

THE SLOT MAN

Generally much of the criticism aimed at newspapers is misdirected. I didn't say unfounded, merely misdirected.

For instance, most of the mistakes made by a newspaper are the result of sloppiness, not intent. Many times a newspaper will be faulted for deliberately distorting news when more than likely the error was caused by a lack of double-checking, follow-through, or by laziness or some such gremlin.

But a recent piece in the Democrat and Chronicle, on its Forum page, defies any such excuse. "Catholic Church rallying cry: Stop abortion" was patently anti-Catholic, had little to say about an inflammatory issue except to heap fuel on it, and had very little relationship to this locale.

It presents Catholics as a bunch of dumb sheep constantly being ordered about by bishops on high and it makes the obvious mistake of not pointing out that the anti-abortion movement is largely a grass roots effort, with the hierarchy involved only incidentally. This area has a particularly strong pro-life movement, led by the laity and which in itself would make interesting local reading.

But back to the Forum article, originally written for Harper's magazine by Marion K. Sanders. It categorizes pro-lifers as religious fanatics, intent on subverting the Constitution and, by implication, all that is good and American. Hogwash! The pro-life movement has been working specifically within the framework provided by the Constitution to change what it thinks is deprivation of human rights. Nothing could be more American nor done in a more American way.

Lest we be misjudged, we do not in any way say Harper's hasn't the right to print such invective. Likewise the Democrat and Chronicle may print it as it sees fit. Normally such obvious subjective feelings are confined to a newspaper's editorial page, which is sound journalistic practice, but, if the D&C wants to spread its editorial opinion into other sections, that is its right.

These are the days of advocacy journalism, a philosophy which requires that newspapers refrain from cold objectivity; that they enter the lists for what they consider needed social reform. Of course, newspapers were always supposed to supply such direction — through their editorial pages. Now the belief holds, such opinions may run throughout a newspaper, which places an obvious added burden of responsibility on a paper's editors.

Be that as it may, we feel that the article in the March 24 D&C is still out of bounds. We are sure that the newspaper wouldn't allow diatribe on its editorial page, so why then elsewhere on its pages. We may hear that an opposite viewpoint will be printed — but in the case of a bigoted attack an opposite viewpoint is hard to come by — except to turn the other cheek and that is difficult to do for 7 1/2 columnar inches of newspaper space. Besides, in these days of newsprint shortage it may be a waste of space.

The article is only another example of a new wave of anti-religiosity making the rounds, much of which is directed at Catholics. Other minority groups will no longer sit still for this kind of bias, thank God. Neither should Catholics.

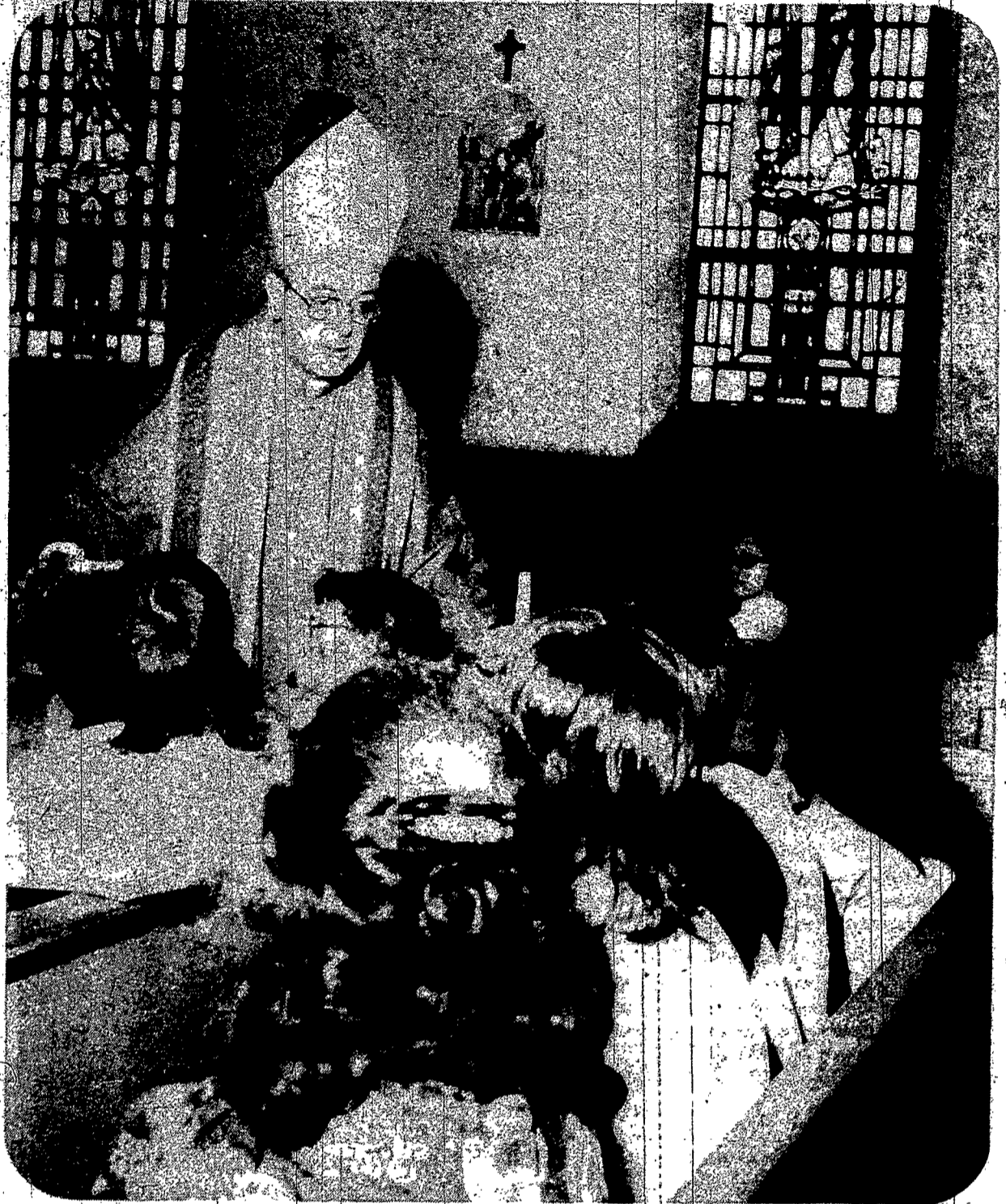


Photo by Dave Witbeck

Special Confirmation

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan pauses to speak with the children in the chapel of the School of the Holy Childhood during the first Confirmation for the handicapped to be held in the diocese. Forty-one children were confirmed at the rites and more than 20 parishes were represented. The school works with the exceptional child and houses a religious education program for diocesan handicapped.

Holy Week Opens Sunday

The most sacred week of the church year opens Sunday, April 7, Palm Sunday.

Palms, blessed and distributed in Christian Churches throughout the world on this day, remind us of the day when Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, the crowd's shouts of "Hosanna" ringing in his ears. Palms are symbols of royalty, and are intended to remind us of Christ's victory over sin and death.

The Gospel of Matthew recounts the story that as Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, he sent two disciples on ahead, telling them they would find an ass and a colt tethered together. The disciples were to loose the animals and return with them. When this was done Jesus rode into the Holy City, and members of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees to line the streets. And the crowd shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The solemn blessing of the palms at Sacred Heart Cathedral will take place at the 8:30 and 11:15 a.m. Masses.

William Leone To Be Ordained

William B. Leone will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at St. Charles Borromeo Church, on April 5 at 7:30 p.m. Father Leone has been serving St. Charles' as a deacon.

The theme of the ordination Mass is "God's Grace for All Men." Father Leone explained that grace "enables men to rise from death to life in and through their daily activities."

Father Leone is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred A. Leone of Hinchey Road, Gates. His home parish is St. Helen's.

The new priest is a graduate of Aquinas Institute, St. John Fisher College, where he earned a BA in Philosophy, and St. Bernard's Seminary, where he earned a BA in Theology.

He performed his Clinical Pastoral Education at Virginia Baptist Hospital, Lynchburg, Va., and has also been associated with Camp Stella Maris.



FATHER LEONE

Father Leone will celebrate his first Mass of Thanksgiving on Palm Sunday, April 7, at 12:30 p.m. at St. Helen's.