



"IT'S FROM MY CASSOCK, OF COURSE, BUT HOW WOULD I LOOK WITH A BLACK BELT IN KARATE?"

Editorial

Msgr. Eckl

Msgr. George W. Eckl attributed his long life to certain dietary habits and a sound regimen of exercise. We rather suspect that God kept him with us into his hundredth year to set an example of Christian concern and steadfastness for the rest of us.

And though it has been a blessing for all of us to have Msgr. Eckl with us for so long, we know that it is not the quantity of life in years that counts but rather its quality no matter how short or long its earthly timespan.

The quality of Msgr. Eckl's life exceeded even its length in years.

B1 Begone!

Wouldn't it be nice if ...

The House of Representatives could take the \$29 billion it had approved to pay for the would-be fleet of B1 bombers and put it to use for the common good instead of the so-called defense? The cost of one of these bombers, conservatively put at \$101 million, would be enough to keep nine community colleges, each serving 10,000 students in business for a year.

Of course, cost is just one of the arguments against the B1. There are those, even in the Defense Department, and certainly including President Carter, who believe in defense wholeheartedly but who do not see the B1 as effective in the age of the guided missile.

And there is also the strictly philosophical viewpoint that it is time to "demilitarize" American life, to decelerate the arms race.

Regardless of the reason, the rejection of the B1 by President Carter is a plus for rationality.

Outcasts and Saints

For all of us who sometimes lose sight of what is important in life, a newspaper account of a funeral as reported in Time magazine may offer a reminder.

"The chances of pickpockets were superior, had the pickings been desirable, but the ragged outcasts and very humble citizens with an infusion of colored little ones who made up the motley crew offered no tempting inducements for the light finger."

The article was from the Philadelphia Bulletin and it described the funeral in 1860 of John Nepomucene Neumann. It is helpful to realize that saints spring from such surroundings.

Opinion

Diocese Needs Pro Life Head

Editor:

We read with interest your news story regarding the newly appointed team to head the Family Life Office. From the personnel, the apparent relevant areas of interest seem to be Marriage Encounter, Pre-Cana, and Divorced and Separated Catholics. We hope that it will deal with or give birth to another vital area...a Pro-Life department.

In your recent editorial regarding WAXC's statistics of 5,000,000 abortions in this country since 1970 as a dubious growth rate, you pinpointed one of the most vital problem areas in family and society, which is crying out for a response and correction.

Those of us who are involved in pro-life activity, generally laity in non-sectarian groups, have only recently seen a glimmer of hope as a result of the efforts of many well-meaning people who have written to their congressmen, carried a sign, walked in the cold, had the courage to speak out. This is the time when we need a strong, definite, uncompromising voice of leadership and Catholic direction from our diocese and those appointed to this frustrating but essential task of restoring life to its proper place and value.

In accordance with the response to, and the recommendation of the 1976, Bishop's Committee for Pro-Life activities, we hope that the vision of our diocese will be challenged to support a Diocesan Pro-Life Director. According to the recommendations of the Committee, the person would be director and coordinator of all the pro-life efforts for the diocesan and parish educators, maintain a working relationship with all parish pro-life committees, promote and assist groups which provide alternatives and assistance to women who face problem pregnancies, encourage grass-root political action, and maintain a local public information effort.

This is an awesome task but represents a systematic organization and allocation of the Church's resources of people, institutions, and

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finances, which can be activated at various levels to restore respect for human life, and insure protection of the right to life of the unborn.

Perhaps this task does not fall within the role of the New Team Ministry, but we hope that such a position will be forthcoming while the need is critical, at the recommendation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the hope of concerned laity

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As a parishioner of St. Augustine's, I object very strongly to the message being delivered by the action of the parish council. It would seem to me that a parish which has such a concern for individual needs and differences would extend this concern to the parents of their school children, and let the individual parents live with the way they choose to accomplish the mission of bringing Christ to the neighborhood. I am not sure if any changes can be made, but I certainly hope so.

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Celibacy Swept Under Rug

Editor:

The Wednesday, June 29th, issue of the Catholic Courier-Journal contained an article entitled Vatican Officer Sees Waning of Priestly Celibacy Strife, which title I am in complete agreement with since there doesn't seem to be much strife.

However, it is unfortunate that the full picture is not given in this newspaper or in any other. Since the Roman Edict which came out, I believe, in the late 1960's forbidding discussion of priestly celibacy, the American priests and people have not discussed this issue to a great extent. Unfortunately discussion has been replaced to a certain extent by action in that our experience shows that during the 1960's and 1970's the number of vocations has dropped drastically and the exodus of priests from the priesthood has not waned.

The experience in other countries is slightly different. For instance in Europe priests marry with at least a tacit approval of their Bishop as is evidenced by the following article from the Elmira Star-Gazette 11/19/76

"The Vatican has demanded the dismissal of the 25 married priests teaching at four theological colleges in The Netherlands.

A letter last month said the Dutch church is the only Roman Catholic Church in the world that openly spurns the celibacy rule and warned that unless the married priests were fired, degrees awarded by the colleges would not be recognized. The Dutch hierarchy has refused.

If the priests were fired, they could seek damages under Dutch labor law on grounds of wrongful dismissal."

Also in Africa evidently Rome or a maverick Vatican ambassador has faced reality as is evidenced in a New York Times article 12/19/76:

"The Vatican's ambassador to West Africa, Archbishop Jerome Prigione, has ordained three married Nigerians as Roman Catholic priests, it was reported here today. The ceremony, which took place Wednesday in Kabba, was described by

an official newspaper as "Historic."

It would seem that ending discussion (or strife) really means that everything done quietly since we don't like any sort of controversy or for that matter questioning. Perhaps I am a fool in thinking that issues should be faced squarely. Evidently it is better to shove them under the carpet, which in my opinion the Courier-Journal article seems to do.

We worry about the lack of vocations, the priests leaving the priesthood and often try to find innocuous reasons so that no one will be upset or offended. Someday perhaps we can all face facts, hard as they may be at times.

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Pilgrimage 'Rewarding'

Editor:

I wish to extend my compliments and appreciation for the assistance and concern given to me by Bishop Joseph Hogan and by all members of the group accompanying him on his Pilgrimage to Rome. The tour has been a rewarding experience, spiritually, culturally and socially!

This was my first accompanied tour, but I don't intend it to be my last. I'm not unused to foreign travel, yet I cannot remember enjoying a more pleasurable stay, than this most recent visit to Italy. Even setbacks were overcome with good humor; in the Venice Air Terminal, we were up against a porters' labor union strike. Undaunted, Mr. Costello, Mr. Viglucci and some of our gentlemen passengers goodnaturedly substituted as porters, so that baggage could be processed for the flight to Rome.

May God ever bless each and all who, in whatever measure, added this wonderful chapter to my life!

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Literature Needed

Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines direct to the Foreign Missions

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns, who need Catholic literature.

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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.