

Bad Example Laid to Priest

Editor:

Open Letter to Father James Callan:

I have never met you, but I read your story and I saw your picture in the Democrat & Chronicle sitting without clerical garb in one of the pews in the church that was my parish before my marriage 27 years ago. I went to school, received my First Holy Communion was confirmed, and was married there, and I attended both of my parents' funerals as well as the funerals of other relatives and friends in that church (so it is very dear to me).

It hurt me to see you sitting there. Why? Because I feel that you are giving the Catholic Church a lot of bad publicity which it does not need right now. I cannot help but wonder if it would not have been better if you had left the seminary as so many of your friends did. You have been ordained 14 months and already you are refusing to obey your bishop because he has asked you to live in a rectory you consider to be too "luxurious." You know when old rectories have to be replaced, of course, it costs a lot of money for the new ones — but rectories these days serve so many needs that were not required in the past. They have to be built for many other purposes than just residences for the parish priests. They have to have room for visiting priests during missions, retreats, or novenas; for retired priests; for priests who are teaching or working nearby. They also have to be used for numerous meetings. These things were not needed in years gone by but are very important today.

You know, Father, the solution to the present problem with your conscience is so simple. You could obey your Bishop, move into the rectory you consider to be too "luxurious" and offer that up to Almighty God as a sacrifice for any number of intentions. Are you so different from the rest of us that you do not have anyone or anything to pray and sacrifice for? You are setting a very poor example for new priests; you are also giving bad example to youth in general — youth who are already much too rebellious. I think you missed a great opportunity for a real commitment to the Lord, and I feel sorry for you!

Mrs. Edmund C. Hillengas
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Does Penalty Suit Crime?

Editor:

Does the punishment suit the crime?

When a child fails to pick up his/her toys, a parent might keep the child inside the house until the toys are put away. When an adult driver parks a car illegally a parking ticket is issued. When an adult driver breaks the speed limits he/she receives tickets and warnings before the license is suspended.

In reference to the articles in the Courier-Journal of Feb. 4, 1975 on Rev. James Callan: Does the punishment fit the crime? If a priest can have his priestly ministry revoked for disobedience and rejection of official policy, and I assume a person would be excommunicated for heresy, what possible punishment is left for those infractions of the law that fall between the above two examples?

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Disappointed At Coverage

Editor:

I was both surprised and disappointed with the front page articles in the Courier-Journal's Feb. 4 issue regarding the suspension of Father James Callan. I found the articles to be both one-sided and highly uninformative. While the articles provided the background and rationale behind the Bishop's decision to suspend Father Callan and quoted from a statement supporting that decision, no information was provided on why Father Callan chose his course of action. In fact there was nothing in any of the articles that presents Father Callan's view of the problem.

I do not know Father Callan personally, nor do I have any view about the merits of this dispute. This letter is not meant to be an endorsement of his actions nor a criticism of Bishop Hogan's difficult decision. Unfortunately, I am in no better position to make an informed judgment on this issue after reading these articles than I was before reading them.

One-sided reporting of any conflict or dispute does a serious injustice to the individual or group whose views are not represented. Unless the basic rights of all parties to a dispute are protected, a just resolution to the problem is impossible. As a Church we must be especially sensitive to the need to insure justice is achieved in our internal disputes lest we be judged unworthy of speaking out against social injustices in the outside world. The Catholic press has a special responsibility in insuring that justice is served. It must be careful to avoid the temptation to reflect only the interests of the Church hierarchy or it will suppress the creative dialogue that is essential to a Church seeking to achieve peace and justice throughout the world.

I hope and trust that the Courier-Journal will take steps to rectify the injustice it has done to Father Callan and his family and will seek to insure more balanced reporting of future conflicts that will inevitably surface in our Church.

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What Do Laity Think?

Editor:

We believe in Father Jim Callan's right to decide not to live at St. Ambrose Rectory. We believe he should be able to exercise this freedom of choice without fear of censure by his superiors. We, therefore, regret Bishop Hogan's decision to censure him. We call into question any personnel policies of the diocese which smack of treating priests as adolescents, telling them what to wear, where to live, and what is proper decorum (e.g., hands folded, eyes downcast). We accept Father Callan's attempt at a more evangelical life style and accept his ideals as a personal challenge to our own.

In all of this controversy, never once was the opinion of the people of St. Ambrose considered or even asked. We recognize the right of a parish to place conditions or requirements on those who are assigned to serve in their parish. They may even demand that their priests reside in the rectories they've built for them. And if this is understood by both the priest and people, the priest has the right to refuse to be in their "employ" if their demands conflict with his conscience. So we believe the crux of the Callan controversy is not the personnel policy of the diocese, but

the requirements for "employ" at St. Ambrose. Do the people of St. Ambrose require their priests to live in the rectory? Do they believe Father Callan cannot make the same commitment of service to them if he lived "off-campus"?

In this day of the involvement of the laity — they who with the hierarchy are the living stones of the church — why wasn't their opinion sought?

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Form Prayer For Children

Editor:

Please give my prayer to the children of the diocese:

PRAYER TO MY PATRON SAINT

St. _____ you are my patron saint. Your job is to keep me from falling into sin. My job is to keep you on my mind and in my heart. If I do my job, oh good St. _____ will you please do yours? Amen.

Peter R. Palmeri
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Sees TM As Benefit

Editor:

After reading Mr. and Mrs. Callari's letter to the editor I felt compelled to present the other side of the story. I could have written of the priests and other devout Catholics who practice transcendental meditation (TM), but perhaps through my own experience with TM some light may be shed on the topic.

In paragraph two of the Callari's letter it is stated that the meditator begins seeking the "so-called god Brahma" instead of the Holy Trinity. In the nearly two years since I have practiced TM, the only mention of "Brahma" or "Nirvana" came through the Callari's letter.

In the following paragraph it is stated that Mrs. Callari has "never heard of anyone who practices TM having a growing thirst for reading scripture." In my 18 years of life prior to meditation, my only reading of scripture was involved in class or homework assignments. In the 1 1/2 to 2 years since meditating, while certainly not as often as I should, I have on numerous occasions sat down and read from the Bible.

In the same paragraph it is added that she does not "see them attending church more often." In my last few years of high school I went through the religious crisis so many young people find themselves in these days. I failed to see any value in the Church or Mass. I only attended Mass when forced. However, since I began meditating, I have been able to see the value of the Church and the Mass. My experience with TM reminds me of the man who said, "I've been a Catholic for 35 years, but a Christian only the last four." I feel as though I was a Catholic for 18 years, but a Christian-Catholic only the last 1 1/2 to 2 years, or since I've been meditating.

My girlfriend, who also practices TM, works on Saturdays and Sundays, but always manages to fit Mass in her schedule — a practice she had discontinued prior to meditation.

Mrs. Callari stated that what she sees is a group of people turning in on themselves and their peace and comfort. May I ask what is wrong with seeking inner peace? It seems to me that if mankind is ever to

have peace it must begin within the individual.

Then Mrs. Callari blames the problems of India on the practice of TM. Someone of similar ignorance might blame Catholicism for the violence and bloodshed found in Ireland.

In conclusion, Mrs. Callari states that our churches do not need "TM or any other such programs." It is true that the Church as a whole may have no need for TM, but what about the individual? In today's rat-race society there may be a need for TM, for some, to help sort things out and "get it together" as they say, so that each individual may see the need for Christ in their lives. With the help of God and TM I got back on the right track, but what about all the other young people being turned off these days? Can't we admit that they may benefit by practicing TM?

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We Must Listen To The Pope

Editor:

There have recently been articles and letters in the Courier-Journal about the permissiveness of certain priests regarding birth control. To clarify the issue, one should be aware of the official teaching of the Church. Pope Paul's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* states:

"... the Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law as interpreted by her constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life."

Also: "To use this divine gift, destroying its meaning and its purpose is to contradict the nature both of man and of woman and of their most intimate relationship, and therefore it is to contradict also the plan of God and His will."

After prohibiting sterilization, the encyclical states: "Similarly excluded is every other action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or a means, to render procreation impossible."

Thus, the Church's present and "constant" teaching is perfectly clear and explicit. But still there are clerics who try to oppose and pervert this teaching by means of their own "modifications" or "interpretations."

What we have nowadays (in this as well as in other matters such as catechetics) is a reversion to the heresy of modernism, which was condemned by Pope Pius X in 1907. Modernism was promoted mainly by Alfred Loisy and George Tyrrell, who were both priests and who were both excommunicated. It was a devious attempt to undermine from within the authority of the teaching Church. Some of the modernist attitudes were: that religion is evolutionary; that dogma is relative and transient; that the truths about God are unknowable; that religious beliefs are historically conditioned; and that Christ was not concerned to impart final truths, nor could He since He was a part of history and His teaching belonged only to His own age.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, modernism "... was characterized by a tone antagonistic to all ecclesiastical authority and by a belief in an adaptation of the Church to modern thought even at the expense of radically changing the Church's essence."

Only a few weeks ago, Pope Paul reaffirmed the "absolute and immutable" teaching of the Church

regarding sex, which is based on natural law. His statement emphasized that the "current tendency to minimize as far as possible, when not denying outright the reality of grave sin" is erroneous. It noted that "there are those who have put forward concepts and modes of behavior which are contrary to the true moral exigencies of the human person." The Church cannot remain indifferent to this confusion of minds (taking place even among Catholics) and relaxation of morals.

What we should do, therefore, is to read carefully the encyclicals and to pay attention to the Papal statements, especially since the episcopal leadership in our diocese seems blandly unconcerned about decisively promoting the moral teachings of the Church.

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