

Needed: Vocations

We ask you, Lord, to continue to bless and enrich your Church with the gifts of your vocations. We pray that many may be willing to listen to your voice and may continue to give joy to the Church with the generosity and faithfulness of their response.

Thus Pope Paul VI concludes his message for Vocations Sunday. Obviously it is a fervent prayer and never more needed than at the present time when lack of vocations is working hardship on the Church.

This is not to downplay the laity, as the Pope made clear in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, when he stated that the laity is called "to collaborate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace of charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them."

The laity is no longer taken for granted in the Church, if indeed it ever was. Those without orders are increasingly urged into greater positions of responsibility, to take a hand at the tiller of the Ship of Church.

Yet, without vocations to the priesthood, and the Religious, the ship will founder. Men and women are needed who are willing and trained to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Himself who dedicated his life to evangelization as he made his way through the towns and among the people of his own country. Then as if to wrap up the point and leave it neatly as a guide, He stated, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away."

Priests are at the heart of this spirit of evangelization. Consecrated to preach the Gospel they are assigned "to proclaim the Good News to all creation."

Lord knows, this world is in need of such spiritual succor.

But the priesthood is not the only calling that might be considered by our younger Church people. Pope Paul in his message for Vocations Sunday clearly spells out the importance of vocations to the Religious: — "to offer one's life in the service of the Gospel, often in the outposts of the missions and to render the Gospel credible through many different forms of works of charity and through the witness of Christian holiness this is a most noble task."

Noble and needed.

As in so many problem areas there is little that most of us can do to increase vocations to the priesthood, the sisterhood, the brotherhood. We can, however, do some things. In our daily lives we can contemplate the importance of ordained life and then pass the good word on so that others also will think twice. And on Vocations Sunday we can all join our prayers to this end to create a community impetus for new vocations.

As Pope Paul concluded his vocations message, "Now, dearly beloved sons and daughters, let us pray together." This "little" we can do could mean a lot.

Disarm? How?

Talk about bucking the tide! In York, England, recently 350 delegates to the World Disarmament Forum unanimously adopted a declaration calling for a complete ban on all offensive weapons. A Methodist delegate, the Rev. David Harding, told the delegates to read and learn from Pope Paul's peace messages.

Another speaker, Lady Jackson, nee Barbara Ward, said one of the greatest difficulties those who want disarmament is convincing "the average citizen" that it is possible. She feels that most people just don't think disarmament can happen.

That is probably true, Lady Jackson, but over here in the colonies that problem is compounded by the fact that a good many citizens think of guns as their Linus blankets, pet rocks, Mama's knee, the end of the rainbow, a thumb to suck on, and the secret to virility. Much less espouse disarmament our gunnies would like to see more and more people with more and more arms. The Pope can make all the sense in the world but our gunnies are not going to listen.

How, indeed, will we ever disarm the world when the U.S. Congress is afraid to regulate the sale of handguns in its own country?

Opinion

More Info On Encounter

Editor:

Re your article on the National Marriage Encounter, we submit the following as corrections:

National Marriage Encounter weekends are structured and follow a very tight time table all weekend. Weekends are NOT "up to the Team Couple and the Priest." This could lead to chaos. Weekends are very carefully constructed and follow the format and outlines as prescribed by Father Gabriel Calvo, the originator of Marriage Encounter.

One of the main purposes of our weekend is to teach the dialog technique, with the primary, but not exclusive, focus on feelings. After the weekend, we encourage the continued use of the written dialog, to aid the couple to grow into a more complete sharing of themselves in a dialogical relationship in which they relate with each other at a profound level daily. This sharing of their total, being may be in the written form, but not limited to it. We encourage this sharing in whatever form it takes, and is most effective.

We appreciate how difficult it was to write on Marriage Encounter, and especially thank you for your objective reporting.

Gene & Karoly Edwards
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Editors Note: The weekends being "up to the Team Couple and Priest" was a direct quote from a National Encounter couple. It was mentioned that National Weekends do follow the Calvo outline. The third paragraph apparently refers to another direct quote from another National Encounter couple dealing with "Dialogue." Continued daily use of dialogue also was mentioned.

Cardinal Baum Quoted

Editor:

Both to contribute to clearer thinking on the subject of fundamental option and to offer what I consider a fine example of healthy spirituality on the part of our new American Cardinal William Baum, I submit the following:

"Ironically, a deepening of our awareness of the meaning of sin as something much more than the violation of laws and codes may tempt us to think that there is no

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relation between sin and these expressions of moral absolutes. This is not the mind of the Church. There are moral laws and standards by which we can examine our conscience and determine, with God's help, the extent of our hostility to divine life.

"The destruction and disorder brought about by the power of sin is not something which depends entirely on our intentions. There is an order of sin as there is an order of grace. The order of sin corresponds to human existence perverted and turned away from God. The purpose of moral laws and standards is to outline the characteristics of this order of life. This order of life precedes our personal sins. The perversion and destruction which characterize the order of sin enter into our world through some of our actions, whether we are guilty of them or not from a subjective point of view

"Accordingly, it is not sufficient to evaluate the moral meaning of individual actions by the extent to which they express the orientation of a person's entire life. An evaluation of the relation between our individual actions and the power of sin has to take into account whether the action is in itself a channel through which the order of sin may realize or increase its hold on our lives.

"This is determined not only by an analysis of the fundamental orientation of the individual's life — not only by an analysis of man — but by the expression of the Creator's wisdom engraved in the very fabric of human existence, as well as by the revelation of God's work in Christ's Cross and Resurrection. Moral laws and standards express this wisdom, and in this way help us evaluate our involvement with sin.

"In any case, it is presumptuous for any one to pretend to be able to judge his heart's orientation to God. To do this is to say that we are to judge ourselves righteous in God's eyes. This reminds me of that 'boasting' which St. Paul condemns and against which each Christian has to be continuously warned. . . . This can never be the Christian's attitude before God — even less when he has violated, at least externally, a moral law or value."

— from "the text of the talk given by Archbishop William Baum at the workshops on the new Rite of Penance held throughout the Archdiocese of Washington" as printed in the English language edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* April 15, 1976.

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Poor Mary? Never!

Editor:

I would like to add some more insights on "Poor Mary" written by Father Benedict A. Ehmann — May 5.

First of all, why the title *Poor Mary*? She has earned her place in heaven as Mother of God, Queen of heaven, and our Blessed Mother. It should be "Poor Catholics?" who do not understand Mary's role in their lives. All true Catholics know Christ is the source of power and Mary is the channel. The reason this generation has been dropping devotions to their Blessed Mother is because they are not being properly taught their Catholic faith. The decline in devotion to Mary should be viewed as a deterioration of faith and not a process of purification.

When the sanctity of marriage was attacked in England by Henry VIII that country became a dying nation. Today the sanctity of the family (in which Mary is the foundation stone) is being attacked in this country through abortion. Should we expect God's blessing or chastisement?

Why should we look much more to Our Lady of the Bible than Our

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Lady of Fatima? That is like saying we should listen to Our Lady when she was twenty years of age and not when she is fifty years of age. She has come at Fatima to tell us what we are doing wrong and what we must do to correct ourselves or be overcome by errors (heresies) spreading from Russia.

God made it abundantly clear He wants more devotion and not less to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of His Mother — Sister Lucy was left in the world to promote this devotion.

To all those who refuse to hear Christ on the cross say "Behold Your Mother" and obey her requests made at Fatima will fall into error.

In every nation which shall hear thy name, the God of Israel shall be magnified of occasion of thee, Judith 13:31.

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Gun Editorial Criticized

Editor:

I am writing this letter to comment on the March 24 editorial appearing in the "Opinion" column of the *Courier-Journal*. In your editorial entitled "Guns, Babies", you evidenced the type of journalism that creates polarization of people on the emotional and controversial issue of gun control. I feel that your article was not in keeping with the level of editorial writing and journalism that has earned the *Courier-Journal* the awards it has won for excellence in journalism.

Your comments aimed at the National Rifle Association leave me cold. This association takes the hard-line stand that it does because it is the major organization representing those who use firearms for safe and legal purposes. The comments that appeared in your article accomplish the negative objective of further polarizing people on this very critical and emotional issue. We do not need any further division of thinking, but need more editorializing that focuses on the many areas of compromise that exist concerning the issue of gun control. Statistics can be presented from both sides of this issue to support the stand of each side.

I agree with your sentiments on the use of sarcasm as a journalistic tool. Could you not, in the future, attempt to concentrate on those areas of compromise that will draw the factions together on this issue, and ignore comments and thoughts that emphasize the polarization. Remember, the overwhelming majority of people who own firearms in this country, use them for legal purposes and in a safe manner. It is the criminal and illegal use of firearms that has created the problem we must contend with. It would serve a more constructive purpose if both sides of the issue could concentrate their efforts in dealing with the criminal and illegal use of firearms, and not in denying private citizens of yet another "right" accorded them under the nation's constitution.

I thank you for accorded me the opportunity to express my opinion.

Gerald A. Garce
Danville, N.Y.

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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.