

## Courier Survey Report

# Readers View Newspaper as Middle-Road

By CARMEN VIGLUCCI

Last week's article in this series on the Courier-Journal readership survey touched on viewpoints concerning the Catholic press and the diocesan newspaper in general.

This week survey questions concerning the Courier-Journal and its readership directly will be analyzed.

Two questions concerned the terms liberal and conservative and how readers rated first themselves and then the Courier-Journal in this regard. The terms perhaps are overused and difficult to define. Still the survey questions do provide some guidelines to the newspaper's efforts in these areas.

The first question asked, how would you categorize yourself; second, how would you categorize the Courier-Journal? The answers to be checked were very liberal, moderate liberal, middle of the road, moderate conservative, very conservative.

Naturally any newspaper staff has some idea of where it stands in this regard. In the Courier-Journal, we try to reflect life in the diocese, to give both sides of debatable issues, to be as objective as a religious newspaper can, and above all to be fair. Obviously, in cases of faith and morals, such as abortion, there are no two sides.

Then, too, a newspaper has another indicator from reader reaction. There are always readers who will accuse a newspaper trying to be objective of either being very liberal or very conservative. When we sense there is a preponderance of criticism of one of these extremes, we take a look. Such criticism of this newspaper has always been balanced, giving us the feeling we are somewhere between the extremes. We wanted the survey to tell us more precisely where.

The survey was conducted by random mail sampling of our circulation list, contacting every 14th name. All the priests, religious and parish council presidents were surveyed as were 7 per cent of our direct subscribers. This amounted to a total of 6,538 readers, with 2,042 returning surveys. In addition, a companion survey was conducted through the pages of the newspaper, using the same questionnaire. This gave all our

readership the opportunity of expressing their views as well as providing a check on the main random survey.)

The plurality of those answering the mail survey see themselves as moderate liberal, 40 per cent so indicating. Meanwhile, more priests and religious so categorize themselves — 49 per cent of the priests and 47 per cent of the religious. Although only 34 per cent of the laity in the mail survey consider themselves moderate liberal, it is still the highest percentage.

In the companion in-newspaper survey, the results were slightly different. Thirty per cent of the readers regard themselves as middle of the road, 29 as moderate liberal, 29 as moderate conservative, 6 as very liberal and only 3 as very conservative.

The next question gauged how the readers assess the Courier-Journal. Of the total mail survey, 31 per cent view this newspaper as middle of the road, 30 as moderate liberal, 23 as moderate conservative, 6 as very liberal and 4 as very conservative. Thus most of the readership see the Courier as middle of the road, leaning slightly to moderate liberal.

An interesting departure occurs with the laity surveyed. Here 32 per cent see the newspaper as moderate liberal, a larger number than the 27 per cent who see it middle of the road. Twenty-two per cent assess the Courier as moderate conservative, 7 as very liberal and 4 very conservative.

Next, those surveyed were given parallel questions. One stated: I read the Courier-Journal because . . . The next said: I do not read the Courier-Journal because . . .

On the first question, the greatest number of those in the mail survey (1,537) answered "for local diocesan news." The next highest figure, 1,276, said "to keep up with what's happening in the Church. This was followed by 1,015 for "it is informative."

Clerical respondents and the laity differed somewhat. The highest return by priests was 218 for local diocesan news, followed by .97 to keep up with what's happening in the church and 76 because it is informative. Religious also chose "for local diocesan news" most often, 478, followed by "what's happening in

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# Priests Council Endorses Justice, Peace Proposal

By MOLLY JUDGE

[See Sisters' Council Story, Page 17.]

The concept of the Justice and Peace Proposal presented by Father John Mulligan, chairman of the Social Action Committee, was endorsed by the Priests Council at their Nov. 5 meeting at St. Bernard's Seminary.

The Proposal calls for a mechanism to make the Diocese of Rochester more aware of local as well as national and international justice and peace. The term "mechanism" must be made specific regarding accountability, funding and job description before the proposal is brought back for further evaluation.

## Pope Attacks 'Disturbers' In the Church

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has attacked some Catholics as "disturbers" who seek to "destroy" the Church.

He said that the Church "needs to be loved" because of the "sufferings" she has to endure not only at the hands of outsiders, but, especially, at the hands of some of her internal critics.

"There are those persons who are against the Church, almost as if it were a disease, a danger to mankind," the Pope said at his midweek general audience.

"This enmity towards the followers of Christ marks the history of persecutions.

"It was the destiny of the Son of God, who is 'the sign of contradiction,' a destiny which extends from the Head to the members, the faithful, who make up the Body of Christ.

"The Church, therefore, needs to be loved because of these sufferings which come from the outside."

"But more painful," the pontiff emphasized, "are those sorrows that come to the Church from her own sons who leave vacant the places assigned to them in the House of the Lord — brothers and sons who transform the positive witness which the People of God expect of them into an arrogant stance of judge and critic of the always holy Church of God."

"They protest that they wish to remain within the ecclesial communion, but they do so as disturbers and even as destroyers, no longer there to share in the Church's joys and sorrows, but to reform, or rather to destroy her in their own way."

The Pope then exclaimed, "How much we wish to have and to feel these brothers and sons close to us so that, together, we can love the Church — our Church which alone introduces us into the fullness of Christ!"

"Some say, 'Christ, yes; the Church, no,'" the pontiff continued, "as if such a division were possible — to detach the Head from the Body of the one Christ.

"If Catholic unity in the Church is lessened or broken, how can we reconstitute the ecumenical unity of the Church? We lose the right to call our separated brethren to unity with us when we ourselves are internally divided."

If this proposal is rejected, however, the PC voted in favor of a task force appointed by the Bishop to utilize present interdepartmental staff and the existing budget to study issues of justice and peace.

Father Mulligan said that a Justice and Peace Ministry, operating under the Office of Human Development, would raise the awareness and consciousness of all people regarding the injustices that exist and the possible Christian responses to these injustices.

"We must try as a diocese to become more aware of Justice and Peace and how issues of international Justice and Peace affect the diocese," he said.

An enabling clause was added to the by-laws regarding elections.

The clause provides for January, instead of June, elections in 1975. Regional representatives elected will serve until July 1976 and the elected age block representatives, until July 1977, according to the new constitution. The January elections would enable the senators to begin their term in February.

Father Richard Torrey, vice president and chairman of the constitution revision committee, explained that June elections would conflict with the Spring elections of the Pastoral Council. He also mentioned that the January elections would eliminate the lame duck period of

four to five months, and said this would be agreeable to members who don't want to serve a long term.

The senators reported on their blocks' reactions to the Permanent Diaconate proposal presented last month by Dr. William Sullivan.

Father Edward Palumbos of St. Alphonsus, Auburn, said his block colleagues felt that the installation of a permanent diaconate was an urgent matter. "It's been three years in the making. We want the diaconate implemented as soon as possible," he said.

This opinion was in contrast to a majority of the block views, which called for further clarification of the diaconate.

"My block wants to know the cost of the diaconate, and the deacons' duties clarified, and some kind of plot of how the deacons would fit into the diocese ministerially," said Father John Mulligan. "It would be too hasty to endorse the Sullivan report and appoint a director to the diaconate."

Father Mulligan commended the work of Dr. Sullivan's committee, but moved that the report be expanded specifying and broadening the cost, and defining the role of the deacon in the diocese and the ministerial requirements of the diaconate. The motion was passed 16-0, with two abstentions.

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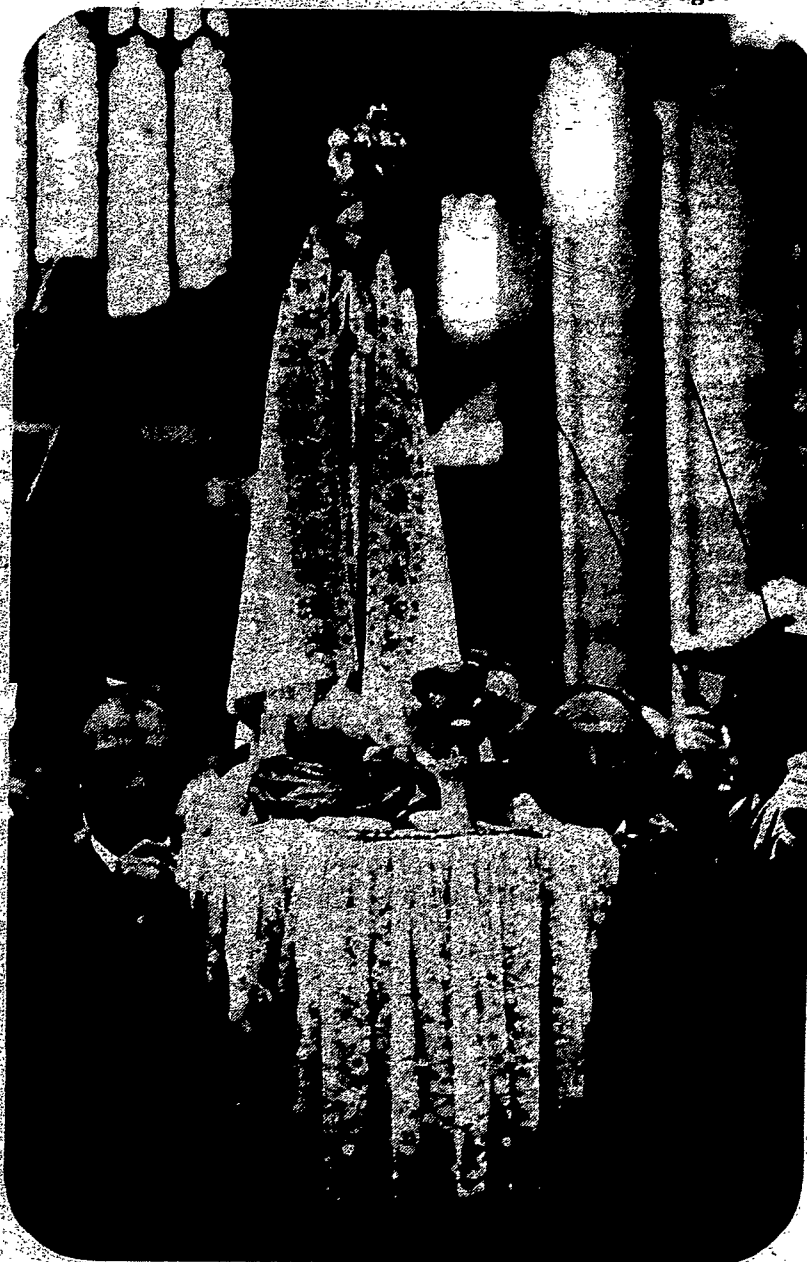


Photo by Bruce Genut

## Cathedral Scene

Procession bearing the Pilgrim Virgin Statue goes down the main aisle at Sacred Heart Cathedral Sunday. The statue is on a tour of the diocese for about one month. At left is Steve Sir-cusa and at right is Sam Lentine.

Local Councils