

ON THE LINE

Bob Condit

We had a nice turnout for High Mass at our church last Sunday. Must have been a hundred on hand. (The almost century-old main church seats 1,800.) The sermon was mercifully brief and to the point. The nationally famous choir never chanted more beautifully. The devout man just in front of us put paper money, not change, in the collection basket as it reaped its meagre harvest. A dollar. God was everywhere around, afloat in the incense.

One block away, the devil was clobbering us. "The Exorcist," a tremendous box office hit in New York since it opened Dec. 26 was doing its routinely spectacular business. The theater was filled, at up to \$5 a seat, and the double lines waiting to get in to see the shocking porn extended all the way around the block. Some in line might have to wait four hours to see the young actress masturbating with a crucifix.

Our church has had a tough time keeping its doors open. The neighborhood has changed over the past generation. The Irish have moved away and been replaced largely by blacks and Puerto Ricans, who don't have the money to support the big church and its adjoining parochial school. Or the wish. Our progressive pastor believes the whole property should be leveled and replaced by a small church, a more functional school, and a high-rise apartment house that would offer medium-income shelter to neighborhood families now ill-housed in fire-trap walkups. It would pay for everything. But there is opposition to this proposal among some of the traditionalists: eloquent preachers and dear old ladies who stop parishioners and ask them to sign a petition to spare the life of the near-bankrupt church.

Last Monday night the old church was dark and bolted when the bell clanged at Madison Square Garden — not too far away — and two men moved under the hot candelabra of the ring lights and began pummeling each other in what must have been a scene strikingly similar to a battle between subhuman cavemen over a mate. Some of the showier people at ringside for this second fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier had paid as much as \$1,000 for a seat, and were happy to get it. The Garden "gate," which doesn't reckon or recognize scalping, was a tidy \$1,053,688, a record for, an

Attica Coalition To Sponsor Film

The Rochester Attica Coalition is sponsoring the film "Sacco and Vanzetti" at the Xerox Auditorium, Tuesday, Feb. 12 at

COMMUNION BREAKFAST

Members of the Alumnae Association of the Sacred Heart and of the Manhattanville Club of Rochester will meet Sunday noon, Feb. 24, for Mass at the Carmelite Monastery, 1931 W. Jefferson Rd., Pittsford. Mass will be celebrated by Father Albert Bartlett, SJ. Breakfast will follow at Locust Hill Country Club. Tickets, at \$5.50, may be obtained from Mrs. William B. Wilmot, 14 Estenay Lane, Pittsford.

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

The women of St. Rita's, Webster, will put on a spaghetti supper in The Barn Saturday, Feb. 16, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Prices are \$1.95 for adults, \$1.25 for children under 12.

indoor nontitle fight. Beyond the Garden, at the nerve ends of the electronic octopus called closed-circuit TV, multitudes of U.S. and foreign fans paid \$16 million to watch the prehistoric pantomime. The fighters would be paid more than \$2 million each for their 36 minutes of bloodless sparring.

Back at the parish, a priest walked home through the empty streets, empty-pocketed, after comforting an old dying parishioner — wondering how to raise the relatively few thousands of dollars that would prolong the life of the old church. The only sounds in the neighborhood were growls from a block away. The lines waiting to get into "The Exorcist" were finding it unbearable to be deprived so long of seeing the unbearable.

The isolation of President Nixon from the press is now complete. Press Secretary Ron Ziegler has told members of the White House staff that they must report to him on any meeting, however casual, with a newsmen. The President now takes off on his trips without knowledge of the White House news "pool" which has been accompanying Presidents since F.D.R. The press communications trailer at Camp David has been shut down. So has Camp David's infamous duck blind, from which two "pool" men — usually AP and UPI — once could furtively telephone the comings and goings of VIPs. Shutting down the duck blind could be a gesture of concern by the President. Perhaps he just doesn't want to see the AP and UPI catch their death of cold.

That has a vaguely historical ring. One day, about seven decades ago, President Theodore Roosevelt looked out of his White House window during a cloudburst and said to an aide (it is said), "What are those poor devils doing, standing out there in the rain?"

"They are journalists, Mr. President," the aide is said to have said.

"For pity's sake, go out there and invite them inside. Give them a little office so they won't have to stand outside any more."

Succeeding Presidents have cursed the damned fool ever since.

7:30 p.m. Admission is \$3; proceeds will be used for the defense fund for the inmates indicted after the 1971 Attica uprising.

Following the movie, Herman Schwartz, professor of law at the University of Buffalo and Robert "Duke" Johnson, one of the 62 indicted men, will answer questions on the current status of the Attica trials. Tickets may be ordered by calling Ophelia Long, 436-9880 or Hyla Sandgrund, 244-4372.



Education Projects

Photos by Susan McKinney

Rhonda Measic finds plenty of work to keep her busy, photos left and above, during religious instructions at St. John the Evangelist School in Spencerport. Richard Wallace, right, puts finishing touches on his mobile.

Women in Prison

Morin Hears Complaints

By PAT PETRASKE

Monroe County Manager Lucien Morin answered questions last Friday on conditions for women in prison. Complaints of overcrowdedness and lack of sufficient personnel sprang from discussions at the 14th annual legislative institute of Church Women United.

Presentations were given by representatives of the Women's Jail Project, the county probation and state parole offices and CHOICE, a volunteer counseling program for inmates.

Carolyn Micklem, community coordinator for the Rochester Interfaith Ministry, asked Morin to explain a seven per cent limitation in the county budget that has resulted in a decrease in the number of probation officers and guards.

Morin explained it as a "seven per cent vacancy factor that was placed on all departments. But no services were to suffer." (This meant that as vacancies occurred, they would be left unfilled up to the seven per cent level). One member of the panel, Hinda Nashke, a county probation officer, reported that she had been handling 50 to 80 cases while her usual load was 35.

Morin stated that the new budget had allocated enough money for all positions.

Mrs. Micklem said that probation officers were handicapped by a shortage of clerical help and that a backlog of untranscribed tapes of recorded interviews with probation women had "prevented caseworkers from knowing the status of each case." In many cases there is "an eight month gap," she added.

The Rev. Merrill Bittner, an Episcopal deacon and the main speaker, described the Women's Jail Project and the conditions inside the Monroe County Jail. Its capacity for 26 inmates has often been stretched to house 30 to 50 inmates. To the request for expanded facilities for women, Morin replied that a possible opportunity frequently mentioned would be the apartment vacated by former Sheriff Albert Skinner.

A major problem, according to Deacon Bittner, is the lack of comprehensive or imaginative

projects to train and rehabilitate the women inmates.

"At the Monroe County Jail women can work in only one area where they receive compensation — sewing up men's uniforms," she said.

Mrs. Nashke, who has been a probation officer for ten years, advocated occupational programs that would break down "the shield of negative attitude. The inmate must be made to feel worthwhile." Mrs. Nashke also believes that the attitude towards probation must be changed. "Years ago a probation officer was seen as a protector of the community against those who are convicted but not incarcerated."

In recent years a more

moderate view gives the probationer "a chance to prove himself and to learn to accept responsibility," she said. Mrs. Nashke noted that there had been an upsurge of admissions, including a group of persistent offenders.

The reaction by the public toward incarceration has been "a sigh of relief. People are glad the criminal was apprehended and put away. The community feels safe again and forgets about it until another major criminal comes along," said Jean Barone, a state parole officer for nine years.

She feels that conditions in the jail serve as a "deterrent to crime. The jail is an undesirable place, no one wants to return."



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