

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.

Father Hogan: Thanks to All

Editor:

The early morning hours of June 23 saw an incredible scene pass before our eyes. Fourteen feet of water hurried through 87% of our parish, causing terror and destruction beyond description.

Father Schmidt, our Sisters, and myself had our vantage point from the second story of our school where we were surrounded by one hundred people who had sought refuge there. We watched the statues float

through the doors of our beautiful Church, carried recklessly by the torrent. Fearful of the gasoline and oil which surrounded us and due to lack of provisions, we left the building by boat as darkness approached to seek food and shelter after a hectic 15 hours of watchful waiting.

Father Brill and our twin housekeepers were taken from the second floor of our rectory by a rescue squad at three o'clock in the afternoon on that fateful day.

Nearly six months have passed since Agnes hit us with a vengeance and little warning.

We now pause to give thanks

2 Obligations,

2 Masses

Those who attend Mass on Sunday evening, Dec. 24, do not at the same time fulfill Sunday obligation and obligation of attendance of Mass on Christmas Day, Dec. 25.

Since there are two days when Mass is obligatory, two separate attendances are required of Catholics.

to God and His people who were so kind to us in our hours of desperation—days without drinking water, heat, clothing, and living in crowded places away from home with concern for those who had been separated from their families.

In a flooded area, one returns to dig in to remove the mud and silt which has covered every inch of the water line. Properties and furnishings literally fall apart and little can be salvaged, so the first step is to tear down and discard even the appliances of the home. The next step is to begin the long, difficult and expensive task of rebuilding.

As we approach the Christmas Season of 1972, we pause to give thanks to the Courier-Journal which made our plight known and brought so many people from the various regions of the diocese and beyond to give us a helping hand. Religious, relatives, and friends came from far and near to give of their talent, time, and funds, and words of encouragement. Many were not of our faith and there was no generation gap in this emergency. Hours and material compensation were never mentioned.

Many complain about our government. Yet, it was a federal grant which enabled us to reopen the four grades of our school and bus the remaining grades to Corning Catholic School South. It was the arrival of some state aid which will help us to operate this school year. It is the loan of substantial amounts of money over a 30-year period at one percent which will enable us to rebuild. It was HUD which furnished us with mobile homes when we could not return to our own homes. What other country could do more in time of such a disaster?

The United Fund of Corning-Painted Post is sponsoring a special drive to enable the churches of this community to recover more quickly. I know of no precedent to this action in any other area.

Recognition should be given to the Office of Human Development, which continues to have its headquarters in our school under the capable direction of Father Peter Bayer. Their coordination of the volunteer workers has helped so many, especially the elderly.

I can never adequately express my thanks to all who have helped. I am hopeful that this letter will reach many of those to whom we owe so much. May God bless them and grant them a Blessed Christmas!

Father Joseph F. Hogan, Pastor
St. Vincent de Paul Church
Corning, New York 14830

Gift Helps The Needy

Editor:

We are making a donation to the Christmas Fund instead of sending Christmas cards. Perhaps other people may feel the

Wednesday, December 20, 1972

same way and find the results more beneficial.

Mr. and Mrs. George Leary
3067 E. Henrietta Rd.
Rochester

Costa Column Commended

Editor:

Pat Costa's column, "As I See It", concerning television's portrayal of the abortion issue as a laughing matter, is one of the best articles I have seen in the Catholic Courier. She should be highly commended for the review of "Maude" which in my opinion, is one of a continuing line of tasteless programs aired this season, most certainly the episode of which she speaks.

I would point out, however, that the letter-writing public can go a step further than the excellent references she listed. They should write to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) c/o Dean Burch, Washington, D.C. 20201 to lodge a complaint.

FCC law is most explicit and states simply that the radio and television airwaves belong to us. We, the public, own them! We do not have to stand for such programming. We can bring down the wrath of the FCC upon

them. For it is this organization which can deny or hold up a radio or television station's license, which must be renewed periodically.

Television also is up to its ears in trouble with the surgeon general of the United States and several Senate subcommittees for its portrayal of violence, misleading and false advertising, and the hawking of over-the-counter drugs. Three cases are now pending against the FCC, Federal Trade Commission and Federal Drug Administration by a militant private group called Action for Children's TV (ACT) which is doing something about the reports of increase in vitamin and lead poisoning in children who take overdoses of the patent medicine sold by their favorite TV characters.

The major networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, are very sensitive to public criticism and pressure. Complain to them and send carbon copies to the FCC and the surgeon general, Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201.

The best way to register a complaint is to hit the sponsors in the pocketbook. Return the products listed in last week's article, with a letter of explanation and boycott, and ask for a refund!

Margi Lash
10 West Main
Phelps, N.Y. 14532

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) 2 Sm. 7:1-5, 8-11, 16. (R2) Rom. 16: 25-27. (R3) Lk. 1: 26-38.

The Advent Season climaxes with the Annunciation story. The background of this Gospel story is the whole history of mankind. The terse dialogue between Gabriel and Mary is a tapestry of quotations echoing the Old Testament.

The Annunciation story is not a tape recording of an interview or a page from Mary's diary. It is a meditation of the early Christian Church on the meaning of the birth of Christ for the history of salvation. Luke presents in a single sentence the place and persons involved.

The place is Nazareth, nestling (as only villages in Palestine do) in a circle of protecting hills. Nazareth was so secluded that it is not mentioned even once in the Old Testament. The Talmud, which names obscure places aplenty, passes it over. Even the garrulous historian Josephus, who enumerated over 200 towns and cities in Galilee, does not mention Nazareth. It was a place fit for a hidden God!

And the persons were an angel from God and a virgin betrothed. Three times the angel spoke.

His first words were, "Rejoice, O highly favored daughter!" This is the new translation of our familiar, "Hail, full of grace!" Scholars have worked hard over this short expression, but have not caught the beauty of the original Greek. The new translation, however, better preserves the original meaning, for "rejoice" recalls the specific Messianic

passage from Zephaniah (3: 14-17), which Luke had in mind. "Hail" is only a greeting; but "rejoice" is an invitation to be happy because the Messianic time is come.

"O highly favored one!" is preferable to "full of grace!" "Full of grace" puts the emphasis on Mary; Luke wanted to put the emphasis on God — the source of grace. Luke wanted to show God as working in behalf of Mary for a long time past.

Luke was implying that she had received more — from and through God's anticipation of Jesus' redemptive work — than anyone else in the Old or New Testaments, especially her Immaculate Conception.

The next words of the angel explained what further favor God wished to grant Mary. "You shall . . . bear a child . . . called Son of the Most High."

Finally, the angel revealed the transcendent origin of this Child. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

The Holy Spirit initiates all the great works of God, from creation to Jesus' own ministry and the birth of the Church.

His overshadowing Mary is an allusion to the shekinah, or God's visible presence on earth through a cloud. A cloud covered the Ark of the Covenant. As a cloud came down on Solomon's new temple to symbolize God's coming to his home, so the same image is used for the coming of the Son of God to Mary.

Mary's answer to the angel's discourse was, "Let it be done to me as you say."

St. Paul said to his Galatians that he was in labor pains until Christ be formed in them. Christ was first formed by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. If Christ is to be formed in our hearts, and in others, then we must cultivate devotion to the Holy Spirit and to Mary.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, we can but pray to Him daily. "Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with the love of Christ."

Regarding Mary, we can but strive to live by her rule: "Not what I wish, but what I ought to do."

Like the forming of Christ Himself, our Christ-like transformation must be a lifelong effort.

My Christmas wish is that the Holy Spirit and our Lady cause Christ to be born anew in all of you.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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