

# THE OPEN WINDOW

Father Louis Holman

Dear Father Holman,

I would like to throw in a few words on CCD. My youngest is not in a Catholic school and what he has learned at CCD about his religion wouldn't fill a pint bottle. The concept of sin is totally alien. Hell? Big laugh! The ten commandments, the works of mercy, the cardinal virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit — he has never heard of them. Oh — he's heard about the Ten Commandments — it was shown on television. Now I approve of "Love Thy Neighbor." I really do believe it is the foundation of a good life, but I think it would be nice if he learned something in addition to that law! None of my kids knew what I was talking about when I said, "Today is the Feast of the Annunciation." Their religion in school could more properly be named Ethics. Which is great — we really do need ethics. But to the exclusion of everything else? Yes, they do more Bible study than we did, and that is good. We are very definitely drifting toward the Protestant churches, and I suspect that by the year 2020 we will be indistinguishable.

Sincerely,  
K.

Dear K.,

Some of what you say is true. A few years ago there came a revolution in the approach to religious education — from the sterility of a memorized Catechism to a more personal and fundamental approach to Christianity. As in the case of all revolutions, the pendulum swung too far for some and the result was a total neglect of fact and intellectual doctrine. Now I think that there is a turning back to some of the factual and specific doctrine you find missing, but hopefully never back to the old system as such. To memorize the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and to put them into use in your life are two different things. Personally I have to trust most of our teachers and educators that they are trying hard to do the latter and less hard to do the former. And, incidentally, if you are harking back to an age of better catechetics, I'd like to have a buck for every Catholic over thirty who has not the remotest idea what Annunciation, Immaculate Conception or Assumption really mean, especially as these pertain to their personal lives. Don't worry so much. I do believe our religious education is getting better and better. If you really try it, I think you'll like it.

# OUR PARISH COUNCIL

Bernard Lyons

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One out ten of our population is now 65 years of age or older.

The majority of our senior citizens live below what is considered the "poverty line" in terms of annual income.

Suicide in the 65 to 70 years of age group is nearly four times that of the general population. This is closely related to problems of loneliness, probably the biggest single problem for most of our elderly.

Malnutrition is another serious problem among older people.

If you are going to do anything about the problems and the promise of the elderly, it's necessary to get the facts first.

Start with the senior citizens that you know.

What would they like to do? Could a parish hall be made available to them, on a regular basis, for a gathering place during the day, where they can have some conversation, coffee or tea, and play cards, and plan other programs?

## PLAYHOUSE REOPENING

Naples — The Bristol Valley Playhouse will reopen this summer to present a wide range of activities. In addition to the five plays to be produced, the playhouse will offer a series of 16 concerts, folk and traditional. The theater will also show exhibitions of various artists and craftsmen.

The official opening June 15 will feature Julie Babbi & Company with John Paulson and Keith Baker, folk singers familiar to many in the area.

## Problem Pregnancy?

For free confidential help call Birthright: (716) 328-8700. Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays; 24 hour answering device to receive messages.



## Be fast Shopping

Shoppers stream through a control point in Belfast's downtown shopping district on the first full day of openshops [May 25] since the general strike began in Northern Ireland nine days before. A British soldier stands at left background near the exit to the control area while a woman soldier waits to check persons entering. Britain has sent soldiers to man key fuel facilities as the general strike threatened to bring a complete stoppage of food supplies, medical services and electric power. The work stoppage was called by extremist Protestant groups in an effort to force the Northern Ireland Executive, a Protestant-Roman Catholic coalition body, into dissolution. [RNS]

# N. Ireland — Moderates Lose

Belfast [RNS] — The collapse of Northern Ireland's coalition government on May 28 has been interpreted as a heavy blow to the efforts of moderates on both sides of the Protestant-Roman Catholic divide to end the violence and bloodshed that has plagued the province since 1969.

The five-month-old venture in power sharing between Ulster's majority Protestants and minority Catholics dissolved under the massive weight of a two-week general strike by militant Protestants.

Brian Faulkner, chief minister of the province and his moderate

Protestant colleagues resigned from the Northern Ireland Executive.

In announcing the resignation, Faulkner, a moderate who once served as prime minister of Northern Ireland, said: "I have never experienced a sadder day in my life from the point of view of the country that I love."

The ad hoc Ulster Workers Council (UWC) that spearheaded the shut-down campaign that brought the province to its knees, announced on May 29 that it was calling off the strike. It said essential services could be back to normal within days.

Public support for the strike had been so widespread, Faulkner said, that he and his colleagues felt the Executive could not continue as a representative governing body.

Faulkner's deputy, Gerard Fitt, a leader of the moderate Catholic-dominated Social and Democratic Labor party, also described the day as sad.

Fitt said:

"I think this is a very sad day for Northern Ireland. And those who are in support at present of the fascist agitators — the Ulster Workers Council — or association — they don't really realize what can happen here."

(British Prime Minister Harold Wilson in an earlier nationwide television broadcast, called the strike leaders "thugs and bullies.")

Violence among Protestants, Catholics, and security forces in Ulster has killed 1,028 people since August 1969.

The immediate aim of the UWC-directed strike was to cause the downfall of the coalition Executive which had been

heralded at its formation five months ago as the political organ that would open the way to a new era of cooperation and compromise between 970,000 Protestants and 540,000 Catholics. The Executive enabled Ulster's minority to share political power for the first time in half a century.

The Protestant resistance movement also demanded the scrapping of a proposal for an all-Ireland Council that would provide links between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to the south.

Hard-liners feared that the Council was but a first step that would lead inevitably to reunification of the North and the predominantly Catholic South. In a reunited Ireland, Protestants would be outnumbered 3 to 1.

When the failure of the power-sharing Executive was announced, there was dancing in the streets of the Protestant areas of Belfast.

Meanwhile, in Dublin, Irish Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave expressed dismay and regret over the collapse of the Northern Ireland governing body.

"This great experiment," he said in a statement, "has been wrecked by deliberate misrepresentation of its purpose on the one hand and by the continuance of violence on the other."

Cosgrave scored the terrorist Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), saying its campaign of violence — bombing, sniping, and assassinations — had "provoked a massive sectarian backlash."

## New Mothers Financial Aid Bills Killed

Albany [RNS] — Two bills that would have eased the financial strain on women giving birth were killed in committee in the New York Legislature as it adjourned its 1974 session.

Both bills passed in the Senate with ease earlier in the session but were locked in the Assembly Rules Committee to prevent a final vote.

One bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Constance Cook and by Sen. Roy Goodman, would have provided disability benefits for women employees disabled during pregnancy and following childbirth. Under present state law, pregnancy-related disabilities are specifically excluded from compensation.

The other bill, sponsored by Sen. James Donovan, would have forced insurance companies to pay the same benefits for childbirth as they now pay for other medical care. Most insurance companies in New York pay a small flat rate for childbirth, an amount that, some say, does not begin to cover the medical costs involved.

The New York State Catholic Committee, voice of New York's Catholic bishops, backed both bills. So did the New York State Right to Life Committee and numerous women's groups. New York State AFL-CIO and the American Civil Liberties union backed the Cook-Goodman bill.

A spokeswoman in Assemblywoman Cook's office said her bill was killed by Assembly leaders who yielded to pressure by New York's Workman's Compensation Board, chambers of commerce and small industrial organizations who oppose her bill. These groups believe, it was said, that if the bill were passed it would hurt businesses which would pay for most maternity benefits.



## Remembered

Gerald and Marjorie Sullivan of Rochester and Brother James Farrell, OSA, a native of Rochester, participated in recent ceremonies at Villanova University, dedicating a room in the school's law library to the memory of the late Father William E. Farrell, OSA, former vice president of the university. Father Farrell was also a native of Rochester.