

Editorial

A Cardinal's Good Name!

A recent report by the official government commission of inquiry investigating the circumstances of the death May 20, 1974, of Cardinal Jean Danielou, SJ, should end for all time the slander indulged in by some.

The cardinal, a member of the prestigious French Academy, died of a heart attack in the apartment of a 24-year-old nightclub dancer whose husband was in jail for procuring. Naturally, the human penchant for gossip quickly produced a mean picture of the situation. What is wrong with us that when we read between the lines we make the pettiest and cruelest interpretations?

The official commission report concludes that "every malicious interpretation" of the prelate's death is "contradicted by the facts." The report details the events of the cardinal's last two days. It is unfortunate that is necessary. Yet it is, because so many are so willing to besmirch other people's good names, even that of a priest who had spent 69 years establishing his own.

He was named a cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1969 and was considered one of the greatest of French theologians. Upon his appointment he was described as the French theologian "who has worked hardest at resolving the post-conciliar crisis the way the Pope wishes it to be resolved."

Let us continue with some more of that 1969 rhetoric:

"As much a preacher as a researcher, Danielou has served the Church and for the true intentions of the Second Vatican Council; he has done so wherever he was asked to talk and without choosing his audiences. He has the reputation for accepting all the lecture invitations his calendar allows, even requests to speak in little known parishes or before groups without much influence.

"He has an extraordinary intellectual vitality. Apparently tireless, he speaks enthusiastically, gestures profusely, battles with ideas, is completely unconcerned about what people think of him."

Philosophically he was considered a traditionalist without losing the respect of those who disagreed with him.

Not much has been reported about the background of the dancer he was visiting when he was stricken. We must avoid leaping to conclusions about her. It is no sin or crime to be a nightclub entertainer. It is no sin or crime to be married to a jailed procurer. Indeed it is probably a monstrous cross to bear. We should remember, however, that slander is a sin and a crime.

Cardinal Danielou was ill before making the visit but that did not deter him. His death-style was consistent with his life-style. And it is edifying to know that a person of Cardinal Danielou's prestige and acclaim would be performing the Christ-like deed of personally visiting one of his troubled flock at the time of his death. Who would want it different? Where else in the world should a servant of God be?

Life or Death?

The Supreme Court was not very mindful of the sanctity of life in its ruling liberalizing abortion. We hope that now when it is studying the issue of capital punishment it will pay more heed to those concerned primarily with morality instead of expediency.

In November 1974, the Catholic bishops of the United States adopted a simple but precise resolution:

"The U.S. Catholic Conference goes on record in opposition to capital punishment."

The bishops thus provided leadership for Catholics on a complicated problem. They also sapped the argument that the Church is concerned about life only in the question of abortion.

Opinion

Bishop Maher Stand Lauded

Editor:

Bishop Leo T. Maher of San Diego deserves respect and praise for ordering his priests to refuse Holy Communion to abortion advocates. Abortion (legalized murder) is a terrible crime and anyone encouraging it or taking part in it should be publicly reminded of this grave error. Anyone continuing to live in any serious sin must not receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. I pray that every bishop would have the courage to do as Bishop Maher.

The people working to restore respect for life in our country need the strength and encouragement from the clergy in this terrible battle against evil. And anyone who thinks we can compromise and say "Not for me — but I must allow others the choice of abortion" better examine the German people. The German Supreme Court, in a landmark decision, struck down a law passed by the German Parliament that permitted abortion on demand until three months. They stated firmly that such a law violates the basic "right to life and physical viability." It's good to recall that 97 per cent of German doctors have gone on record as opposing abortion on demand. When asked why, Dr. Siegfried Ernst, the Lutheran leader of the German Pro-Life movement simply stated "It's because we know where it'll lead. We've been down that road once already." One of the crimes that doctors were hanged for, after the trials at Nuremberg, was that of abortion.

I'm glad for the columns Life, Liberty and Law by Nancy Murphy and Capitol Letters by Jeanne Sweeney. Mrs. Murphy's column is one small weekly reminder, and source of encouragement to people to hold to the belief that the child's life in the uterus is as sacred as yours and mine.

If our free country is to survive, I believe we Catholics must do as Mary, the Mother of God, has asked us at Fatima and other places of apparitions — to pray the rosary every day. God knows if we pray the rosary and live what the rosary teaches, we will have faith and trust in Him, a spirit of sacrifice for others and a respect for proper use of sex in marriage.

We must use the means of peace that God Himself has outlined.

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Courier-Journal



Secularism And Values

Editor:

A newcomer to the Rochester area after a year of residence expressed disappointment in the programs of Catholic organizations. She pointed out that to her knowledge events seem to be limited to wine-tasting, style shows, and card parties.

It is very difficult to defend such emphasis on trivia with the contention that so few people are aware that the surrender to secularism is a prologue to termination of all traditional values. It is difficult to comprehend how anyone could not be aware of the threats to Christian values and not make some attempt to stem the tide.

The newcomer to Rochester cited other communities as engaging Miss Eleanor Schlafly of the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation to repeat her lecture on "The Assault on the Family" which was given at a national conference.

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Thanks for 'China' Letter

Editor:

I thought the letter concerning Red China by B. Stavis which appeared in the April 16 issue of the Courier-Journal was excellent. I find the "opinion" section of your paper its most interesting department because it would appear that in this one area a myriad of opinions can be expressed. Some infuriate me, but others give me hope that all is not lost.

Mary Lu Walker
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Greeley in Tune With Chesterton

Editor:

Father Greeley's column (9 April) about "going forward" with Newman, Hopkins, Chesterton, et al was, I think, very fine. The great figures of Church history do indeed speak to our time as well as their own. And they will speak to the future more loudly than most of us will.

It is interesting how closely Father Greeley's attitude corresponds with that of Chesterton himself, who said in 1913: "... real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root." (Victorian Age in Literature)

Robert Knille
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Pray Rosary For Peace

Editor:

I really appreciated your editorial "Needed: Prayers" in the April 30 edition.

I would love to have seen "The Rosary is the prayer Our Lady told the children at Fatima that every Catholic must say every day (at least five decades) before there will be peace and true freedom in the world."

There are so many marvelous promises attached to the devout recitation of Our Lady's Rosary that it is like hidden treasure of infinite value.

St. Louis De Montfort has written a little booklet on "The Secret of the Rosary."

It is a must for those Catholics who really are concerned about the state of the world today.

Mrs. Arlene O'Connor
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Chest Not For Them

Editor:

We wish to point out to the thoughtful readers of the Courier-Journal an unpleasant truth concerning the Community Chest fund drive in the Rochester area — a paradox easily overlooked in our efforts to assist those in need.

The Community Chest embraces those organizations which 1) directly serve all human life at all levels of human development, while, at the same time those which 2) openly encourage the selective destruction of the unborn — the great ungeneration of mankind.

We do not agree with those articulate and well-meaning spokesmen who define the Chest as a "good deal."

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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.