

OUR PARISH COUNCIL

[C] 1974, Voice Publications. Bernard Lyons is editor of COUNCIL Newsletter. For a free copy of the Newsletter, write to: Council Newsletter, 724 North Harvey, Oak Park, IL 60302.

The closest contact many Catholics have with each other is in the crunching of fenders in the parish parking lot, the late Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan, of Atlanta, used to say.

There is something immediate that a parish council can do to change the patterns that permit or reinforce an impersonal custom in their parish.

Take an inventory of the social interaction that is encouraged or frustrated by your parish plant layout and architecture.

You do not have to be a professional sociologist to observe the patterns of people coming to and from Masses for a number of weeks.

Are there opportunities for people to greet each other, and perhaps stop and talk with each other awhile?

What means of transportation do most of the people use, and how far do they travel to your parish church?

Are there sufficient spaces in the parking lot (with marked lines for the most efficient use of the space)?

Are there differences in the patterns from, say, a 5 p.m. Saturday Mass and a 10 a.m. Sunday Mass?

After several weeks of observations, it would be well to stop people and ask them questions based on your observations.

Listen not only for their answers, but for other "answers" they might give by their willingness to talk or, perhaps, their lack of cooperation.

When these preliminary observations have been gathered and discussed in your parish council it might be well to create a special committee to which you invite sociologists, architects, liturgists and others.

Give them the results of your early thinking. Ask them for help.

The essential problem might be expressed: "How do we take what we have now in the parish plant and architecture and make it a more human place that encourages personal interaction?"

If your parish priests have not yet made it a practice to conclude Mass by coming down the center aisle to shake hands with parishioners or to stand in front of the church building in free moments, could you discuss this with them?

CCD BENEFIT

Honeoye Falls — The annual festival at St. Paul of the Cross, scheduled for Sept. 7, will be a benefit for the CCD program. Jim and Jane Predmore head the committee.

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Would an architect have some ideas about planting trees, placing benches, or building a kiosk (for a bulletin board or sale of Catholic publications) in a plaza-like arrangement in front of the church?

What ideas would the liturgists contribute to get the "silent majority" to open up during the worship service?

To get people acquainted and open to each other, it is not sufficient to re-arrange static architecture and patterns, but it is an important factor, for man not only shapes architecture, but architecture helps to shape man.

Pope Condemns Train Bombing

Bologna, Italy [RNS] — Pope Paul has roundly condemned a bomb explosion on a packed holiday train near here on August 4 as a "barbarous act of terrorism."

Twelve persons were killed and at least 48 injured in the blast, which occurred as the train originating in Rome and bound for Munich emerged from a 10-mile-long tunnel carved through the Apennine Mountains between Florence and Bologna.

The train, the Italicus, was filled to capacity with about a thousand passengers. The explosion tore the roof off the fifth car of the 17-car train, igniting an inferno that spread to the car behind.

Cardinal Jean Villot, Vatican Secretary of State, sent a telegram

to Cardinal Antonio Poma of Bologna on behalf of the Pope, expressing the pontiff's "profound sorrow" at the "barbarous act," which was so "absolutely unjustified."

"His Holiness," said Cardinal Villot, "offers fervent prayers for the unfortunate victims and imparts to the afflicted families as well as to the injured and the survivors the comfort of his apostolic benediction as a pledge of particular divine assistance."

President Giovanni Leone branded the disaster an act of "homicidal madness," and vowed that Italy would never fall to forces of violence.

Government leaders pinned responsibility for the explosion on rightist extremists. It was one of the worst such incidents in

postwar Italy. In 1969, a bomb exploded in a Milan bank, killing 16 persons and injuring 88.

Last May, a high-explosive time bomb went off at an anti-fascist rally in the northern industrial town of Brescia, killing 11 persons. Police attributed that blast to the extreme right-wing underground group calling itself "The Black Order."

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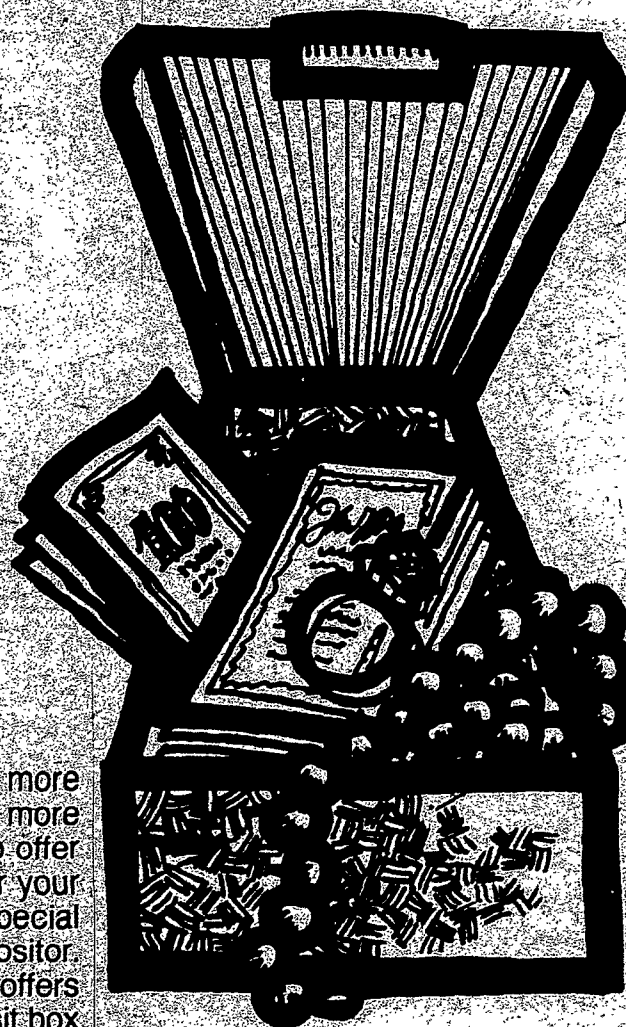
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