

**Church
And Politics**



Sister Frances

Maggie Kuhn is founder of the Gray Panther movement, an organization of elderly activists. She says there are three steps in organizing people: "1. Get communication going. 2. Make an inventory of what people are hurting and angry about. 3. Find

some leadership within the group." National Catholic Reporter, May 30, 1975. The work of building Church community includes this type of organization around people's needs. Church people, though, are like most Americans who tend to screen out the signs of hurt and anger and need in ourselves and others.

Our insensitivity is reflected in the media. Advertising on TV and in magazines offers an ideal of youthful, sweet-smiling, bronzed perfection. Clean is beautiful. Healthy is beautiful. White is beautiful. The Total Woman and How to Be Your Own Best Friend are best-selling guide books in middle America. And, contrary to what one might hear in Church, suffering and death are at the edge of human experience, not at its heart. We may, if we choose, live and work and play and pray within this false and ultimately

dehumanizing perspective. Where are the prophets?

Prophets are people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Malcolm X whose life style and words shake us from this false perception of ourselves and others. Groups, too, can be prophetic if they challenge us to listen to those people systematically silenced in our society, e.g. blacks, prisoners, farm workers, women, the elderly. Such organizations as St. Joan's Alliance and the Gray Panthers are prophetic in this sense.

Church people have a special obligation to listen to prophetic groups and, indeed, to become a prophetic people. Jesus allied himself with those denied voice and influence. Christians today also will be one with the powerless if we are truly open to the demands of discipleship. The prophet who writes in Second

Isaiah describes the gift of openness and listening offered to the disciple:

Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear.

Isaiah 50:4b

And Jesus himself challenges his listeners to respond wholeheartedly to the least important people (Matthew 25:31-44). Our thirst for justice and our efforts toward human liberation are a constitutive part of our yes to the Lord's call.

Church structures reflect our awareness of what this call to discipleship means. If one element of this self-awareness is our identity as prophetic people, we must assess whether our structures are listening, open structures. Christian leaders in parish councils, liturgy, education and human development committees must be people willing to listen like disciples to those without voice or influence. Reflection on this need leads to some specific questions:

1. How do parish educators foster the growth of listening people who are compassionate, critical, and creative leaders?
2. In what spirit does the parish respond to other prophetic groups like St. Joan's Alliance and the Gray Panthers?
3. How does the parish community pray together about negative life experiences of unemployment, economic poverty, doubt, hunger, death — all areas of human hurt and anger?

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COURIER-CALENDAR

Alhambra Ladies — Annual garden party, 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 25, at home of president, Mrs. Donald L. Woerner, 3725 East Ave.

Womansplace — Monthly coffee house, 264 Arnett Blvd., 8 p.m. Friday, June 27. Music, entertainment; \$1. Drop-in hours this week, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. through Saturday, June 21.

Bicentennial Show — Arts and crafts at East Rochester Village Mall, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, June 20, 21.

Youth Theater — Open auditions for The Mad Show, 7 p.m. Friday, June 20; 1 p.m. Saturday, June 21, Community

Playhouse, South Clinton at Meigs. Auditions for three one-act plays, 7 p.m. Monday, June 23. Additional information: 473-4320.

Noontime Lectures — A summer session series at Eastman School of Music on the lives and music of Mozart and Haydn. Tuesdays and Thursday, June 24 - July 31; fee. Information: 275-3015.

42nd Annual Picnic — St. Thomas the Apostle Holy Name Society, 6 p.m. Monday, June 23, St. Paul Exempt Club, Thomas Avenue; rain or shine. Limited to 100, tickets from Norm Robinson.

Deadline

Calendar items should be mailed to the Courier-Journal Calendar Desk, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Deadline is Wednesday noon, one week ahead of the publication date.

**WORD FOR
SUNDAY**



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 10:26-33. (R1) Jer. 20:10-13. (R2) Rom. 5:12-15.

When a man puts the great question to a girl and asks her to marry him, he does not have to offer her a blueprint of the future, with all the details filled in.

He may have plans, but they both know that they are far from infallible. He is asking her to trust herself to him! To make a personal commitment to him on the basis of what she knows of his character! And that is the foundation of the whole transaction.

In the same way, God asks us to put our trust in Him. In the Gospel He gives us reasons why we should — and infallible reasons! He sees all, knows all — nothing is concealed, nothing hidden to the Lord. The slightest thing does not happen without His say-so. "Not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent." But with man God is far more concerned: He has counted every hair of man's head! Man, therefore, should fear nothing — save Him who can destroy both body and soul into hell! (R3).

As if this were not enough to elicit man's commitment, God gave us the example of the great prophet Jeremiah (R1). Here was a man of God! But a man beset on all sides by enemies, friends and foes alike. They had whispered, conspired, plotted, planned against him — but all in vain. For Jeremiah trusted in the Lord and what was said in darkness against him: came to light, what was whispered in private was proclaimed from the housetops. So much so that Jeremiah could exult, "The Lord is with me, like a mighty champion. My persecutors will not triumph. Sometimes the magnitude of

things ahead causes us to lose heart.

In Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, one of the first things the hero Christian has to do is climb the hill of difficulty. There was no other way to go to reach the Palace Beautiful. So Christian started up the hill. First he ran, then he jogged, then he walked, finally he trudged — it was so steep! But he was determined to reach the top.

To make matters worse, halfway up the hill Christian saw two men running down the hill, tickety-split, as if the very devil were chasing them. As they sped past Christian, they shouted, "There's lions up there!" You can imagine how this jolted Christian.

However, he kept on, but without much enthusiasm now. The farther up the hill he clambered, the more frightened he got, thinking of those monstrous lions. Finally he reached the top. The Palace Beautiful was there all right, but so were two huge lions, rampant and roaring, one on each side of its gates. Christian froze in his tracks. He did not know what to do — to hazard going on or to turn back. Just then a porter appeared at the gate and shouted something.

At first Christian could not hear him, for the lions were roaring too loudly. "I can't hear you," Christian shouted back.

Once again the porter called, and this time Christian heard. "The lions can't hurt you," said the porter, "they have no teeth."

And surely enough they did not. When Christian got right up to them, he found out that they were not only toothless but even chained.

That too is the way with most of our problems. They often seem insurmountable — but to those who trust God they are in reality harmless. "O Lord of Hosts, you test the just" — not to punish them, but to purify, glorify, and unite them to Yourself.

RADIO SHOW

In observance of Independence Day, "A Cry For Freedom", a new, half-hour radio program was produced by the Sacred Heart Program. It will be broadcast by more than 300 radio stations across the country on Sunday, June 29, including WGLI, Corning, at 10:35 a.m.

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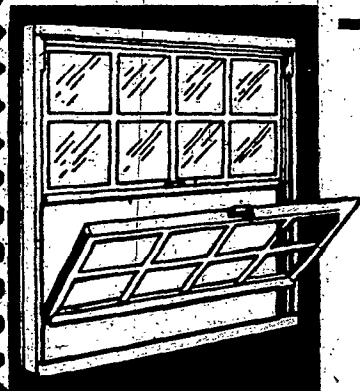
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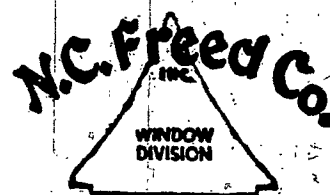
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