

**Editorial**

# Labor Day 1973 And Cesar Chavez

The eyes of the nation are on Cesar Chavez, his farm workers and their struggle to organize into a union of their choosing. And this fact augurs well for them in the viewpoint of the United States Catholic Conference.

In spite of the confusion of issues, temporary setbacks, and powerful opposition, Chavez and his workers will eventually win, says the USCC in a Labor Day statement written by Msgr. George G. Higgins, because their ideas coincide with the values of the American people. And the more attention the workers receive the more likely becomes their chance of success.

Just three short years ago, the efforts of these workers of the field seemed to have reached fruition when their United Farm Workers Union won collective bargaining contracts with the table grape workers industry. It was about to extend its organizing efforts into other crops, not only in California, but across the nation.

But then a powerful union, the Teamsters, moved into the picture, secretly negotiating contracts with many lettuce growers, pacts which subsequently were described as collusive by the California Supreme Court.

Instead of expanding, the UFWU was once again cornered in still another battle for survival. Two jurisdictional pacts, reached in good faith under the auspices of the U.S. Bishops Committee on Farm Labor and the national AFL-CIO, fell apart. Eversuing meetings among the Bishops committee, the Teamsters and the UFW were to no avail.

To the contrary, the Teamsters announced they had decided, in executive session, to declare war on the tiny UFW. They then secretly negotiated contracts with all but two of the 20-odd table grape growers whose three-year contracts with the UFW had just expired.

"The Farm Workers were stunned and embittered, by this disgraceful move on the part of the Teamsters and the growers," declared Msgr. Higgins, secretary for research for the USCC.

The workers called a strike in the Coachella Valley and announced the start of another nationwide table grape boycott.

What has happened since could serve as script and scenario for all the major labor organizing disputes in the United States — picket lines, epithets, police intervention, killings.

The jury is still out, but Msgr. Higgins is optimistic for the UFWU because in this case the jury is the American people. Public opinion may have played a role in the fact that the Teamsters now have repudiated some 30 pacts although it appears growers may claim they are still in effect.

Still it represents a chink in the armor of the powerful union and lends support to the USCC prediction that the workers "will win their struggle for survival and then go on to organize the rest of the agricultural industry."

The USCC bases this prophecy on the "good sense and good judgment of the American people."

To quote from its statement:

"The value system of the United States stresses the very qualities called for by the farm labor movement; freedom of association, self-determination, fair play . . . the field workers who have been struggling so long and so hard to build up the UFW are asking our society "to live up to those values which it already professes."

Something else speaks well for Chavez and his workers — in a tense and bitter struggle, they have eschewed violence. Chavez has reminded us that no side has a monopoly on saints or sinners but that all deserve equal respect by reason of their dignity as human beings.

The USCC concludes its Labor Day statement by noting that "it is rather late in the game for the agricultural industry to be facing up to its responsibilities and its opportunities in the field of labor-management relations — but better late than never."

Its message seems directed to farm owners in every section of the land when it declares "to try and postpone the inevitable and to go on fighting against time . . . would be disastrous for the agricultural industry from every conceivable point of view."

# Opinion

## Let People Pick Religious Life

Editor:

Father Henry Atwell was one of the first priests in the diocese of Rochester to ask his congregation their opinions on crucial subjects. He always said he would abide by the majority opinion, and always did.

In the issue of Aug. 22, he wrote that he and two other clergymen took a tour of Riverton, a new development town which, along with Ganahda, will eventually house 30,000 people. Father Atwell said they are "planning the religious life" of these towns.

The word planning can mean to devise the accomplishment of, or to establish, their methods and means.

Why don't Father Atwell and his cohorts let the people of these towns choose for themselves? Religion is their choice; they will determine what they want. Clergymen, don't push.

Fred W. Frisch  
191 Coleman Ave.  
Spencerport, N.Y.

## Who's to Follow Orders?

Editor:

I wish to disagree most sincerely with the writer in the Courier-Journal (8/22/73) in regard to Bishop Hogan's pastoral letter, concerning the Sacrament of Penance following children's First Communion.

I feel there must be many, many dedicated priests in the Diocese of Rochester that feel as I do.

If a bishop decides not to follow the orders of the Pope, how then can he expect the priests of this diocese to follow his orders?

Mary Lee  
R.D.  
Victor

## Adult Courses To Be Offered

Editor:

A new program for Rochester residents will soon begin at Benjamin Franklin Senior High School. This program is aimed at mature adults — women with children in school all day, men who have to work a night shift, and others who would like to take a high school course during the day.

Classes will be available on the

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basis of room and could include literature, foreign language, art, music, business — in fact any course.

Adults who are interested and want to explore the possibilities offered by such a program are encouraged to call me at the school, 467-3131.

Pincus Cohen, principal  
Benjamin Franklin High School  
950 Norton St.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14621

## Send Your Socks Across Continent

Editor:

Will readers please consider this request to help poor men on the Los Angeles "Skid Row" get pairs of socks?

Each day they come in numbers from 1,500 to 2,500 to Miserere House, a rehabilitation center maintained by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Los Angeles. They come from every hamlet, village, town and city of the United States, and are of all ages, races, nationalities and creeds.

Many wear broken, ill-fitting shoes — without socks. Their feet are injured and sore.

Please gather any new or used socks and send them parcel post to us. Socks need not even match. One may be black, the other blue, etc. Parcels should be addressed as follows:

Thomas F. Cassidy  
231 Winston Street  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90013

## Pastor's Article Joy to Read

Editor:

Father Richard Torrey, pastor of St. Stephen's Church, Geneva, deserves to be commended for having the good sense and courage to publish the article entitled, "A Phony Wedding," in the Sunday bulletin of 8/5/73. His clear cut explanation of canon law regarding Catholic weddings and the sanctity of Marriage was indeed refreshing and encouraging. In these times of ultra-liberalism and permissiveness, it was a joy to behold a manifesto of basic tenets of our Catholic religion. Too often it is shrugged off as too controversial and further alienating the liberal following of young adults and misguided parents in the Catholic Church today.

There appears to be a drastic compromise of principles and values in our society (families) today which waters down administering to those to whom God has given to our care. Invariably, family principles (or lack of it) set standards for the Church today. If the parent feels

the church is too drastic, or rigid or hard, the Church leans toward parent and young adult in order to allow him room for growth, (finding himself) and thus endorses the new "conscience" which seems to have negated not only tradition, but commandments, as well as precepts. This falsely leads to beliefs that canon law can be changed at the whim of parent and/or child.

This creeping philosophy of freedom, complete and unabridged seems to have infiltrated our society to the extent that "anything" goes in the church because of some reforms made in custom and practice. It takes a wise and devoted priest, to tell it "like it is" for those who need to be told.

Mrs. Constance C. Hoffman  
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## Irish Facts Covered Up

Editor:

I am an Irish student spending my vacation in Rochester. I am very impressed with what I have seen of America in general and Rochester in particular. I have read with interest your Courier-Journal and local press, including the numerous reports on the situation in Northern Ireland. However, I'm very disappointed with the local press and their one-sided presentation of these news items. The majority of their reports consists mainly of statements from the British Army, which appear to be taken at face value by reporters on the scene. It seems to be forgotten that it was this same army which shot 13 civilians, claiming they were "terrorists" even though it was later proven that they were innocent people.

Far from exercising an impartial role in the situation the army has continually harassed the minority population. It is a pity that these reporters cannot appraise the situation themselves instead of sitting at news conferences and meekly printing the army's version. As a result, the American public cannot get the facts as they are unfolding in a terribly tragic situation in my country.

I trust you will publish this letter in an attempt to redress the situation, somewhat.

Matt Linehan  
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Rochester, N.Y. 14616

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