

Editorial

Mrs. Ford

It is not so much that Mrs. Betty Ford is willing to have her shallow view of life promulgated across the world.

It is not so much that the recent television interview revealed an all-too-obvious level of conscience that is able to justify premarital sex and also praise the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion.

It is not so much that "60 Minutes" feels that such sophomoric views are worthy of its usually excellent show.

It is not so much that Mrs. Ford's unoriginal views may fortify all those who have been promulgating such amorality.

The trouble is that there are many who cannot separate a person's views from her standing in life and who may feel that if the First Lady takes such positions there must be validity in them. That is too much.

Fair Is Fair

Five years ago the Courier-Journal strongly criticized the Monroe County fair for presenting striptease shows and other even more degrading spectacles at an affair intended to attract youths.

Our views rankled some community leaders but others apparently shared our feelings. Officials announced that such spectacles would be eliminated.

A Courier-Journal team toured the fair last week and can report that it has indeed weeded out most of the tawdriness. There were no shows degrading human beings. There were instances of vulgarity here and there — one particular example being a booth displaying obscene posters for sale. We would hope that this vulgar vestige will be eliminated by next year.

We suggest that readers attending county fairs throughout the diocese keep their eyes open for instances of poor taste and report them to fair officials.

But by and large the Monroe County fair seems to have rejected the "dark ages" and is presenting a wholesome image worthy of our young people.

Your Opinion

Several problems have been cropping up with our opinion section which should be shared with our readers. First of all, we think that this section is of vital importance; it adds vibrancy to the product and enhances two-way communication.

It should come as no surprise to anyone but there are those who believe that while their views are worthy of publication those of contrary views are not. We do not want to sound platitudinous but we not only believe that people have a right to their opinions but they also have a right to be heard — good taste being the principal rule.

Recently we have received a few letters of excellent content which should have been printed. Unfortunately, the writers did not sign them. For many reasons we must identify letter writers. In addition, it is a worthwhile attribute for all of us to have the courage of our convictions. We have made exceptions to this rule on rare occasions — for instance when a woman who had had an abortion wished to warn others of the remorse that followed. Even in these cases the editor must know the identity of the writer. That is only responsible journalism.

Then there is the common problem of writers taking too long to express their views. We must insist on one and a half pages, typewritten, double-spaced. Any time someone thinks he has something so important that it can't be said in that space he should reflect on one of the greatest stories ever told which takes just 10 words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

We relish our function as a conduit between letter writers and the rest of our readership. We invite all to express their views on contemporary life, keeping in mind some simple guidelines — it is always more edifying to discuss issues and not personalities; positive ideas transmit more effectively than negative ones; keep in good taste, it excludes a multitude of sins.

Opinion

End Pompous Celebrations

Editor:

We read in C-J that 1976 is to be a Eucharistic Year in our diocese. Why a Eucharistic Year? Shouldn't every year, every minute in a Christian's life be Eucharistic? Shouldn't we participate in the Eucharist to thank God for his love, and so learn, from the Eucharist, how much he loves us and how we can pass this love to others?

We don't think a Eucharistic Year really has very much to do with the Eucharist. It is, we think, a lot of wearing of robes, swinging of censers, reciting of long formulas of words which are supposed to be prayer and, most non-Eucharistic, the spending of fuel, money, time and human energy which could otherwise help to shelter the homeless and feed the starving.

Some will say that celebrations of this sort give honor and glory to God. Isn't this presumptuous? Is God so short of honor and glory that we have to have parades to build Him up? Jesus said that if we see Him we see the Father. We've never read anywhere that Jesus sought adulation or encouraged demonstrations or celebrations in His honor. By example he showed us how to honor the Father: by giving up ourselves to love and serve others.

Why don't we stop all this pomp and circumstance that we call giving glory to God? Is it because we want to honor Him our way; not necessarily His way? His way is not so spectacular, and it may seem a bit harder (it really isn't). His way is Jesus' way: Love of people, serving people, accepting God's love and passing it on to others.

Why don't we have a real Eucharistic Year? For instance, why doesn't every parish in the diocese spearhead the resettlement of a Vietnamese family in its community?

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On Justice To Homosexuals

Editor:

In a letter written to the Courier (7-9-75) Rev. G. Stuart Hogan attacks homosexuality as "the sin that brought fire from Heaven on the two sinful cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah." But what actually was the great sin of Sodom? What was it that actually caused its destruction by God? Was it homosexuality?

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Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

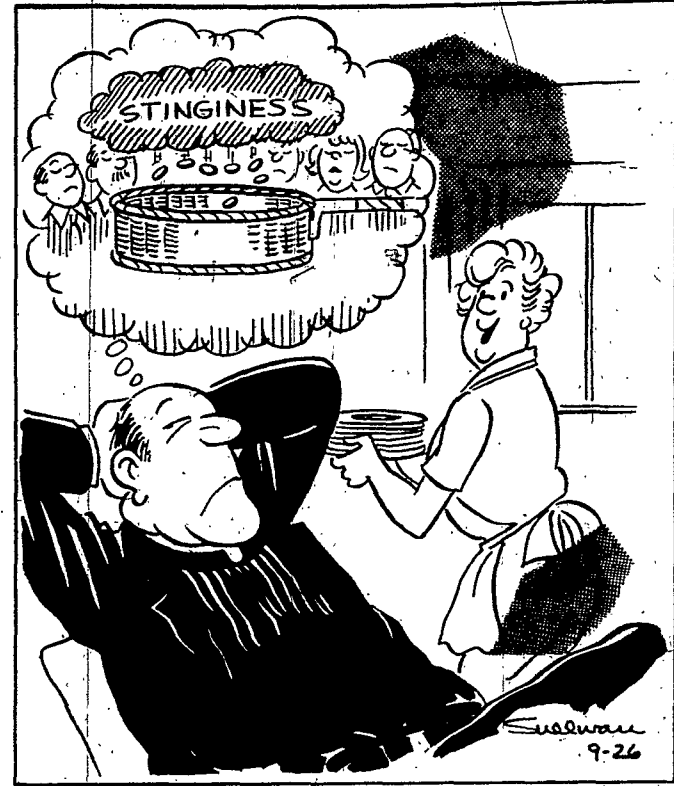
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Courier-Journal



"A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS, FATHER!"

Sexual immorality? Listen to the words of Ezekiel:

This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride of wealth and food in plenty, comfort and ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. (Ezekiel 16:49)

Father Hogan further states "Catholics regard homosexuality as a grave sin: it is an abnormality, a deviation from normal sexuality, a sin against nature. God created the sexes and sexual love that, in love, children might be procreated and brought into the world." These are the negative attitudes that have caused misunderstanding, hostility and even outright oppression of gays by the Church and society. These bigoted attitudes, "Homosexuality is so repulsive because it is so very unnatural" exemplify what Father Eugene Kennedy said in his book **The People Are the Church;**

Churchmen have never fully purged themselves of the emotional blocks about sexuality which they developed in the course of history. These, however, remain as the defenses which must be put aside if the Church is to achieve its identity in the modern world. The Church overemphasized the procreation of children as the sole primary end of marriage. This has been

redressed by Vatican II, but the emotional residue of this distorted emphasis still remains.

I am not condemning Father Hogan for his attitudes, but the Church has always recognized that Scripture requires interpretation and that its message is primarily regarding that which concerns salvation and not the mere impartation of human wisdom. In fact, a narrow, literal reiteration of the Scriptural passage regarding homosexuality yields little insight into God's will; e.g. are we also to emulate Lot's offering of his daughters to the mob? (Gen. 19:8) Do we not hear more clearly God's word when we recognize that the Genesis story speaks of God's saving his faithful ones. The condemnation is of those who live as though they were unredeemed, unfaithful, unloving. But does such a picture truly define gay men and women? It would appear not. Gay people are not more immoral than other Christians. Rather, they share the same faith (that in Christ's life, death and resurrection is our life and hope, our salvation) and the difficulties in living out the demands of this faith, living lives of love, dignity and responsibility.

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"reasonable." There is no reason with such people. They are in it solely for the job and for what it pays. And there are people who enjoy their work.

Eventually and always the word cancer is brought up when animal experiments are mentioned. You know as well as I that the world has always been plagued with diseases of all kinds none of which have ever been cured through animals.

Sincerely,
G.A.

Dear G. A.,
Your rejoinder to my "answer" is a mass of rash judgments and facile assumptions:

"Like a politician you did not read on — and God saw everything that he had made; and behold it was very good" — rash judgment. I too believe all things are good, including the meat and eggs I eat.

Scientists, who do this kind of research are Communists because some people who do this kind of work are Russian — rash judgment.

"There is no reason with such people" — rash judgment.

"You know as well as I that the world has always been plagued with diseases of all kinds, none of which have ever been cured through animals" — facile assumption.

My dentist inflicts pain to save my teeth; my physician hurt me terribly in removing an abscess. Were they wrong? To inflict pain on animals for enjoyment or for its own sake is immoral, but for a legitimate higher purpose — I say it is not immoral.

Reverend Father:
Your reply to my letter on vivisection which was printed in the Courier-Journal, 7/16/75, reads like a politician answering his constituents. First you quote Genesis, "Be masters of the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air and all living animals on earth." How in the world do you interpret this to justify the torture of living animals for the promotion of the welfare of the human race? Like a politician you did not read on — "and God saw everything that he had made; and behold it was very good." Nowhere did He see animals abused. He didn't see animals being beaten to death with automatic metal hammers just so scientists can watch their facial expressions on the pretense of making a better football helmet!

You object to my calling some of these so called scientists Communist. The Russians are Communist. Much of this animal abuse is carried on in Russia, but also in this country, too.

You say the key word is