

Editorial

A Potential For Glory

What would Christ have done?

A hot summer day in a place called Philadelphia. Probably unlikely that Jesus Christ would be an official representative in attendance. But would he avoid taking any stand on the revolution in progress? Would he say anything about declaring independence from the mother country? Would he leave to Thomas Jefferson et al the things that belong to Caesar? Would he see the rights of the colonists so abused that he would speak out?

It is nearly 100 years later. A civil dispute is raging, new insurrection is imminent. Ostensibly the main contention is the right of states to govern themselves, but the emotional issue is slavery. Would Jesus say it is not his business to discuss bondage? Or would he condemn slavery for the abomination which it is? Would he have discussed the Emancipation Proclamation with his followers?

Remember the Alamo! Remember the Maine! Manifest destiny. The only good Indian is a dead Indian. What would Jesus have taught? If anything.

The industrial revolution. Big business. The labor movement. The IWW. The Wobblies. Sacco and Vanzetti. Vanderbilt. Debs. Sweat shops. Child labor. Would Jesus have expressed his views?

No Irish need apply. Nigger. Wop. Spick. Lynchings. The Ku Klux Klan. The poll tax. What would Christ have said? If anything.

The Wars. Number I and II. Making the world safe for democracy. The war to end all wars. Remember Pearl Harbor! Over there! Halting the spread of communism. Would Jesus have enlisted? Would he have promoted pacifism? Would he be silent? Would he aim an M-1 rifle? Would he avoid taking a stand on a godless movement sweeping the world?

Saturation bombing. Defoliation. Abortion. The B-1 bomber. Trident submarines. Political corruption. Ecology. Capitalism. Communism. Socialism. The distribution of wealth. The Third World. Would Jesus have something to say? Would he be silent?

If Jesus were an American, how would he celebrate the 4th of July? Would he be ashamed for the things that should have been done but were not? Would he be ashamed for the things that were done that should not have been? Would he join the drummers? Or the crepe-hangers?

Answering any or all of these questions is probably impossible, short of omniscience. After all, Jesus was not bodily in our country from colonial times to the occasion of the bicentennial. He was here only to the extent that we have been. He was able to speak to the wrongs only to the extent that we did. He was able to give direction on divisive issues only to the point that we did. He could only condemn slavery if we did. He could only fight the great battle if we did.

What would Jesus have done? Who knows? But it is the very thing we should ponder as we reflect on our own choices, past and present, as a society and as an individual, as a nation and as a single citizen. We can not even guess what Jesus would have done until we examine what we have done. What we are doing.

A potential of glory exists for us Americans of the year 1976. It lies in the fact that we can act now to make up for our historical shortcomings or excesses. Therein lies the opportunity for a glorious Fourth. A just reason to celebrate. — Carmen Viglucci.

Opinion

Seniors Need Readers' Stamps

Editor:

I am sincerely appreciative of your continued sending of cancelled postage stamps to St. Francis Village.

Our residents sort cancelled stamps regularly, either in their homes or with groups in our Game Room. The stamps are sorted into various categories, then sold to stamp dealers. The proceeds from these sales are used for the benefit of the Village.

The highest paid price, and in great demand, are foreign and commemorative and special stamps. Other stamps bring in a lesser price, but are still very rewarding financially. Please note that metered stamps have no value.

May we ask you, in your kindness, to leave at least a half inch of paper around each stamp, as a border to protect the perforations. With some stamps the perforations can be very important.

Please let your friends know of our need for cancelled stamps. The stamp project here at St. Francis Village is a continuing program. As such, it is a happy conversation piece among all our residents. In age, our stamp sorters range between 60 and 85. They are all very happy to be doing something constructive for their Village, using their free time for this worthwhile project.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered each month, all year long, for the benefactors of St. Francis Village. So you and your intentions are remembered regularly in my Masses, as well as in my prayers and the prayers of all our residents.

Thanking you again for your kindness, I am,

Rev. Philip Marquard, OFM,
Director of St. Francis Village,
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What's It Like To Be a Dog

Editor:

The character of Father William O'Malley's retort to Nancy Murphy's familiar complaint about "modernist" perversions in teaching about the Divinity of Christ is likely transparent to many readers. However in the absence of authoritative teachings alongside those of Fr. O'Malley, some readers may be misled into false "cer-

titudes" about the understanding of the Divinity of Christ in the Catholic Faith.

Between his statement of Church dogma, "Jesus was not only fully God but also fully human," and his much later implicit imprimatur, "And that's dogma, m'am," Father O'Malley largely offers personal views and parts of the Scriptures with his interpretations of them.

Below is an excerpt I transcribed from Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen's 1966 Christmas TV program:

"This idea of a God becoming a man that you saw there in the crib is something very hard for us to realize. Just suppose you love a — suppose you love dogs and you were sorrowful for the way dogs were treated by some masters, or neglected. And you had the power to dispossess yourself of your body, but you could do with your soul what you wanted. And you took that soul of yours and you put it in the body of a dog. And when you did that — you would resolve but rarely to exceed the limitations of that dog organism. What a humiliation that would be! You'd know you had a mind that could write poetry, and that could study science, and absorb literature, and understand Dante and Aquinas — and yet here you were in the body of a dog! And there would be another humiliation, and that other humiliation would be — because you went into the organism of a dog you would have to associate with other dogs knowing all the while that you were better — that you were a man! You think it humbling? To become a dog, just simply to give dogs good example of good conduct?"

Joseph J. Murray
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Chance Seen For Renewal

Editor:

For several weeks Father Andrew Greeley's column has dealt with the decline of the Catholic Church in the United States. His statistics attribute this in great part to Pope Paul's Humanae Vitae.

Some of the staunch defenders of the faith claim that the statistics are misleading, that the ones leaving the Church are those who were not good Catholics to begin with and, consequently, were unwilling to make the sacrifices the encyclical demanded.

My wife and I are much too old to be directly concerned with the use or non-use of contraceptives, but not too old to have been deeply shocked by Humanae Vitae.

We, and we are sure a good many other Catholics, saw the encyclical as something far more devastating than a proclamation against the use of contraceptives. We saw it as a betrayal of the spirit of Vatican II, saw it as an attempt to return to the status quo which Pope John hoped so fervently could be replaced by a true Christian spirit.

Perhaps the decline of the Church in the United States is not all bad. Perhaps something good could spring up from the awakening it would bring — perhaps true renewal.

Louis Evelyn in his book, "We Are All Brothers," writes that the world will never know God or be converted to Him until it can see a true Church, a true fraternity of love. Poverty, hunger, war, violence, dishonesty in government are symptoms of a world of people who have not seen God's love because we have not shown it to them.

Our Church will never be the Church the world needs as long as its prevailing philosophy measures a person's spiritual stature by such things as whether or not that person goes to Mass on Sundays, or masturbates, or believes in the infallibility of the Pope, or uses

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contraceptives, rather than whether or not that person feeds the hungry or gives a cup of water to the thirsty.

As Jesus said that a man must be reborn, so it may be with a church — with our Church. It is up to us, by prayer, action, even revolution, to bring about this re-birth — to form that fraternity of Love that Evelyn writes about.

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Columnist Praised

Editor:

The June 9 article concerning Nancy Murphy's thinking on Christology seemed petty. She might not know a theandric act from a theophany. But she has not become confused in her Faith so as to abandon the reality of the historical Jesus somewhere between Gilgamesh and Jesus' eponymous human ancestors — as some learned clerics have managed to do.

And she does "know how to love Him." She has continued to fight for human life and family values recognizing that the unborn person is like Him in almost all things but Divinity.

Nancy is not hiding in an upper room, thank God. Keep slugging, Nancy! This messed-up world needs you.

Father Frederick W. Straub
Chaplain (COL), USA
Catholic Chaplain
SHAPE, Belgium

NFP Comment Clarified

Editor:

I take exception to Nancy Murphy's statement in her June 23 column, "although they unfortunately do not teach NFP, the Rochester Family Life Office will refer couples to teaching sources."

Natural Family Planning is a program directed, supported and funded by the Office of Family Life. The Office sponsors monthly information sessions in NFP. If the necessary funding can be obtained, the Office plans to hire a full time teaching coordinator for the NFP program in the near future.

Our greatest need at present is for couples willing to be trained as NFP teachers. I invite interested couples to contact the Office for further information.

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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.

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