



"I DON'T WANT ANY MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT NUDE BEACHES IN SISTER AGATHA'S GEOGRAPHY CLASS."

**Editorial**

**Healing**

What is the biggest problem in the Church today? Perhaps this query is too negative in itself and we should be contemplating the virtues of the Church instead. But for this brief space let us consider the bruises rather than the overall strength with the hope of healing.

Pinpointing the worst problem would be problematic in itself — a list would be more likely. At the top or very near it, however, must be a certain quality which at first glance may seem divorced from religion — lack of civility. Yet on the other hand, simple respect and kindness must live near the heart of Christianity.

True, it is essential to a dynamic Church that is moving and growing, that participation of all, in thought and action, is required. All of us together with our hopes and fears, virtues and sins, strengths and weaknesses are the Church. We must all use our God-given talents to ensure a proper consensus.

Apathy is deadly yet even it is rivaled by the rancor with which we often cloak our views. We must learn to express ourselves without bitterness. Being at the hub of diocesan communications, this newspaper hears and transmits a wide and divergent set of views on Church life. Too often we hear criticism, carping, bitterness, and vituperation in place of healthy discussion or healing intent. Name-calling, slander, libel and, yes, even vengeance too often are seen masquerading as Christianity.

We humbly offer some rules:

Let us begin by being thankful for those who feel strongly enough about issues to speak out for Christ.

Let each of us prayerfully seek the grace and courage to speak out properly and correctly.

Let each of us remember that in order to make a point it must be presented clearly and reasonably.

When we disagree with another viewpoint let's keep our discussion to that viewpoint and not indulge in belittling the person behind it. Instead of remembering that even a scoundrel may be correct at a given time we tend to try to make scoundrels of all those who disagree with us.

We cannot say it any better than Christ Himself. Treat others and their viewpoints with the same respect we seek. Remember God gave all of us the means and the right to think and express ourselves.

And let us be charitable with our spoken words when we speak and when we write. It enhances our own viewpoint and our own image.

Even sadder, however, is the fact that too often those among us crying out for the milk of sympathy are instead handed the bitter pills of rejection and condemnation from our fellows.

The essence of Christianity is healing. Let us practice it.

**Opinion**

**Charles House Defended**

Editor:

A report compiled by the United Community Chest Evaluation Task Force piercingly shattered the good works and reputation of an agency, the Charles Settlement House, 445 Jay St.

The 50 years of past and present services provided to the people in the Charles House Service area were diminished by people who do not know, never knew or received the many good and reliable services that have been available through these 50 years.

But the Italian immigrants of yesteryear knew and the present generation of blacks, Puerto Ricans and other minorities know as residents and recipients living in the area now.

This handful of people chosen by the United Community Chest didn't base many facts of their report on first hand knowledge.

The United Community Chest Evaluation Task Force based its facts on a few intermittent visits to Charles House, a few scattered meetings with the Charles House Evaluation Task Force and the very hateful opinions of a few dissident residents.

Actually 67 residents, out of an approximate 14,000, were interviewed either by phone or randomly on the street, many who were unaware of the many diversified programs at Charles House or its varied services.

Why were their opinions of the agency's work allowed to determine the outcome of the United Community Chest Evaluation Report published publicly for the city and towns to read and judge? Why did the grievances of a few people allow the U. C. C. to hang out some dirty linen that almost every agency accumulates through years of working with and for all kinds of people with all kinds of problems?

Why would a creditable agency such as the United Community Chest, which has taken earnestly contributed donor dollars from the community at large, continue to sponsor and support Charles Settlement House for over 20 years if there was ever any doubt about its programs?

Why didn't the task force check in with the senior citizens who have had social events planned for and with them through four very active senior citizen groups organized through Charles House?



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Or why didn't they ask the senior citizens who now have two nutrition sites within walking distance of their homes simply because of the determination of the executive director, Miss Eileen McCarthy and her staff, who pursued county and federal money and channeled them into the area.

Why didn't the evaluation team talk to the more than 300 children who go to Charles House for after school activities in the winter and to day camp in the summer?

Why weren't families asked who were helped through the complications and confusion of the legalities involved with Social Services of the Welfare Dept., or the SSI or HILP, including those with language barriers, with transportation problems, health problems?

Why weren't city councilmen, county legislators, DPW, Bureau of Buildings and Property Conservation, Bureau of Zoning, West Side Health Center, Monroe County Council for the Aging asked?

Through its many efforts, along with neighborhood people, Charles House helped establish working communications and liaisons with these and other branches of city and county government for over ten years.

The real task now is for the public to return the credibility and reliability of Charles House and its programs to the many donors and their dollars to the United Community Chest.

Charles House must be allowed to continue to service the area residents and their needs.

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**Good People Abound**

Editor:

Two strong cross-currents of morality seem to be emerging in today's free society. The bad people are getting worse and the good people are getting better. Examples of heroic charity have not been uncommon in recent months. A family with two children adopted five more rather than permit the adopted children to be separated. Some parents with several children of their own have adopted Vietnam orphans. Groups of charitable people have sponsored whole families of refugees. A young married couple by mutual agreement sold the family business so that they could devote themselves to the work of Christ's Church.

Recently I received an invitation to a wedding. Enclosed with the invitation was an engraved note which read:

"We sincerely request that no gifts be given. God has blessed us with more essential gifts of love, happiness, and beautiful friendships. We want you to share the joy of this day with us."

"In place of a gift, please make the world a better place, by doing something special for someone in our name. No material gift could make us more happy than increasing joy, brotherhood, understanding, and love in this world."

Yes, Virginia, there are good people still in the world.

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**Communion Distribution**

Editor:

As a mother of eight children, all baptized Catholics and growing up with much confusion in their minds about the changes in the Church as

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It is today, I feel I must make public my thoughts on those changes.

My husband and I have raised our children to know Jesus as a friend who is always with them, in good times and bad. We hear so much today the motto, "When all else fails, turn to God." We say, "Turn to God first, you will not fail." Sure, we have had our problems, but with God as our Father, Jesus as our Friend, the Holy Spirit as our Guide, we have always been able to weather the storm.

We were asked to be a Eucharistic Family in our parish and to take Holy Communion to a nursing home. We have been doing this for about a year and a half now. We experienced a great joy from doing this and we pray that we brought comfort and God's love to a lot of lonely people.

We were then asked to distribute Holy Communion to the people at Mass. We prayed about it and felt we had to say "no." Through prayer, we have also decided to end our participation as a Eucharist family.

We feel that the administering of Holy Communion by lay people is totally wrong at Mass. The involvement of the people in Mass in this way has gotten out of hand.

A postman, delivering a special delivery letter, does not stop on his route and ask a member of that household to deliver the letter for him. The letter is entrusted to him and he is responsible for seeing that it reaches its destination.

A doctor does not hand the scalpel to his patient and say, "You perform the operation. Even though I have studied for years to become a doctor, you are perfectly capable of doing the job."

My children are entrusted to me and I do not ask my neighbors to help me raise them because the burden is too much for me to carry or because I want them to become more involved with my commitment.

We see the breakdown of the family unit today because the parents are too busy with other things to be available when their children need them. Too much responsibility is being turned over to the children and they can't handle it. They don't have the leadership of their parents when they need it.

We see the same thing happening in the Church. Too much of the responsibility entrusted to the priest is being turned over to the people. We are confused and floundering. There are so many roads open to us in the Catholic Church today. We pray we are taking the right one.

We would like to see the responsibilities entrusted to the priests returned to them. We would like to see the Catholic people "getting back to basics" and carrying out their role in the Church. We believe with all our hearts that this role is to live their lives as Jesus would want; not just on Sunday at Mass, but loving him and serving him, through a smile, a handshake, a readiness to forgive.

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