



"WE'VE BEEN TALKING, AND WE THINK IT'D BE REALLY NEAT IF WE COULD HAVE THE WHOLE MASS—HYMNS AND EVERYTHING—IN LATIN!"

Editorial

The Laity

Once upon a time . . .

Because laymen had jobs "out in the world" everyone assumed that the only way they could contribute to the life of the Church was by serving on finance committees and the like. The things of God may have been in close proximity but it was the things of Caesar that were reserved for the laymen. And the laywomen were thought of only for their homemaking talents.

Perhaps that is too flippant a characterization. In addition there was some sense to such practice. But times are changing and more responsibility for all aspects of Church life is falling within the laity's province. Whether for pragmatic reasons — the falloff in the numbers of priests and Religious — or for sociological reasons — the laity is better educated today and more aware of events — the fact is that those not of the cloth are being asked to move up to the helm of this pilgrim ship.

Regardless of the reason, this greater sharing would seem to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Looking at it from another angle, in those days of yore when laymen were deemed capable only of fiscal responsibility, many were left out. Not all laymen are financially astute. It is a false assumption that the average lay person is better at balancing the books, or at profit-and-loss ledgers, or at organizing fund drives. It is a fact that many pastors, then and now, are far better at such jobs than most laymen or laywomen.

So for many it should have been gratifying to hear or read that Bishop Hogan and Father Douglas Hoffman, director of Pastoral Ministry, are exhorting the laity, particularly on parish councils, to take a more spiritual role in the Church.

We must reassess our talents and widen our self-respect in such matters. Many lay people always have been better at rearing children in a Christian manner, for instance, than dealing with business complexities. Many feel more at home saying a prayer to the Blessed Mother or to the saints or in reciting the blessing at meals than in figuring out how to get money to pave parking lots. These values should become incorporated in council doings.

Let's face it, laymen were stereotyped as one-talented creatures, their expertise limited to matters financial. Like all blanket assumptions, this was false. Some laymen qualify as financially adept; most don't. But all have other special gifts, that may have nothing to do with dollars and cents, but which are needed by all the Church. Embellish them with prayer and feel confident enough to put them on the conference table at council meetings.

Perhaps then we will be transforming "once upon a time" into living happily ever after.

Opinion

Schools' Goal: To Be Unique

Editor:

Anne B. Christoff's rambling denunciation (Courier-Journal, July 30, 1975) of Catholic school education, Bingo, and Black and Puerto Rican ministries was a curious example of shotgun accusations based on gratuitous assumptions and fuzzy principles.

As we approach a bicentennial year, it bothers me that anyone would see the genius of America as crushing the richness of varied ethnic backgrounds into a spiritless uniformity. The recent Italian Festival in Rochester is a good example of Americans celebrating the differences that make our unity attractive.

Ms. Christoff, while lamenting Church efforts to build on the distinctiveness of Black and Puerto Rican cultures, wants Catholic schools that are different from public schools. As a point of fact, Catholic school leadership and staffs have been working to make Catholic schools truly unique places of learning. If they are like public schools, it is in their willingness to use contemporary approaches to make instruction reach the individual needs of students. Our test results continue to affirm the academic quality of Catholic schools.

But equally important is the less measurable religious dimension. Catholic school staffs have invested considerable planning and effort in responding to the three-fold goal outlined by the American bishops in their pastoral, "To Teach as Jesus Did." The formal teaching of religion is one aspect of that. Building in the school an atmosphere of faith (a "faith community") is another aspect. Showing young people their responsibility to use their talents in service of others is a third goal.

No one would contend that any Catholic school does all of this perfectly. However, I believe many parents would attest that the efforts of their children's Catholic school teachers to share faith information and experience is a most welcome addition to the family's contribution.

One final thought for Ms. Christoff. If Bingo helps pay for this experience, long live Bingo! And God bless the many, many people whose volunteer work makes Bingo possible. I doubt she really believes that Bingo prevents anyone from praying or tithing.

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Correction In Letter

Editor:

Our letter 7-30 had a misprint. It should have read "we have a copy of the laws NOW standing in the state of New York." The paper printed "not standing."

Most of the 250 laws considered "sex-biased" and "unequal" by the State Law Revision Commission, and which would be changed by voter approval of ERA, are beneficial and/or protective to women. They should not, in our opinion, be changed.

Briefly summarized, five of those laws are: CPLR 6101: Women are exempt from Civil arrest. Gen. City L 91: The mayor shall designate two women to be in constant attendance where any woman is confined after arrest. Insurance Laws 208, 458, and 470: Insurance rates on female risks may be calculated according to an age not more than three years younger than actual age. Labor L 378: Every mercantile establishment etc. where women report for duty shall provide and maintain separate washrooms or facilities for each sex. Milit. L. 2: The unorganized state militia shall consist of able-bodied males between the ages of 17 and 45.

There are numerous laws naming the husband, not the wife, as primarily responsible for the financial support of the family unit. There are laws protecting a wife's properties from the debt settlements of her husband. There are numerous laws specifying separate restrooms and rest facilities in establishments.

How will anything improve for women if we "equalize" these "unequal laws"?

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Renewal Necessity

Editor:

"The Charismatic Renewal needs renewal" was the profound statement made by Father Alan Tammany of Emmanuel Charismatic Community, Albany Diocese, to the Rochester Diocese this past week. I heartily endorse this statement.

The renewal needs to begin within the hearts of each one of us to quote the Prophet Isaiah — "I have called YOU by your name. YOU are MINE." This call is to all the people of God, but to the people of the charismatic movement it entails a complete dying of self to Jesus. Only God deserves the glory that is to be given and it is only God who is to be served. Let us not glory in ourselves or seek to maintain position but let us give ourselves completely to the will of our Father for each one of us that His Kingdom may be established and served for His glory and praise.

Let us be obedient and walk in His will that all things be subject to Him. Let us rid ourselves of all pride which destroys the relationship and smothers the Spirit within us.

"Seek ye first, the Kingdom of God and all else will be given to you."

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Regards ERA As Unnecessary

Editor:

Movements to legalize abortion and euthanasia and pass

the Equal Rights Amendment all have something in common. None of these needed to be made into law.

Abortion was presented as a necessity for saving the life of a mother or helping the rape victim who might become pregnant. Any doctor or district attorney can attest to the fact that before the law was passed these cases were taken care of by doctors in hospitals.

The right of a patient to die without having extraordinary efforts made to keep him alive has been respected by every good doctor. No suits were ever brought against a doctor for doing otherwise.

The rights of women to equal pay and opportunities along with all those rights named in the Life and Liberty Column a few weeks ago have been legally recognized or are presently in litigation.

Passage of all of these into law have far-reaching effects: that most of the population do not want. They have been simplified to look good and necessary, but they are all dangerous because they give some members of society total power over others.

Mary Ann Jensen
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Murphy Series Commended

Editor:

Recently I have read the five series of articles from July 2 through July 30, 1975 by Mrs. Nancy Murphy in her column titled "Life, Liberty and Law" in the Courier Journal.

Our Commission has taken a stand against legalization of marijuana. From our experience, our Commission is most grateful to Mrs. Murphy in writing very intelligently and well the articles and to your newspaper for printing them. It is critical that the recent scientific facts concerning marijuana be known to the people. The people of our state thank Mrs. Murphy and the Courier Journal for making this vital information available to the public.

David V. Moynihan
Associate Drug Abuse
Prevention Specialist

Would Mention Unborn's Rights

Editor:

Throughout his "Spirit of '76" (Courier-Journal 7/30/75), Bishop Hogan overlooks one of the most vital issues of our time, as well as one of the most essential rights in the Constitution — the right to life. I did not find any mention of the fact that unborn babies are brutally being denied the gift of life.

He states that the denial of "legitimate demands for equality by women" is a social injustice. Yet too many of the same women that cry "Rights! Equality!" also scream "A woman's right to abort!"

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