

THE OPEN WINDOW

Father Louis Holman

Two letters this week express opposing views on the quality of current religious education. Excerpts follow.

Religious education getting better? Far from it. I will not have my children attend a Catholic school nor will they go to a CCD class unless I know the instructor. To be told they do not have to go to church and Mass on Sunday if they don't feel like it, don't have to obey their parents, etc. is what you call good religious education? People are to gather together to pray and what better place is there than the House of God. And the seventh day is the Lord's day. Or perhaps you never had memorized catechism and applied it to your life. Sad, so sad that the religious today are not setting the example and showing good leadership like a few years ago. The result is the children are not praying, not going to church and there is no indication of applying Catholicism to their life.

Your last comment "if you really try it, I think you'll like it" has much to be desired. Good religion is a security within oneself which is not being taught today. Too, the religious are too interested in politics to be bothered with the problems of their own flock. This paper certainly indicates that.

As a teacher in the CCD program, I felt I had to write and commend you on the excellent reply you made to someone who wrote to you criticizing CCD. It never fails to happen that those who are so critical and yell the loudest are the very ones who never offer to help out in any way.

We have a wonderful program in our parish and a very dedicated religious education coordinator. This summer she and a few assistants are working on a coordinated syllabus, wherein certain things are taught in certain grade levels. We feel this will eliminate a lot of confusion and guesswork and each teacher will know what is to be taught. Throughout the year we have meetings and workshops which give us new insights into theology and methodology.

We all have taken the CCD teacher training course and spend a lot of extra time reading and studying. Granted, such a course does not qualify us as professional teachers by any

means, but it does give us a means whereby we can teach children effectively.

Perhaps I shouldn't take sides, but I do feel much of the problem of discontent with our religious education program is due to lack of real knowledge of what is going on. There probably are instances of the types of abuses mentioned in the first letter but I am certain they are rare if we look at the whole picture. Similarly I feel that complaints about "new theology" and methodology spring largely from a lack of knowledge or contact with them. Some study and investigation might be of real help. That's why I said, "try it." Maybe I shouldn't have said "you'll like it" but I sure wish parents in particular would get to know more about it. Please take the time. It involves the most important aspect of your child's education.

Nuns Applaud Women's Ordinations

St. Louis [RNS] — More than 600 Roman Catholic nuns taking part in National Assembly of Women Religious (NAWR) meeting here overwhelmingly approved the recent ordination of 11 women to the Episcopal priesthood.

Although the ordinations were later declared "invalid" by the Episcopal House of Bishops, the nuns had sent a telegram to the Chicago meeting of the bishops urging them "to affirm and recognize" the ordinations which took place July 29 in Philadelphia.

"We view these ordinations as a sign of hope authenticating the ministry of women in the Church," the NAWR wire said, "and a valid response to the Gospel values of human dignity, service and justice."

Sister Ann Patrick Ware, chairperson of the NAWR committee on Women in Church and Society, said the NAWR endorsed the sentiments of Episcopal Women's Caucus "which sees the ordinations as an occasion of joy because the event was a clear response in

obedience to the Lordship of Christ and, at the same time, a cause of some dismay because of the irregular nature of the ordinations."

The NAWR statement was sent in recognition that ecumenical considerations — fear of slowing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church — have delayed the legal reforms that would allow the ordination of Episcopal women to the priesthood and episcopate, she said.

She also indicated that the communication of the Episcopal bishops carried the hope that the time will soon come when all

ministerial roles will be open to women so that the needs of the People of God may be better served.

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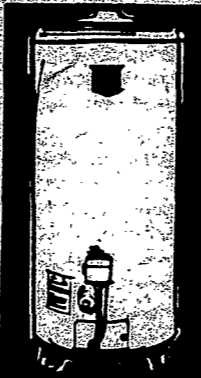
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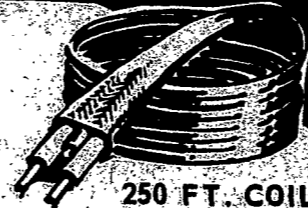
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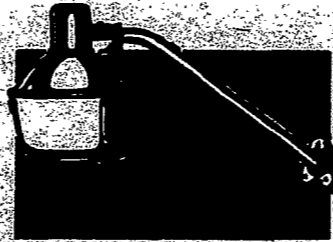
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Resignation Seen Help For Chavez

St. Paul, Minn. [RNS] — Richard Nixon's departure from the presidency should help the cause of Cesar Chavez, United Farm Workers (UFW), according to a Roman Catholic priest who has been one of the staunchest supporters of the UFW.

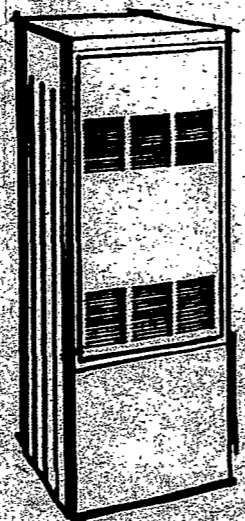
Msgr. George G. Higgins of Washington, D.C., said the reason for this is that Frank Fitzsimmons, president of the Teamsters' Union, which also seeks to represent California's farm workers, no longer will have "entree" to the White House.

Fitzsimmons, Msgr. Higgins noted, was "the only labor leader who stayed with Nixon to the end."

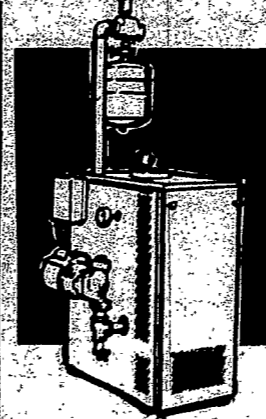
He said it was "most unlikely" that President Gerald R. Ford would establish the same kind of relationship.

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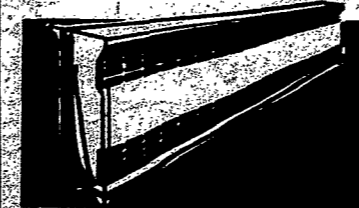
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