

Editorial

Conciliation

At a time of polarization, when so many issues tend to become embroiled in discussion of personalities instead of means to solutions, when divisiveness seems more of a shelter for some than harmony, it is well to ponder a recent lesson from Pope Paul VI.

The leader of the world's 600,000 million Catholics, certainly one of the most respected men in the world, and, even more important, the vicar of Christ on earth apologized to any of the faithful he may have "offended."

"If we have been guilty of having offended our brothers and of having disturbed their peace and serenity, their joy of living in the Church, well, then, we with God's help will have the strength to ask for pardon. Pardon us if we have not served you well. Pardon us if we have not been giving you the example you expected from one who is the representative of the Lord."

Conciliation. Leadership. And more:

"But you must also make your own efforts. Forgive us. Forgive one another. Let us give the Church her great joy and peace lived in the name of Jesus."

A lesson particularly suited for these turbulent days.

Judicious?

Father Robert Drinan's recent pronouncement that the judicial system provides the best means for overturning the Supreme Court decision on abortion is almost ludicrous in light of the treatment the courts have been giving things appearing to be Catholic.

Although the pro-life movement is not exclusively Catholic, to the prejudiced mind it can appear that way. But the judicial rulings on abortion need not be a criterion. Consider how the courts, particularly our Supreme Court, have mishandled aid to nonpublic schools.

Time after time, courts have chopped down laws providing services to American children who don't happen to go to public schools. The latest decision has forbidden aid to handicapped children if they go to nonpublic schools — this under the guise of separation of Church and State.

Such instances have provided strong argument for those Americans who doubt the fairness of the Supreme Court in particular, or the court system in general. Such instances have made it extremely difficult for American Catholics who realize they live in a pluralistic society and are sincerely working at conciliation and harmony.

Hyperbole can be a dangerous tactic in incendiary issues. Yet we can't help feel that Russell Shaw of the U. S. Catholic Conference was justified in describing the most recent Supreme Court ruling forbidding assistance to handicapped children in nonpublic schools as "bizarre" and an "exercise in fantasy."

Let us hope that some branch of this potentially great government of ours will itself begin to practice some reconciliation. There is a growing segment of American Catholics who are feeling alienated from the system.

Other American minorities have been subjected to governmental rejection until they resorted to strong, open and vociferous protest. We pray our courts will not so narrow the options for American Catholics.

Opinion

'Hate America' Theme Claimed

Editor:

"Bicentennial: Hate or Celebrate" is the title of a Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation report which reviews the controversial bicentennial discussion guide, "Liberty and Justice for All."

It sets forth analysis by leading Catholic columnists. Writer Dale Francis described this "guide" as "WHAM — Uncle Sam". Father Albert J. Nevins, Editor of Our Sunday Visitor, calls the discussion "guide" a "negative sociological approach to what should be a celebration of our nation's birthday." Even liberal sociologist Father Andrew Greeley has termed this "an attempt to celebrate the bicentennial of our republic by tearing the American accomplishment to pieces." His other warnings cogently covering the "hate America" theme are fully reported.

This "discussion guide" is designed to be used by 49 million Catholics in every area of the United States.

It would seem wise to be informed and forewarned. A free copy of this Mindszenty Foundation report will be mailed to anyone who sends a #10 stamped-addressed envelope.

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What's It Like In Heaven?

Editor:

A man in his last illness asked his doctor what the future life would be like. Just then the physician heard his dog, which had followed him to the house, scratching at the door. So he told the sick man that his dog knew nothing of what was happening behind the door, but merely wanted to be with his master. "Is it not the same with you?" he asked. "You do not know what lies behind the door, but you know your Master is there."

The story illustrates for the faithful Christian that love of God casts out fear in this world as well as in the next.

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Courier-Journal 1



"I TALKED TO OUR PASTOR AND IT DIDN'T HELP, I WROTE TO OUR BISHOP AND IT DIDN'T HELP, FINALLY, I SAID, 'I'M GOING TO SEE THE HOLY FATHER ABOUT THOSE AWFUL POT-HOLES IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT.'"

Charismatic Job Praised

Editor:

I want to thank you for sending Tom Celso and Bill Spong to the International Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in Rome and permitting them to be special correspondents for the Courier-Journal. I often scan the Courier and go through especially those articles which contain the bishop's and the Pope's words to us and also for writings such as this one which tell us of what the Holy Spirit is doing in renewing the Church through the charismatic renewal. I pray that the coverage of what Our Lord is doing might increase even more.

Thank you very much for your kindness to these seminarians, Tom and Bill. You have allowed Our Lord to use you as a channel of blessing to them and our whole community (the diocese of Rochester). May Jesus' blessing be upon you.

Anthony Paul Mugavero
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Priest's Action Commended

Editor:

Speaking as concerned Catholic laymen who sympathize with those couples who must limit reproduction for compelling reasons, we salute Father William Cosgrove for resigning his position as chaplain of a Catholic hospital which has allowed sterilizations to be performed.

It is interesting to note that he might have chosen to become a source of temporary compassion for the suffering women involved; he could have become a source of justification for the Administrator Sister Mary Reher; and he might have become a source of ethical solace for the medical doctors. He chose instead to continue his practice of being a source of inspiration, hope, faith, moral courage and truth to all who still accept the pre-technological truths of the Catholic faith.

Further, with growing church/lay efforts on behalf of the highly effective Natural Family Planning, there is a decreasing basis for seeking sterilization, with the corresponding increase of hope for couples who must limit their parenthood.

There has always been a need, since the days of the pluralistic silence at the foot of the Cross, for men of Father Cosgrove's mettle.

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Alliance Defended

Editor:

As a member of St. Joan's Alliance, I would like to clarify some of the misconceptions stated by Richard and Theresa Hussar in their letter (June 11, 1975).

To begin with St. Joan's has no affiliation whatever with the National Organization of Women. Most of our members locally are not even members of NOW, including myself. So, any criticism of that organization should not be directed at St. Joan's.

As for the abortion issue, St. Joan's takes no official stand on this issue. Locally, our members have diversified opinions on the subject. I, for one, do not favor abortion, and am offended by this misdirected stab at St. Joan's.

True, we support the ERA. Obviously the Hussars are prone to stake their prejudices on misinformation. Undoubtedly, their fears of the ERA are equally lacking in research and consideration of facts. They would do well to consider this further. If ERA really threatened family life — or the chosen vocation of motherhood — St. Joan's would not support it, for many of our members are mothers who prefer to be full-time mothers in the home. This is their choice — and ERA in no way threatens this choice. I would refer the Hussars (and anyone else who is lacking in facts) to contact the League of Women Voters.

In conclusion, may I quote some scripture for the benefit of the Hussars: "Judge not, and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned" (Luke 6:37) I, for one, consider myself to be a devout Christian — and I do not feel that the Hussars have any God-given right to predict the destiny of my soul or to identify sin in others.

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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.