

Editorial

New Awareness

Evidence is building that those politicians who thought they could satisfy the Catholic population by saying something nice about St. Christopher are in for a rude awakening.

Constant rebuffs by politicians in such issues as school aid, abortion and now perhaps in such areas as euthanasia and enforced sterilization are tending to unite Catholics as a voting bloc — and when one fourth of a nation's citizenry coalesce that constitutes clout.

The fact that there is anti-Catholic feeling in many of the decisions affecting the citizenry is increasingly difficult to deny.

Father Andrew Greeley of the National Opinion Research Center has noted that Catholics have been leaving their traditional political home in the Democratic party "because they were thrown out." He blames the liberal intellectual elite for ignoring the wishes of Catholic voters.

Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, also sees a "possible surge in Catholic anger."

Father Hesburgh is quoted in Religious News Service as noticing "some stirrings among these quiet, faithful, patriotic modest American Catholics. They are beginning to feel set upon, even badly used and unappreciated."

How much of this disregard of Catholic sentiment is the result of bigotry is hard to assess. It simply may have resulted from years of paying lip service to Catholics and getting away with it. If that is the case, then Catholics have been equally to blame for accepting such low-rate regard.

Un-plain Talk

Our language, more particularly our idiom, is important because it reflects our attitudes. That is why some recent cogent remarks by Cardinal John Heenan, archbishop of Westminster, bear consideration.

"Death has become an obscenity — the great unmentionable," he said. "Nobody dies — we pass away or pass on. No disease is fatal, it only reaches its terminal stages."

But, he pointed out, "the believer does not regard death as obscene. St. Francis of Assisi used to talk of 'Sister Death' — a friend to be welcomed."

The cardinal extended his point.

"Like death, the word 'old' has become obscene. Old people have been abolished. They have become senior citizens. At best they are the 'aged' which is thought to be less offensive than being old."

"An intelligent people recognize that unless they have an accident or develop a killing disease they will grow old."

When we develop euphemisms to describe such natural development as old age and death, we skirt the truth. And that is not good for anyone.

Perspective

Argentina, a highly complex nation with its huge grazing lands, cosmopolitan cities and fervid politics, is at best a difficult land to govern. Now this responsibility has fallen to the first woman to become head of state of a Western Hemisphere nation.

Argentine government has been marked by a lack of stability. There have been eight different presidents since World War II, not counting military juntas.

Leaders with such names as Juan, Roberto, Jose, Arturo and Alejandro have failed to solve the nation's problems. If the present president unfortunately joins that list, we should attach no special significance to the fact that the name is Isabel.

Opinion

Says Workers Reject Chavez

Editor:

The recent descent of Cesar Chavez on Monroe County prompts some observations on an often-ignored aspect of the endless grape-lettuce-Gallo Wine boycott. It is simply, that the California farm workers hate and fear Chavez, and do not want to join his United Farm Workers Union (UFWU). If given a free choice, the workers would elect to be independent and not bossed by any union.

In September of last year, I noted these facts. However, the Courier's 9/23/73 issue smugly countered that the National Labor Relations Board would not conduct elections in the farm fields since labor law excluded farm workers from coverage.

Obviously, Washington bureaucrats are not needed to run elections. Father Richard Humphreys, the pastor of Our Lady of Soledad parish in Coachella, Calif., organized a representative laborer election on the KK Larson farm this past March 21. Larson had been one of two California grape farmers who kept contracts with the UFWU while others abandoned the union. In Father Humphrey's balloting, 60 workers voted for no union, while only 28 backed the UFWU.

In this case, free men beat Chavez's oppressive hiring hall practices and excessive dues demands. I can only suggest that other farm workers, given free choice, would to the same.

Thomas Scott Thrasher
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USCC Service Recommended

Editor:

I'd like to recommend an excellent publications service for anyone interested in the broad areas of Church, society, and justice. It is called the Standing Order Service of the United States Catholic Conference. The Publications Office of the USCC publishes numerous pamphlets and booklets which include statements of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, papal documents, and material from other important documentary sources.

If one subscribes to this service, he gets several times a year a packet of the main USCC documents printed during the interim. A bill is sent at the end of the year (the list price total of the

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"IF YOU SAY 'POOR BILLY GRAHAM' ONE MORE TIME, YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY SLIPPER."

documents mailed); this is usually around 12 to 15 dollars.

The subject matter of the documents received is wide ranging indeed, from the reform of correctional institutions to diocesan accounting, for example. (And this broadness tends to broaden one's own interests.) Some of the general areas covered in recent documents have been: international justice, communications media, social/moral concerns, racial justice, liturgy, parish and pastoral councils, ecumenical affairs, ministry and catechetics, missionary activity, youth programs, family life, the

drug problem, right-to-life and abortion.

The USCC documents are characterized by outstanding expertise, thorough research, realism, and great clarity of expression. They are strong, solid, and well-balanced presentations of the many areas covered.

The address is: USCC Publications Office, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

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OUR PARISH COUNCIL

Brother Joel

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What happens to the janitor in your parish when he retires? What about the nuns? And the lay teachers in the parochial school?

Has your council considered these questions?

That a Catholic institution should be attentive to the needs of employees, especially when they reach the age of retirement, is a long-standing principle. The founder of the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ, is the exemplar of social justice, both in practice and theory," writes Brother Joel Damian, FSC, in the booklet "Private Pension Plans for Employees of Catholic Institutions and Members of Religious Communities."

In modern times Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI and John XXIII outlined the principles of social justice that should govern employer-employee relationships. Unfortunately, however, some entities of the Church, for reasons of varying validity, have not been models in the practice of these theories."

Brother Joel points out that the Catholic schools of the U.S. have been operating on pauper financial budgets and they have put salaries and other employee benefits on the bottom of their priority lists.

In the early history of the Catholic school system the question of pensions was hardly considered since the number of religious to staff the schools was usually sufficient. With the increasing number of lay employees in the last decade, the question of pensions must be considered.

What kind of pension plan works best?

From his own experience, Brother Joel recommends that the plan be self-insured, self-administered, trustee, funded and IRS-approved.

He warns against some insurance company programs.

"Recently I was asked to review the requirements of a pension plan with the business manager of one of our Catholic dioceses. He had been asked by his bishop and the episcopal council to investigate the best method of setting up a plan for all employees of the diocese. He told me that as soon as he let it be known what he was looking for, he was deluged with plans proposed by insurance companies."

"He showed me 14 plans which had been brought to him by the enterprising salesmen of these companies," explains Brother Joel. "I reviewed those plans briefly and found that not one of them was suitable for the kind of group employed in this diocese."

Brother Joel reports that every one of the plans suggested an insured annuity plan, a very expensive way to set up a pension program.

There are no "cheap" pension plans, but the important thing is to do it correctly, and thus make the best use of the limited funds usually available.

If your council is going to consider pensions — and it should — a good starting point for study for the council, or the assigned committee, is Brother Joel's "Private Pension Plans." A single copy is \$1.25, but bulk prices are available from Publication Sales, National Catholic Educational Association, One Dupont Circle, Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20036.