

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.

Coupons Help Retarded

Editor:

Could I please ask your readers to help in our need for retarded children?

Lakemary Center, School of Special Education, Paola, Kan., is a residential school for retarded children, ages 3-16. It is operated by the Ursuline Sisters.

Lakemary Center is in need of playground equipment for their students. General Mills has agreed to issue a check for this purpose if we can collect a sufficient number of Betty Crocker coupons.

Please mail coupons to Mrs. Walter Vitt, Route 1, Box 5, St. Paul, Kans. 66771.

Mrs. Walter Vitt
Route 1 Box 5
St. Paul, Kans.
66771

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Courier-Journal has a policy requiring that letters to the editor not exceed 1 1/2 pages, typewritten double-spaced. To give all those wishing a chance to express themselves, we must insist that this guideline be followed.

Some Advice On School Aid

Editor:

The Catholic community, both clerical and lay, are the only ones who can be blamed for the current financial crisis in the parochial school system.

Let's see why. For years we've been requesting "some state aid". When a politician is told "some", that's about all we'll get. In addition, why should we allow these "procrustean politicians" an opportunity to "dream up" something for us. Most of them do not have the talent. For example, last year it was the \$33 million Non-public School Aid Law. It was unconstitutional.

The Fleischmann Commission has recommended no public aid for private schools. This commission, appointed by Gov. Rockefeller, spent \$1.5 million of taxpayers' money to reach this hollow, ecumenical decision. We Catholics, who helped contribute our tax dollars for this study, are told, "Your school system is not worthy of aid." Could the finding of this commission be a "get us off

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Courier-Journal

the hook" smoke-screen made for the benefit of this present administration?

If we Catholics are to recover, re-group and do something about this situation, the first requirement is a definite plan and this should be, at least "a complete income tax deduction for the full cost of private school education."

I am sure there are enough tax experts and legal talent in the Catholic community to expand this principle to make it legal and constitutional.

Once armed with a plan, perhaps a high level meeting of our cardinal and the bishops with the governor and the leaders of the Senate, and Assembly would be in order to explain exactly **WHAT WE WANT.**

The next step, to back up this request, might take the form of a visit to our elected representatives at the new billion-dollar mall in Albany. This visit should be attended by the 700,000 students of the parochial school system along with their parents... their teachers... their bands... and their signs which say "This school saves the taxpayers X dollars per year".

Third would be an all-out petition campaign at the parish level. This would mean that the Men's Clubs, the Women's Clubs, the Altar Societies, the Home-School Associations would obtain signatures withdrawing support from any candidate who will not sign a statement in support of the tax deduction plan.

If all this fails, then we should answer those who say we are bluffing about closing our schools and turning over the 700,000 students over to the secular monopoly. These people and the politicians should be invited to witness a reenactment of the beautiful ceremonies that opened these schools. But at the closing ceremonies instead of a Gregorian Chant, may I suggest a rousing chorus of "SOC ET TUUM", a little tune they can dance to after they receive their new school tax bills.

Joseph B. Butkowsky
Arcadia Parkway
Rochester, N.Y.

RACL's Need Doubted

Editor:

After carefully reading the material regarding the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen (RACL) in the Courier-Journal (2-16-72) I have had to conclude that this group is not meeting and very probably will never meet any real need in Holy Mother Church.

I question very much the likelihood that an exclusively lay association can be constructively effective, although it may well become divisively so. We laymen already have available to us many ways for contributing to our Church; there are parish councils, parochial school boards, diocesan councils and groups, and from time to time ad hoc bodies created at parish and diocesan levels, within the Church's own organization structure. Do we really need an extra-organizational group, no matter how well-intentioned?

Is the Courier-Journal to become the organ of expression for RACL? Has our bishop endorsed RACL? Does he look upon it as an acceptable independent and exclusively lay organization for the expression of

Catholic thought and criticism? Just as RACL, in the words of its president, presumes to criticize the policies of the Church, not out of hate but out of love, so also do I venture to criticize RACL. And I am sure that I would be in agreement with some of the objectives of RACL. However, I do not agree that RACL is the way to achieve these objectives, and I sincerely hope that we all are not to be subjected in the Courier-Journal to a continued series of articles by or about RACL, or to anything other than factual news reports, on the activities of this obviously sincere but miniscule and very probably not desperately needed non-clerical group.

Joseph P. Garca
Kemphurst Road
Rochester

Reader Cool To NCC

Editor:

The story headlined "3-year Study Warm to Catholic N.C.C. Membership" (Courier-Journal, 2-9-72) deserves comment. What sort of an organization is the National Council of Churches?

The NCC has come out for abolition of the House and Senate Internal Security subcommittees (to be replaced by a more "responsible" joint congressional committee).

It has been in favor of universal disarmament in these very dangerous times.

It has opposed a diplomatic mission to the Vatican.

As reported in the Courier, USA Catholic membership is 48 million, while the 33 churches belonging now to NCC claim 42 million. It is interesting to learn that if the Catholic Church joined the group, over 50% of the member Christians would be Catholic. Yet the Catholic delegation would have only one-fifth to one-third of the voting strength. Conceivably, the NCC with Catholics in its membership could vote approvingly for legalized abortion throughout the nation.

Catholic Church membership would undoubtedly strengthen the NCC. The question remains: Would that be a wise decision?

Nicholas Hober
Lapham Street
Rochester

Modernism Questioned

Editor:

So Father Atwell thinks Jesus was a "mid-lib" without a "pre-fixed position". Why did Jesus have reference to His Father so often? Wasn't His Father His pre-fixed position?

It seems the "thinking-man's strait-jacket" is Modernism which is not new, only sophisticated.

Its pre-fixed position is that it was obsolete from the date of its birth.

Father, find me a truly liberated male or female without a pre-fixed position and I'll find you a fish that survives and swims without water.

Mrs. Richard Moes
Sawmill Dr.,
Penfield

Wednesday, February 23, 1972

QUIRP

"THINE INIQUITY IS TAKEN AWAY AND THY SIN IS PURGED" (ISAIAH 6:7)



START UP IN ANOTHER TOWN

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Gen. 12:1-4. (R2) 2 Tim. 1:8-10. (R3) Mt. 17:1-9.

The second Sunday of Lent is always Transfiguration Sunday. Baptism and penance are Lenten themes. Both themes emerge in the transfiguration event. The voice on the mountain and the words spoken there are echoes of what happened at the baptism of Jesus; while the talk of Moses and Elijah centered in the "penance" of Jesus — His baptism of blood.

The transfiguration was no mere dream. Three men don't dream the same dream. Rather it was a profound mystical experience. Its purpose was to confirm the confession Peter had made, just a week before, that Jesus was divine; and to corroborate the prediction Jesus had made at the same time that He would suffer and die. There, on the mount, Peter saw firsthand that Jesus was the Son of the living God. There, all three of the apostles who were to witness the inside story of the Passion, the agony in the garden, heard Moses and Elijah talking about the Passion of Jesus. They were shown the moment of glory to fortify their faith and carry them over the moment of the Passion.

The transfiguration is related not only to Christ's baptism but also to ours.

To understand baptism, we must realize that it is only one step in the process of divine love. Divine love reaches from eternity to eternity. God loves man with an everlasting love. Before a child is conceived, God has loved it; that is why He creates each child; divine love leads to creation as does human love.

But God creates a child not that it might just exist, but that it might live with Him forever. When a child is born, therefore, God baptizes it: to give the child Himself. In so doing, God transforms a child into His son, fills it with the powers to believe, to hope and to love. God wants this done for the child almost as soon as it is born. Parents lavish love on a child long before it is aware of it, against the day it will discover this love and respond to it.

Some frown upon infant

baptism. "Why confer on a child one of the most important things in his life at a time when he knows absolutely nothing about it?" Since when does man know anything "about it," when it is a question of grace? Grace, after all, is all God's doing. It was Jesus who led Peter, James, and John up to a high mountain. It was Jesus who was transfigured before them. The transfiguration event was all Jesus' doing.

So is every grace. And few things teach this so clearly as infant baptism. The infant can do nothing to deserve God's grace. But who can? Are we less helpless than the infant in matters of grace? Grace would not be grace were it not something freely given and totally undeserved. When a man finds God, it is because God has first sought him. When a man acts, it is the fruit of God's activity within him. That is why infant baptism is not ridiculous. God is simply anticipating a need, as He always does in matters of grace. Because He is, the distance in time between His call and a person's ability to respond is of no significance.

Baptism, however, is only a beginning. It begins a new life in a new family, the Church: for God is reached in eternity through time. Baptism is a call to a holy life (R2). It is a call to a life of faith, like Abraham's (R1). It is the Christian's exodus from a slavery of sin to a freedom of God's children in the promised land of the Church. Thus the transfiguration is penetrated with allusions of the Exodus; the high mountain recalls Sinai; the bright cloud was the sign of God's presence during the Exodus; the dazzling face of Jesus recalls Moses' shining face when he came down Sinai; the booths, the tents in which the dozen people dwelt at the foot of the mount. A child need not be asked whether he wishes to join the Church or not. He was not asked whether he wished to be born a human being and to enter this life. God's gifts are freely bestowed—only later the child will be asked to do something about it. Adulthood is reached when we begin to respond to others, especially to God's "Listen to him."

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