

Editorial

**What Really Counts
In Maude Protests**

Bending over backwards to be fair is a commendable practice, especially for newspaper editorials. However, it should be realized that there are times when it leaves one in an embarrassing posture.

Witness the newspaper of another diocese which editorially opposed efforts by Catholic agencies and pro-life groups to "suppress" reruns of two CBS episodes of the situation comedy Maude.

The Providence Visitor editorialized that when the "pro-life position is put forward in shrill tones with threats and harsh rhetoric, it defeats its own purposes."

We agree. Shrill tones, threats and harsh rhetoric win no one over to any cause, even one as sound as pro-life. We must admit that some pro-lifers have become more interested in acerbic dialogue than in securing the rights of all persons. Some pro-abortionists are equally as guilty of poor taste.

But we think it is unfair to generalize the protests over the Maude reruns as characteristically shrill, threatening, or harsh.

The Providence Visitor seems to have overlooked a vital point in this issue — the air waves belong to the public, not to the Columbia Broadcasting System nor to the writers of situation comedies nor to the sponsors who foot the bill.

The public has every right, nay, every responsibility to keep check on how the air waves are used.

When members of the public feel a protest is in order, they should do so. Too often, however, such sentiments, even when voiced by great numbers, fall on deaf ears. The simplest way to make them effective is to tell sponsors they will lose sales, to tell networks and stations they will lose listeners. People do this regularly in regard to many programs and commercial messages when far less than life is at stake.

If following those procedures may be construed as "threats" then so be it.

Those who favor abortion, now have mounted a campaign of their own directed at the sponsors who dropped Maude and at the stations who canceled the reruns. Again so be it. It is their right.

We think that the essential fairness in the case of abortion demands that all pro-lifers stand up to be counted. Or in this case, write in to be counted.

Unhappy Brother

Although some of the charges James Dulin recently made against the American Catholic Church create an uncomfortable feeling, they should be heard, if for no other reason that they come from the horse's mouth.

Dulin is the outgoing president of the National Black Catholic Lay Caucus. At the annual black Catholic convention in New Orleans, he said in his farewell talk, "I am somewhat bitter toward the white-oriented Church that dominates so much of our daily lives. . . . The failure of the Church to meet the needs of the oppressed people of God is a tough piece to handle, and you as black Catholics will have to deal with these major problems."

According to Religious New Service, Dulin suggested that perhaps black Catholics should take a stand like Wounded Knee which might either "rid the black community of the Catholic Church or make it accountable to the black community. . . . exposing racism inherent in the Church and confronting it. . . . may not be the only answer. But, for me, I see no other alternative. . . . I have refused to be their field nigger or in terms of the sophisticated hierarchy, their altar boy. The whites continue their complete domination."

Harsh? Yes. Unfair? That's something that must be pondered by all Catholics. What also must be considered is what is the Church doing that puts a brother Catholic in such a bitter frame of mind? And as we think about that, we must realize that we are the Church. All of us.

Opinion

**Lauds Her
Vacation**

Editor:

Last week I went for a vacation for three days with 40 people from the Danforth Center. We went to a place in Deposit, N.Y. It is 1,000 acres of vacation paradise.

It has a showboat, waterskiing, speedboat, sailing, excellent swimming and fishing. Horses are available and there are numerous trails. It also has a ballroom for every one. It was my first vacation to a place like this and I was never so happy. I have been to lots of other places and never was so pleased.

Mrs. Anna Nicoletti

Editor's Note: Mrs. Nicoletti's post script explains the importance of her letter. "I am 77 years old and still go places, dancing with my friends and I have fun." She makes a lesson for all ages.

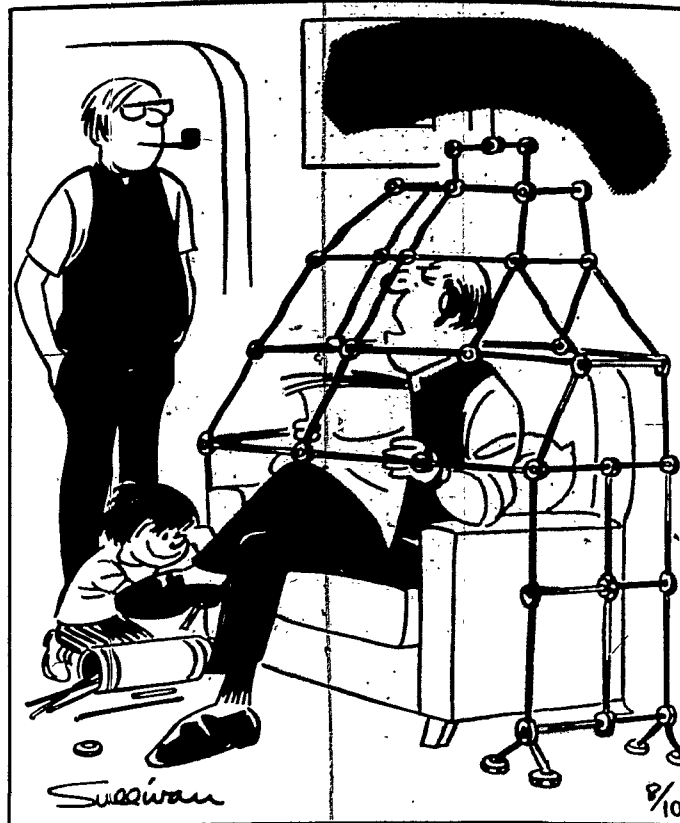
**Penance Should
Come First**

Editor:

To quote Bishop Hogan from the Courier-Journal (8/8/73), "I would be far from honest if I did not express my own personal disappointment with the decree (the order of reception of First Penance and First Eucharist) as being contrary to my pastoral experience." I too would be far from honest if I did not express my own personal disappointment. My disappointment is with the Bishop's attitude toward the decree. He mentions "three pastoral concerns" regarding the decree. It is my belief there is a fourth "pastoral concern." That is the concern for the parents' beliefs regarding this decree.

As the mother of four children, two who have received Penance before First Eucharist, one who received the Eucharist first and one who is about to experience the Sacrament of Penance after Eucharist, it has been my parental experience that children are ready for their First Penance much before fourth grade as they have formed a conscience much earlier than this. There is much more shyness and reluctance at the age of nine than at the age of seven.

Just as you must teach a child about the care of his body much before he is really able to grasp the meaning and importance of cleanliness, rest, etc., so, too, must we let the child experience the care of his soul even if he doesn't comprehend its entire meaning. When the interest is there, we must take advantage of



HOW LONG ARE YOUR SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW PLANNING TO STAY?

it. Many of the parents to whom I have expressed my concern are in agreement with me on this.

It seems rather incongruous that the Bishop would direct Parish Council members (July 29 at Our Lady of Mercy Church) to imitate Mary especially in her humility and complete submission to the will of the Father and the following week question and express his disappointment over a Roman decree. Is it any wonder there is so little regard for the authority of the Church today?

Mary McCarthy
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**Doesn't Like
Greeley Column**

Editor:

Friends provide me with the Courier-Journal regularly.

A recent column by Father Greeley consisted of a long first verse on a womanly priesthood, (arguable, unquestionably) but concluding with a chorus that Greeley is constantly singing these days — the terrible state of the Church. If it is, he's helped no little bit to make it that way through these many mouthy years of his just past.

I think you do your good paper a disservice by running such tripe. I've no doubt it is a syndicated column. But I'm sure there are ways of cutting that off, too.

Aforesaid, the paper is good and much enjoyed. Sounds like a thriving diocese!

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**Wants Penance
To Come First**

Editor:

We have come to a very sad state in the present day Church when every statement, decree or directive issued by the Holy Father of himself or through the Sacred Congregations, from Humanae Vitae, the Creed, "Transubstantiation" and the Catechetical Directory down to the latest decree on the First Sacraments can be called into question. Catholics are beginning to wonder if their Church is really the Church founded on the Rock of Peter or if they are living in a house built on the shifting sands of opinion.

On May 24, the Holy See issued a decree stating that all experimentation with regard to time and order in the reception of the First Sacraments must end with the close of the school year. Henceforth, as previously, the decree of Pius X is to be observed. The experiment was a mistake from the beginning and should never have been permitted. Why should we think that ALL children can go to the end of the fourth grade in school without at least the possibility of grave sin. There are children who at the tender age of eleven years, as accomplished musicians, have appeared on the concert stage of Carnegie Hall. Shall we say that such children are incapable of sin?

I have here before me newspaper clippings telling of three sadistic murders, all committed by children 11 years old or less: 1. Two little boys, seven and ten, tied a naked two-year-old boy to a cross, poked him with sticks, and, finally, crushed in his head with a brick; two girls, aged eight and eleven, cruelly tortured and gruesomely murdered a smaller child; 3. three boys, 10, 11, 12, raped a seven-year-old girl and then hurled her six stories to her death.

Pius X decreed that all children were to be admitted to Penance and the Eucharist when they first reach the use of reason. In so doing, he recognized that venial sin is valid matter for the Sacrament of Penance; that the sacrament, like the other sacraments, confers a certain participation in the Divine Life of God (sanctifying grace) even though the child may not understand this conferring of grace; that the sacrament also provides moral training and growth in the spiritual life (sacramental grace). When Penance is delayed until after the reception of the Eucharist, not only is the child being placed in the danger of making sacrilegious communications, it is being deprived of a special sharing of the Divine Life. Only in the next life will we understand fully what this means. Parents and all concerned people who have at heart the immortal souls of children, should feel free to protest the practice of delayed first Penance. The program of delayed first confession has won favor and popularity among those who must prepare the children for the sacraments because this program favors the teachers; not because it favors the children.

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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.