

LETTERS

Practice Questioned

Editor:

St. Paul taught that, not by natural law but by custom of the Church, men's heads should be uncovered and women's heads should be covered as a visible expression of reverence for God (cf. 1 Cor. 11:4 ff). The Church endowed these customs with sanctity and, by Canon 1262-2, certified them, not as mere customs but as required, holy forms of worship.

About 3 years ago, an erroneous news release stated that women are no longer required to cover their heads in church.

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.

Rome's correction of this error, unlike the error itself, was not published by papers. Consequently, many have the mistaken impression that Canon 1262-2 has been abolished.

The practice of this error continues because many who earlier gave spiritual food now feed upon and distribute hogwash that swells the hellish circle of spiritual poverty. These denigrate, if not totally destroy, the sacred substance of canon law.

In his address to canon lawyers at the Gregorian University on December 13, 1972, Pope Paul VI discussed both the false notions which underlie the errors of those who criticize canon law, scorn and neglect it, indeed consider it harmful, and the

sacred nature of canon law. "Therefore it is clear both from Revelation and from the exercise of law which is found among the Apostles that Canon Law is a sacred one, entirely distinct from civil law. It is a law proceeding from the very will of Christ."

Courier-Journal readers can be leaders who show that "the very will of Christ" is more than to say, "Our Father... hallowed be Thy name... Thy will be done."

Joseph J. Murray
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Expert opinion among canon lawyers says that, "A solid, standing custom among the faithful contrary to a law abrogates the law." This means that, while the letter of the law about covering the head still stands, common practice in the Church has made that section of the law without effect.

Heartfelt Thanks

Editor:

I hope I can use this means in your paper to convey to so many my heartfelt thanks for the responses I received from my request for used greeting cards (Courier-Journal 1/10/73). It was terrific. May God bless each and every one.

Mrs. Frank Smith
31 Quincy St.
Rochester

Atwell Column Attacked

Editor:

Within the past few months, Pope Paul VI has publicly taught on such subjects as:

- the Church's unchanged and unchangeable doctrine condemning abortion. 12-9-72.
- those who want a Church without a doctrine, authority or sacrifice. 11-22-72.
- the devil and his influence on people and societies. 11-15-72.
- the true nature and manifestations of the Holy Spirit and His works.

The Courier-Journal, as a Catholic paper, might be well advised in the Year of Renewal, to carry the complete texts of the papal teachings (rather than excerpts or someone else's or press opinion of what the Pope said).

Perhaps then Father Atwell wouldn't consider the Pope's statements a "bland blend" or the Church "slumped into lukewarm mush."

I must argue Father's statement that the "church has neither clear goals or directions" (I assume he means the Catholic Church).

Too many want to throw the baby (the Spiritual Church) out with the bath water (the physical manifestation of the Church).

If we have the True Faith in the Catholic Church as promised by Christ, it is our human faults that refuse to accept or see the directions or goals established by Christ and implemented by the authority He gave His vicar-in-time, to instruct us in faith and morals. So we despair or refuse to accept the goals or directions.

Father Atwell considers us "dead center" and would like to see us move. Which way? Liberal? Conservative?

Perhaps Father's "dead-center" is actually and hopefully a period of stabilization to help undo the years of polarization in which extremists have wreaked physical and spiritual violence. It could be a time for reflection on how to amalgamate the best of the old and the new. It might

Wednesday, January 24, 1973



I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ATTITUDE! COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS WHERE IT'S AT!

be a time to realize little is accomplished amidst strife. How can we as individuals or groups reach peace when we are torn as to liturgy, doctrine, social action, etc.?

Progress is built on a solid foundation and not change for change's sake. Perhaps this is a winnowing time, or a hiatus, in which terms such as liberal and conservative Catholic could be discarded — and the reasons for them.

We might once again all be just Catholics.

Mrs. Herbert Schuhart
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New Closings Lamented

Editor:

Congratulations to CICP and the school task force chairman, Sister Barbara Fox, for working out a feasible plan for their schools and for working so hard to keep the educational mission to the poor in our own inner city.

Why must they struggle so hard? Because we, in other parts of the city, will not recognize this mission. Father Shamon, in his many talks on regionalism, says, "Each region can work together and make joint decisions on problems of Catholic schools."

Bishop Hogan said, "When we close Catholic schools we cannot discriminate against inner city schools but they could not do it alone. They need to depend on all of us who live outside of the poverty areas."

Therefore, St. Theresa's has closed; St. Peter and Paul has closed; and now St. Lucy's and St. Francis Xavier. Will the next

closing be St. Thomas More or St. Louis in Pittsford? In 10 years will the only Catholic schools be those which serve the upper and upper-middle economic class?

The challenge to regional coordinators is: Blessed are those who hunger, thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.

Margaret Joynt
32 Sandpiper Lane
Pittsford, N.Y.

Letter Writers Clarify Point

Editor:

We don't seem to remember asking anyone to believe "that if sexual love need decrease, giving need decrease." In fact, we don't believe this ourselves. We do believe in other expressions of love as well as the sexual and we try hard to share thoughts and feelings with each other every day as a conscious act of caring.

The quality of sex has more to do with happiness than the quantity. More is not better, and less is not better, but best is what is "enough" for the individual couple. The quality of sexual expression cannot be good unless other ways of expressing love also are present. We never meant to divorce one from the other. Both are indispensable.

Only the individual couple can decide whether abstinence at this or that time decreases happiness for them. We, however, meant only to affirm the beauty and the value of the sexual relationship itself and we are sorry that lack of space prevented us from explaining more fully in our previous letter.

Jerry and Terry Patti
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FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Dt. 18:15-24; (R2) 1 Cor. 7:32-35; (R3) Mk. 1:21-28.

The first event of Jesus' ministry, as Mark presents it, is one that expresses his authority in word and then in action.

The event took place in Capernaum, a small but busy and thriving city.

Jesus chose Capernaum as his headquarters during his public ministry because it afforded easy communication, by land or lake, with many flourishing towns and an easy avenue of escape into more secure regions should this be necessary.

The synagogue in Capernaum was an architectural gem. Present-day ruins reveal how large and white were the blocks of limestone that made up its walls and how finely carved were its architraves and friezes. A God-fearing Roman centurion had it built and presented it to the Jews. They were so grateful that later in our Lord's life when this centurion's servant was ill, the Jewish elders besought Jesus to heal him because, they said, "he loves our people and even built our synagogue for us" (Lk. 7:5).

To this synagogue on a Sabbath Jesus came to teach. But it was not his teaching that struck the people. It was His authority — "He taught with authority, and not like the Scribes."

The Scribes in their teaching most certainly did not lack assurance and self-confidence. They were unquestionably dogmatic and intolerant. But they al-

ways spoke with borrowed authority. They always quoted others, were slaves to "authorities," were bogged down with interminable details and puerilities.

Jesus, on the contrary, did not quote authorities. He was the authority. His thoughts breathed, his words burned. He drew his illustrations from the sights and sounds in which the people lived, not from the desiccated decisions of the Doctors of the Law. On this occasion, he evidenced the might of this authority by driving an evil demon out of a man with a word.

Whence this authority? Surely, because He is more than a mere man. Yet even this claiming to be God's own Son would not have held people spellbound, been able to drive evil out of man. Whence, then, this authority? The Greek word for authority (exousia) literally means "out from himself." Jesus' authority "came out from himself." It was the kind of authority that comes when one lives what one teaches, the kind of authority that emanates from a person who is selfless, compassionate, meek, radiating love for others, who is willing to die for his convictions.

One word that turns off young people today is authority. This is so, because so often the authority they have experienced is something totally divorced from the person exercising it. The image of authority they see is the boss — one who merely gives orders, who lords it over others, without any personal involvement on his own part.

Yet it was precisely the authority of Jesus which impressed people. This was so, because all his commands issued from his own deep personal conviction and care. His authority came out from himself, because He was a Man who really cared for others.

Perhaps religious education is not having the impact it ought to have on youth today, precisely because there may be too much teaching going on like that of the Scribes. So-called authorities do not impress; nor do mere words — even though they be existential!

Oh, there is so much learning today! So much jargon! But so little conversion! So much talk of love. So much talk of peace and so little peace. So much talk of community and so little unity.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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Vol. 87, No. 39 January 24, 1973

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 15c; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$6.00; Canada and South America, \$8.50; other foreign countries, \$9.50. Offices, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. (716) 454-7050. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

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