

Editorial

Press Vital Part Of Today's Church

The recent and untimely death of Archbishop Edward L. Heston; the American-born head of the Pontifical Commission on Social Communications and the Vatican's top communications spokesman, brings to mind some of his ideas concerning information within the Church.

When he took the Vatican post two years ago, Archbishop Heston said there is a growing realization of the fact that "full collaboration (with the press) is the means to the informational and educational ends which Vatican officials desire to see in the press."

He saw a more open Vatican as the "best approach for the Church . . . not insisting on secrecy and confidentiality as in the past."

When he spoke at last year's 100th diocesan anniversary in Buffalo he called for the "free flow" of information at all levels of the Church.

We in the Rochester diocese are fortunate in having a bishop who believes in the same principles, who uses his diocesan newspaper and other media to let everyone know where he stands even on the most controversial issues. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan knows that informed Catholics are the best Catholics and that if the Church is going to ask laymen, for instance, to man the tiller then it cannot expect them to do so with one hand tied down by lack of knowledge.

Our Priests and Sisters councils also merit praise for opening their meetings to the press. And Region II of the U.S. Bishops conference provided laudable leadership when it invited the press to its recent meeting in Syracuse.

All dioceses are not so fortunate. There are those who see the press, and thus the public, as not needing to know what's happening until it is packaged prettily and tied up in ribbons. This amounts to cynical distrust of the people to do their own shopping.

There are those who feel that the press is not up to its job, that its intentions are suspect. Let us assure readers that this newspaper, for one, is not interested in sensational scoops, does not want to disparage anyone, certainly does not want to upset the hard and good work of so many in the Church. What we must do is serve as a two-way conduit between the people of the Church and their leaders, to let the people know what their leaders think and vice versa.

We do not claim to be impeccable. We know that too often the press botches up a job and must admit there will always be mistakes — as there is in every pursuit in life. We endeavor to keep errors at a minimum but the only way we can relay the truth is when decision-makers let us see it first-hand; not spoon-feed it so that the public sees the package but not the contents.

The Church has the truth. She did not get it from Someone who wanted her to keep it to herself.

Award's Significance

Any time a newspaper receives national commendation, such as the Courier-Journal's first place award for Community Service from the Catholic Press Association, it is cause for staff rejoicing.

We hope it does not constitute breast-beating if we note that this particular award has even more significance because community service is what journalism is all about.

Even more cause for satisfaction arises from the fact that the work this newspaper did in covering the Southern Tier floods was a collective effort with everyone in every department of the newspaper involved.

Finally, perhaps the most gratifying aspect of the award lies in the fact that this paper's coverage was reflecting the goodwill and yeoman work of so many in the diocese who did so much for their stricken brothers and sisters. Thus in a large sense the award belongs to the entire diocese.

Opinion

Don't Neglect The Spiritual

Editor:

Probably the vast majority of Courier-Journal readers would sincerely identify themselves as Catholic. However, an objective observer must conclude that most of us do not live a life that is identifiable with the Catholic Faith. The usual pattern of Lenten spiritual growth, which both culminates and spontaneously decays at Easter, is incompatible with Our Lord's teachings and His witness through His Apostles and generations of saints. For example, consider that about 10% of those who attend Sunday Mass participate in daily Lenten Mass, and after Easter participation in daily Mass plummets to about 0.5%. Obviously the vast majority is confident of being fruitful for Our Lord's Harvest while abandoning the Lenten plow.

During His discourse of the Last Supper, Our Lord promised His Apostles that if they were obedient to His commands, He would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit of truth to instruct them and remind them of His teachings. However, at Easter, He opened their minds to the Scriptures and, significantly He Himself instructed them that "In



His name penance, for the remission of sin is to be preached to all nations. . . ." (including Rochester). On the occasion of the Ascension the Apostles were filled with great joy. . . . Why? — because Our Lord is interceding for us! The Apostles, enflamed by the purifying fire in the power of the Holy Spirit, were fruitful because of Christ within them through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Yet the majority of us ignore Our Lord and His Sacrifice of the Mass daily. Apparently we are also content that Catholic schools give daily reverence to State educational mandates and values — but no time for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. St. Paul asks, "Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?"

God chose St. Francis of Assisi to visibly share the sufferings of Christ at a time of rising heresies which was later followed by the Protestant reformation period. In our own time Padre Pio like St. Francis, was chosen to visibly share Christ's sufferings. Both Padre Pio and St. Francis exercised great devotion to Our Blessed Mother — Our Co-redemptrix who uniquely can say with Our Lord, "This is my Body, . . ."

In the Sept. 1972 Messenger of the Sacred Heart, Father Joseph F. Hogan, SJ, explains "In the Apostleship of Prayer, then, we offer our daily sufferings in the Mass. Like Christ, our sufferings

too, can be redemptive, helping to save our souls and the souls of others." In the "Morning Offering" we offer all our prayers, works and joys also. We may see ourselves as relatively good Catholics when we look at our neighbor rather than the Apostles and Saints approved by God.

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Let's Hike For Schools

Editor:

There has been so many "hikes for" — how about a hike for our Catholic schools? They need the help.

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Opinions to the editor should be addressed: Letter 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.

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