

THE OPEN WINDOW

Q: If God is just and merciful why does he allow innocent young children to suffer? No clergyman has ever answered this question.

A: You are right. No clergyman has ever answered that question, mainly because the answer is not available to any human being. I know you will say it is a cop-out but I must answer that it is a mystery, one of many in this life. Do you know for example why you were born into the comfort and relative affluence of the United States and someone else was born into a war-torn poverty stricken corner of Vietnam? Besides, suffering is not a punishment for wrongdoing as the ancients thought. Do you remember in the Gospel (9th chapter of St. John) when Jesus met the man born blind and his disciples asked him, "Who has sinned, this man or his parents?" And Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but the works of God were to be made manifest in him." In this case we know what the works of God were. In other cases we do not. But that does not mean that God does not have valid reasons for allowing such suffering. He is all good and we know he loves us with an everlasting love. It is up to us to trust that love. When we were children we often were made to do things by our parents which we thought at the time to be cruel or senseless. But looking back we can now see how reasonable and important they were. "Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counsellor?"

Q: Why did our Blessed Mother Four Cardinals To Testify to Abortion Panel

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Four U.S. Roman Catholic cardinals, speaking as "concerned Americans" in defense of human rights, will testify March 7 during Senate subcommittee hearings on a proposed constitutional amendment to protect the life of unborn children.

The prelates are Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB); Cardinal John Cody of Chicago, who heads the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities; Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles; and Cardinal Humberto Medeiros of Boston.

Following a three-day meeting of the NCCB Administrative Committee and the U.S. Catholic Conference's Administrative Board (Feb. 11-13), Bishop James Rausch, general secretary of the two organizations, announced that the cardinals had been invited by the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments to testify.

The bishop noted that the subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), had also invited representatives of other religious, civic and professional groups to testify during the series of hearings which begin March 6 with testimony by members of Congress.

"The cardinals will speak as concerned Americans," said Bishop Rausch, "not to advocate sectarian doctrine, but to defend human rights."

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appear only to Catholic children and never to non-Catholics?

A: If this is true, and I really don't know, I suppose it would be that Catholic children would be more likely to have devotion to her and therefore the odds swing that way. But being the Blessed Mother of all the human race, I am certain she loves all her children equally and desires the happiness and salvation of all.

Dear Father Hohman:

My mother says God is going to punish this wicked world this Christmas. She says that there is a comet coming and that is a sign that something terrible is going to happen like another flood or maybe a war. Why does God send comets to punish people?

S.C.

Dear S.C.:

The comet was a fizzle. Aren't you happy with the answer we all got? God does not send comets to punish people. I don't know whether your mother was trying to scare you or is just a bad theologian (to say nothing of astronomer). Incidentally, God does not make or send wars. People make them.

12 Catholic Schoolers Win Ribbons

Twelve young artists who attend local Catholic schools won awards in the Sibley-Scholastic High School Art Competition. Five of them are students at Bishop Kearney High School.

Five of their entries in various categories took blue ribbons, which means that they advance to the national competition and will be exhibited and judged in the finals next month in New York.

William Hudon of McQuaid, a photographer, is not only a blue ribbon finalist and winner of a white ribbon, but also a nominee.

CDA Announces Scholarships

Any Catholic girl going to any college is eligible to compete for the Catholic Daughters of America undergraduate scholarship, the organization announced this week. One three-year scholarship worth \$200 a year is given in each diocese of the state. The application deadline is March 15.

On a national level, there is one \$500 graduate scholarship to be given to a member or daughter of a member who will receive a bachelor's degree this June and enter graduate school in September. Applications for this one must be in by June 1. Information about either award may be obtained from Mrs. Genevieve Insalaco at 467-8139, or from any Catholic Daughter.

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Patricia Innes of Kearney was awarded two blue ribbons for her mixed media paintings.

Finalists include also Sidonie Merkel of Mercy High and Kevin Newman and Christopher Shipley of Cardinal Mooney. Sidonie's winner is in the graphic design category. Kevin's is an acrylic painting and Christopher's, a watercolor.

The finals will pit them against winners from 51 other regions.

White ribbons were awarded to Margaret Serafine, Kathy Cama, Joyce Mark and Michael Piston, all of Kearney, and to two junior high school students, Ellen Ortolani of St. Theodore's and James O'Neill of St. James.

More than 1,200 entries are on show in Sibley's new Ward Gallery on the fifth floor of the downtown Rochester store. They came from 136 schools in 12 counties. The gallery is open during regular store hours through March 2.

Sponsors of the competition with Sibley's are the Central

Western New York State Art Teachers' Association and Scholastic Magazines, Inc.

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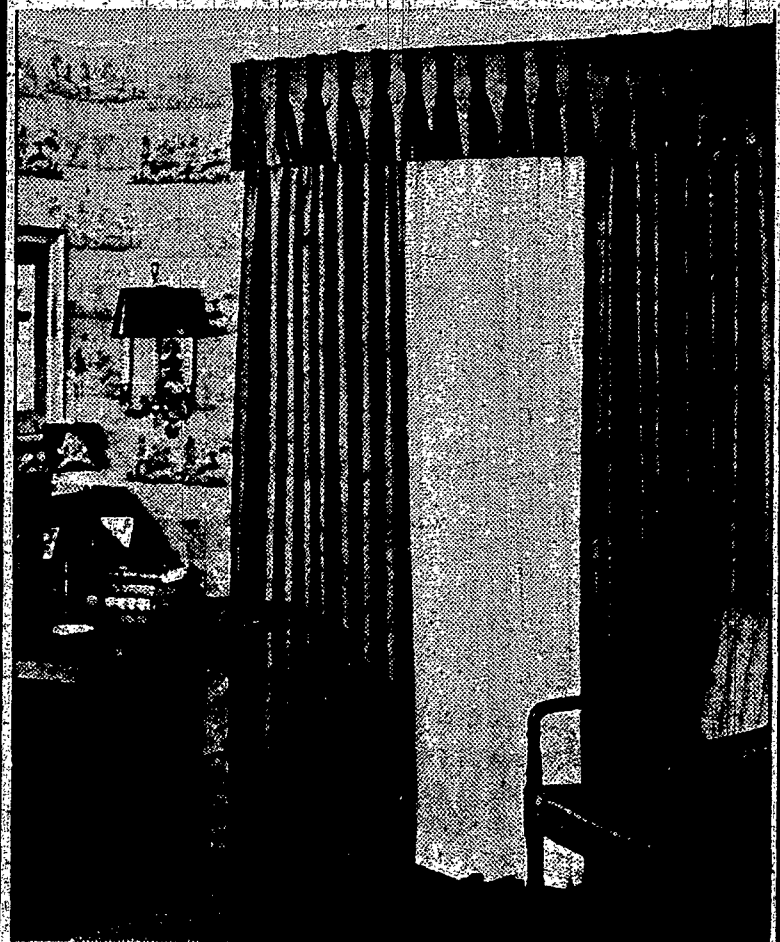
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