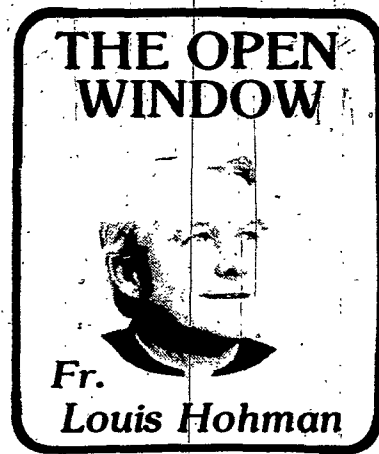




Sheen Tapes

Grand Knight Timothy B. Halpin of Pope Pius XII Council of the Knights of Columbus presents Father Raymond Moore, chaplain at St. Ann's Home and The Heritage, with a set of tapes of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's retreat for priests. Looking on is Thomas Grosdonia, Past Grand Knight and program chairman. More than 1100 persons at the institution will have access to the cassettes.



Dear Father Hohman,

My daughter is going to make her first Holy Communion this spring and we are looking forward to it. A beautiful Mass has been planned, for the children and their families to receive together. I have attended one parent's meeting so far and was absolutely horrified at the reaction of the parents to this lovely program. Amid shouts of what their child would be deprived of by way of dresses and veils ["Who will see them if they are not in procession?"]; photographs ["They will be dirty if you hold the Mass late?"]; parties ["How can you hold a catered affair if the Mass is so early?"]; and of course, nostalgia ["Why can't it be like it was when I was a kid?"] Not one person made mention of the most important part of the Mass — the time of their child receiving communion.

Can't someone, once and for all, issue a direct order which each parish must follow, with no exceptions? The poor priest in charge that night tried to explain that this is the way the bishop wants First Communion Masses to be held, but their one and only defense was that our neighboring parish has a procession, so why can't we? Please explain whether there is a hard and fast rule or not.

A.M.

Dear A. M.,

No, there is not a hard and fast rule. Yes, someone could issue a direct order which each parish would have to follow. But I sure hope the Bishop never will. Let's look at this for a moment. There is more to it than dresses, photos and nostalgia.

For centuries officials of the Church treated the laity like children. "You do what we tell you." It was neat, simple and uncontroversial. It was comfortable, at least to the hierarchy. But the trouble is, it was keeping grown people in the role of children all their lives, at least where religion was concerned.

Now we move the other way. We ask parents to share responsibility for the spiritual growth of their children in the first reception of the Sacraments. Now they haven't been used to such responsibility and so they don't really know what to do with it. So they concentrate on the "rinky-dink" decisions and bypass the spiritual ones. Here is the greatest challenge the leadership of the parish has — to show parents and others how important it is for the parents to recognize what things are important in the spiritual development of their children and what things are not so important so they can show their children the way.

Maybe I'm being overly simplistic but it seems to me that meeting was an ideal time to sit down the parents and say, "Wait a minute. Let's sort out together what we're doing here and what's really important. If we don't know, our children never will. Now let's take it from the beginning." (Exit me — tarred and feathered). End of scene.

Newcomer Night

Musa Caravan, 25 of the Alhambra has scheduled a Neophyte Night for incoming members at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 25, at Tony Emanuele's Restaurant, 1160 Jay St.

Gene Battaglia is ticket chairman and Dominic Antritano party chairman. The newcomers will be inducted into the Alhambra March 1-2 in a ceremony in Buffalo.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Most Precious Blood School has announced a pre-school program for 3- and 4-year-olds of the parish. The program which started on Feb. 10 will operate two days a week for the next 10 weeks. The project was developed under the guidance of Sister Regina, principal.

Diocese Gets Youth Study Grant

The Diocese of Rochester has been awarded a one-year \$11,000 grant from the Raskob Foundation to take part in the Youth Advocacy Project of the Center for Community Issues Research.

The grant is contingent on a companion grant of 90 per cent from the Division of Criminal Justice Services.

According to Eve Block, director at the Center for Community Issues Research, the Youth Advocacy project will study the problems surrounding discipline and suspensions in the public schools.

"Last year, we had tremendous

problems surrounding suspensions. Approximately 3,000 out of the 16,000 students enrolled in public schools were suspended. And this year, we already have around 2,400 students suspended. It's an epidemic in the area of disciplinary problems," she said.

The money should benefit Catholic children who will enter public schools as a result of the closing of parochial schools in the inner city. "We need to assure these children that they will be getting a quality education in the public schools and we need to facilitate their adjustment into the public schools," Mrs. Block said.

She added that Puerto Rican

and Spanish children, a majority of whom are Catholic, comprise a substantial number of drop-outs in the public school system.

The trustees of the Raskob Foundation agreed to award the grant after receiving a letter from Bishop Joseph L. Hogan supporting the project. If the Rochester project is successful, the trustees believe that it could be used as a potential model for other cities that wish to host similar projects. The trustees expressed particular interest in finding out how the diocese, the CYO and other church-related agencies can involve themselves in the project to help needy Catholic students in the public schools.

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