

Editorial

Stereotyping

Some disparaging criticism has been directed at the so-called Christian Maximalist who is seen as the kind of person who diagnoses and prescribes for problems in Timbuktu but avoids mentioning those down on Main Street.

As the ever-provocative Father Greeley writes, the maximalist's "compassion is proportionate to the remoteness of the beneficiary and therefore comfortably undemanding." This person discharges his obligations "by going to meetings and issuing statements" and "tends to fasten on an ideology, a master plan, as a panacea."

In contrast, the Christian Minimalist is drawn (naturally, as in all stereotyping, the term must be the direct opposite as in black and white). He eschews general statements about the plight of, say, the Third World, but helps the fellow in need right next door.

Needless to say, there is a great deal of truth in such characterizations. We all know those in the Church who fit the roles. But it should be clear that the characters are too rigidly drawn — surely it is possible for a Christian to possess elements of both the extremes.

A case in point:

Recently a widely known churchman said that the affluent Western world must give generously to the poverty-racked Third World before those countries rise up and take what they want. He also caustically observed that "because we have television and three meals a day and summer cottages we think we can rule the world." He said Westerners were not producing goods to feed people, but to earn money. "Mondy is all we're living for."

Talking about farmers who pelted police with butter and milk, this person said "They have too much milk and butter and they are throwing it away."

The words of a Christian Maximalist. Could be. They were spoken at a recent press conference by Cardinal Paul-Emile Leger, the former archbishop of Montreal who resigned and spent several years as a missionary in Africa and has since returned. What he said is neither more nor less true because a cardinal said it. The same observations would contain neither more nor less truth if spoken by an armchair theorist. Truth is not affected by the status of the speaker.

Incidentally we happen to believe that Cardinal Leger is a Christian maximalist, in the best sense of the phrase.

Sports?

This newspaper has long cautioned against the over-rabidness with which some people — players, management, and fans — treat our sports. We have noted sadly that too often we make wars of our sports and sports of our wars.

Sports illustrated in a recent series on religion and sports noted that sports are having a "greater impact on religion than the other way around."

Two national religious magazines also have taken note of the situation. Christianity Today has declared that "the passion of the land is too often athletic rather than spiritual" adding that "increasingly of late that passion has become violent."

We do not think it is fair to compare religion and sports, quid pro quo. But we do agree wholeheartedly that spiritual values, or something very akin, are needed now to soften the violent and mercenary aspects eroding sports.

The Jesuit magazine America, speaking to the same subject, pointed out such anomalies as hockey's "eye for an eye" principle or baseball's "struck it in his ear." Add fan violence and greed of both players and owners and frankly you have something much less than the wholesomeness that sports proponents like to talk about.

What is needed is for someone to let the air out of athletics, reducing the pressure, not only in big time sports, but right down to the small fry leagues. Who is that "someone"? All of us, that's who.

Opinion

ME Brought 'Sunshine'

Editor:

It's a little over a year now since we went on a Marriage Encounter weekend. We have found this year to be the richest in our ten years of married life.

We knew we had a good marriage before the weekend by we never realized how much peace and happiness we could find in our lives together. The weekend made a difference in our marriage — a difference like sunshine makes on a vacation.

We were skeptical about going on a weekend, and now we invite all you other skeptics to call 227-1805 for a reservation — to love and to cherish.

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Sexist Bias Claimed

Editor:

No, Father Sheets, if my sisters whose call to the sacramental priesthood remains untested due to your proposed "dogmatic judgement that only men can be priests" (C.J. June 16, 1976 p. 21), the Church will not have to "contend with the rage of disappointed females." Since we, too, are the Church, we will be contending with sadness (a redeeming suffering-time for more listening to God and people) and not debilitating rage. I have seen no repressed or potential "rage" on the national or regional level or in the literature or conference.

What we do see is patient study, prayer and dialogue with the hierarchy, people in the pew and the world and increased service to all. We as Church have called the commission members to an enormous work and they respond with awe, discipline and stamina.

Father Sheets, we do affirm that "God chooses, sends and blesses" His ministers. And we see that people come to believe that God loves them through priestly personal care which is so reflective of Jesus' ministry. But, look about you. Do you not see sadness and loneliness and detachment from Church? Transformed and renewed priestly ministers respond to pastoral needs. More transformed and renewed priests can do MORE for the Church.

Lay ministers alleviate some people's pain by bringing hope and a taste of ongoing love in Christ.



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they help to create a thirst and need for sacraments. Lay ministry then does not relieve the priest, but awakens a need for more people to carry the credible sign of the ordained. People of prayer discern God's call.

Gaudium et spes 29 decries sexist discrimination: "It is discriminatory to refuse to test a seminarian's call simply because she is a woman."

"All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free man, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27-28)

The Courier-Journal seems to be a little heavy on the "rebuking" side in printing Father Sheet's remarks while apparently ignoring those of Murphy, Kung, Cuneen, Harrison, Janeway, Ermath, Swidler, Culver, Tavad, McGrath, Stendal, Scanzoni, Faxon, Morris, McKenna, McLoughlin, Romero, McManus, Henning, etc. But, the placement of your coverage (p. 21) indicates the low esteem with which you hold the issue.

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News Policy Questioned

Editor:

Within recent months the Courier-Journal has either obscured or ignored at least four events of far-ranging importance and interest: the suspension and reinstatement of Father James Callan; the resignation of the diocesan superintendent of schools; the creation of a diocesan office of Peace and Justice; the charges surrounding Sister Maureen Murphy.

Two of these events made front-line copy in the national media including the New York Times and Paul Harvey News. In contrast, your one-liner about Father Daniel Brent's resignation and the three lines of editorial comment "Pray" seem woefully inappropriate and insufficient.

You can appreciate the frustration of a Catholic who must rely solely upon secular sources, however credible or useful, to make an informed judgment. The predicament into which your readers fall was well-illustrated by the flood of letters in the wake of the Callan story, most of them in sharp, if not heated-up, reaction to presumed attacks either on Father Callan or on the institutional Church.

In an earlier letter, Thomas Kochan, a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, registered surprise and disappointment with highly

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uninformative articles regarding the suspension.

Essentially he was calling upon you for a review and a reformulation of news policy which would seek to insure a broader and more balanced reporting of future conflicts and divergence which will inevitably surface in our Church. His challenge was only too predictive.

I believe that Mr. Kochan's plea is more on the side of truth, justice and compassion in the Church of the Holy Spirit. This is the same Church which must be in constant renewal and reconciliation within itself, a Church which must become increasingly mature and penitent to turn all things, especially divergence and conflict, along with suffering and tragedy, to the greater honor and glory of God.

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Editor's Note: Without getting into prolonged disputation over news judgment, we wish to point out that both the Peace and Justice Commission and the Father Callan case were covered in the Courier-Journal. The Father Callan situation seems to have reached amicable settlement for all directly concerned. As for reader Carver's other charges, we see no need for anyone's "judgment" of the individuals concerned. Sister Maureen Murphy's case represents a personal tragedy, is in the courts and does not directly involve the Church, in our view. The Thomas Kochan letter in reference appeared in the Courier-Journal 2-18-76 issue. The Courier-Journal policy will never be dictated by what the New York Times or Paul Harvey consider "front line" news.

'Exorcism' Suggested

Editor:

As a movie actor, Fr. William O'Malley, SJ, may be great, but as a theologian, he needs to be 'EXORCIZED'.

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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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.