

"WE'VE TRIED FOR OPENNESS IN OUR MARRIAGE, BUT SO FAR IT'S ONLY INVOLVED THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR!"

Editorial

Open Letter To State's Bishops

Dear Bishops,

We feel that the meeting in Rochester last week of the Region II bishops and members of their education staffs provided a splendid example of an open and airy Church. As you know, American bishops increasingly have been opening their meetings to the press and the overall effect is salutary.

True, the subject matter of this year's meetings, the National Catechetical Directory, while of paramount importance to the future of the Church, is not one that would have newsmen battering the doors down. Still it has its controversy and prophecy of change and it was wholesome for the press and thus the public to see the Church in action on one of its nuts and bolts problems. We feel that it is advantageous for others to see the Church with its sleeves rolled up rather than its minds.

Of course, in Cardinal Terence Cooke, host Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and all you other bishops of our state, outsiders were seeing and hearing fine examples of Church leadership. In a similar vein some outsiders were pleasantly surprised to find bishops comfortable and easy to talk with. Most big people are.

We long have championed more openness in the Church. In May of 1973 we editorialized on the subject, quoting the now deceased Archbishop Edward L. Heston, who had helped our sister diocese of Buffalo celebrate its 100th anniversary. Archbishop Heston, then the head of the Pontifical Commission on Social Communications, said he hoped for a more open Vatican "not insisting on secrecy and confidentiality as in the past." Unfortunately, the Vatican has shown no signs of accepting this advice and has continued its romance with secrecy. Would that it would follow the lead of our American bishops.

The inherent theme of the moving liturgy at the Cathedral, you'll remember, was spreading the Good News. Naturally that is a subject close to any diocesan newspaper's heart. So may we note that the diocesan papers of New York State, individually and collectively, are among the best in North America. You bishops deserve credit for this and it is our hope that you will be ever mindful of the important role your diocesan newspapers play in transmitting the Good News.

Plaudits

And discussion of the Region II meeting would not be complete without mention of the outstanding job performed by our education department and other diocesan offices and the staff at the Cathedral laying the groundwork for the convocation.

Opinion

U.S. Policy Victimizes Viets

Editor:

The current situation in South Vietnam is appalling. The slaughter of the innocents is taking place with little concern on the part of our Congress. Individuals such as Bella Abzug, Michael Harrington and Ronald V. Dellums have openly expressed their wishes for a total victory by North Vietnam. Despite the lack of interest on the part of many Americans, events in southeast Asia will have serious repercussions throughout the world. The honor and integrity, as well as the credibility of the United States in foreign affairs will be impaired.

The United States and Great Britain gave eastern Europe to the Soviet Union at the end of World War II with the hope that communism would coexist peacefully with democracies. It has been demonstrated time and time again that this has not been so and that the world cannot be "half slave and half free."

We should send our donations to relief agencies to give the most basic relief to the people of South Vietnam. Our prayers are also needed to give them spiritual support.

It is with great sorrow that we witness the tortures imposed upon the people of Vietnam, the victims of an illogical American foreign policy.

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Emphatic 'No' To ERA

Editor:

I agree with the professed objectives of some of the pro-ERA advocates. They wish sincerely to abolish existing unreasonable discriminations against women. Divorced women for instance should be able to secure mortgage loans. Single and or separated women should be able to buy houses as well and as easily as divorced, single and or separated men. Insurance, too, should be available to women as easily as it is to men.

But specific discriminations can and should be met with thoughtful and specific legislation at the proper level of government.

According to numerous constitutional lawyers, including but not limited to the 18 men and women whose statement against ratification of the ERA was

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presented to the U.S. Senate in March 1972 (available from any U.S. Senator's office, as Vol. 118 No. 42 including all exhibits and appendices) there is considerable evidence that the ERA could result in invalidation of numerous existing laws which now protect women only.

The rape laws for instance - statutory rape I and statutory rape II - the laws pertaining to sodomy, adultery, prostitution and pimping, the Mann Act and others - according to the attorneys these laws would have to be changed to include both sexes, or be invalidated.

By the same token, the laws on marriage, homosexual, heterosexual, transvestite - would have to be changed to cover all, or be invalidated.

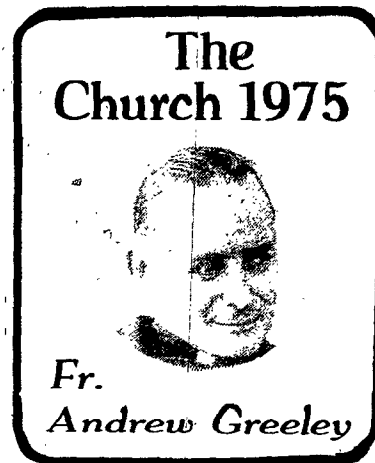
The laws protecting women in any area of society or industry would have to be changed to

include both sexes, or be invalidated.

The attorneys stressed also that at the state or federal level, any sweeping ERA "would transform every provision of law concerning women into a constitutional issue to be ultimately resolved by the Supreme Court of the United States (or the ruling individual state.)" An ERA whether state or federal would necessitate countless legislative changes at the supreme court level.

I agree with Sen. Sam Ervin when he asked himself the rhetorical question, "Is a constitutional amendment required in order to abolish unfair or unreasonable legal distinctions between the rights and responsibilities of men and women? I submit the answer is an emphatic NO."

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The Church 1975

Fr. Andrew Greeley

I miss Gregorian chants.

I miss them so much that I have a couple of albums of records that I play often. I am told these albums sell very well. Banished from church, the chant is prospering in the record stores.

I am disturbed that we will shortly have a whole generation of clergy who know nothing about chant, who will not have fallen asleep at night in their seminary days with the melodies of "Alma Redemptoris Mater" or "Ave Regina Caelorum" echoing in their heads.

What will such clergy say when the laity of the future asks them what ever happened to the Gregorian chant?

They will reply doubtless, "Gregorian WHO"

I do not feel nostalgic about chant. Catholic nostalgia (a la Wilfrid Sheed's "Three Mobs," Garry Wills, "Bare Ruined Choirs," Caryl Rivers "Aphrodite at Mid-Century," and John Powers' "The Last Catholic in America") laments for the dear, dead past. Plainsong is not dead. It is a glorious musical tradition which will be studied, listened to, and appreciated as long as European music is known to humankind. The Church may have abandoned it, but that does not mean chant is worthless; it means only that American Catholicism has once again and characteristically thrown out the baby with the bath.

We entered the ecumenical age with counter-Reformation mentalities. Change meant to exclude not include, it meant to reject not to accumulate, it meant to repudiate not to combine. If you were going to have a new liturgy, you had to get rid of as much of the old as possible. If there were to be folk music and guitars at Mass, there could be no plainsong, if you were going to have an English liturgy, then every last bit of Latin had to be extirpated.

How very Protestant of us.

There is no reason on God's earth why you cannot have chant and gospel music side by side. When Bobby Vinton can sing part of the latest Country and Western favorite in Polish, we should be able to have an English liturgy with Latin hymns. Why can't we have Latin hymns at Mass? When

the Latin liturgy first came into existence it retained the Greek of the Kyrie.

It is part of the exuberant genius of Catholic Christianity to pull everything together, not to exclude and fragment. James Joyce said that Catholicism means "here comes everybody!" It also should mean, "and they're bringing everything!"

We may not have enough musical talent just now to write new music in plainsong. Some of the older music admits of translation, but the "Ave Maris Stella" and the "In Paradisum," for example, probably do not. So sing them in Latin. It's a nice language and it won't hurt you.

The past resistance to chant is understandable. We were unsure of the permanence of liturgical reform. Diocesan church music commissions were often hotbeds of creepy reaction. To say anything nice about the old liturgy seemed like giving something away to the traditionalists and other hyperconservative groups. But now that we know the new liturgy is overwhelmingly accepted, we can go back to the old and select from it whatever we need or might want to use.

Chant is not beautiful because it is old. It is beautiful because it is beautiful. We return to it not because we are sentimental about a dead past but because we admire a vital tradition which can contribute to our own growth in worship in the present and is part of the heritage we wish to pass on to the future.

We have moved from uncritical acceptance of the old traditions to uncritical rejection of them, from barbarism to decadence without ever pausing at civilization. The result is liberation theology, tongue-speaking, principled anti-intellectualism, confrontation, pseudo-sincerity, pop psychology, and music which is simultaneously unsingable and worthless (with or without the omnipresent guitar).

What a sad, rigid, crude, ugly narrowness for the heirs of the richest religio-cultural tradition the world has ever known!

We might ponder the thought that they will be singing the "Ave Maris Stella" long after they have forgotten about Garry Wills and liberation theology. And they will write us off as the uncultivated boors that we really are.

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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.