

Opinion

Yule Donors Thanked

Editor:

It's heart-warming, inspiring and confidence-restoring to discover how

good and generous most people are when it comes to meeting the needs of the unfortunate. The response to the Courier Journal - Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal was overwhelming. Some 3,000 families were assisted and the generous spirit, touched people all

over the Diocese of Rochester.

Direct grants of money were given to priests and sisters in the Inner City so that they could help the people with whom they work year round. Families and individuals known to Catholic Family Center, Charles Settlement House and Genesee Settlement House as well as other needy people participated in the allocation of vouchers and food. Catholic Charities worked very closely with the Christmas Bureau and the Salvation Army to insure that the money was used most effectively.

Speaking on behalf of all the people assisted, may I express my most sincere gratitude to all of you, our generous contributors. My wish and prayer is that Almighty God will continue to bless you throughout 1977, that it may truly be a Happy and Holy New Year.

Father Joseph F. D'Aurizio
Director,
Catholic Charities

Editorial

1976 . . . What Didn't Happen

Now is the time of the year when the various news services reveal their choices for the top news stories of the past year. In the religious realm, such items as the increased focus on religion in the presidential election, the approval of women priests by the Episcopal Church, and conferences such as the Eucharistic Congress and the Detroit Call to Action generally rank highly.

Admittedly to be different, we would like to list some of the top religious news stories that did NOT happen in the year 1976. First and foremost we list the failure of Christianity to convert the world to peace, as was and is its founder's wish.

For some reason humankind chooses war despite the honest and sincere efforts of world religious leaders, in the vanguard of whom is Pope Paul VI, who surely deserves the appellation of Peace Pope. Aggravating the situation is the unholy spectacle of Christian warring against Christian, such as the case in Ireland.

We may blame such sad states of affairs on hostile ideologies, on power-hungry leaders, on age-old differences, on any number of seemingly uncontrollable circumstances. The truth, however, may be closer to home that we care to admit. Perhaps until each of us conquers the dark side or our own nature peace in the larger sphere will continue to be elusive.

Peace is much more than the lack of war. Peace is a positive thing; it embraces the active performance of good for others. Even this connotation of peace has escaped us: In 1976, the starving, the destitute, the oppressed not only persisted but may have increased. Freedom House, an independent national organization dedicated to the strengthening of free societies, has reported that 86.4 million people in seven countries "suffered substantial loss of personal freedom in 1976." Its latest survey shows that 43.9 per cent of the world's people live in nations that are not free.

It is perhaps well to note, using a paraphrase, that while so many people are not free, we ourselves are in chains.

So 1976 has come and gone and racism still rears its stubborn head, not only in Africa but also on Main Street, in our suburbs, in our rural areas.

The year 1976 has come and gone and the Supreme Court anti-life ruling has been allowed to stand.

Nineteen and seventy-six has come and gone and religious persecution continues behind the Iron Curtain. Oppression thrives in our own backyard of Latin America.

The year 1976 brought no solution to the brutality in Northern Ireland.

We are sure many of our readers could add to the roster of disappointments. It is a negative activity, to be sure. But such speculation can serve a purpose if we all resolve that 1977 will not slip by as passively.

Perhaps such goals are unreachable in this world. But we will be the better for striving after them.

thinking is that anything which is not easy, comfortable, and entertaining must somehow be wrong.

I would suggest their views are in error in several ways: (1) an atmosphere which is fairly formal and dignified befits the Mass which is, after all, the reenactment of Christ's Sacrifice of Calvary; (2) we do not go to Mass to be entertained, but as a faith community united by love we go to worship God and to express our communal hopes and petitions; (3) it is foolish to expect all of life's circumstances to be easy, comfortable and entertaining. As life continues, this expectation is perceived more and more to be unrealistic and naive.

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Fresh Air Thanks

Editor:

We want to thank you for giving space to our work in the Rochester area last summer.

Community interest and the dedication of hard-working volunteers like Fran Wissick, our publicity person there, have been the mainstay of our program throughout its 100 years of existence. Over 1,300,000 New York City children have enjoyed summer vacations through the generosity of our Friendly Town Host Families.

Best wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Cal Gertsen
Director
Friendly Towns

God Gives The Grace

Editor:

When Father Louis Hohman (C-J 12/22/76) calls the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage "a terrible oversimplification," he is questioning the very words of Jesus (cf. Mt. 19:3-9, Mk. 10:2-12, Lk. 16:18). There will always be cases calling for compassion, but not in numbers to match the current divorce rate.

Father Hohman jeopardizes all the Sacraments with his ill-chosen phrase. They impart by their signs supernatural graces for specific purposes. In the Sacrament of Marriage, this grace is sufficient for a faithful, indissoluble, fruitful marriage. It is the norm to acquire it, not the other way around.

Jesus does not ask people entering marriage to do so with all the psychological maturity they might have 25 years later; He asks them to obey the Church and to trust Him. He asks no more in Holy Orders. Similarly, He requires only imperfect contrition for valid reception of the Sacrament of Penance. God does not put the graces of the Sacraments out of the reach of the ordinary man.



"WHAT'S YOUR PARISH COUNCIL UP TO THESE DAYS?"

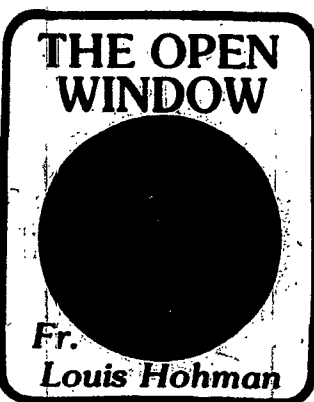
It is of vital importance for people to understand that the tendency to weaken the meanings of the Sacraments corresponds to a weakening of faith in the supernatural that leads some to attempt to make everything in religion subservient to the science of observable phenomena. The Sacraments do not survive on a strictly natural level. The disciples questioned Jesus' teaching on indissoluble marriage (Mt. 19:10). Nicodemus couldn't understand Baptism (Jn. 3:4). A great many people could not accept our Lord's teaching on the Eucharist (Jn. 6:60), and Jesus didn't change a word (Jn. 6:61).

Sacramental marriage mirrors Christ's union with the Church in sacrifice as well as in closeness. Where there is one flesh, there is one soul. We can assist the salvation of our spouse. What a privilege this is! Each partner must in a very real sense lay down his life for the sanctification of the other: the greatest love there is. There are almost

limitless possibilities for mirroring our sacrificing Savior, certainly in difficult situations as well as in pleasant ones. Joy comes from this intent and behavior in either case. This is the best example in Catholic living for children. It is the foundation for a just and peaceful society. And it is in giving up oneself for another in Christ that one's identity crisis in sacramental marriage is solved.

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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.



Dear Father Hohman,

I'm addressing this to you because your column is titled "The Open Window" and I thought my words could be aired by it.

I am a Protestant mother of four lovely Catholic daughters. I am the Protestant wife of a great Catholic man. I am as Catholic as a lot of my Catholic friends — they tell me.

I am not a "Non-Catholic".

I was a Protestant patient when Father Cuddy came in and gave me a paper and said he would pray for me.

I am not a "Non-Catholic".

Perhaps if the Catholic people would stop using that obnoxious term more Protestant partners in a

mixed marriage would feel less "Non".

Thank you for listening.

Signed, B.J.

Dear B.J.,

Thank you very much for your letter. This particular designation has bugged many of us for a very long time precisely because of its negative connotations. I do think, in all fairness, that many people do not intend it to be negative but merely use it as a way of including not only other Christians but those who are not Christian.

It doesn't seem to me that it is all that difficult to designate people who would come under that category as other Christians, or Protestants, or people of other persuasions, or any non-negative designation. One of the most important elements in the ecumenical movement is taking a very positive attitude toward people whose beliefs are different from our own and recognizing not only their sincerity but the richness of their particular tradition and our need to respect it.

Again I thank you for your letter and hope that many readers will take the hint and stop using this negative approach to fellow Christians of other traditions.

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