians intended the Crown to remain safely in America until Hungary is free again."

There have been many recent reports that under a plan engineered by Henry Kissinger, St. Stephen's Crown is to be given to the Red rulers of Hungary before President Nixon's visit to Moscow. In November, Cardinal Mindszenty communicated with our President on this subject because in 1970 the President solemnly promised not to betray this trust as custodian of Hungary's holiest and greatest national relic and pride.

That there is substance to reports of a pragmatic gesture of accommodation is indicated in two congressional resolutions concurrent in House and Senate. Some 25 congressmen headed by Congressman Ashbrook have introduced this subject in the House. Congressman Hogan is pressing for a House Foreign Affairs hearing. Senator Dole, supported by Senators Thurmond, Buckley, and Tower, initiated the Senate resolution.

G. F. Newberry
Azalea Road
Rochester

Nuns' Garb Seen Not Significant

Editor:

With regret I read in your 22 December 1971 edition the letter of Rev. G. Stuart Hogan expressing his feelings about the religious women not wearing traditional "nun" garb. I think it is sad that he feels it necessary to take a public "poke" at dedicated women because not all of them appear in clothing that he thinks appropriate to Christian witness.

I seem to remember, somewhere in history, an original Christian band of twelve with their leader who wore no distinctive religious garb. The "witness" they gave to neighbors and the world constituted a rather striking example.

Each one of us who has any association at all with the Mercy nuns, whom he attacks in particular, has been most impressed by their total dedication to "witness" Christ among men. They are to be admired for their attempts to be relevant to people. This admiration should increase as we reflect that they have tried and are striving to insist that personal development and individual maturity among their members is most important for that "witness." These are far more significant than rigid adherence to a requirement to appear "in uniform."

Serious scholars of the contemporary scene are beginning to think that a former lack of personal consideration in religious life that demanded absolute adherence and conformity to a rule has been a major factor in the current death of vocations. Perhaps, even because of this, some of us in religion have failed to display a basic joy in the life that would attract others to join us.

It should be obvious that a person can be most religious without any formal religious habit. It is patent from a mere nodding acquaintance with history that there have been those, who from time to time have appeared in the extremely religiously symbolic robes of the papacy, who have given somewhat less than perfect religious "witness."

I reflect that the religious garb with which we have been acquainted is nothing more than the ordinary dress of women of a by-gone age. I fail to see anything sacred about clothing that is outdated and that led to many cartoons and jokes about penguins.

My strongest objection to Father Hogan's letter is that he attempts to judge interior motives by external action. I think he is on very dangerous ground. I call to mind a fundamental Christian instruction, "Judge not lest you be judged."

I vote wholeheartedly for religious orders of women who enthusiastically endorse an inner disposition of witness and commitment rather than complete conformity to a style of dress.

I compliment all sisters for being humanitarian, for being case-workers, teachers and do-gooders. I applaud their concentration on essentials rather than on incidentals such as how they will be clothed.

With regret admiration for the Sisters of Mercy and all dedicated religious women of the Diocese of Rochester I offer this public witness, even though I am not wearing a Roman collar and cassock as I write this.

(Rev.) John A. Widman
343 Canisteo
Hornell

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday Readings: (R1) Is. 42: 1-4, 6-7 (R2) Acts 10: 34-38. (R3) Mt. 3: 13-17.

Sunday is the feast of the baptism of the Lord. Jesus' baptism posed a problem for early Christians. Why did Jesus go to John if He were greater than John? Why should the Sinless One submit to a baptism of repentance to sins? Matthew neatly disposes of the problem by presenting John as refusing to baptize Jesus and by having Jesus override the refusal with the explanation: "Let it be for now. My Father wants it that way."

The Father wanted it that way because Jesus' baptism was a proclamation. Epiphany Sunday manifested to wise men that Mary's child was the King of the Jews. Jesus' baptism manifested to the world what kind of a King He would be. Matthew borrowed much of his baptismal story from Mark. However, Matthew altered Mark's account. In Mark the voice from Heaven speaks only to Jesus; but in Matthew, to the world. Thus Mark's "Thou art My Son" is switched to "This is My Son."

Furthermore, the words from heaven were a fusion of at least two scriptural texts. The words, "This is My beloved Son," come from Psalm 2:7. Addressed to Jesus, they pointed Him out as a divine King, the unique Son of God the Most High. The words "My favor rests on Him" come from Second Isaiah (R1) and marked Jesus out as a suffering King, for the passage from which these words were culled speaks of God's servant, His Messiah, as a suffering servant.

Finally Jesus' baptism was an inauguration. It was a formal beginning of His work of salvation. By submitting to baptism He had identified Himself with sinners. For them He would now suffer the consequences. The temptations immediately following His baptism demonstrated how fiercely beset with struggle His life would now become and also how adamant

His loyalty to His Father's will would be.

What baptism was for Christ, baptism ought to be for us. He was baptized because it was His Father's will; we are baptized, because it is Christ's will.

His baptism was a revelation that He is truly the Son of God and that His mission was to be achieved the hard way — by suffering; the devil in the desert tried to get Him to opt for the easy way out. Our baptism makes us new creatures, sons of God, and calls us to be sons, like Christ, even when it is hard. His temptations after His baptism suggest that our baptism is no magic rite: it demands lifelong effort and unflinching fidelity in the face of trial.

Christ's baptism was the public beginning of His work of salvation; our baptism is the beginning of our salvation — a new life, a new way of life. As a child is born into a family so he can grow up; so when a child is reborn, baptism inserts him into a Christian family so that he can grow up in the company of believers. And his growth depends on how well he reflects to others his new life of son of God.

Christ began His public life "to fulfill all God's demands." When we begin each day with the Morning Offering, we confirm the "yes" godparents once made for us at our baptism. Christ went about doing good. When each day we strive to be kind to others, we repeat the "yes" of our baptism. Christ ended His life with the child-like trust of commending His spirit into the hands of His Father. When we go gaily into the dark valleys of life, move forward in faith through the ever-encircling gloom, then we are saying "yes" to our sonship through baptism.

To help us live this way, the heavens opened at our baptism and the Spirit of God poured into us. Thus we may live a life so truly like Christ's that in the judgment God must say "You, too, are my beloved son."

A Leper's Plea Forwarded

Editor:

The recent Courier-Journal appeals for the poor and subsequent responses are like alternate heart-beats of Our Lord Who continues to suffer and redeem us with a compassionate love.

This letter appeals for continuous support of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and of the Diocesan poor whose needs are not met with government aid. Additionally it begs a compassionate response to a poor family whose circumstances are sustained in the Grace of Our Lord.

Can you lighten the burden of "a wretched life — forgotten and forsaken by relatives and friends" of one whose "world is bare of pity, of love, of hope and encouragement . . ." of one who seeks "encouragement to bear up my cross in this cruel world?"

The sorrow, anguish in hopes of overcoming despair, and humble begging of Mrs. Graciela Ceryag stems from her deep love of her third grade daughter and her sophomore college son.

"With a Catholic education and fear of God, my son will be

better armed to face and fight a degraded and cruel life of being a leper's son. Moreover he will have a better chance to acquire a decent livelihood, not only for himself but also for his dear sister — Oh, how much he loves her."

Mr. and Mrs. Geryag bear the suffering of leprosy without much hope of cure. "For us his parents, our moons are numbered and we may not be able to see him attain his goal."

As patients in Cebu Leprosarium, P. O. Box 671, Cebu City, Philippines, Mr. and Mrs. Ceryag receive medicine and food rations from the government; however, many necessities such as shoes and repairs of their rupa hut are not given. "There are eleven of us sharing our two rations. We have three girls and four boys, who are released negatives and unwanted (by their families) and are sheltered in our home."

"My husband and I have tremendous faith in Our Dear Lord's mercy and goodness . . . Please help us in the name of Christ!"

"May the risen Lord grant you and yours success in all your undertakings. Your daughter in Christ, Mrs. Graciela Ceryag."

Joseph J. Murray
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Wednesday, January 5, 1972