

Editorial

Vocations: Crisis of Love?

In his annual message concerning Vocations Sunday April 24, Pope Paul makes an unusual observation.

Speaking to the problem of a lack of vocations, the pontiff declares, "Perhaps there is a crisis of love rather than a crisis of vocations."

His message is that if we all practiced the kind of love typical of true Christianity there would be no problems of this sort. "Foster love within yourselves," he says. "Learn to love the Lord more, to love His Church more." The Holy Father climaxes this train of thought with a direct appeal to pastors, parents and teachers: "Help good and generous young people to foster love for Christ and his Church."

This guideline not only applies to vocations but to all the large issues confronting a changing Church these days. A proper spirit of love, gladness, contentment - all consonant with Christian philosophy - would go a long way toward making divisive questions palatable, if not always solvable.

As part of the Vocation Sunday observance, one of the general intercessions suggested to pastors by Father Gerald T. Connor, diocesan director of vocations, is that all who minister in the Church may be signs of the care and concern of the Gospel.

This prayer in essence says much the same thing as the Pope's message, that if those already in the Lord's service - priests, sisters and religious - reflect the joy of their callings, what the Pope calls the "unfailing gladness of genuine charity," it would create an atmosphere conducive to attracting new hands into the fields.

But it is not only those with vocations who can foster this spirit. Parents can produce the same effect by creating an atmosphere for Christ and Church in the home. Out of such a climate will grow the necessary attitude and understanding of Christ and Church that will generate vocations.

By no means, however, is the situation that simple. As Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey reported to the Priests Council a short time back, priests between the ages of 60 and 69 account for 25 per cent of all active priests in this diocese. He has called for greater concentration of thought and action toward the obvious implications of this statistic.

And Bishop Hickey pointed out another element in the unhappy cycle. The shortage of vocations also applies to the sisterhood and he thinks that the smaller number of men entering seminaries is also attributable to "the decline of sisters in elementary schools." Vocations "get the first nudge there," he said. For many priests, it was a teaching sister who first encouraged a vocation.

Prayers help. Concentration on the problem will also help. But what will do the most are the face-to-face encounters - between parish priest and congregation, between sisters and community, between teachers and classes and between parents and the rest of their families.

Perhaps despite all the messages, all the petitions, all the appeals the most effective prayer for vocations is the sight of a joyous priest, sister or brother. And the best advance people the Church has going for it are the parents whose attitudes have such a great influence on youngsters.

And as the Holy Father has implied, the only way for all of this to have any impact is through a mutual calling up of the love innate in the spirit of Christianity. Pope Paul has said it:

"Every vocation is an act of love, of twofold love: the love of the Lord who calls and the love of the one who responds."

Opinion

Bingo Bill Introduced

Editor:

I am writing to inform your readers of a bill I have introduced which will allow the advertising of the time and location of bingo games.

As you may know, most forms of advertising are currently off-limits to bingo game operators. This prohibition dates back to a time when many bingo games had been taken over by professional gamblers and were considered to be somewhat unsavory events.

Of course this is no longer the case. These games are now primarily conducted as fund-raising operations for churches and other non-profit organizations. They are certainly no less reputable than the state lottery or OTB, which advertise extensively.

I encourage any of your readers who have ideas on this topic to write their state legislators. Anyone with specific comments about the bill I have offered should refer to it by number (S.1574) in any correspondence concerning it.

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Portrayal Offensive

Editor:

When, oh when are they going to stop portraying Our Lord as a humorless, glassy-eyed, speel-talking fanatic?

I watched the TV program, "Jesus of Nazareth," for two hours, up until that bug-eyed stick in the mud they picked to play Our Lord appeared. Then I shut the TV off in utter frustration.

Our Lord was a sinewy, manly sun-bronzed, strong, vital, person who knew how to smile and mingle at feasts and banquets.

I simply cannot understand why nobody ever gets Him right.

Look very closely at men who are truly close to God. Take Bishop Kearney, for instance. He had a sparkling eye, a beaming countenance, a ready wit, a warm, outgoing, ap-

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proachable, down-to-earth manner that was the result of continual and close union with Our Lord.

Billy Graham is another example. These are just two but they are a far cry from that wooden character we always see on the screen.

Maybe Father Peyton's Messiah (if it ever reaches the screen) will get closer to the true nature of Christ. I certainly hope so.

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Gays Must Repent

Editor:

A letter to the Courier-Journal of March 30 is captioned "Gays Seen Deprived." The writer states, "Any person known to have, or even is suspected of having a preference for the same sex is vulnerable to facing blatant discrimination in employment, housing, military service, civil courts and in the law."

In order to understand fully the problem of the "gays," we must remember that we are dealing here with the sin of sodomy, a sin that has always been abhorred by all civilized and normal people: pagan, Jewish and Christian. Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, who lived two thousand years before the Christian era, recognized the gravity of the sin. His abhorrence was not the result of Catholic theology, Church or state laws, but an intuitional understanding of the natural moral law. On the other hand the Sodomites, who were pagans, although they did not have divine revelation to guide them, were destroyed by God because they had become so depraved by the passion of lust that they refused to obey the dictates of natural reason.

Perhaps the gravest mistake that the "Catholic" sodomite can make is to think that he can please God, remain in the state of sanctifying grace and still continue to live as a "sodomite." God will forgive the "gay," the Church will forgive the "gay" and society will forgive the "gay" but first there must be a willingness and desire to lead a Christian life. The lusts of the sin of sodomy can be overcome with the help of prayer but only after the gay recognizes that there is no road to eternal happiness except the Way of the Cross.

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'Defeatist' Cancer View

Editor:

Your editorial, Cancer Mass (Courier-Journal, 4-6-77), was not only contradictory but it also defeated the purpose of the Mass, that of building hope. The contradiction was in the statement, "the building of hope in the face of that sinister and so far unconquerable disease."

To conclude that cancer is unconquerable, as well as sinister, eliminates the possibility of attaining that element of hope; and statements such as this only perpetrate such a loss. Yes,



"A GROUP IN SECTION B IS GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE!"

many people do die of cancer. This, however, should not make cancer synonymous with death.

Many people also die of heart disease and diabetes. The point that has to be emphasized is that today, many people who have had (conquered) cancer live a long and full normal life of activities as before.

Advancements are being made daily in the conquest of this disease. It is only when cancer can be considered "just another disease" that people will be able to achieve and maintain that necessary element of hope

Mary Lou Marks
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Four Dogmas Reviewed

Editor:

In response to Kevin J. Morrisroe's letter (Courier-Journal, 3-30-77), who is under the false opinion that as long as a teaching is a non-infallible one, one may dissent from that teaching, it is quite evident that this thinking deviates far from the Catholic Faith. From Morrisroe's writings, and those of his associates in the past, there is not the hint of Catholic doctrine being taught at St. Bernard's Seminary.

For those of this persuasion, let it suffice to say that you are about to embark on the road of Authentic Catholic Teachings. Here are just four of many dogmas of the Church which are binding on most any "well-informed conscience," and are not open to further discussion: (1) "We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (Pope Boniface VIII, Unam Sanctam, (1302); (2) "If anyone shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the office merely of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which belong to Faith and Morals but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the Church spread through the world... let him be anathema" (VCI, Denzinger 1831, CIC 218); (3) "The pastors of every rank and of every rite and the faithful, each separately and all together, are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and of true obedience, not only in questions of faith and morals, but also in those

that touch upon the discipline and government of the Church throughout the entire world... Such is the doctrine of Catholic truth, from which no one can separate himself without danger for his faith and his salvation" (VCI, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Pastor Aeternus, Ch. 3, DZ 3060); (4) "This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given in a special way to the authentic authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak ex cathedra in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect and sincere assent be given to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which the doctrine is formulated" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, VC2, Lumen Gentium, Nov. 21, 1964, n.25).

I think St. Ambrose said it best when he wrote: "Where Peter is there is the Church," and St. Augustine completed it with: "He who has not the Church for a Mother, has not God for a Father."

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TV Mass Applauded

Editor:

The televised Mass each Sunday at 8:30 on Channel 10 has been a joy to us who could not get out to church during the long winter. It is a year-round boon to the many year-round shut-ins.

Warmest thanks to the faculty, students and alumni of Aquinas Institute who for years have sponsored the Mass and to the priest-celebrators, the readers; the altar boys, who so generously donate their services.

Frances Murphy
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More Letters On Page 21.