

Editorial

Priests Aren't Slobs . . .

When priests were referred to as "slobs" in a recent Father Andrew Greeley column more of the laity registered complaints here than did priests. This is interesting for a number of reasons.

The remark in the column is open to interpretation but we feel that Father Greeley himself is not so characterizing priests — that would be a form of self-immolation foreign to the priest-columnist. Rather it was a flippant characterization of how the good Father surmises the laity feels, judging from data collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), of which Father Greeley is program director.

To refresh memories, Father Greeley ends one paragraph by stating, "Anticlericalism is still very small. On the whole, the laity is willing to say we are trying." Then he opens the next paragraph, "No, priests are not bad; they're just slobs." We feel he is paraphrasing how he thinks the public feels about priests.

Father Greeley is one of our most provocative—and more popular — columnists. Because he cares deeply about the problems of the modern Church and because he is able to articulate his thoughts and findings, and because he is generally unafraid of controversy, he is a valuable columnist — if, for no other reason, than that he stimulates others. But in using the word "slob" he struck out in a number of ways.

When he paraphrased the alleged sentiment of the laity he employed slang and a word that is rather overworked and shabby in itself, perhaps revealing how he judges the laity's depth of expression. Certainly, the general laity must harbor varied misgivings about the clergy but "slobs?" We hardly think so. And judging from the response from this neck of God's woods, lay people were more disturbed by the characterization than were the clergy.

. . . But Beware Of Other Insults

And while it may be healthy to indulge in such a family fight provided there is no continuing vindictiveness, there are other areas where prejudice, ignorance and unprofessionalism combine to constitute an effrontery that cannot be avoided.

A case in point is a pair of articles in a recent Democrat and Chronicle (the morning newspaper in Rochester) under the label "Religion." Over the main article of the two was the headline "Sex and the clergy — openly discussed." Wow! Come one, come all. Read all about the lurid lives of our Church leaders. And "openly" yet.

To give the article *raison d'etre*, the writer shallowly discusses the problem of celibacy and the clergy. Needless to say, this is an issue of great import and perplexity, a matter for serious study by theologians, canon lawyers, sociologists, and serious writers and not to be treated superficially under what someone feels is a luring headline.

For the article, the writer interviewed "25 former clergy." Someone might say that there are literally hundreds of thousands of priests, Sisters and Brothers who have lived within their vows and whose views should be represented. In this sense, however it should be pointed out, that the purpose of the article could be legitimate — to shed some light of why clergy are leaving their vocations.

But the article fell short here also. At most, it may have explained why some of the 25 "interviewees" left. That is all. In no way did it establish itself as a serious report but dallied with phraseology such as "erotic adventures" of some mysterious people whose stability or lack of same was never made clear.

Then, as if it were necessary, a companion article was included — presumably by the same writer although this matter of communication was neglected. This headline, believe it or not, read, "He considered castration." It was under an artist's conception of a priest — whether the subject of the article or just another figment of imagination is not clear. But if the art work is confusing, one shouldn't worry. The anonymous writer describes the fallen angel — "He is a handsome man with fierce dark eyes, a robust wit, and a keen appreciation of the ridiculous . . ." we hope the latter attribute is true because then he at least enjoyed the article.

So in the face of such articles and without being maudlin we think it appropriate to express our respect for, confidence in, and gratitude to all our clergy for the sacrifice undertaken in their vocations, for their devotion to God and service to His people. And may we also understand and never forget their humanness.

Opinion

Find Out About ERA

Editor:
Articles titled "ERA — Catholic Readers Quiet, Papers Uncertain," March 19 Courier-Journal raises some interesting speculation.

Conjecture as to why the quietness and uncertainty of readers should neutralize the obligation of the press to present the facts is intriguing. In the past I have noted articles of the interview type on the subject of Equal Rights Amendment which offered little more than poorly informed or self-serving impressions of the proposed amendment.

The following sources of information could form the basis for an interesting article if reported objectively:

Yale Law Journal, April 1971, described by Senator Sam Ervin as probably the definitive analysis of the consequences of ERA.

Harvard Civil Rights — Civil Liberties Law Review March 1971 issue by Professor Paul A. Freund, which is cited as an excellent legal prognosis as to the fate of women's Social Security benefits under the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. This same issue carries another article by Professor Philip B. Kurland of University of Chicago. Professor Kurland explains one of the little-known aspects of the ERA controversy, the "Hayden Modification" originally attached to the proposed amendment by Senator Hayden, which stated: "The provisions of this article shall not be construed to impair any rights, benefits, or exemptions conferred by law upon persons of the female sex." Why did a certain group of women successfully agitate until the Hayden modification was removed from the Equal Rights Amendment? Professor Kurland gives the answer.

Congressional Record — March 22, 1972, pp. S4577-4578 includes legal testimony before Senate Judiciary Committee.

If neither the press nor the people are inclined to examine the consequences of ERA, it would be wise to follow the excellent suggestion implied in the Courier's March 19 column, Capitol Letters. The second New York State action on this constitutional amendment is presently before our State Senate Judiciary Committee pending action. We have for the first time, an opportunity to support a proposition by Assemblyman Neil Kelleher to explore the legal implications of ERA by establishing a task force for this purpose. The Capitol Letters Column Courier March 19 reads, "To support Assemblyman



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... AND SO, BROTHER FIDELIS TOOK HIS WINE RECIPE TO FATHER SUPERIOR WHO, WITH AMAZING FORESIGHT, KNEW THAT THIS WOULD SOMEHOW SOLVE THE MONASTERY'S FINANCIAL TROUBLES! AND THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS, 200 YEARS AGO TODAY.

Kelleher's Task Force proposal, write to him, to Senator Bernard Gordon, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and to your respective assemblymen and senators. Address for all, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y. 12201.

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League Wrong On 'Fables'

Editor:
In the Courier-Journal (3-6-75), Celine Watkins suggests that people contact the League of Women Voters for a copy of the pamphlet called "Fables and Facts" — about the Equal Rights Amendment. The pamphlet lists six so call "fables." The first 'fable' according to the league is:

"The ERA will make wives legally responsible for providing 50% of the financial support of their families, and undermine the basic American family structure by forcing women into the labor market."

This is not a fable.

Probably the leading expert in the United States on the subject of ERA is Prof. Paul Freund of the Harvard Law School. His study of ERA covers 25 years and his recent research has convinced him that the "case against ERA is stronger than ever before." In an article entitled "The Equal Rights Amendment Is Not the Way," published in March, 1971 issue of the Harvard Law Review, Prof. Freund states clearly that ERA, by enforcing equality in the matter of family support, would dictate a completely new principle of family support which would invalidate the state laws which now place the primary responsibility on a husband to support his wife and children. If ERA is passed every wife and mother will lose her right to be supported by her husband unless she has pre-school children, and she even loses the right to be supported by her husband while she has pre-school children if child care centers are available. No more radical piece of legislation could have been devised to force women outside the home — not by brute force but by economic coercion.

Pennsylvania and Colorado have passed a state ERA. In both these states wives have lost the right to be supported by their husbands.

In Virginia, a Task Force Study on ERA revealed that their present law imposing the primary duty of support upon the father would not be valid under ERA.

All of the remaining five "fables" in the League pamphlet can be shown to be absolutely

true but space does not permit me to cover them all.

North Carolina is the 12th state to reject the National ERA this year, making ratification impossible in 1975. Two states have already rescinded their ratification and 12 more states are trying to rescind.

One of the reasons for this is that we can now see what is happening in the states that have passed state ERA. The League's "fables" are now coming true. Fortunately New York can still reject the state ERA. The Senate Judiciary Committee will be studying ERA in April. Let your views be heard. For more information, write to Operation Wake Up, 107 Lapham St., Rochester, N.Y. 14615.

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Let's Find Our POWs

Editor:
Last week we attended Geneseo State College to hear a former Vietnam prisoner of war and a former Korean War prisoner of war speak. We were surprised to hear that there are still 1334 American men unaccounted for in Vietnam. We believe as American citizens we sent them and we are responsible for their return.

Whether we were for or against the war we should do all we can to find out the fate of these men not only for their sakes but for the sake of their families.

One of the ways the former POW John Anderson of Niagara Falls suggested was that we write letters to the president, senators, congressmen and anyone else we think might be able to put a little pressure on Hanoi.

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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y.: 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.