

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.

God Centered Schools a Must

In his letter in the Courier-Journal (2-14-73) Clarence Amann attacks efforts to secure education taxes for children in God-centered schools. In my experience there are three reasoned approaches to this question: 1. educational philosophy; 2. rights of American citizens; 3. (for a Catholic audience) the teachings of Vatican II. Mr. Amann does not use any of these, but gives us instead a collection of some ten or more clichés and personal opinions.

Passing over the fact that his view is directly contrary to that of the American Catholic Bishops and Vatican II, I shall comment on only three of Mr. Amann's points. 1. Trying to secure our civil rights as Catholics is "enervating and demeaning." This struggle involves the

civil rights of all American citizens. Personally I believe in the tradition of Patrick Henry, and am amazed that anyone would consider an effort to secure his rights as a citizen "demeaning."

2. If we secure the use of our own education tax money "the price would prove too high" because of "controls inevitably exacted." The Province of Ontario has a system by which parents can designate the education authority to receive their education tax money. The state has, of course, the right to reasonable controls, and the experience in Ontario, as well as in other countries with similar systems, is directly contrary to Mr. Amann's assertion.

3. The "new ecumenism" shows we have been failing to bolster up the public schools, and should "use the public facilities." In the Villages of Victor and Fairport all the Catholic children go to public schools. Also,

in some city parishes, and in many Rochester suburbs, the percentage of Catholic children is high enough to test Mr. Amann's thesis. To the best of my knowledge neither Mr. Amann nor anyone else has succeeded in showing that either the public schools which have a considerable fraction of Catholic children, or the Catholic children themselves, are any better for it, in the sense he is asserting.

I should like to touch on some matters of educational philosophy: 1. Who has the right to educate? 2. What is the right kind of education? 3. What is the proper function of the government (the majority) in education?

Practically all Catholics agree that the right to educate is a God-given right of parents, a view upheld by the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, because a sizable fraction of Catholics do not understand the political implications of this, they vote with those who believe the state (the majority) has the right to specify the philosophy of the educational system. In doing so they deprive many of their fellow citizens of both their natural and civil rights.

Americans are divided on how to deal with the most important issues in education: inculcation of a proper attitude toward God and a correct system or moral values. The majority, believing these attitudes and values can be developed by the home and the church, prefer the public school, from which religion is excluded. Note that this belief is an assumption, which cannot be proved by those holding it.

Parents who, like Mr. Amann, hold this theory, invariably ignore the question as to whether the deficiencies apparent in American society, for example, the rise in drug addiction, may be due, in considerable measure, to the failure of this theory. They also ignore the unfortunate psychological effects of excluding God from the classroom, and the effect of long exposure of the young to the philosophy of the public school system, Secular Humanism.

The minority view on inculcating moral values and a proper attitude toward God is that it can be done successfully only by the active cooperation of the Church, the school, and the home. This group believes that a God-centered academic school is essential. Note that "God-centered" does not mean, primarily, teaching a particular church doctrine. Instead it means being able to refer to God in a believing manner when questions such as the morality of cheating on exams or stealing arise. It also means being able to talk to God, either individually in private meditation, or as a group, at suitable times of the day, without having the teacher fired.

This minority view is held by Orthodox Jews, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, the Christian Reformed, many Lutherans and Episcopalians, and an increasing number of other Protestants. Since this view is held by all these groups, it is primarily a matter of educational philosophy, rather than the belief of a particular religion.

The rights of the majority in education are satisfied if a school meets reasonable state requirements as to subjects taught and levels of achievement. The state has no right to determine that religion should be excluded from the curriculum (a violation of the First Amendment); nor to give education taxes back only to those agreeing with Secular Humanism. Such a monopolizing of the education taxes is a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

A combination of no political action, or inept political action, has brought our system near disaster. Unless we join an organization like Citizens for Educational Freedom and fight for our



"I TOLD THEM THEY'D HAVE TROUBLE WITH ANOTHER PARISH FUND-DRIVE!"

rights, the system is doomed — except for a few schools for the rich.

Write for information to Citizens for Educational Freedom, P.O. Box 7123, Rochester, N.Y. 14616, and join the fight now!

J. Kenneth O'Loane, Ph.D.,
Secretary, N.Y. State Board
Citizens for
Educational Freedom

Must Protest Abortion Ruling

Editor:

Congressman L. Hogan of Maryland made the following comments after the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion:

"If I had been in Nazi Germany during the systematic extermination of the Jews, I like to think I would have had the courage to stand up and protest the inhumane actions of my government. I feel similarly today. I must stand up and protest the gross disregard for human life which is now the official law of the United States of America. I have deeply loved my country. This is the first time . . . that I am in deep despair over the future of my country, and I am today ashamed of the government of which I am a part."

Congressman Hogan has introduced legislation to protect the unborn. There comes a time when those who profess Christianity must prove their sincerity. The blood of innocents is flowing now. Silence implies approval. Some of the guilt of these murders will be on the hands of those who witness the crime and do nothing. There are groups now organized to oppose the evil of abortion with all the legal and ethical means possible. May we suggest that true Christians please come forward.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Hober
101 Lapham St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14615

Orphan Relief Lauded by CFC

Editor:

We would like to add our praise for the immediate and compassionate response of Bishop Hogan and the priests and deacons, as evidenced by their letter in this week's Courier-Journal regarding the aftermath of the Vietnam war.

As social workers in Catholic Family Center, we have been especially concerned with the plight of the orphaned and abandoned children so aptly described by Bishop Hogan as "those who are the most helpless of all the war's victims". On the local level, this concern has been shared with a group

called "Friends of Children of Vietnam" which is based in Denver, Colorado but has many branches throughout the United States.

The Rochester group is headed by Mr. and Mrs. Harley Orr of 1014 Bay Road, Webster. They have been instrumental in sending supplies to orphanages in Vietnam, and in talking to interested persons about the possibilities for (and problems connected with) adoption of Vietnamese children. They also have a slide presentation which they would be willing to share with interested groups.

Catholic Family Center is currently exploring the myriad ramifications and legal questions involved in assisting couples who may wish to consider adoption of a Vietnamese child.

James E. Maloney,
Executive Director
Catherine E. Wobus,
Casework Director
Catholic Family Center

Magazine Criticized

Editor:

In yet another blast against the Catholics, Time magazine condemns our efforts to Christianize the natives in Mexico as "Four centuries of repression in the name of faith and reason . . ." (March 5).

Would the editors of Time please tell us how the Indians were doing before Catholicism arrived in Mexico?

How are the Indians doing in the United States?

Daniel Lyons, SJ
Editor at Large
Twin Circle

Large Print Review Offered

Editor:

The Xavier Society for the Blind announces the publication of a new monthly magazine, The Catholic Review in Large Print, containing a wide selection of articles from Catholic newspapers and periodicals. Each issue will run about 66 pages, printed in type about three times the ordinary size. Sample issues may be had without obligation from:

Xavier Society for the Blind
154 East 23rd St.
New York, N.Y. 10010

Further information and catalogs of all our free services in Large Print, Braille and Tape may be obtained by writing to the same address.

(Miss) Betty J. Dodt
Promotion Director
Xavier Society

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Gen. 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18. (R2) Rom. 8:31-34. (R3) Mk. 9:2-10.

Last Sunday we saw that the baptized man will be tested, as Jesus was in the desert. This Sunday shows how the man of faith is tested. He may be asked to give up someone he deeply loves, as Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son (R1), and God the Father his Son (R2), and the Son His life (R3).

The Transfiguration story underscores this theme of self-sacrifice and hints that it is the way to glory. Every second Sunday of Lent, this story is read because the Transfiguration ties in closely with the Lenten themes of baptism and sacrifice. The voice from heaven connects it with Jesus' baptism, and Moses and Elijah connects it with the sacrifice of the cross, for that was what they talked about with Jesus.

Peter, James and John needed to witness the Transfiguration of Jesus, because they could not believe in the doctrine of the cross. St. Paul called the cross a stumbling block to the Jews. It certainly was that for the apostles. Right after Peter had made his glorious confession of faith, that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus told the apostles He was going to suffer, die, and rise again. The apostles were astounded. Peter began to argue that this could never be. Jesus

turned on Peter and fiercely rebuked him with "Get out of my way, you satan. If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross and follow in my steps."

You can imagine how the apostles felt. This was all mystery to them. So Jesus took the three to the Mount. The Transfiguration of Himself proved that Peter's confession was correct. But the conversation with Moses and Elijah about the coming death of Jesus proved that what He had prophesied to them about the cross was also equally true. And still, they did not get the message.

Peter, ever the impetuous one, cried out to Jesus, "Let us stay here; let us erect three booths on this site." Ecstasy poses no problem for anyone. Who would come down from the pinnacle of joy if it were left to himself. But man cannot bear continued ecstasy any more than his eye can gaze steadily into the burning sun. The glimpse of glory is given only to help one carry the cross. After ecstasy comes agony but after the agony, ecstasy. That was why, to the three who would witness the Agony, the glory of God was revealed and, in the midst of the glory, talk of death. A short while before, Jesus had told the apostles that the path to glory is through the grave. Now the voice of God thundered, "Listen to Him!"

Abraham, the great model of faith, also had to take the road of the cross. God asked him to give up what he loved very much — Isaac, his only son. Abraham immediately built an altar on Mt. Moriah, arranged wood on it, and took a knife to slaughter his son. By this time Abraham had already sacrificed himself to God. By his willingness to sacrifice his son, he proved his own will was subject to God's will. He discovered that this is the only offering God really wants. When the real victim (our wilful self) has been offered to God, the ram caught in the thicket is all that is needed to symbolize this offering.

So as we begin the second week of Lent, the Church reminds man, transfigured by baptism, that his faith will be tested; that all love must be subordinate to the love of God; that the only way to be strong is to have faith in God; that God will never fail those who have faith in Him; that after the testing will come the glory!

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