

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.

CCD Programs Explained

Editor:

I write as a "Father Education Specialist" to offer a response, for your readers and your writers, to some concerns they express, from time to time, about the present status of religious education programs in the nation and in the diocese.

(1) The Diocese of Rochester has, for over two years, had public and official Guidelines published for several areas of religious education: Elementary and Secondary Religious Education; Sacrament of Penance; Guidelines for Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. As Guidelines, they leave much room for decision-making by the local parish community. They do set new directions and new goals for parish programs. They were written with much input from parents, teachers and priests. (Several hundred copies have been purchased by other dioceses in the nation.)

(2) A staff of five people in the Diocesan Office of Religious Education—CCD—is paid for by all the parishes of the diocese, through the Quarterly Tax Assessment which every parish sends to the Diocesan Pastoral Office. One of the major functions of this staff is to present, explain and help a parish to plan the implementation of all Diocesan Religious Education Guidelines. These five people are available to every parish, to parent groups, to priests. Much of their time is spent with local parish groups.

(3) The diocese has specifically recommended certain religion textbooks—as aids to assist a teacher in reaching the goals of the Guidelines. It has specifically named other Religion textbooks that are not suitable for the implementation of the Guidelines. It has offered repeated services to assist teachers—in CCD and Catholic schools—to adapt their teaching style to these new and recommended programs. The religion textbook series recently advertised as of value by your columnist "On the Right Side" is not among those recommended by the Bishop's Office of Religious Education.

(4) To any pastor, parish board or organized body of parents or teachers, this same office offers a process of self-evaluation of the religious education programs of that parish. It is a year-long, guided process, that does assist the parish to assess its programs and take planned steps to improve them. The basis of this process is a paper published by the office in May, 1971, presented to all the priests of the diocese, for full discussion at a clergy conference, entitled "Faith Ever More Conscious."

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Courier-Journal

Thank you for the opportunity to present to your readers these four points of standard procedure in our Diocesan Family of Believers—procedures devised by Bishops, Priests, Parents and Teachers—to aid all of us in a continuing growth and deepening of our faith, hope and love.
Peace!

Father Daniel F. Holland,
Director, Division of Religious Education—CCD

Pius XI Warned Of Communism

Editor:

March 19 marks the 35th anniversary of the prophetic Papal Encyclical "Divini Redemptoris" by Pope Pius XI, which opens with a description of how the promise of a Redeemer brightened the first pages of the history of mankind and sustained the human race until the expected Savior came to begin a new universal Christian civilization. The encyclical describes the struggle between good and evil. It describes a modern revolution which "exceeds in violence anything yet experienced in the preceding persecutions launched against the Church... atheistic Communism."

The prophetic nature of the encyclical appears in the answers to the questions it poses, "How is it possible that such a system, long since rejected scientifically and now proved erroneous by experience, how is it, we ask, that such a system could spread so rapidly in all parts of the world?" The explanation lies in the fact that too few have been able to grasp the nature of communism. The majority instead succumb to its deception, skillfully concealed by most extravagant promises.

The Holy Father then defines deception. First mentioned is the role of propaganda as "diabolical", being directed from a common center. Each vehicle of mind manipulation is mentioned, cinema, theater, radio, pamphlets, all financed by gigantic organizations with trained workers and he traces the development of propaganda in its effect on all levels of society.

The press is indicted as a powerful factor in the "diffusion" of this evil through its "conspiracy of silence."

The encyclical explicitly describes the deceptions concealed in the "Cry for Peace", while promoting class warfare and divisive actions; the use of fronts to insure promulgation of their goals by well-meaning people who would not accept communism per se but are duped into action under various guises. Infiltration of religion and religious organizations is warned against.

Material concerning DIVINI REDEMPTORIS will be mailed to anyone who forwards a stamped, addressed envelope.

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Two Articles Recommended

Editor:

I would like to express my approval of two very fine articles which have appeared in your paper. Feb. 16 Father Calimeri wrote about the terrible books, newspapers and movies flooding our City with filth of all kinds.

In cannot understand why it has taken so long for a member of our clergy to come out and condemn the terrible conditions that exist. I think the Catholic

Church made a very bad mistake when they discontinued the Movie Pledge. At least it alerted our people on the thinking of the Church in such matters.

The second item was an Editorial (2-23) regarding violence in film and sports. In my opinion this is a direct result of the break down of morality in our people. When people have no morals one cannot expect to find high instincts of any other kind. There are so many causes that need our attention these days. But I feel the break down of morals and conscience which have been brought about by the films and books have also been responsible for other evils such as promiscuous sex which leads to abortion on demand, drugs and violence of all kinds.

I feel that our paper should have more of this type of up to date information and I am pleased that we now have a start in this direction.

Mrs. H. Pikuot
Chestnut Ridge Road
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Mortal Sin A 'No' to God

Editor:

In the first of his articles on the Sacrament of Penance (Courier-Journal 2-23-72) Bishop Hogan lists some of the reasons why people do not go to confession as frequently as formerly, (specifically, before Vatican II). He states, "Many people are beginning to experience in their lives what many theologians are saying today, namely, that for a Christian who is sincerely trying to live the Christian life mortal sin would seem to be a relatively rare occurrence." Bishop Hogan does not endorse this theory, he merely mentions it.

Since Vatican II, there has been a definite trend among certain liberals in the Church to play down, even to deny, the possibility of committing mortal sin.

The statement "that for a Christian who is sincerely trying to live the Christian life mortal sin would seem to be a relatively rare occurrence" is true; yet, as understood and interpreted today by certain liberals in the Church, it is a salve for the conscience of Catholics who are sinning gravely by contraception but find it difficult, at times almost impossible, to avoid relapses into this sin.

As interpreted by these people, it means as long as they live good lives otherwise, say their prayers, go to Mass, do no harm to their neighbor, and practice charity, they are not actually saying "No" to God, as Bishop Hogan puts it; hence, they are still living a life of grace.

The fallacy here is that the commission of a single mortal sin destroys the life of grace in the soul. The sinner has said, "No" to God even though he would have preferred not to have said it, even though he would have preferred to remain God's friend.

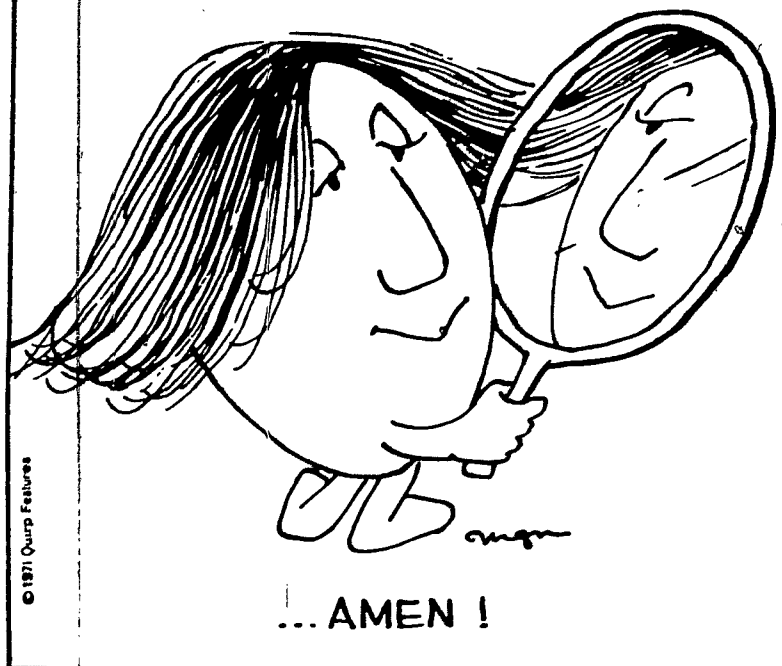
Vatican II has said that when people are constantly relapsing into sin, they must not despair; they must not remain away from the sacraments; they must continue to try. But the Council never said that such people have no need of the Sacrament of Penance.

It is possible to "reverse the basic direction of the Christian life" by one grave act of disobedience to God, just as Adam and Eve did in Paradise, just as David did when he committed adultery. Catholic theology distinguishes between a mortal sin and a state of sin. However, the state of sin begins with the commission of a single mortal sin and a person remains in this state of sin until the sin which produced this state has been re-

QUIRP

"HE HATH MADE EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN HIS TIME"

(ECCLESIASTIS 3:11)



... AMEN !

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday Readings: (R1) Ez. 37:12-14. (R2) Rom. 8:8-11. (R3) Jn. 11:1-45.

The prophet Ezekiel was a Jewish exile in Babylonia. He was taken captive in 597 BC and perhaps never returned to Juda. Jerusalem was still intact when false prophets arose in Babylonia, declaring that the captives would soon return. It was then that God called Ezekiel (593 BC) to be His prophet. Ezekiel had a double role. Up to the destruction of Jerusalem (588 BC), he preached its doom and tried to make the people realize that their captivity would be a long one, that it was caused by their abandonment of God, and that they must return to Him. After Jerusalem had been destroyed, Ezekiel became a prophet of hope—he preached a future resurrection of the nation.

Sunday's first Reading is part of this message of hope. The captives became, after the fall of Jerusalem, like dead men, buried in a land far away from home. Out of the depths of despair, they cried to the Lord. Ezekiel consoled them by preaching, "With the Lord is mercy and fullness of redemp-

tion. He will open your graves and put His spirit in you and settle you upon your land" (R1). This same God, who brought a dead nation back to life, in the Gospel resuscitated a dead man. Jesus loved this Lazarus (as He does every man). "The one you love is sick." And Lazarus loved Jesus. Resurrection is for those who love Jesus and whom Jesus loves.

But resurrection is no far distant thing—something that will happen on some remote "last day," nor even at the moment of physical death. It is significant when Martha said, "The Teacher is here," the Greek verb she used was *parousia*, which derives from the same root as the word *parousia*, which refers to Jesus' coming at the end of time. By this play on words, so typical of John, he was teaching that the resurrection is a now-event. Men don't have to wait till the end of time for some general resurrection; the real resurrection takes place here and now in every man who hears the voice of the Son of Man, loves Him, trusts Him, and obeys Him. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus. He changed Martha's future tense to present.

The death and resurrection of Israel were symbols of its spiritual resurrection. The death and resurrection of Lazarus were to a greater life and love of Jesus. St. Paul says man must die to the dictates of the flesh (its lustful tendencies) and rise to a new life in the Spirit.

Again the great sign of this death and resurrection is baptism. Water is the tomb. He who loves Jesus steps into it, is buried with Him. But Israel rose and as Lazarus rose, so he whom Jesus loves rises from the waters to a new life in the Spirit. Baptism is the Easter sacrament of resurrection.

This new life either grows or recedes. The soil in which it grows is prayer and penance. When we come to die, we shall know whether we have chosen death or life. But before we do, let us every time we think of death, think twice of what will follow after it. If we do, we shall undoubtedly so live that in the end we shall live eternally with God.

For married people who have been sinning against the married state by contraception, it might mean: a) that, an understanding of true love in marriage carries with it the knowledge that self-denial is sometimes necessary, especially when there is a question of avoiding sin; b) practicing the rhythm, even though the method may not be infallible; c) having separate rooms for husband and wife, or, at least, separate beds.

Rev. G. Stuart Hogan
East Avenue
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Wednesday, March 15, 1972

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