

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 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Should Poor Suffer First?

Editor:

There have been inequities between inner city and suburban parochial schools for many years. The sign of our neglect in letting the poor suffer most and first is shameful. It would indicate to the world our Christian compassion if poverty areas received priority attention, not merely last minute survival measures.

The poor have many needs. Our Church is equipped to minister to their education needs if we will share our finances and equipment and encourage per-

sonnel to work with the needy. If parochial education must be cut back, can inner city schools be the last to close? What a dramatic gesture of the Catholic concern for those Jesus Christ loves so much. The secular press will dutifully describe such institutional sacrifice and our Church's credibility will be Good News.

It is not so shattering to envision some schools closing to free our resources for more effective work with the needy, the young adult and the often aged, many-faceted adult people of God. All studies show that Christian formation takes place primarily in the home. It is in enriching the faith and attitudes of parents that the

Church can most assist its young. We have much to learn from and with diverse peoples in family enrichment.

Research indicates that our religious instruction emphasis should begin in the Catholic's 13th year and never end throughout his lifetime. Younger children, while needing religious education geared to their level of receptivity, should not claim such a great percentage of their parish's resources. How can we justify this priority to the educationally disadvantaged ages and social classes?

Adults are best equipped to respond to the Christian message. Yet some believe that because of their intensive formal religious education as children, they've heard it all before and think they know it. The dynamism of the Gospel involves our continuing Christian development, yet we have turned off many Catholics from an adult quest by mistakenly emphasizing childhood education. The love of God is with us and our intentions are good, but how we suburban parochial school parents are letting the rest of the world suffer when we succumb to society's pressures and shelter our children. Are we practicing Christianity's superficialities or its essence?

Many of the reasons for which parochial schools were founded still exist in the inner city, but many have ceased to exist elsewhere. Suburban Catholic parents now have clout to redirect public education. Many public institutions are Catholic (made up of many nationalities, religions and races) but some could benefit by our Catholic input especially were we to avail ourselves of workshops, seminars, retreats, missions, studies, etc., given by our churches and by ecumenical and secular professionals concerned with humanizing endeavors. A very clear sign to our children of the importance of Catholic education is our participation and openness to it ourselves.

This great world desperately needs our renewal.

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CUF Decries Changes

Editor:

The Rochester St. Pius X Chapter of CATHOLICS UNITED FOR THE FAITH (CUF) wishes to remind Catholics, that Communion in the hand is "not permitted" in the United States. This proposal was rejected in April at the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Atlanta because it failed to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority.

We of CUF object to any changes in the conventional practice of receiving Holy Communion for several reasons:

1. The lack of reverence for the Eucharist, especially when so many signs of Eucharistic reverence are quickly disappearing — kneeling, nocturnal adoration, Corpus Christi celebrations, benediction, and the like.

2. The possibility of abuses and profanation, particularly among children.

3. The danger of minimizing the ministerial role of the priest.

4. This practice would be very divisive among the faithful.

There is something more to the proposed practice of Communion in the hand. This issue must be placed in the context of the countless other liturgical changes enacted in recent times which have stirred controversy among so many of the faithful



who still feel confused, disenchanted and alienated and wonder whether there ever will be an end to these questionable changes.

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How to Get Aid For Schools

Editor:

For several months it has seemed to me that an unfortunate policy of the Courier-Journal has been hastening the demise of God-centered schools. This is to assume that the average priest, religious, or layman is competent to make recommendations which are clearly contrary to the teachings of Vatican II on Christian Education.

The latest case in point is Father Henry Atwell's column in the C-J for July 19. In just about one paragraph he has gathered together the main intellectual and political errors which are bringing about the death of the God-centered schools of Jews, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics.

Father Atwell recommends that, if the government "won't invest a cent in their future citizens, I think we could save a considerable amount of money not trying to do that thankless job and concentrate instead, as the Jews do in their schools, on religious formation and heritage. That after all is our principal product and by concentrating on this a bit more we might just possibly improve it."

The Jews are a rather poor example to pick, as one can readily see by reading the New York Times for two or three years. In that period he will have read several long columns by Jewish Rabbis who are stationed at the Hillel Centers of our prestigious universities. Uniformly they bewail the fact that the Jews who come to their schools are religiously illiterate and intellectually unprepared for the assaults on their beliefs which are customary in secular universities. In the last few years the Jewish students themselves have begun to wake up to this fact, and de-

mand that something be done about it.

In my opinion, we are not going to get out of the woods on the school question until we have clear answers to the following questions: 1. Who has the right to educate? 2. What is the proper function of the government (i.e., the majority) in education? 3. What is the philosophy of the so-called American public school system? 4. Is this philosophy compatible with a God-centered view of the universe? 5. Should Catholic parents send their children voluntarily to such schools?

Sound educational philosophy, the teachings of several recent Popes, as well as of Vatican II, suggest that the answers to these questions are: 1. Parents. 2. To help parents educate their children in a school compatible with their religion. 3. Secular Humanism. 4. No. 5. Ordinarily not.

After one is on course intellectually he can then ask: what do we do about it? Proper education as American citizens, as well as the explicit teachings of Vatican II, show that the true course is political action.

Earlier in his column Father Atwell says: "Now is his (the President's) chance to put the money where his mouth is . . . but he can't muster the strength to give a nickel to a Catholic school."

If I were President Nixon, I would not give one cent to help flood-damaged Catholic schools until Catholics stood up and roared for aid. (No politician is required to be a damn fool.) Until the Catholics of this diocese do this, Bishop Hogan would do well to ignore Fr. Atwell's suggestion of a trip to Washington. (Incidentally, it should be a group of laymen, not the bishop, who goes to Washington. A bishop who comes to Washington without assurance of strong political support represents one vote. As President Roosevelt said: "Nothing happens by accident in politics. If it happens, you can bet it was planned."

When we stand up and fight like men, and American citizens, we'll get our dues. Otherwise, we don't deserve it.

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FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday Readings: (R1) Dn. 7:9-10, 13-14. (R2) 2 Pt. 1:16-19. (R3) Mt. 17: 1-9.

According to Mark's gospel, the first half of our Lord's public life was concentrated on teaching the apostles about who He is. Once they had grasped the lesson, as shown by Peter's confession of the divinity of Jesus, then our Lord shifted the focus of His teachings to His coming death and resurrection. It was at this critical juncture, when His prophetic role had reached its climax and His priestly role was about to begin, that the evangelists situate the transfiguration.

The transfiguration confirmed Peter's confession of faith in the divinity of Jesus; but more, it served as an introduction to His passion, death, and resurrection. That was why Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. They symbolized the law and the prophets, the heart of the Old Testament. Their appearance with Jesus showed the unity between the Old and the New Testament: the Old sheds light on the New. In this instance, Moses and Elijah spoke of the passion and death of Jesus to help the apostles grasp its meaning.

Moses had struck a rock in the desert and life-giving water gushed from it. He talked of the Rock, Jesus. He would be struck, and the waters of life, baptism, would flow from His dying.

Elijah had offered sacrifice on Mount Carmel. His sacrifice had brought down fire from heaven.

Jesus' death would bring new fire from heaven — the Holy Spirit.

Through water and the spirit, the new Israel would be born. So Peter was there on the Mount, because he was to be the rock on which the new Israel was to be built. James was there, because he, like Jesus, would be the first apostle to die for the Church. John was also there, because he would be the last of the apostles to die and the one to care for Mary, Mother of the Church.

We could well meditate on the many truths implicit in transfiguration. Some of the affirmations of the transfiguration are:

- Humanity and divinity are perfectly united in the Person of Jesus.

- Man is capable of a new and higher life, as shown by the glorification of Jesus.

- The future life is a reality, as evidenced by the presence of Moses and Elijah.

- Those in heaven are vitally close to and concerned about us on earth.

- The death of Jesus was not an accident, but a goal to be won.

- Christianity is distinctly a supernatural religion.

- Jesus is present even when the moments of joy have passed.

Like Peter, James, and John we have our moments on the Mount. We are filled with joy. All seems a delight. Like a summer vacation, we just do not want it to end. But it must end, as did the rapture of the apostles on the Mount. Earth is not heaven. Earth is the place for work to be done, the place where joy and suffering are yoked together. Often sorrow follows close upon joy. Joy prepared for the sorrow: transfiguration, for Calvary.

After the moments of joy, how dull and drab everything must seem, as it did for Peter, John and James! After their ecstasy on the Mount, even Jesus did not thrill them. They saw no one but Jesus. Imagine — "but Jesus"! Similarly, our religion, our faith, the Mass, the Christian life — all these at times, and often, can seem tasteless, flat, insipid.

However, in all our experiences of joy and sorrow, there is that which passes and that which remains. The joys and sorrows come and go, but the presence of Jesus does not. He is always with us — even when we come down from the mountain to prosaic life. "They did not see anyone but Jesus" — but He is enough!

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