

# 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.

## Missions Need Literature

Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic Pamphlets and Magazines direct to the Foreign Missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of Missionary Priests and Nuns who need Catholic literature.

Write direct to:

Mary Conway  
14 Castle St.  
Cork, Ireland

## On Christian Apathy

Editor:

Three cheers to Thomas G. Shea and his letter to the editor on Aug. 31 regarding conscience and housing!

Along the same vein, I think that it is sad to see those professing to be Christians who are completely apathetic to the whole area of racial and religious discrimination involving housing, employment, welfare and education. How great it would be to see a series of articles and Sunday homilies dealing with the Christian conscience and these most

important issues.

Believe me — prejudice may be not so overt these days but covertly it is a very real issue which many choose to ignore! Can one be truly Christian and apathetic to these problems at the same time?

Patricia A. Geraci  
17 Frederick Road  
Pittsford

## Missioners Cite Roles

Editor:

Greetings from South America. At the present time we are going through a rather rigorous language course in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in preparation for work in the Rochester parish of San Jose Obrero (St. Joseph the Worker) in La Paz.

Cochabamba is a fertile valley between the vast altiplano of the north and the rich jungles of the south. From our windows we can watch in awe the huge mountains that surround the valley. It is a remarkable sight.

Even though we are in the midst of winter the days are very warm. The sun is brilliant and one forgets that it is winter — far cry from the bold, cold winter of Rochester's January and February.

We cannot say we miss the taste of the local Rochester brew as many TV travelers do, but what we do hope is to bring to the people of La Paz from Rochester a word and a sign of your concern for them, some of that spirit of community and hope that inspires so many of your parishes and groups. We also believe that the people of La Paz have much to complement the other and bring each to a fuller comprehension of the living Church in the world.

We have many goals in choosing this work but one paramount goal is to establish a stronger and more visible link between the community here and the community "back home".

As we, a priest and a layman, become students together and prepare to join in the work of this parish we want to express a word of gratitude to those in the diocese who have sent us on the mission with their prayer, their alms, and their good wishes. Be assured that you are daily in our prayers.

In Christ,  
Tim McCluskey  
Fr. Dan Tormey  
Cochabamba, Bolivia

Editor's Note: The following is a Spanish translation of the letter from our missionaries in Bolivia.

Reciban saludos de Sud America. Al presente nos encontramos estudiando español, en el Instituto de Idiomas en Cochabamba-Bolivia. Es un curso intensivo.

Aprendemos el español para prepararnos para trabajar en la parroquia de San Jose Obrero en La Paz.

Cochabamba es un valle fértil situado entre el amplio altiplano con el cual limita al norte y al sur se encuentran los Yungas. Desde nuestras ventanas podemos ver asombrados las enormes montañas que rodean el valle. Es una vista hermosa.

Aunque estamos a mediados de invierno los días son calidos, el sol brilla con todo su resplandor y uno se olvida de que es invierno, ya que es tan diferente



"AS SOON AS I FIND IT, I WANT EVERY PARISH ORGANIZATION TO HAVE A COPY OF MY REPORT ON 'WAYS TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY!'"

del frío invierno de Rochester durante los meses de enero y febrero. No podemos decir que extranamos la cerveza de Rochester como muchos viajeros de T.V. lo dicen. Pero lo que esperamos es traer a la gente de La Paz una palabra de interés de la gente de Rochester algo del espíritu de Comunidad y esperanza que inspiran tantas de nuestras parroquias y organizaciones.

Creemos también que la gente de La Paz tiene mucho que enseñar a la Iglesia en Rochester. Ambas comunidades pueden complementarse y así adquirir una completa comprensión de la Iglesia Viviente en el mundo actual. Tenemos muchas metas en

nuestro trabajo pero la más ansiada es establecer un vínculo más fuerte y visible entre la comunidad de La Paz y la nuestra en Rochester.

Nosotros, un sacerdote y un laico que somos estudiantes y nos preparamos para trabajar en esta parroquia, queremos expresar nuestra palabra de gratitud a aquellas personas en nuestra Diócesis, que nos han enviado a esta misión con sus oraciones, su ayuda económica y sus buenos deseos. Todos ustedes están en nuestras oraciones diarias.

En Cristo  
Tim McCluskey  
Fr. Dan Tormey

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

## Word For Sunday

Sunday Readings: (R1) Sir. 27: 30; 28: 1-7. (R2) Rom. 14: 7-9. (R3) Mt. 18: 21-35.

You have heard this one. I am sure. What is it that we all have, but nobody wants, and yet when we lose it, we are sorry? It is our tempers. Sunday's Readings are about anger and forgiveness.

Ben Sira wrote two centuries before Christ. From the passage quoted in the First Reading, we can see that Israel had come a long way from the ancient law, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." That law forbade unbridled revenge. It legislated that punishment could equal, but not exceed, the injury.

Israel had learned from her long history that the Lord is not vengeful, but "kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion." Ben Sira concluded that God's people should be like their God. He is forgiving, so should they be. In fact Ben Sira anticipated Jesus and warned that only one who forgives can expect forgiveness from God.

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches Peter the same lesson. It is ironic that it is Peter who started the discussion about forgiveness. He would need so much forgiving himself! When Peter first walked with Jesus and heard Him talk of forgiveness, it made little sense. Peter loved Jesus so much that he felt no one could betray Him. Should one do so, then he deserved not to be forgiven. At least that was the way Peter felt in the beginning of Jesus' life.

But day to day contact with the Master, seeing His slowness to anger, His meekness, His spirit

of forgiveness toward sinners, and even toward the Pharisees, began to mellow Peter. So after a couple of years, Peter made what he thought was a grand gesture of forgiveness. He asked Jesus, "Lord, when my brother wrongs me, how often must I forgive him? Seven times?" Peter felt he was being more than generous.

What Peter was really saying was that after all there is a limit to forgiving. Without proposing any limit, Peter showed he still considered that to forgive was an exceptional act. He implied forgiveness was foregoing a right which could at any time be reasserted. He saw forgiveness as a revocable measure — not a law of the kingdom.

Would a mother ask, "How often must I love my child?"

Or an artist, "How often must I love what is beautiful?"

Or a Christian, "How often must I be kind?"

Any answer misleads, because the questions asked should not have been asked. They are based on a false notion of love, beauty, and kindness.

So Jesus' 70 times 7 is saying that numbers have nothing to do with the matter. Forgiveness must be a perpetual state of mind, the Christian attitude. There is no room for non-forgiveness.

The parable Jesus used drives this home with irrefutable logic. A king forgives one of the governor's of his province who has embezzled \$10 million in tax monies. This governor in turn refuses to forgive a fellow servant a debt of \$25. Imagine! If you were the king, how would you have reacted? Could you have done differently than the king?

Well, that is exactly our situation. Sin makes us debtors to God. But for a mere change of heart, He forgives and forgets all. But can He forgive us if we do not forgive our brothers also from our hearts? Do we not put ourselves in the same situation as the governor of the parable when we refuse to forgive one another? And yet, how often we nurse a bitterness over some misunderstanding or injury at home, or work or business. Not infrequently a husband and a wife are split asunder because one will not say "I'm sorry." Or the other won't say, "It was my fault too."

Pent up anger, resentment, hate, discord, have created a market for sedatives.

Twenty-two hundred years ago Ben Sira wrote: "Wrath and anger are hateful things . . . and to overlook faults wisdom."

BOB CONSIDINE

## On the Line



Sammy Davis Jr., who seems to have become Mr. Republican, in that he can hug the Republican President on TV, hasn't as yet taken on the image and likeness of some of his predecessors in the Party.

"The Honorable Mr. Marigold," a biography of the late Sen. Everett Dirksen by his wife and Normal Lee Browning, gives Dirksen's definition of a Republican.

"I'm an old-fashioned, garden variety of Republican who believes in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Abraham Lincoln, who accepts the challenges as they arise from time to time, who is not unappreciative of the fact that this is a dynamic economy in which we live and sometimes you have to change your position."

But Sammy's on his way. At least, he changed his position.

Dirksen was one of the political world's last pure phrase-makers. Neither Nixon nor McGovern could carry either his Funk or his Wagnall.

"I must use beautiful words," he once said. "I never know when I might have to eat them."

Dirksen was a superb orator of the old school, given to shaking his great gray mane and letting his voice run the gamut between whisper and roar.

"The voice is like an organ and must be suited to the occasion, the subject and audience," he wrote. "Sometimes all stops are out and sometimes, for contrast, it must be soft and modulated . . . The oilcan is mightier than the sword."

He was a spellbinder, of course, and his biographers give us a clue to his odd know-how in this book, published by Doubleday.

"I do not write speeches," he told an interviewer. "I find a quiet room, sit at a desk, and stare at the wall. If there is a crack in the wall, so much the better; there is no greater stimulus to the imagination. How did that crack get there? Does it go completely through the plaster? The mind seeks the answers and out of this reflection you make a start, you lay out a text, you develop it, and you prepare the final clout."

Bob Hope described Dirksen's voice as sounding like a "duet between Tallulah Bankhead and Wallace Beery." He was never hesitant to use it, whether he had anything to say at the moment or not. A story went with that willingness to speak up.

"One of the Senator's favorite stories," his wife writes, "was about the man who bought a parrot that could speak six languages. He paid the shop owner \$35 for the bird and another \$15 for the cage, and asked that the bird be delivered to his home that afternoon. Later, the man bounded up the steps to his house, opened the front door and called out to his wife, 'Did the bird arrive?'"

"The wife said yes, it had, and she had already put it in the oven."

"The man shouted, 'But dear, he was a rare bird. He could speak six languages.'"

"Well, why didn't he speak up?" the wife said.

Why the marigold in the title of the book?

"You can't beat a marigold," he liked to say. "It has humility, it has pungency, and it is resistant to man and bug and beast."

So was Ev.

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