

More Opinions

Only A Beginning

Editor:
The recent statement on authority in the Church issued by the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission is yet another step toward the reality of Roman and Anglican union.

Since 1968, many steps have been taken to bring together the Church of Rome and the Church of England. For centuries we have professed one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God who is Father. The question becomes more vivid with the passage of time: "What is this one faith that we profess, and how can we share one baptism without unity?"

We live in the hope that one day we will see the unity of the Anglican and Roman persuasions. We will all, however, have to learn to live with the distinctions between unity and uniformity. It becomes clearer that the faith of Christians will find its strength in unity. Divisions only create weakness, and

weakness in faith is contrary to evangelization.

The doctrinal difficulties, once settled, will only be a beginning. The practical or structural problems will perhaps test our faith and perseverance the most. The question of administration, law, institutionalism and finances may well turn out to be some of the greatest problems that will need to be solved. The topic of ecclesiastical administration becomes increasingly important in our studies and discussions. It is at this level that the unity of faith becomes unity in reality.

To bring this koinonia to perfection is indeed gospel. None of us are naive enough to think that any declaration, even fully agreed upon, will achieve our purpose. To be sure, many hours of research and practical experience will be needed. Compliance, understanding and acceptance will be key factors in achieving unity. Does it not take the patience of a God to deal with men who seem so often blinded by the Vision?

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Column Leaves Reader Sad

Editor:
The article by Father Paul J. Cuddy (Courier-Journal 2-9-77) about capital punishment left me extremely sad. I've never tried to loose my idealistic feeling that priests like Jesus have a deep love for all men — even the unlovable. That life — be it in the womb or mature, saint or sinner, is a sacred and precious gift, a gift that nobody but God himself has a right to take away.

The most prominent victim of capital punishment in my mind is of course Jesus of Nazareth. This is the Jesus who

constantly rehabilitated sinners, who constantly told us stories of "Lost Sheep" and "Prodigal Sons", who stopped Peter's sword and the stoning of an adultress. This is the Jesus who came with a new way, love, and constantly told us not to judge.

After all of this how can we pretend to be his followers and kill, be it by saline solution or the electric chair. Who can say what life is more precious in his eyes? Why aren't we as Christians in the business of rehabilitation instead of, as Father Cuddy puts it, "just removal?" How can we possibly "preserve society," as he says, by taking a life? Has Father Cuddy any idea of the hundreds of death row convicts that have

found Christ? If rehabilitation does fail, and it often does, perhaps a man or woman will be imprisoned for a lifetime. But at least the choice of his life or death will be God's not man's. It's time that man stopped playing God and tried Christ's new way of love.

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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.

\$25 Million In Clothing Collected

New York (RNS) — The Thanksgiving clothing collection sponsored by the U.S. Catholic bishops produced more than 12 million pounds of useful clothing, blankets and bedding worth more than \$25 million.

By Feb. 15, the Catholic Relief Services warehouses here had processed 6.5 million pounds and dispatched the materials to 34 countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

Bishop Edwin Broderick, executive director of CRS, said 102 dioceses participated in the 1976 collection which brought in 38 million garments, blankets and bedding items.

THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,
I cannot tell you how distressed I have been the last several weeks over the way the secular press has been making a big thing about the controversy relative to women priests. And incidentally you are one of the offenders both in the newspaper and in your radio program: How can this be justified? Aren't you all Catholic Priests serving the one Holy Father? Aren't you supposed to be a sign of unity? What do you think our non-catholic neighbors feel about this whole thing? Don't you think they're floating over the fact that we are in such turmoil and are no longer unified as we used to be?

Signed, S.S.

Dear S.S.,
There are obviously several ways of looking at the situation which you perceive as a tragedy. I will simply try to share with you my way of looking at it but I doubt very seriously if it will have much affect on you or people who feel the way you do.

First of all may I gently chide you for using the term non-catholic. We dealt with that in a previous column. I guess I have more trust in the generality of human beings than to think that any numbers of them would be floating over the controversy (if you want to call that) which is taking place in the Church.

Personally I would like to think of what is happening as dialogue within a family leading to the resolution of a problem. A family should always try to have respect at the base of its communications. I believe that if we do respect one another, our differences as well as our agreements, that we can carry on a dialogue which, far from being divisive, can lead us to grow in our appreciation not only of the subject discussed but also of one another. Families which avoid dialogue and simply are under the thumb of authority are not only dull but unhappy families.

One of the basic problems in this whole matter is the failure on the part of many people to get past the era of triumphalism when it was thought that every teaching (not just the absolute fundamental ones) was a closed matter and no longer the subject for discussion. As long as one felt that the teaching of the Catholic Church was signed, sealed and delivered in totality for all ages then any kind of change or movement to another position would be unthinkable. But Vatican Council II illustrated most clearly the Church can move from one position to another on all but the most basic Christian doctrines. Certainly no one would declare the problem of sex as a qualification for priesthood as a basic Christian doctrine. (I take that back, there probably are quite a few who do.) Dialogue which is carried out in charity and respect can produce a creative tension which is not only healthy but growth producing.

I know that you and many other people see this whole situation much differently but I guess that's another area in which we're going to have to try to live together and still think differently. May God give you peace of mind and a holy Lent.

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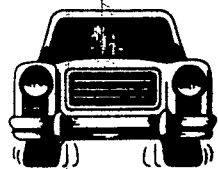
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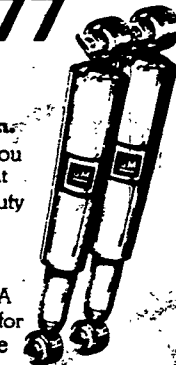
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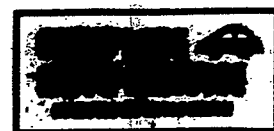
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