



ON THE RIGHT SIDE
Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

A radio director commented; "We have a CALL IN program, and our station will discuss some subject; then invite listeners to telephone in their reactions. The speaker might be the Mayor of the city, or a college professor, or an ex-drug addict. The subject might be the UN, or starvation in the Third World, or drug addiction, and the reaction is mild. But if the discussion is about the city garbage collection or the leashing of dogs or the spaying of cats, the reaction is explosive." I suppose the answer is: "People are interested in their own back yards." A comment in this column on a CEDAR problem brought explosive reactions. One of the best came from an occasional critic of mine, who wrote:

"I think it was grossly unfair and have tried to answer your two charges: 1) of overpaid coordinators; and 2) too much professionalism. I think you should have known the facts before you let loose a volley, since your column is accepted as the continuation of the New Testament by many people. I've also found that there are a lot of people who wouldn't read your column on a bet."

NOW TO REPLY:

"Your letter made my day. It had that mixture of reasoning, exposition and passion which I admire. Let me respond; and with great thanks for your letter. For clarity's sake, let's take one item at a time.

1) CHARGES and VOLLEYS Good heavens! How could you derive such terms either from the text or the context? THE EXACT OPPOSITE WAS EXPRESSED. Rather than an attack, the text seems to me clearly a pensive musing about things I constantly ponder over, and with deep concern. Read the text again. The problem about CEDAR, a kind of umbrella organization of CCD groups, seems to be a shortage of money. The program has two coordinators: Barbara Schmucker and Sister Ellen Ward. Their two salaries total between \$18,000 and \$20,000. I cautiously suggested to Mrs. C. "Why don't the coordinators cut down on their salaries? After all, this is a work of religion."

Now, my thought was not that the coordinators were being overpaid. I should be happy if parishes could give them \$30,000. The root thought was this, and still is. When a Father and Mother are caring for the family they love, and the income becomes tight, they adjust to the tight income, but do not consider leaving their children. They will do the best they can, and hope and work for better days.

In somewhat of a parallel, I think that religious workers, whether they are bishops or Sisters, Brothers or priests or laymen, if they are motivated by religious love, will lessen neither their service nor devotion to their charges, whether the charges are school children, the sick, the missions, teen seminarists, columnists, retreatants, curillistas, Marriage Encounter people, or CCD Coordinators, because of less cash. Rather they will care for these charges as they would care for Christ.

I suppose this seems like Christian idealism. However I have never considered the Gospel message as so much moonshine, but rather as difficult, possible and to be worked at.

Bishop Hogan expressed it incisively in his beautiful Lenten pastoral, published in the Courier-Journal for Ash Wednesday. "The Gospel's call to conversion is not simply or even primarily a call to

repentance of this or that particular transgression. Rather, it is a call to restructure our values, to remake our hearts, to accept the priorities of the Gospel." And in this vein we are inspired by the lives of the Saints who chose the difficult priorities, even as we are inspired by people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the late Dr. Tom Dooley, and by quiet, unknown people who live the Gospel with little notice from anyone but God.

To allay your misgivings, I tell you frankly, that if I were a pastor, authentic Catholic religious education both of children and adults would be at the top of my priorities after the Mass and the Sacraments. What seems to be our bone of contention is a thing called "the spirit in religion." I think we really are in great accord, and will discuss this with you next week as we consider "professionalism in religion."

Bishop Outlines Pro-Life Plans

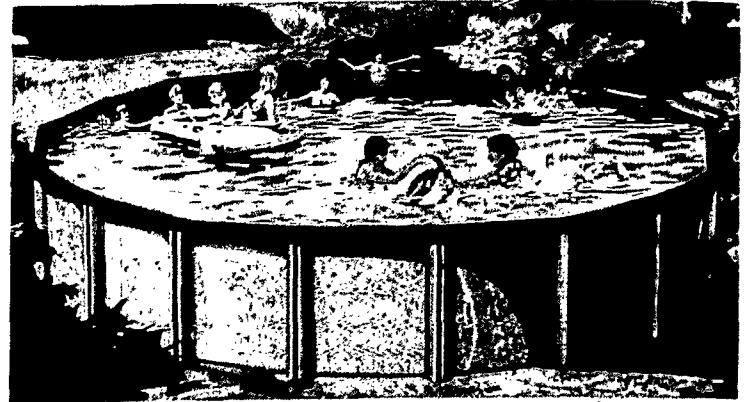
Washington — "The Supreme Court decision on abortion was a beginning, not an end. The pro-life movement in this country has just begun to fight!"

That comment was made by Bishop-elect James S. Rausch, General Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and United States Catholic Conference, as he disclosed planning for expanded pro-life activities now underway within NCCB and USCC.

The current planning efforts at the staff level will be reinforced by discussion of pro-life issues and activities during the regional meetings of the Catholic bishops to be held in 12 geographical areas of the country in April and May.

"The thrust of the present and projected activities is aimed not just at developing a response to the Supreme Court's tragic action on abortion but, more important, at devising new, positive ways of encouraging respect for human life — before birth and after — in American society," Bishop-elect Rausch said.

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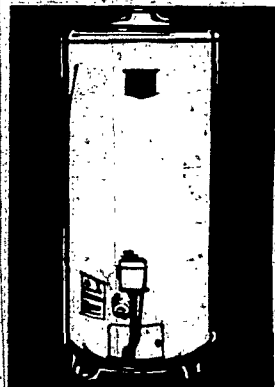


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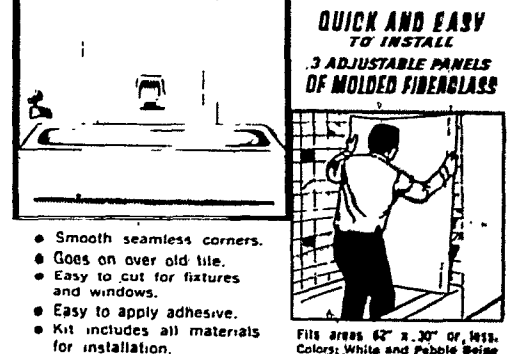


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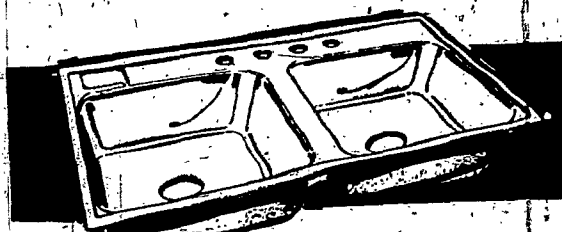
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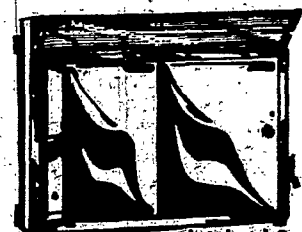
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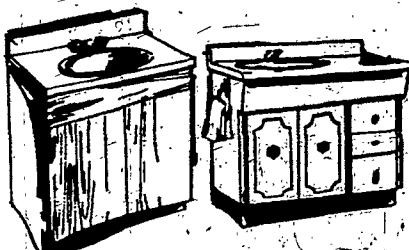


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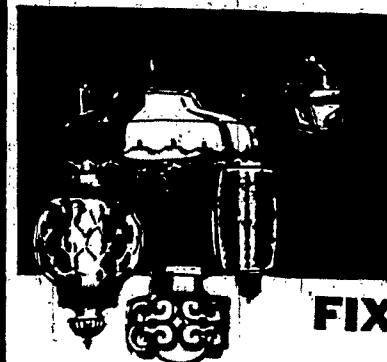


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