

A Healthy Sign

Many times those of us in the trenches are guilty of underestimating the problems of the boss. For instance, in these times when criticism is a la mode, those in charge by their very station are prey to fault-finding, which ranges from the justified to nitpicking.

Think of the Pope. Though it would seem that his biggest critics are to be found among liberal elements of the Church — particularly over birth control, he also catches it from those on the other end of the spectrum.

For instance, a French traditionalist priest has accused Pope Paul VI of the "self-destruction of the Church," claiming that "the doctrines of Vatican II and of Pope Paul are foreign excrescences on the body of Christian doctrine . . ."

There is an old newspaper axiom that if extremists at both ends of issues are upset with you then you must be doing something right. Pope Paul should be accorded at least that much credit.

A Dream Realized

We can all learn something from a story of unselfish love that came from Religious News Service this week. Kathy Murray, a young woman dying of cancer, watched her husband receive his master's degree in divinity with honors at a special commencement program at Midwestern (Southern) Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

The special ceremony was invoked by a vote of the faculty to allow David A. Murray, 25, to receive his degree earlier so Kathy could attend. Commencement is in May.

The couple learned last October that Kathy has terminal cancer and doctors are not sure how long she will live. The graduation became a major goal for both of them, since Kathy had helped support her husband through the seminary.

Some 300 attended the special commencement and Mrs. Murray "appeared poised and radiant, the picture of a proud wife as she sat beside her husband."

Millard J. Bernquist, acting president of Midwestern, quoted Mrs. Murray as saying, "We just have to hold onto our dreams. We can't let our dreams go."

After the ceremony the couple returned to her parents' farm in Beebe, Ark. "We will stay there until we see where God leads us next," she said.

Mass Critics?

"The atmosphere of relaxed concentration is one that is extremely rare . . ."

Does this partial sentence smack of comment in a restaurant guide or in a hotel brochure? Let us finish the sentence.

... in an English liturgy."

That's right, a Catholic journal in England, The Clergy Review has begun publishing the Good Church Guide critiquing Masses at various churches.

Talking about one service, the critic, of which there are 30, noted:

"Here the children simply enjoy themselves; some serve on the altar with obvious glee; some are allowed to light the candles and arrange the altar; some just rush up and down the aisles bashing their fathers on the head with a prayer book; and at the kiss of peace they hug their friends and throw their arms around the celebrant's neck with complete abandon."

Religious News Service didn't say so but it is possible that the guide rates the Masses. Could you imagine "four stars for St. Mary's," or St. John's "a bellringer."

The idea is only experimental and we hope it will end there. After all, the Mass already is the longest-running performance in Christendom and its success emanates from something more than good reviews. Still the critiques, written in fine English understatement, make for enjoyable reading. For instance:

"The post Communion is once more sung in Latin and as the deacon steps forward one expects an 'Ite Missa Est' but gets instead a completely deflating announcement that coffee is available afterwards in the social center."

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

Clergymen Challenged

Editor:

Friday morning, Jan. 26, on Pastor's Study, a Genesee Ecumenical Ministries' TV program, the guest was Father Henry Atwell.

A question was phoned in for Fr. Atwell's answer: What blame can the liberal clergy assume for the pandemic incidence of venereal disease and abortions by refusing to speak out and give moral guidance or doctrine in this permissive society — but rather, condones use of the birth control pill and in some cases trial marriage.

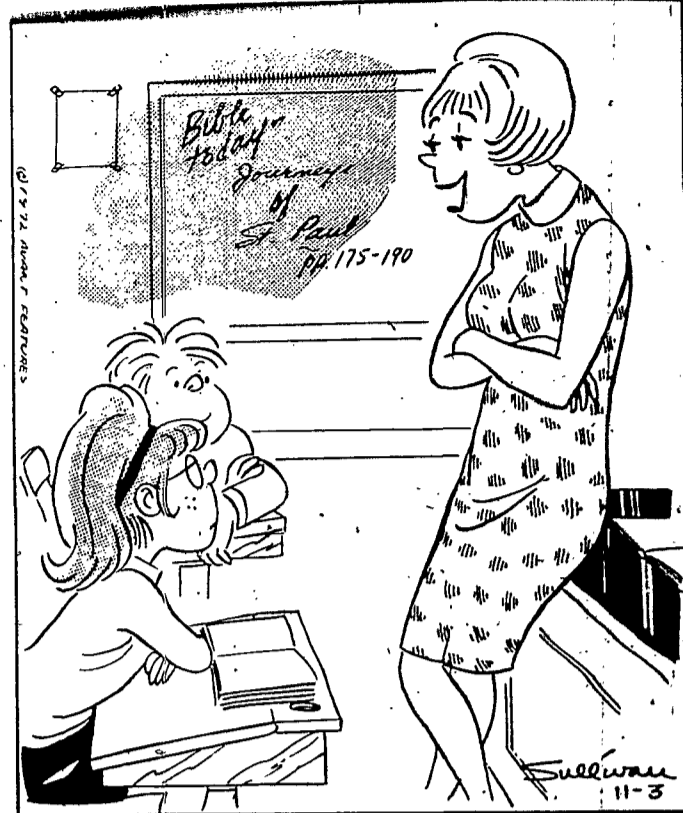
Father Atwell's answer was bland and evasive. He said in effect that because one wears a Roman collar people always assume you to be a conservative. Fr. Atwell went on to dimly illuminate an answer by saying that in his grandfather's day it was thought a man could only go as far as a fast horse could take him, then came the steam engine and now we're sending men to the moon — so in this fast paced world the Church has to change also and he didn't doubt that both liberal and conservative clergy would be addressing the problem.

Ironically, at the end of the program some boy phoned in to say that he had gotten a girl pregnant and what should he do now. Father Atwell rattled off about ten agencies he could call for advice including Planned Parenthood who I'm sure would make abortion one of its suggestions.

The nothing answer prompted these thoughts. It admits defeat to see the ad in a Sunday Church bulletin for all to see, "Pregnant — Need Help?" Call such and such a number. There would be no need to call that number or any other if the clergy were doing an adequate job (I grant you it's a tough one in this era).

In my growing years a Catholic bulletin carrying this message would be shocking and most importantly, unneeded, because we received solid moral doctrine and training, years of it, including God's admonition to Mary Magdalene "Go and sin no more." There was no equivocation as to what a sin was and was not.

From 16 years in Catholic schools I can say, as can my classmates, we knew of no one, or else the percentage was so small as to be negligible, who was ever pregnant before marriage. Why? Because dedicated nuns and priests gave us God's expectations of our conduct, because the heartfelt concern and charity in their hearts wouldn't permit them to let us pass from their classroom or by their pulpit only to one day see us crying in a venereal disease



"THAT'S AN INTERESTING COMPARISON, CINDY, BUT BESIDES ALL THE TRAVELING, HOW DOES ST. PAUL RESEMBLE HENRY KISSINGER?"

clinic or tortured with guilt and doubt on an abortion line.

Being our spiritual mentors their prime concern was always the health of our souls — constant learning in the light of eternity, and the particular judgment. As one priest had put it — "times change my young and impetuous friends, but moral values never"

This "let your conscience be your guide" ship we're all set adrift in is a leaky one at best when a right conscience is impossible for the young to form when the captains are bland, evasive or downright anti-scriptural.

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On Knowing Good and Evil

Editor:

Few, if any, "teachers" (all are teachers) would hesitate to judge that an habitual red-light crasher is guilty of violating the traffic law and to conclude he is on the road to destruction.

Nor should they hesitate to rightly judge that one who habitually misses Sunday Mass is guilty of offense against a greater-law, of mortal sin, and to conclude that he is on the road to hell. To put aside faith, right judgment and mercy on the greater law makes us "Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but swallow the camel" (cf. Matt. 23:24)

Through the vicar of Christ and His Church, the Holy Spirit of Truth teaches and provides means to know good and evil

and to perform Spiritual Works of Mercy. These are proof of love of God and man — of the love and light of Christ in the world.

The Holy Spirit enables us to see that He alone has knowledge for perfect judgment, and to simultaneously judge rightly whether those whom we have the obligation to teach, rule and sanctify are on the road to heaven or the road to hell.

Authentic instruction is Catholic doctrine and Faith, in accordance with the General Catechetical Directory, as prescribed by the Holy Spirit of Truth is essential but not sufficient.

Although versed in Scriptures and in what Jesus did and taught, the Scribes could not recognize their guilt (John 15:22); though most completely instructed by Our Lord, the Apostles did not recognize Judas as the one on the road to hell.

From these Apostles who believed, who were admonished and who loved Him, Our Lord formed the visible body of Holy Mother Church. On Holy Thursday He incorporated her with Himself (1) to reestablish unity of man in God that, Adam and Eve destroyed by Original Sin, and (2) to show Himself, through His Church, to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit of Truth.

Those who, blinded by the light of their reason, preempt the authentic mind of the Church, sin against the Holy Spirit, who exposes the brilliant lies of Lucifer and his mystical body of evil (John 14:26; 16:8-11). They are not as little children (Luke 18:17).

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Welcomes Readers' Comments

If you feel moved to communicate your thoughts with the rest of diocese, use our LETTERS TO THE EDITOR space.

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Typed double-spaced
Keep letters to 1½ page maximum
Include name and address
Remember good taste embellishes every thought.

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