

More Opinions

Teen Seminar

RE: Fr. O'Malley's "The Mass and Teenagers."

Rather than redesigning the Church and the Mass to fit the teenagers, why not re-educate the teens so they understand and appreciate the Church and the Mass?

It is being done! Try "Teen Seminar."

Father Dave Gramkee
Pre Teen Seminar Committee
716/473-9656

Fr. O'Malley Praised

Editor:

One question concerning Father O'Malley: where and at what time does he say Mass on Sunday? Or would the Courier prefer not to make that announcement because of probably mob gatherings?

Father O'Malley is a tremendous example to those who think the priesthood must be dull, somber and conservative. I'd vote for a youngster seeing this priest in action one time, over hundreds of silent prayers for vocations.

Lois Elliott
394 Meadowbriar Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

On School Enrollment

Editor:

With the opening of school and renewed, or continued, talk of the decrease in enrollment in our parochial schools, I cannot help but ponder all of the possible reasons why this situation exists. True, the pill and abortions (God, help us) are causing a decline in births, but this is merely one explanation. Stop and consider the number of Catholic students not attending parochial schools and you'll find that our enrollment is far below what it should be or has to be. I feel that laity and religious alike should give serious thought to other reasons before taking the easy way out and laying the blame on the declining birthrate.

Understandably, there are some who cannot afford the cost of a Catholic education or for other legitimate reasons have their children in other schools. At the same time, however, how many parents are "saving money" by refusing to pay tuition costs, yet can afford many of today's luxuries and extras? How many are giving in to today's youth, allowing them to choose their own schools? Are they not, then, forgetting their duties as Catholic parents? Is another school system more convenient because of transportation and because students can remain for lunch? How many have given in to rumors, and because they've "heard" their schools "might" close have used this excuse to discontinue Catholic education for their children?

Questions worthy of consideration by the religious include:

Are our schools striving to give quality education and well-rounded curriculums in relation to tuition costs? Have some of our priests forgotten the importance of educating parishioners regarding their responsibilities as Catholic parents? Is too little emphasis being placed on the merits of a Catholic education and perhaps, too much emphasis on other Church-related activities? Are steps being taken to curb criticism of our schools? Why so

much negativism and rarely positive thinking regarding our grammar schools — the lifeline of our high schools?

In this changing world — at a time when more and more problems crop up each day, including many among the youth, I wonder if too few of us are putting priorities in their proper perspective? We are and always will be Our Lord's first priority. Where are we putting Him when it comes to our duties as Catholic parents and educators?

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas P. Deane
25 N. Main St.
Geneva, N.Y. 14456

Backs Bishop On Study

Editor:

As a mother of four and a CCD Teacher for the past eight years, I feel it my duty to disagree with Miss Ethel E. Sercu (Courier-Journal 9/19/73.)

First, let us define sin. Sin is the willful breaking of a love relationship with God our Father. There is no possibility of breaking a relationship when one does not exist. As a teacher for six years of first grade children and two years of second grade, I know that the personal loving relationship of children ages 6 and 7 with their God is at the most, a glimmer, even for the very bright child.

I agree that infants can learn to swim, and small children learn music and ballet, tennis and golf. These are all physical skills. However, setting the atmosphere where a child can learn how the Father, Son and Spirit act in his life with love is a gradual process and one that does not come to each at the same age. Child psychologists tell us that at ages eight through ten, sometimes eleven, these flash insights of conscience are forming and through these years, the flashes come closer and closer together until a child's understanding of good and evil is finally set. That is when true feelings of sorrow due to the guilt of his actions begin.

Certainly a small child can express sorrow for a misdeed, but the motivation behind the sorrow is more likely to be his fear of the physical punishment that will follow than that he has sinned against a God with whom he has little or no personal relationship. This is not to say that parents and teachers should not teach children at an early age that they are responsible for their actions, either good or evil, and that they must accept the consequences.

The decline in the reception of the Sacrament of Penance today is due to those who were brought up to receive it at such an early age that it became a habit rather than a conscious desire to reconcile with their God. It is certainly not due to the experiment of the past few years of postponing the reception of the Sacrament of Penance for a few years.

Pope John opened the windows of the Church to let in some fresh air. With this came many excellent insights into the present

day spiritual needs of the people of God: and how to best fulfill those needs. Now that we have made great strides to make the Catholic Church a living Mystical Body of Christ, it saddens me to see the doors being slammed shut once again by those who blindly refuse to think for themselves and are once again becoming the "Pay, Pray & Obey" Catholics of two decades ago. We can never go backwards and I'm wholeheartedly behind Bishop Hogan in his effort to allow enough time to judge the results of the experimentation of postponing the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation until after the reception of Holy Eucharist. Christ Himself said "Let the little children come unto me." I don't recall anything in scripture about him adding "if they are worthy."

Mrs. Mary Dean Wolf
9 Allyn's Rise
Fairport, N.Y.

Don't Be Duped By Communists

Editor:

I read with great dismay your lead editorial of Sept. 12. Communism is the social exposition of the philosophy of collectivism. This ideology has revised itself continually since Marx laid its ground-work. Lenin enlarged on Marx, then Stalin, Mao and Guevara made other changes. These alterations were always tactical and were instituted to facilitate the victory of communism.

The East German tolerance of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is another machiavellian device since it accommodates a church group that has never condemned communism though the WCC proudly touts its alleged "social gospel." This lukewarm Christianity poses no threat to state socialism.

Too many Christians are engaged in a farcical carnival of chic radicalism. Condemning racism, poverty and intolerance are indeed worthy projects, but why not develop universal social concern? At this moment East Germany holds thousands of Christians in dank prisons. The Soviet Union and China torture the followers of Christ. Yet not a word of protest is uttered by the World Council of Churches, the Berrigans or any of the so-called enlightened dissenters.

Communism is the enemy of Christianity. Its core philosophy, which has not changed since its inception in 1848, is an insipid reliance on materialism, a soul-rendering denial of individual worth and the tawdry deification of man as "god." Communism is the emperor without clothes. Christian anti-Communists are not popular because they point out a truth that most of us have been indoctrinated into denying. As a result of this myopic apathy Christians are drifting into a herd morality that sanctions almost any blasphemy in a mad rush to be "with it." This conformity in the name of dissent is a great benefit to the enemies of our Lord.

We are a group of students and young workers. We ask all followers of Jesus to stand up and speak out against state communism, an ideology that has killed millions of Christians and now deceives even the elect of our churches. We are not sun-

shine Christians or summer soldiers. In this, the winter of satanic confusion, we continue to love our enemies and hate their sins.

SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS
Michael Hoffman—co-ordinator
503 White Springs Rd.
Geneva, N.Y. 14456

Hopes Penance Will Be Delayed

Editor:

I have been very upset by some of the recent letters to the editor. I feel that certainly these people have grossly misunderstood Bishop Hogan's statement about the Sacrament of Penance.

First, as a parent of a child who recently received First Communion, I feel that he cannot fully comprehend formation of conscience in second grade. Secondly, as an adult, I myself have a great hangup about Penance which I strongly believe is a result of the way I was prepared for confession at an early age with so much emphasis on how many times I sinned and not on the why or trying to do better.

I greatly resented the referral to religion teachers (volunteers) who didn't want to change. I have been a secretary to the Religious Education program in my parish for three years. How many parents and other Catholics (even priests) realize the work and planning that goes into setting up a program, especially one involving the preparation for receiving a Sacrament for the first time. Some seem to think that it is all so simple — just send the children!

Bishop Hogan was very correct in stating that the time for

Penance should not be changed without some study and planning. I just hope that my youngest child can have more understanding and use of the Sacrament of Penance than I have had.

Verna M. Julien
[Mrs. Rene W. Julien]
116 East Elm St.
East Rochester, N.Y. 14445

Seminarians Send Thanks

Editor:

On Sunday, Sept. 16, homilists throughout the diocese pleaded for prayers and support for vocations. Among those homilists were men from St. Bernard's — the receptions which we received were at once warm, gracious and obvious signs of hope. On Sunday, Sept. 23, responses were returned to our appeals.

As representative of the students of St. Bernard's I would like to thank all those who welcomed us, and in particular, all those who generously responded to each homilist's plea. Throughout our seminary experience, we become aware of the need for support and prayers from those with whom we live and also from the larger Christian community. We at St. Bernard's are very much aware of the many sacrifices being done for us. And, in a very real way, we wish to thank everyone. With these words of thanks, we, too, offer our prayers for the generous response on the part of young men and women to God's call. We also pledge to remember the many people who join us as we pray to the God of our faith.

Thomas P. Mull, President
St. Bernard's Student Community

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