

LETTERS

Paper Thanked For Help

Editor:

I wish to express deepest gratitude to you for printing "A Leper's Plea Forwarded" in the Jan. 5 issue of the Courier-Journal.

You have been instrumental in doing our Lord's work as He desires. As you know He gives value to our works and efforts, and although He asks as a beggar, He gives and rewards as God.

JOSEPH J. MURRAY
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Don't Demean The Rosary

Editor:

Please permit me to be the first to say that Sister Theresa Peters' (1-19-72) letter was beautiful! One observes true

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.

dedication in the tone of her letter. All the points she makes are good ones but there is still, in my humble opinion, an inner importance in the "external, peripheral things such as dress, etc."

I'm sure that most, if not all, of our Sisters agree with Sister Theresa right down the line. The commitments of today's Sisters must be more clear than in the past. They are Sisters serving God and fellowman in a life dedicated toward showing a living example of the true meaning of Christianity to others. But they need something external to distinguish them from lay people. They are not, each one, just another social worker; just another do-gooder. They are special social workers; special do-gooders! Show people externally that you are proud of this! We lay members are certainly proud of all of you and are proud to be members of the true faith along with you!

In contrast, Mary E. Martin's letter was bitter. I don't blame her for her touchiness because we laymen all become touchy at times. Her reference to "the rattle of rosary beads" was a bit

annoying to me because those beads serve as an open advertisement of prayer! Prayer, today, is completely de-emphasized; and it's too bad because it is probably the only thing that can save the world from its present dilemmas. It seems the Pope is the only person of consequence today who still mentions prayer frequently; and this is a credit to our Faith.

It behooves us to find ways to convince people of the importance of prayer. While daily Mass cannot be surpassed in this respect, the Rosary always has been and still is one of the most powerful prayers in existence! Here I speak from personal knowledge through experience. You can take my word or not but the fact remains and it needs to be tried by all.

John G. Lentricchia
South Goodman St.
Rochester

Pacifism Invites Violence

Editor:

Bishop Hogan's recent article, "The Theory of a Just War," seems to say there can be no just war as the loss of life involved would outweigh any reason for participation in a "Just War."

Recently members of the President's blue ribbon defense panel submitted a report which stated among other things that Soviet Russia is expanding its missile power so that it will possess a first strike capability. This means their first missile attack would be so overwhelming we could have no means of retaliation.

At the same time, the report continued, the U.S. is cutting its defense spending.

We can debate how unthinkable and immoral war would be in our nuclear age but unless we convince other governments (notably Russia) it would be very unwise on our part to adopt a policy of pacifism.

I am quite sure a nuclear holocaust would be more probable when an enemy knew its victim could not offer much resistance.

Our best defense then against nuclear war is a mighty arsenal with an emphasis on defense missiles such as the ABM. If science could perfect such a defense system it would eliminate the possibility of a nuclear war. Then maybe all we'd have to worry about would be germ warfare.

In any event I hope our Church and national leaders re-examine their views because when they advertise pacifism they invite violence.

Robert Bart
Hicksville

Opposite Side But Charitable

Editor:

In the Courier-Journal (1-12-72) I was pleased to see Father Hogan's response to my comments on his letter to you. It was good that he clarified.

Despite several readings of his letter, what came across to me was an attack on nuns who prefer to give Christian witness while dressed in contemporary clothing. He is disturbed by what appears to him as secularization and dissolution of Catholic Church and schools primarily attributable to nuns' abandonment of distinctive garb. He feels this indicates lack of sacrifice. Clearly I disagree.

My intention was to give public support to religious women who are sincerely trying to be

Christianly relevant to our age and times.

It is quite obvious that my response has not changed Father Hogan's mind nor those who think the same way he does. By the same token, neither has he changed my mind nor those who think with me.

It pleases me immensely that we both can differ and still work together in the Church for the salvation of people. I accept his opinion as valid and I hope he will offer me the same acceptance. Certainly we both are trying to exercise charity in our diversity.

(Rev.) John A. Widman
St. Ignatius Loyola
Hornell

Needs Old Valentines

Editor:

I am a handicapped Veteran, living on a small pension. My vision and hearing are slowly leaving me. The doctors say they can do nothing, so I have made hobbies to keep busy and fight off periods of mental depression and despondency, which seem to plague me most of the time.

While I am collecting antique valentines and old post cards, I am also collecting rare old calendars and advertising cards, in hopes of writing a book about the items I collect and earn enough from it to get off this small VA pension and have medical care, which the VA is unable to afford me, so my hobbies have a dual purpose.

Living on limited funds, I depend on friends and others for the items I collect and was wondering if any of your readers had any antique valentines, old post cards or rare old calendars they do not want, because I would be happy to have them.

Leon Thompson
1211 Chicago St.
Kent, Washington

Justice As Well As Mercy

Editor:

It is sad that Father Atwell feels the need to raise the question of the relevance of the Ten Commandments for an urban, mobile society because never before are we in greater need of God's explicit directives. We live in a society whose other gods are materialism, secularism and a humanism that is devoid of any dependence on God.

The news media constantly reminds us of many problems that are rooted in the direct violation of the Ten Commandments. The crime rate is so bad that it is considerably safer to be on a battlefield in Vietnam than to walk a street in our nation's capital. Mothers, with the cooperation of doctors and other medical personnel, are killing the unborn by the hundreds of thousands. The divorce rate is appalling. Venereal disease is no longer called an epidemic but now phrased as of "pandemic proportions." It is estimated that one customer in ten is a shoplifter. Our movies and best-sellers are profusely seeded with blasphemies.

Father Atwell implies that the Church is perhaps too severe upon its lawbreakers and should be moderated in the interest of "mercy." However, if one reads the full biblical text of the first commandment, God clearly outlines the sanctions for acceptance or rejection of His commandments. Mercy is extended only to "those who love me and keep my commandments" and this mercy will extend to the "thousandth generation." But He also warns that He is "a jealous God" who inflicts punishment.

Much anguish these days is

spent on the lawbreakers at the expense of their victims. Who has mercy for the victims of street crimes, the innocent, defenseless aborted babies, and the responsible families who are faced with the difficulties of rearing children in a secular society?

Joanne Purcell
Wheatstone Circle
Fairport

Clothes Not Key To Witness

Editor:

This letter is in response to the recent controversy concerning the witness value of religious garb by the local sisterhood. We'd like to say a few thousand words about priestly witness manifested at local country clubs.

While stale jokes about priests spending undue time at local links are boring, they are not half as bad as comments on Christian witness being reduced to a few bolts of cloth. Considering the fact that the personnel in our religious education programs and parochial schools are at least 1/2 lay people, we take it a personal affront that we are not capable of providing some sort of Christian example to society (although we realize that many are called but few are chosen). We believe that this sort of attitude is an example of a chauvinism among various religious that is not only nauseating but very anachronistic.

Catherine Alfieri
Margaret Alfieri
Mary Eileen Alfieri
Heatherhurst Drive
Pittsford

Laymen Give Witness, Too

Editor:

Father Hogan, in his letter to Father Widman (Courier-Journal 1/12/72) regarding nuns' garb, contradicts himself, but thankfully catches up with his last statement. "By their fruits shall you know them." Why not "By their dress shall you know them?"

As a wife and mother, I resent Father Hogan's implications that religious garb is indicative of a person's dedication to God and his "witness to the world." Many laymen have dedicated themselves to God. Do they too need the religious habit to be a witness to the world of that dedication? Sorry, I have no intentions of donning a habit.

In Webster's Dictionary, "religious" means "devoted to the divine." "Habit" means "a costume characteristic of a calling" and "a usual manner of behavior." I can think of no costume that would be acceptable by the layman to show our good "habit" of witnessing to the world our devotion to the divine. Christ dressed in the garb of the times, laymen always have, and thankfully, now religious. Remember the lilies of the field? They worry not what they put on!

I feel sorry for any religious who have in the past been inspired to a vocation because of the traditional religious habit and the patronizing that often goes with this outfit. As an educator of my children, I do try to help them learn to respect all men, regardless of race, creed or dress.

I, for one, have enjoyed discovering that religious and clergy-under-wraps are "real" people. Now let's hope we laymen can convince them that we too are "real." Christ was.

Nancy E. Franz
Apple Grove Circle
Webster

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Zep. 2:3; 3:12-13. (R2) I Cor. 1:26-31. (R3) Mt. 5:1-12.

St. Matthew begins Jesus' public life by having Him lay down the law which one would have to follow to be a member of His kingdom.

What did Jesus expect of His followers? What kind of people did the Son of God expect us to be? I think His answer would shock us. For Jesus expects us to be exactly the opposite of what everybody else expects us to be. "My thoughts are not your thoughts." No doubt the revolutionary quality of His expectations does not come clearly across to us because it is buried behind an archaic term called "beatitudes." However, if we wish to substitute "happy" for "blest," we shall glimpse a bit of the radicalness of the beatitudes which are the theme for Sunday's Readings.

Most people think —

Happy are the go-getters, they get on in the world.

Happy are the hardboiled, they don't get pushed around.

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