



Coincidence

Library Week brings special significance to students and faculty members at St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads. The books shown were received under the Federal Government's Elementary School Education Act II on National Library Day. Unpacking the books are [left to right] Angela Ramp, fourth grade; Mrs. John Leonard, chairman of the library mothers committee, which staffs the library; Karen Stermer, eighth grade; Sister Campion, school principal; Jeffrey Grant, eighth grade, and William Sonner, third grade.

THE CHURCH 1974

Editor, Andrew Grogan

I have been worried about myself lately.

A while back, I began to receive all sorts of friendly messages, signals, and invitations from members of the East Coast Catholic Liberal Establishment. Apparently I was being forgiven for my opposition to the Berrigans. Or maybe they finally realized that I was right on the foolishness of "liturgical" protests.

I felt ambivalent. First of all, they are all nice people, and I like having them as friends. But they are almost always wrong, and if they turned sympathetic toward me, then I would be wrong, too.

Fortunately my presumption in criticizing John Cogley solved the problem. I am once again outside the pale. Such a relief! Indeed, now I am in real trouble. As one friend from Ohio told me on the phone in ominous tones, "Bill Clancy is really mad!" I was puzzled because I couldn't quite remember who Bill Clancy was. (I thought he might be my self-confessed "hard-hitting" Franciscan nemesis, Roy M. Gasnick, under an assumed name.) I was also told that a Catholic paper has suppressed my column on Cogley. Nice stand; apostates get an opportunity to attack the Church, but critics don't get space to reply.

Let it be clear what the difference are between me and the Cogleytes. We disagree on the Roman Catholic Church. I think that someone who has played the role of leader in the Church for three decades and then leaves it has betrayed the Church and those who took him seriously and listened to him. But they think he is some sort of folk hero. I think that the way papal authority is currently exercised and the birth control encyclical are theologically absurd reasons for breaking from the bonds of the Catholic community. They think that such reasons are excellent.

I think that an attack on the Church by a former highly visible member which appears in the Op Ed page of the New York Times is a vile and disgraceful act. They think it well within the rights of freedom of conscience. I think that anyone who attacks the Church in public is open to criticism. They think that John Cogley, no matter what he says about the Church, is immune to criticism.

The fundamental difference is that I love the Roman Catholic Church and am deeply and passionately loyal to it. When someone who played the role of the official Catholic layman for

so many years defects from it and then defames it, I become furious. Furthermore, I am not ashamed of this passion for the Church and I am not reluctant to admit it.

It is not a triumphalist loyalty. I know from personal experience the flaws of the ecclesiastical structure, probably far better than all the Cogley crowd put together. I can think of nothing I have put my hand to in the Church which has not ended in miserable failure. But the bride will be without blemish only when the bridegroom returns. To love the Church despite its flaws seems to me the only available option until then.

In other words, the Roman Catholic Church, as it currently exists, may not be much of a church, but it is the only one I have. Its leadership may be inept and insensitive and occasionally psychopathic; its clergy may be frequently self-centered and immature; its religious may be nasty, superstitious and occasionally apathetic and confused; its theologians may be doing everything but theology; its elites may be making folk heroes out of resigning priests and apostasizing laity, but I love it.

The Church is where I first heard the Gospel; it is where the Lord Jesus first revealed himself to me through my family, my priests, my teachers; it is where He still challenges me daily through my brothers and sisters in Him. Despite all its faults I can only be deeply grateful for what it has done for me.

And so I will continue to defend it and wonder why some people are so eager to defend its defamers and so silent when it comes to defending the Church.

The Cogley Crowd and The Wanderer Gang — no one with enemies like that can be completely bad.

There is one — and I believe only one — intellectually respectable reason for separating from Catholic Christianity. It has to do with rejecting the specific Catholic Christian insight while maintaining the basic Christian world view. I shall turn to that subject in a later column.

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Once Over Briefly

BLAZING SADDLES — Objectionable — Offensive Western spoof by Mel Brooks who's been funnier on Hollywood Squares.

CINDERELLA LIBERTY — Objectionable — Schematized story of sailor (James Caan) who falls in love with a hooker (Marsha Mason) and her son (Kirk Calloway). Good, clever scenes, but sappy and seamy at the same time.

CONRACK — Adults and adolescents — Sensitive film of a teacher's experiences in a South Carolina island community of black students. With Jon Voight, Paul Winfield.

CONVERSATION — Adults — Gene Hackman as the James-McCord type. First-rate film about "third rate" burglars.

DAY OF THE DOLPHIN — Adults and adolescents — It's a good thing most dolphins won't be seeing this movie. They'd be embarrassed for the so-called "superior race" known as mankind.

EXORCIST — Adults with reservations — This is the one movie you should really think about before deciding whether or not to see it. And though it's rated R, we strongly urge against taking the young along with you. That is, if you can get in at all.

GREAT GATSBY — Adults — When leading man Robert Redford failed to show for premiere, he explained, "I already read the book."

LAST DETAIL — Adults with reservations — Salty story of two career sailors (Jack Nicholson and Otis Young) who give a young seaman (Randy Quaid) an education in manhood. Some of the finest acting this year is turned in by Nicholson and company.

MAGNUM FORCE — Condemned — Sequel to Dirty Harry once again tries to prove that crime pays, if you're on the right side of the law. Fascist-chic.

MAME — Adults and adolescents — Who pulls the wool right over our eyes? blame Gene Saks for this regrettably lame, lame Mame.

MAN ON A SWING — Adults — Mixed bag of crime detection and parapsychology, with Cliff Robertson and Joel Grey.

MCQ — Adults — John Wayne as a crusty Seattle detective. A hard-nosed law 'n' order film.

PAPER CHASE — Adults — Timothy Bottoms, Lindsay Wagner and John Houseman in a drama of a law student's battle between intellect and emotions. As the professor, Houseman is stunningly convincing.

PAPILLON — Adults — Autobiographical story of a fugitive from Devil's Island. With the talent and charisma of both Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman, it can't miss.

SERPICO — Adults with reservations — Could be the best cop movie ever, with Al Pacino extremely convincing as the plainclothesman who refuses to bend to corruption.

SEVEN UPS — Adults — Car chase sequences have become the hallmark of director Phil D'Antonio (Bullitt, French

Hear Women, Bayh Told

New York [RNS] — A group of women leaders have demanded that more women be allowed to testify at the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee hearings on the proposed constitutional amendment to overrule legal abortion.

Bergen, Helen Cahagan Douglas, Billie Jean King, Mary Lasker, Shirley MacLaine, Marya Myerson, Margaret Mead, Bess Myerson, Maurine Newberger, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Ann Scott, Marietta Tree, Harriet Van Horne, Barbara Walters, Sarah Weddington and Joanne Woodward.

It is "incredible that so few women have been allowed to testify," the women said in a telegram to Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) chairman of the subcommittee.

A press conference to announce the women's specific demands was set for May at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., sponsored by National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). Among the participants will be Lana Clarke Phelan, president of NARAL, Gloria Steinem, Helen Gurley Brown, Judy Collins and Liz Carpenter.

The following also signed the telegram: Shana Alexander, Leona Baumgartner, Candace

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