

Editorial

Lest We Forget

There is not much to be written about Memorial Day that has not already been written. We have only to search through editorials now buried in library stacks to find the proper sentiment of the day already presented in the most appropriate language.

Still on this Memorial Day, it seems something more need be said. For instance, not only should we all remember with bowed head and bowed ego all those who died for this country back when wars were more popular, but we, perhaps with more vigor, should make note of those who have given their lives for the common good in the most modern war.

The Vietnam War may or may not have been necessary for this country but those Americans who died in its cause are above academics. They deserve all the honor and glory this country and its people have always reserved for those who performed the ultimate in the name of the common cause.

The Ruling Class

One of the aspects of the Watergate scandal is so obvious that few are noticing. Few women are involved in any of the alleged wrongdoing, at least at high levels. It is unlikely that any would be, since the men running the government have not seen fit to endow women with positions of high trust.

Without taking up the women's lib banner, may we suggest that perhaps it is time for a change.

No less a personage than Cardinal Humberto Medeiros of Boston told a Catholic women's group last week that "when we look about us for something that will strengthen the moral fiber of the nation, return its values to their proper places, we think almost instinctively of women."

He added that it would be a "a wonderfully reassuring thing if women would mobilize in favor of honesty, integrity and honor. What influence could be theirs if they demanded, in both public life and private, an end to chicanery, double-dealing, venality and all the petty corruptions now tolerated!"

We realize that a possible rejoinder is that when and if women come into real positions of power they will fall prey to same self-serving temptations. Perhaps. But right now it seems well worth the experimenting with the ruling class.

Heaven Forbid!

We have been told that there are times when lawbreaking is a necessary evil when it comes to protecting the national security.

That must mean that if we don't bug, break and enter, steal from suspect organizations and even foreign consulates, and run roughshod over others' rights for the common good, we run the risk of being overtaken by totalitarian governments.

This is distasteful because totalitarian governments bug, break and enter, steal from suspect organizations and even foreign consulates and run roughshod over citizens' rights.

Overstepping Bounds

Would you believe it?

In Philadelphia, a new Girl Scout merit badge requires a visit to an abortion clinic as part of a study program.

The new badge, entitled "To Be a Woman," also is designed to familiarize girls with contraception and menstruation, according to Religious New Service.

When some mothers raised objections, the pat answer came that "no Catholic girl need see the badge or need do the badge" which means that they will be categorized as religious fanatics, at worst and as "different" at least.

We would like to add another pat answer — NO Catholic girl need be a member of an organization which is presuming to take over parental responsibility.

Opinion

Following the Holy Spirit

Editor:

One of the outgrowths of the move of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic is the home prayer meeting. Christians desiring a closer walk with Jesus find this opportunity of praising God in an informal way, and in small groups, an important adjunct to the formal liturgical worship, the Mass.

Those outside the Catholic Pentecostal movement or Charismatic Renewal, as it is sometimes called, fear that these smaller group meetings will supplant the churches. However, just the opposite is true. Most pastors would readily agree that the charismatics in their parishes are very active in parish life.

The most outstanding characteristic of prayer meetings is that no two are alike. The reason for this is that both the leaders and those participating strive to allow the Holy Spirit to lead the meeting and develop a theme.

I shall attempt to give an example of how a theme is developed. Someone may begin by reading Luke 12:22-34 "Life is much more important than clothes. Look at the crows — they do not plant seeds"

Another may then share with the group a recent experience of God's providing in an unusual way. Spontaneously the group then begins to sing the 23rd Psalm — knowing no want when Jesus is your shepherd. The prayers of petition on this particular evening will be more slanted toward asking God to provide for our needs in particular instances and for those of our neighbors, and most of all thanking and praising God for his provision. In this way, a theme of God's providential love is developed.

Only the Holy Spirit Himself could provide the inspiration for the theme of the meeting because there is no effort made before the meeting to co-ordinate scriptures, songs and testimonies. There are a few things common to every prayer meeting. First of all, Jesus and His Spirit are present (Matt: 18, 20). The purpose of every prayer meeting is the same: to praise God, to wait upon Him, to bring Him all our burdens and allow Him to work through our lives.

Jane Jennings 29 Audubon Ter. Rochester, 14624

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"FOR YOUR INFORMATION, MRS. RANKIN, WE GOT ALONG VERY NICELY BEFORE WOMEN STARTED PARTICIPATING IN THE LITURGY!"



WORD FOR SUNDAY Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) Acts 1:15-17, 20-26. (R2) 1 Jn. 4:11-16. (R3) Jn. 17:11-19.

The theme for Sunday's reading is unity — unity of mind and heart — in anticipation of the founding of the Church at Pentecost.

Christ prayed for unity of mind (R3); John for unity of heart (R2); and Peter gathered together the Church to restore the unity blasted by the defection of Judas (R1).

Today Church unity is being marred by those who, perhaps in good faith, attack the Church as an institution. Young people seem to bristle at institutional religion. "Religion is all right, but Churches are out!" they argue. "After all, religion is a pretty personal thing, but institutions are anything but personal. How often, too, the needs of the organization crowd out the needs of the people. The energy, time and personnel consumed in maintaining the organization could better be spent proclaiming the Gospel."

So some reason. Others see the Church as one more thing between God and themselves; in fact, "a substitute for God."

Still others complain that it seems being a card-carrying member of the Church is more important than to love God and neighbor.

Institutions, they add, seem to lose their freedom. To get along, they often have to go along.

Religion, moreover, should seek universal brotherhood, they say, but institutions set up fences, are divisive.

And so it goes, on and on.

But did you ever see a dream walking or a truth talking? Truth cannot become effective in a complex society without organization!

Organization, of course, is not life, but without organization there can be no life. In the Salt Lake Valley, farmers build irrigation canals. These are tile watercourses which conduct the melting snows of the Wasatch Mountains to vineyards and cornfields. The farmers have no guarantee the snow will fall or that it will melt, or that the law of gravitation will bring the waters

down to the tile conduits. These things are in the hands of God. The orchards blossom and the corn sprouts not solely because the farmer has laid so many feet of tile, but chiefly because God sends the snow, melts it, and causes it to flow downward. Yet the highly organized network of tile canals is necessary to baptize the arid valley and cause it to resurrect into productive life.

Similarly the Church, her organized life, her ministry, her sacraments, her worship, the proclamation of Jesus' message of truth and love — all these are not less essential today than in the beginning when Peter convened a hundred and twenty disciples to choose Matthias.

In this age when Parish Councils are in, it might be profitable to reflect on how the first Parish Council was run (R1). The agenda of this Council was serious business: to choose an apostle. All the assembled members took part in the meeting. Peter chaired it. How delicately he handled the Judas story; no uncharitable gossip at this meeting! Then he proceeded to the main point of business — to select an intimate of the Master to take the place of Judas. No doubt there was much dialogue. Two names surfaced. Instead of the assembly polarizing itself into two camps by arguing about the pros and cons of each candidate, the assembly prayed to the Holy Spirit. (How often prayer is the sole solution for an impasse). And wisely did they have recourse to prayer, for appearances deceive. Outwardly Joseph had the edge; he was known as Justus, the just one! Yet the Spirit who alone reads the hearts of men chose Matthias.

Yes, the institutional Church was there in the beginning and is absolutely necessary. But it should always be, as it was in the beginning, a community of truth and love: working together, praying together, and achieving together.

Opinions to the editor should be addressed: Letter to the Editor, Courier-Journal, Richmond 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.