

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 1½ pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

A Plea For Peace

Editor:

An open letter to President Nixon.

Your inaugural pledge to the American people was "to end the war and win the peace." We commend your efforts to wind down the involvement of American ground combat troops though we join those who request that you set a date for total withdrawal! But we unequivocally condemn your simultaneous orders intensifying the Air War, not only in Vietnam, but in Laos and Cambodia as well. Particu-

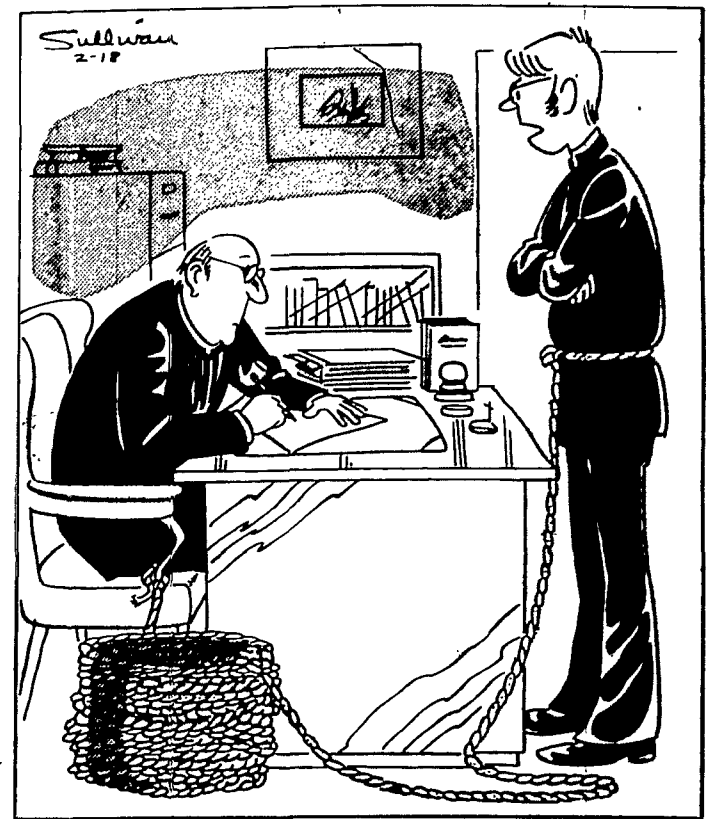
larly do we condemn the recent escalation of massive bombing in North Vietnam. We join our Protestant brothers and sisters in the demand: "In the name of God the killing of Vietnamese by Americans must be stopped by any means except more killing. A peace or negotiations produced by automated mass bombing offends against humanity and cannot be just."

The current upsurge of battle in Vietnam demonstrates, Mr. President, that a military solution to the Vietnam war can be achieved only (if, indeed, it can be achieved at all) by means that are disproportionate, unjust and immoral, a heinous offense against God and man.

As hard as it may be, you must

squarely face this fact and seek a political compromise with the various contending forces. For a negotiated settlement is the only moral alternative to more bombing, more bloodshed, more prisoners. Certainly, it is the only way you can win for us the peace you promised.

Fathers William Amann, Raymond Booth, James Boyle, David Callan, Robert Collins, George Cozzuzi, William Donnelly, Benedict Ehmann, George Gauthier, William Graf, Gerald Hafner, Robert Kreckel, James Lawler, William Lum, Mark Miller, John Phillips, William Roche, James Schwartz, Daniel Tormey, Laurence Tracy, Thomas Watts, John Walsh, George Wiant, Charles Mulligan.



"FRANKLY, I EXPECTED A LOT MORE FREEDOM AS AN ASSISTANT IN THIS PARISH!"

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday

Trinity Sunday: (R) Ex. 34:4-6, 8-9. (R2) 2 Cor. 13: 11-13. (R3) Jn. 3: 16-18.

St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1109), said, "I believe in order to understand." This dictum marked the beginning of scholasticism.

Scholasticism was the effort of medieval scholars to reconcile the mysteries of Faith with reason. This endeavor of the Schoolmen generated a philosophy called "perennial," because it was deemed valid for all ages.

A branch of this philosophy is ontology — the study of the very being of things. Ontology burrows into such abstract ideas as essence, nature, substance, accident, Person. To define terms like these it was necessary to probe into the mysteries of Faith and discover their harmony with reason.

The doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, involves ideas about persons and nature. Trinity means three Persons possessing one and the same divine nature. Knowing what person and nature mean helps one to see there is no contradiction in the doctrine. The mystery, of course, remains: we cannot understand how the Son proceeds from the Father and is still equal to Him.

Since the Trinity is a mystery, why talk about it? Because man is made to the image of the Trinity. And because he is, then man, like God, must be both an individual and a social being; like God, he must be a person living

in a community of love with other persons.

One of the great errors of the twentieth century is individual absolutism, that is, thinking of man only as an individual and forgetting his community aspect. Individual absolutism sets the rights of a man above the right of mankind, an individual's good over the common good.

Individual absolutism prevails in our new journalism — "advocacy journalism." Advocacy journalism believes not in objective reporting but in reporting personal objectives. It fits the news to print. Thus a Leighton Ford Crusade gets buried by advocacy journalists, but a protest march of 150 anti-war demonstrators gets TV limelight and banner headlines. Not news is being reported, but views — even though such reporting imperils the democratic process.

Individual absolutism prevails when one individual can ride roughshod over the will of the many regarding prayers in schools. Individual absolutism prevails when courts in a contemptible caricature of justice deny parental rights to school aid. Individual absolutism prevails when courts on legal technicalities promote pornography under the guise of protecting individual rights — the devil with the rest of society! We need to be reminded of what Charles Fox declared in the trial of Warren Hastings: "The first principle of government is the will of the many!"

Boethius, a fifth century philosopher, defined person as an individual. That was only half the definition. Only recently have we discovered the second half, namely, otherness. A person is an individual who relates to others. In the Trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons. However, the Father is Father precisely in relation to His Son, and the Holy Spirit is Holy Spirit precisely in relation to both Father and Son. The Persons in the Trinity are substantial relationships.

So individuals become fully persons insofar as they relate to others. In proportion as that relationship breaks down so personhood disintegrates.

Our overstress on individuality is an understandable reaction to the totalitarianism of the last few generations. However, unrestrained individualism will breed anarchy. And anarchy will spawn that detestable destroyer of all rights — dictatorship!

The antidote? A trinitarian-type of community: persons living in a relationship of love for each other out of love for God.

Bishop's Action Hopeful Sign

Editor:

I feel that Bishop Hogan's decision to go to Washington and meet with our political leaders is a hopeful sign that the Church is, indeed, alive and responsive to contemporary moral issues, in this case the Vietnam war.

For some time now there has been much criticism of the American hierarchy's passive leadership on the moral questions involved in the Vietnam war. Bishop Hogan's actions now, as in the past, leave little room for this type of criticism here. If the rest of our priests and laity would do as much I think that we Christians could have a real influence on the quality of life on this earth. The kingdom of God will come to fulfillment on earth only when Christians begin to apply gospel values to the public, as well as the private, sphere. Christians can no longer afford the luxury of leaving decisions involving public morality to our political leaders alone. The values of our religious heritage must be heard by our political leaders. Of itself, Bishop Hogan's action should not be considered as an extraordinary event, but only as the natural response of one committed to the work of Christ's Church here in America.

John J. Erb
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Letter Chides Governor

EDITOR:

Excerpts of a letter to the governor.

Dear Gov. Rockefeller:

There undoubtedly are people who "let emotion stand in the way of truth." But when other people allow other factors to stand in its way, I think we have to ask with Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?"

You have reportedly said that "The truth is that this repeal would not end abortions." Is there anyone really so naive as to think that it would? Mr. Rockefeller, this is a distortion of peoples' true objectives. Repealing the present deplorable law would certainly not end abortions but the real truth is that it would make them illegal. And the dreadful truth is that the present law does make this horrible crime legal: prostitution, rape and extrajudicial murder. But the law would not make them any less a crime. That is the plain truth.

You have also allegedly stated that you are not sure that the legislature's decision represented "the will of the majority of the people of New York State." What an indictment of our de-

mocracy! If this is true, then I ask, can we ever be sure that the men in our legislature are honestly representing us? If the vote had been reversed, could we not say the same thing? Why do we have a representative government, if our Governor cannot trust our representatives?

Finally, I should like to refer to another quotation attributed to you. It is difficult to believe, but this is the way I saw it reported: "I do not believe it right for one group to impose its vision of morality on an entire society." If this quotation is true, then I submit, Mr. Governor, that you have been woefully misinformed. As a member of the American Association on Mental Deficiency, I personally cooperated with Jews and Protestants last year in working on a resolution against legalized abortion. I assure you that it is by no means "one group" which is imposing its vision of morality on an entire society.

Rev. E. Charles Bauer
Bosco House

Rating System For Sermons

Editor:

The priests of today have many blessings for which they should be thankful — but a blessing that they may not be aware of and one they use quite miserly — is the blessing that they can speak out to their parishioners without fear of dismissal. To exemplify this freedom more explicitly let me share with the readers of the Courier-Journal a sermon-rating system that is making the rounds of Protestant "Newsletters" and the results that can come about if a Protestant congregation disapproves.

G — Generally acceptable to everyone. Full of inoffensive, puerile platitudes such as "Go ye into all the world and smile", and "What the world needs is peace and motherhood." This sermon is usually described as "wonderful" or "marvelous".

M — For more mature congregations. At times this sermon even makes the gospel relevant to today's issues, in subtle ways, of course. It may even contain mild suggestions for change. This sermon is generally described as "challenging" or "thought provoking", even though no one intends to take any action or change any attitudes.

R — Definitely restricted to those who are not upset by truth. This sermon "tells it like it is". It is very threatening to the comfortable. It is most often described as "disturbing" or "controversial" and usually indicates that the preacher has an outside source of income.

X — Positively limited to those who can handle explosive ideas. This sermon really "socks it to 'em". It is the kind of sermon that landed Jeremiah in the well, got Amos run out of town, and

set things up for the stoning of Stephen. It is always described as "shocking" or "in poor taste". The minister who preaches this sermon had better have his suitcase packed and life insurance paid.

Attention Priests' Council: How about announcing from all pulpits what rating your sermon will be so that your parishioners will attend one suitable to their taste?

Anne Christoff
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United Ireland Their Goal

Editor:

We the Rochester Chapter of Irish Northern Aid wish to thank Mr. Korb for putting into words our feelings regarding the Irish in the U.S. in his letter 4-26 issue of the Courier. We believe as he does that if all the Irish in the U.S. were organized into one cohesive group a United Ireland would soon become an accomplished fact.

In our initial efforts to organize our chapter, we were confronted with complacency, indifference and even hostility in a few cases, from people from whom we expected support. Being persistent, we gradually built up an interest, through donations and through a benefit dance we raised a substantial sum of money which we have forwarded on through our head office in N.Y.C. to aid the distressed people of Northern Ireland.

We, along with over 60 other chapters from coast to coast (and growing) are doing something to help the people over there. We provide financial assistance and clothing to victims of the repressive policies of the British and Stormont Governments.

On March 11 we held a dance which was considered one of the most successful functions run by the Irish here in Rochester in years. The attendance was approximately 420, to those who supported us we are deeply grateful but when we compare our attendance against the many thousands of people of Irish descent here in Rochester we cannot help wondering where the rest were that night.

In our opinion, it is time the Irish stood up to be counted, to take pride in their great heritage and to unite in this great effort to remove for all time the bonds of oppression from the hard pressed minority in Northern Ireland, who now stand with their backs to the wall defending themselves against a vastly superior enemy, just because they dared to ask for equality under the law.

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