

More Opinions

Catholic 'Gestapo' Seen Rising

Editor:

Over the last 11 years, I have become more and more disturbed by the un-Christian zeal of many Rochester anti-Catholic hunters. I speak from no small experience. Each week I get letters somewhat like the following: (unsigned):

"Your thinking is only self pleasing. Threw intellectuals; the Faith is lost. Those of the Faith know what it is while you don't."

If you had one ounce of Faith you would know the difference between Spirit and the flesh.

My Faith would like to come and open your closed mind to the spirit. For your mind has destroyed whatever made you."

The arrogant pharisaism and self-justification in such letters seems apparent. Others send me copies of articles in The Wanderer (as if that were as inerrant as Scripture) with contrasting articles written by Father Louis Hohman and myself (as if we were agents of Satan). Not only that, but my latest such correspondence was catalogued "Numbered copy 111!" One can snigger at such things. One can yawn tolerantly. One can wish they'd go away, like a swarm of deranged mosquitoes. But they won't.

In the public forum of the Courier-Journal, I have been called "apostate," "Modernist," "corrupter of youth." And all of this, of course, without any recourse to the courts for libel or unfounded defamation of character. The writers are, after all, my brothers and sisters in Christ. The courts will not interfere in family squabbles. And yet the writers never think that they might be undermining my ability to convince my students even of the points on which these writers and I agree, like the existence of God. These professional letter writers can undercut their fellow Christians with Saracen efficiency and with legal immunity.

Such people squander their time checking their Denzingers and The Church Teachers for counter-arguments against the orthodoxy of men and women who are trying their best just to establish the rudiments of the faith to a hostile baptized audience.

If only they would spend that time working with retarded children or campaigning for decent housing, the Kingdom in Rochester might just have a chance. These people wax wroth about "getting back to basics."

If only they would get their minds out of neutral and realize that "basics" are not whether the bell is rung three times or once at the Elevation but that Jesus sent us to rouse up the indifferent; the Kingdom in Rochester might just have a chance. These people keep shouting that a "pure" religious education is essential for our children.

If they'd only get out and understand what the mind-set of our children is, if they'd only realize that the Spirit did not desert the thinking Church once these writers closed their grammar school catechisms, if they'd only get some updated religious education themselves, the Kingdom in Rochester might just have a chance.

I am fed to the teeth with the correspondents each week who inform me through my mailbox or through the Courier-Journal that my hard-won and hard-held poverty, chastity and obedience are a

hypocrisy. If H. L. Mencken were alive (and cared), he might call them "the holy booboisie."

From their endless correspondence, one can only guess that they believe that once a pope or council has spoken — on any subject, the function of the Christian intelligence is to self-abort. One can only suspect that they believe Catholicism ante-dated Christianity. One can only presume that they are more concerned with nit-picking about secondary and tertiary questions in theology than they are in spreading the healing message of Jesus to those who are starved for it. Why do they attack the secondary ignorances of those who believe in Jesus? Why don't they spend their manifold energies bringing the Message to those who think Jesus was just "a nice guy" — which includes a great many of our baptized brethren? These people are becoming more and more like a Catholic Gestapo. Before I came to Rochester, I would have thought that was a contradiction in terms.

Surely the primary, irreducible Message of Jesus is clear: Jesus and God are one; the God-Man rose from the dead to share eternal life with us; if you want to be part of the Kingdom of the God-Man, you must reject the values of the Kingdom of the World (materialism, competition, self-protectiveness) and accept the values of the Kingdom of God (love God and love your neighbor, particularly the outcasts).

Somehow, many Catholics have focused on the secondary and tertiary levels of the Christian faith at the expense of the primary truths. Not frustrating an ovary with the Pill becomes more pressing than understanding the divinity of Christ; winning a theological debate over the Virgin Birth becomes more important than convincing people that we will win over death; correcting my neighbor's peccadilloes in doctrine becomes more important than loving him.

It is the same in all areas of life. Scholars become so busy proving Shakespeare was a committee that their souls and hearts can no longer be touched by Ariel or Lear. Patriots become so heated over the treatment of the flag that they will refuse forgiveness or understanding to honestly conscientious objectors. Public servants, as we have seen, become more concerned with holding onto public office than they are in fulfilling public trust.

Just so, when Mass doesn't "grab" me or when Mass isn't like it was 20 years ago, then the Church is going to hell in a roller coaster. It is sad how people lose the forest for a tree here and there.

But wars are fought and men die for a piece of ground not big enough to bury the dead.

Surely there are levels of importance in Christian doctrine and practice. Surely the immorality of war is more important than whether people receive Communion in their hands. Surely the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is more important than the doctrine of the existence of hell. Surely the plight of our brothers and sisters in the inner cities is worthier of our physical and psychic energies than Letters to the Editors of our Catholic papers about the Lavabo. Surely the Victor of Calvary must win at these unholy tempests in such tiny teapots.

Perhaps if our "holy booboisie," our orthodox Gestapo, spent more time in finding and understanding and spreading the real Message of Jesus — and less time in arguing about tertiary details — the Kingdom might still have a chance in Rochester.

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Fr. O'Malley Disputed

Editor:

May I remind Father O'Malley, SJ, of McQuaid Jesuit High School, that he may have overlooked a few details himself in his feeble attempt to discredit Nancy Murphy's valid accusations, as was made evident, concerning perversity and heresy in Christological teachings.

Father O'Malley writes that Christ "did, indeed, have the same struggles WITHIN Himself as any human man." Really? Then it would logically follow that He would have the same unruly passions, ignorance, error in judgment, etc. "as any human man," and this would, indeed, be heresy.

"He was like us in all things except sin" (V.C. 1); Church in the Modern World, 22; Heb. 2:15). Christ Our Lord had two natures, one human and the other divine, BUT there was only One Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son. What was done through the human nature was done by God Himself, and if you attribute error to the nature, then you are attributing error to God. This, Father O'Malley in short, is the Hypostatic Union.

It is NOT "probable" that Jesus' human consciousness became more and more aware of who He was. "From the beginning" it (Christ's human soul) "KNEW in the Word all things, past, present, and future, in a word, that it knew ALL things which God knows by the knowledge of vision" (Pope Benedict XV, Decree On The Knowledge in The Soul of Christ). It has been the continual teaching of the Church that Christ's soul, from the very beginning, had the Beatific Vision and supernaturally infused knowledge. It is also the teaching that He acquired experimental

knowledge through the senses, BUT is has always been strongly upheld that any knowledge acquired this way WAS ALREADY IN HIS POSSESSION.

For example, as a child He allowed Himself to be taught by His Mother and St. Joseph as if He did not know all things. St. Thomas (Summa Theologica III, q. xii, a.3.) teaches that Christ did nothing but was required for His age. The phrase from Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature" is attributed to His human nature; His experimental knowledge, physical strength and His virtuous acts. It may be impossible to imagine but it is all quite easily conceivable.

Finally, I would like to remind Father O'Malley that snide remarks, vacuous analogies, and subjective suppositions are very poor substitutes for the truth. Mrs. Murphy's articles speak for themselves, and have never been out of tune with The Church one iota. And "if all Catholics had the driving intellectual curiosity about the Message of Jesus that Mrs. Murphy's article seems to manifest," what an even more glorious Second Coming there would be.

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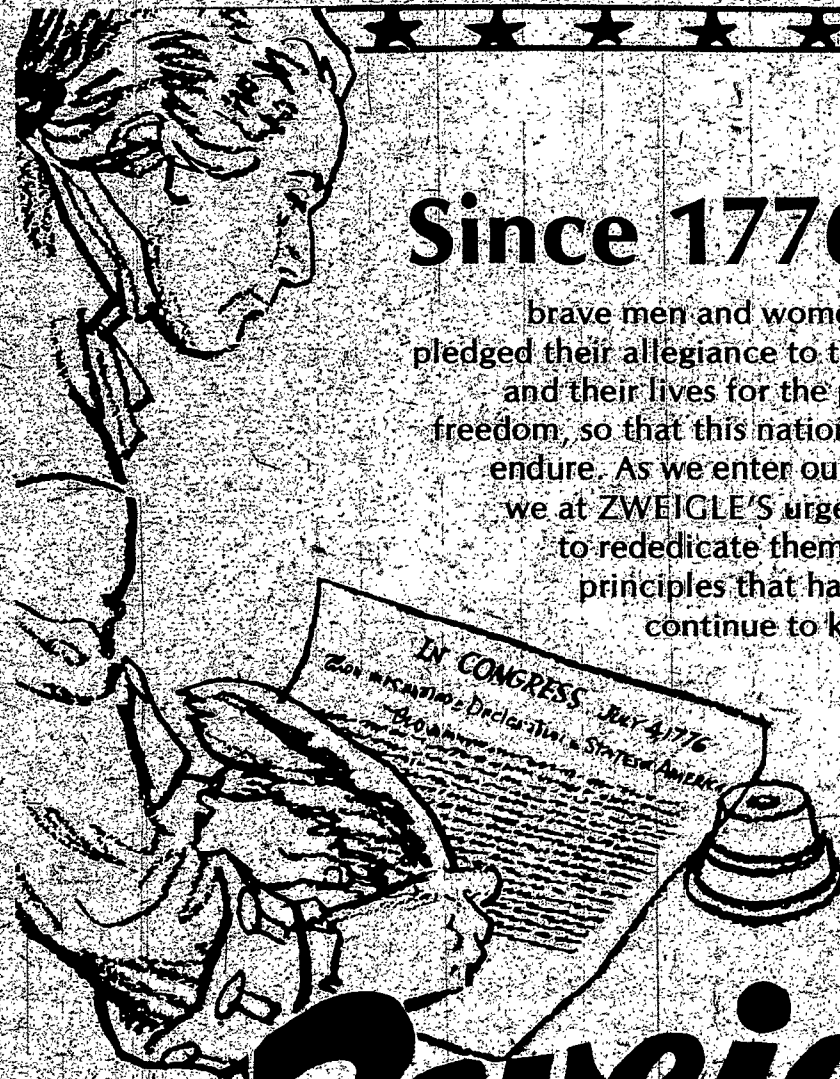
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