

Editorial

Useful Tool

Too often a newspaper is so in the center of the "tumult and shouting," to use a phrase of one of the profession's brightest lights, that it cannot judge its own effectiveness or contribution.

So two events recently, both culminations of long, arduous work, made it all seem worthwhile.

First it should be clear that the Courier-Journal cannot take the credit for either one of these fortuitous happenings. But it can take satisfaction that it provided the means by which our readers were able to take constructive action.

First came the news that the Courier-Journal Filter Campaign went well over the top. The goal was to provide 1,800 water filters at a cost of \$10 each for impoverished families in Vila Bella, Brazil, whose children are afflicted with worms. How great a job did diocesans do? Let Sister Katherine Popowich of the Sisters of St. Joseph serving in Brazil answer that: "Never did our hopes, our dreams stretch to imagine the response of the people of the Rochester diocese."

Of course, it won't mean the end of worms in South America or even in Brazil. But because of the directness of the appeal, with the newspaper funneling the assistance straight to the missionaries more than 2,100 families here were able to give more than 2,100 families in Vila Bella a fighting chance against the disease.

News of another sort also arrived recently, again showing that a newspaper can do a job above and beyond the mere reporting of events. Some time back, through a series of articles and photos, the Courier-Journal worked for the adoption of hard-to-place children. A letter last week reported that one of these children "has been placed in an adoptive home as a direct result of your paper."

Again the newspaper cannot dare take the credit. It only brought to light the need. Others actually did the work and provided the love.

But it's nice to be reminded that a newspaper is a useful tool.

Pro Life

Neither victory was all one could hope for in the name of life. But together they represented a possible turning point in the battle to stem liberalized abortion.

For the first time since the 1973 decision that entitled women to have abortions under a constitutional right to privacy, the Supreme Court deserted the liberal path when it decided that neither the Constitution or statute required states to use public funds to offer elective abortions to the indigent for free.

That judicial switch coincided with action by the U.S. Senate indicating that it would join the House in prohibiting Medicaid funds from being used for abortions.

What the high court told the states is that while they may not make abortion illegal they can "make a value judgment favoring childbirth over abortion, and implement that judgment by the allocation of public funds."

What this means is that the decision on using public funds for abortion must be faced squarely by legislators both at the state and national levels. They will want to hear your thoughts.

So while the Supreme Court ruling is not the end-all for those who believe in the sanctity of life, it nevertheless represents a clear-cut victory. Whether the trend is reversed remains to be seen but such developments are a credit to profilers who refused to be counted out in 1973.

Admittedly there may exist some imbalance in the fact that those with money can buy abortions while the poor may not. The corrective, however, is not to use public funds to provide abortions for the needy but rather to secure laws barring liberalized abortions for all strata.

Opinion

'Children Loved Him'

Editor:

To the many beautiful and well-deserved tributes to the late Msgr. Eckl, I should like to add perhaps one of the greatest tributes of all, "The children loved him."

As a Kindergarten teacher at St. Andrew's a few years ago, I came to know Msgr. Eckl. The many steps leading in to the school were never too steep for the kindly priest, then already in his 90s. He often visited our class, to teach the children little prayers which he himself had learned almost a century ago. Before he left, he would always sing a

song and dance to the delight of the little ones.

The children indeed loved him!

May God rest your beautiful soul, Monsignor.

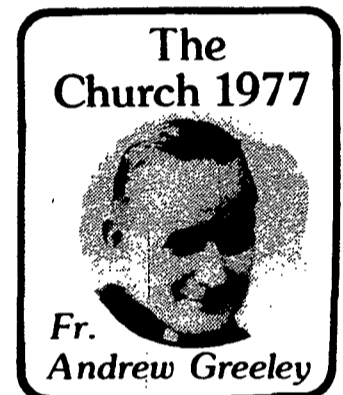
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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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.



"HE KEEPS SENDING FOR ALL THE RECORDS AND TAPES THEY OFFER ON TV."



One of the most important Catholic speeches of the century went unnoticed the other day. The United States senator from New York, a certain Daniel P. Moynihan, joined public forces in a commencement speech at Canisius College with those who have been saying not only that anti-Catholic nativism persists but that it may be the last lingering bigotry which will persist indefinitely in the American soul.

Furthermore, the senator charged, Catholic self-hatred is one of the principal reasons for the persistence of anti-Catholicism. Our own elites accept the judgments of the "best people" about us.

There was immediate proof of the accuracy of Moynihan's devastating talk. The Catholic press ignored it almost completely. No ponderous editorials in "America," "The Commonweal," or "The National Catholic Reporter," no cautious statement from Archbishop

Bernardin (I bet his staff did not even call Moynihan's talk to his attention), no shrill outcry from "Network" or The Center for Concern. We hate ourselves so much that we ignore speeches by a distinguished American calling attention to our self-hatred.

Senator Pat had better be careful. I can testify, as someone who entered the lists on this one a year or two ago, that pretty soon you get clobbered by your own kind for suggesting that there are people in this country who hate Catholics and discriminate against them. It's not a proper ecumenical attitude, you see.

We are not prepared to accept the fact, the senator said, that there is a legitimate Catholic agenda, that we have the right to push that agenda, and that there are enemies of Catholicism who will resist not only our agenda but even our right to have an agenda.

We are excluded from

serious planning about the future of American education because those who dominate American education don't believe Catholic schools ought to be there. So they proceed as though they are not there. We meekly let them get away with it. They can safely ignore us, Moynihan observes, because they know we won't protest.

They also take as given (and this is my addition) that we are incapable of serious intellectual activity; you cannot be a good Catholic and a good scholar. This is the sort of basic definitional assumption which simply does not yield to contrary data. If you're a practicing scholar and a practicing Catholic, your scholarship, by definition, is poor — without any need to examine it. If there are data showing those Catholics are successfully pursuing academic and scholarly careers the data are simply ignored. It doesn't really exist, because it cannot really exist.

How pervasive is this anti-

Catholic bigotry? I would not contend that the majority of the members of our elite academy hold it — some particularly the younger ones, are sufficiently open-minded to be surprised when they find a good Catholic who is also a good scholar. But it still comes as a surprise. However, among the older generation, and especially among the dominating power groups, the legend of Catholic inferiority is unquestionably dogma.

Our leadership, hierarchical, clerical, and journalistic, must share in the blame; they accept the place of second-raters. They seem unaware that we do have first-raters now, that our heritage has something unique and special to offer, and that Catholics have rights too. The Moynihan thesis, terrifying but I'm afraid persuasive, is that our cultural experience in this country has bred diffidence and self-hatred into our collective personality.

The Best People can go right on pushing us around.



Dear Father Hohman,

Here is a question I would like answered, if possible. How is it that every Tom, Dick and Harriet can give communion now? I always thought that only a priest, whose hands have been anointed, could do that. Recently, a rather obese young man, not wearing vestments, who had been sitting inside the railing all during Mass, at communion time got up, strolled over to the altar, drank from one chalice, picked up another and came and gave us communion. Sometimes a woman, could be a nun, sits quietly until time to give communion, then comes and helps out. And once, believe it or not, the head usher also gave communion! I realize the church is short-handed, but really this is ridiculous! I was a member

of Blessed Sacrament Church when you were an assistant there. So you see I am an "old Catholic" in more ways than one. Then, we went up to the railing and had a moment for a silent prayer before the priest came around again. Now it's just like an assembly line, with us dashing up and back.

You usually have an answer for everything, whether it satisfies or not, so let's see what you can do with this.

Sincerely,

(Signed) S.A.

Dear S.A.,

The complaint you register is one heard fairly often lately although dissent from this practice is lessening.

The idea of lay distribution of communion has to do with a shortage of priests and the need for liturgy to have a certain pace. Long periods of waiting can be counter-productive for many, while others find them an opportunity for reflection.

The rules regulating lay distribution are the

following: 1—The lay distributor should be a person who is regarded as qualified for this particular ministry and trained in its meaning and practice. 2—The lay distributor must be approved by the bishop and registered as a minister of Holy Communion. 3—The lay distributor should be in the sanctuary during the entire time of Mass and not merely appear at the time of Communion. 4—Some distinctive kind of garb should be worn if that is possible. Most churches are trying to figure out what would be the best kind of vesture for these ministers.

I think that nostalgia has caught up with you and that if you would try to look at this from a broader point of view it would help. There is nothing of doctrine involved here and the idea that only the priests whose hands have been anointed can touch the Eucharist is not theologically accurate. For many centuries lay people carried Holy Communion back to their sick relatives and neighbors.

(P.S. I assume you are no longer a member of Blessed Sacrament Church and I do not necessarily regard you as an "old Catholic" because I don't regard myself as an "old Catholic")

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