

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.

Conscience And Housing

Editor:

Congratulations to William C. Schneider, who had an excellent letter in your Aug. 16 edition. I would like to add a few thoughts about UDC. That state agency was set up by the legislature because the private sector failed to provide living units for young couples starting their lives, for families with limited incomes and for senior citizens with low, fixed incomes. It was a commendable endeavor three years ago and it is attempting to do a creditable job today. If it has shortcomings, they can be

remedied if we seek avenues of accommodation.

An objective study of housing needs in Monroe County has been published as the Wilson Report. It finds that 59,000 new housing units are needed in Monroe County by 1975. This then becomes one of our most urgent community problems. Why can we not cooperate to "harbor the harborless" in Christ's name?

If progress is to be made, you and your neighbors will have to recognize the housing crisis, investigate the efforts being made in your community, then open your hearts and respond.

It is sad that today's political aspirant cannot be elected in this area if he espouses low-

income housing and in this he is reflecting our collective conscience. Sadder still is the fact that Catholic pulpits are silent on the moral implications of open housing. We hear so few pertinent sermons that reading the Christian Science Monitor during the homily would be more ethically edifying.

Thomas G. Shea
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On Man-made Church Laws

Editor:

Mr. Florack's reply (Courier-Journal 8-16-72) to our (CUF) letter concerning communion in the hand seems to be disparaging Church rules and regulations simply because they are man-made and subject to change. I find it difficult to believe that as an informed Catholic he could be ignorant of the Church's legislative authority to make such laws for the good of her members as the changing circumstances of history might render necessary.

Nevertheless I think he missed the point completely. If the manner of distributing the Holy Eucharist is such a minor point, as he states, then why change it at all. The CUF isn't against change, only unauthorized and capricious change. Even those who might disagree with our objections against communion in the hand cannot overlook the fact that the American Conference of Bishops turned down the proposal.

Msgr. Ronald Knob put it very aptly in his book, *The Belief of Catholics*: "It is a poor and haggling faith that will believe the Church to be infallible when her decision is made upon faith and morals, yet will not render even a bare assent or obedience to her disciplinary requirements."

Anthony Acciari, Chairman
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On Preaching The Gospel

Editor:

"If the faith fails to find any believers," said Pope Paul VI, "is this because it is taught in an old, abstruse way, cut off from life and contrary to the tendencies and tastes of today? The sobering fact is that most Catholic Christians are not sufficiently enriched by what they hear from church pulpits, their major channel of contact with Christian truth."

Christian history gives proof that successful preaching never went "contrary to the tastes and tendencies" of the people who listened. St. Francis of Assisi urged his fellow friars to use song as well as speech in their sermons.

As the followers of St. Francis spread the gospel of Christ throughout Italy in the 13th century, they avoided any abstruse theology; they did not even ask their congregations to practice the chastity, poverty and obedience which they themselves had vowed. Their preaching was surely cut "to the tastes and tendencies" of the times in which they lived. "Fear and honor God," they said in words the uneducated could clearly understand. "Praise and bless Him . . . Repent . . . for you know that

we shall soon die . . . Abstain from evil; persevere in the good." Such a simple sermon oft repeated was sufficient to turn the worldlings to God. But a much stronger influence made Franciscan preaching most effective. It was their contempt of riches and their love of poverty that made many men listen. The Franciscans practiced what they preached and in so doing won the hearts of men everywhere.

In the same 13th century another saint appeared who was to do for preaching what St. Francis of Assisi had done. This was St. Dominic. "Together they saved the Church," St. Dominic explicitly gave the name of the Order of Preachers to his religious followers who were thus described in the England of 1140.

"Very sparing in food and raiment, possessing neither good nor silver nor anything of their own, they went through cities, towns and villages, preaching the Gospel . . . They went shod only with the Gospel. They slept in their clothes on mats, and laid stones for pillows under their heads."

When the Reformation came in the 16th century, man did not turn away from preaching. Calvin knew that the word of God could not be known unless it was transmitted by word of mouth. "The whole household shall attend the sermons on Sunday, except when someone shall be left at home to tend the children or the cattle. If there is preaching on weekdays all who can must come." Such was the command of Calvin. His preaching could not have been successful if he did not cater "to the tastes and tendencies" of his time.

What has made the preaching of God's words successful at all times and places? Perhaps William James, the American psychologist, offers the best advice to those preachers who do not wish to go contrary "to the tastes and tendencies" of today:

"No one wants," he said, "to hear a lecture (or a sermon) on a subject completely disconnected with his previous knowledge, but we all like lectures on subjects of which we know a little already . . . If the topic be highly abstract, show its nature by concrete examples. If it be unfamiliar, trace some point of analogy in it with the known. If it be inhuman, make it part of a story. If it be difficult, couple its acquisition with some prospect of personal gain . . ."

With the help of James, and the examples of effective preaching listed is there any reason for thinking Pope Paul's plea for making the faith better known should go unanswered?

John J. A. Overlander
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'Rebuild' Doing Job

Editor:

I have just visited two homes of widows who lost practically everything in the flood.

Last week they were depressed. This week they are thrilled!

Why? "Because somebody loves me." Two parishes have adopted them in the Rebuild Program sponsored by the Office of Human Development (328-6400).

Thirty-five congregations have already responded to assist the elderly and sick in this practical manner.

I hope more people and priests will offer walls and warmth to our afflicted people. Since construction is so slow and costly, many of our people are already suffering these cold nights.

May God bless all of you who take this opportunity, a true work of mercy.

Father Elmer J. Schmidt
St. Vincent de Paul
Corning

Sen. Laverne Offers Thanks

Editor:

Through your columns, I would like the opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the many good citizens of Rochester who have supported me over the past 12 years.

The challenge of government service has been one I have enjoyed throughout my tenure, despite the fact it has become more difficult recently as the issues have become more complex.

The result has been a sense of increasing alienation by the people, decreasing the chance for rational solutions to many problems. New approaches must be sought to remedy this.

As I have stated, I have chosen not to run, but want to express my warmest appreciation to so many people who not only have been of help to me, particularly in these trying times, but who have assisted me over the years.

I expect to be a member of this community for the rest of my days. I will continue to be interested in the welfare of our community and while I shall become a "private citizen" it is not my intention to become a "silent citizen".

Sen. Thomas Laverne

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday Readings: (R1) Jer. 20: 7-9. (R2) Rom. 12: 1-2. (R3) Mt. 16: 21-27.

This month, the Year of Renewal begins in the Rochester Diocese. St. Paul wrote often about renewal. In the Second Reading this Sunday, he says: "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

What is renewal?

How can one be renewed?

Renewal is essentially a change in a person — a change in one's outlook, attitude, way of thinking. From this conversion, a new life-style should spontaneously flow.

Renewal differs from revolution precisely in the fact that it concentrates on persons, rather than on things. Revolution, on the contrary, focuses on establishments, on structures. It seeks to change things and invariably leaves persons untouched.

Yet the problems in life, as always, are never in our stars, but in ourselves. Our environment does not make us, we make our environment. We are not the creatures of our surroundings, we are the creators. Man, therefore, needs — not revolutions — but renewal!

And how can man be renewed?

St. Paul gave the answer — "by the renewal of your mind." Renewal starts from within man — in his mind. As one thinks, he acts.

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