

Editorial

Well Done, Brother!

Those interested in opening the American Catholic Church to receive the gifts of our black brothers and sisters will be somewhat dismayed at the recent resignation of Brother Joseph M. Davis as executive director of the National Office of Black Catholics (NOBC).

Brother Davis has managed in just seven years of the NOBC to awaken Catholics to the previous snubbing of blacks in this country. This amounted not only to injustice, racial mainly, against a whole group of Americans but even worse deprived the Church of needed spirit, numbers and, yes, leadership.

The NOBC under Brother Davis has accomplished many things, both those capable of recording and those that are subtle or intangible. We hope to point out one area of accomplishment that may suffice to show the progress the Church has made through NOBC.

In 1970 the American hierarchy was 100 per cent white, with the exception of one auxiliary bishop, Harold Perry of New Orleans. After seven years of NOBC under Brother Davis, there are now four black bishops in the United States, including a newly installed ordinary, Bishop Joseph L. Howze of Biloxi, Miss.

In recent years there have been many more instances of an awakening of white Catholics to the folly of their previous attitudes. We do not pretend that the bias has been eliminated or even that we have come a long way down the road to rationality. But we seem to have taken some initial moves in that direction.

Brother Davis deserves at least some of the credit for that. We wish him well in his new post as provincial assistant for education for his community, the Society of Mary (Marianists) in Cincinnati.

Another Step

Those who believe that Christian unity is a necessity will be heartened by the words of the Holy Father at a recent meeting of the Conference of Secretaries of World Confessional Families in Rome recently.

Pope Paul VI told the conference, a group of Anglican, Protestant, Orthodox, Old Catholic, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Roman Catholic officials, that he hopes for unceasing pursuit of the goal of "full unity in Christ and in the Church."

He said the Catholic Church is solemnly committed by the Second Vatican Council to "an ecumenism based on increased fidelity to Christ the Lord." He, however, cautioned against "a false, conciliatory approach," implying that the differences between Christian bodies are serious.

"Let us then, despite all obstacles, pursue the goal of full unity," the Holy Father told the conference.

The meeting was significant for other reasons. It marked the first time the conference, which was organized in 1957, met in Rome. And its secretary, Dr. Bert Beach, a Seventh-Day Adventist, noted that the general audience with the Pope was the first time that a representative of his religion had ever met officially with a Roman pontiff. He added that it was a "pleasure."

The ecumenical road has been a long one and many miles lie ahead. But the journey has begun.

Death Veto

Quote of the summer:

"The death penalty is no proven deterrent to crime and never has been in an open society. It leaves no room for human fallibility; it lowers all of us who abide by the law and the Judeo-Christian tradition of preserving and perfecting human life and dignity."

All of us who believe in the sanctity of life should appreciate the sentiment expressed by Gov. Hugh Carey in vetoing the broad death penalty bill passed by the State Legislature.

Opinion

French Prelate Isn't That Bad

Editor:

Reference is made to the many articles published both in your paper and in the Rochester papers regarding Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. It seems to me that the Vatican has a terrible Public Relations Dept. — if, in fact, they have such a thing. The more they rail against this man, the more of a martyr they're making out of him. And just what is he doing that is so terrible — excommunication seems like such a drastic measure to be considered for him. Just because he won't submit to the changes put out by the Vatican Councils doesn't make him such a dastardly character.

If the Vatican is looking to excommunicate anybody, why don't they start with the hierarchy of the Dutch and Belgian churches. They're doing and have done things which are unbelievable. And how can they condemn Bishop Lefebvre on one hand and greet with open arms the man from Hungary who persecuted Cardinal Mindzenty? I'm confused.

I think Bishop Lefebvre has a lot of 'guts' to do what he is doing. If there are such large numbers of Catholics who support him, then it would seem to me that they should be allowed to worship according to the Latin Rite. There are so many factions and divisions in the church now, why not one more. If the Ukrainians can have their rites and the Melkites have their own rite, etc., etc., why not a Latin Rite?

And this business of the Latin Mass being "forbidden" is something else. After so many centuries of using it, all of a sudden it's something akin to heresy to say one or go to one. What gives? Now I read they are having a "Gregorian Chant Mass" in Old St. Mary's — according to the new Latin Rite. What, may I ask, is the "new Latin Rite?"

Can anyone make any sense out of all of this?

Vincent L. Ross
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'Get Involved' Catholics Urged

Editor:

The World Almanac says there are about 120 million Christians in the United States, of whom about 50 million are Catholics.

Can you imagine the power of a political lobby.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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for-good if, for instance, one in 20 showed an active interest in the affairs of our country? Suppose on a serious issue one in 100 would write his or her members of Congress. Can you imagine the impact of 1.2 million letters arriving at the House and the Senate?

But, sadly, Christians do not seem to think they have an obligation to take part in forming the policies of our Government — Catholics, perhaps, less than others.

Do we have some stirrings of conscience when we think of the thousands who died in the Vietnamese war, a good many of them civilians? We Christians could have stopped that war before it started — but we didn't.

We hear complaints, and we complain, about the secularization of our Country, of its deteriorating moral stature. Whose fault is it? Who writes his Congressman or Senator or State Legislator and tells him what values he wants him to work for? How many Catholics in our Diocese have written even one letter about the vital issues that face us or have faced us: the B-1 bomber, the President's position on human rights, hunger in the world, should we spend billions of dollars and untold sophisticated brain-power-hours for the Space Administration's fantastic program or should these be devoted to human needs, the Farm Bill that is in Congress now? One could go on and on.

We Christians with the help of the Holy Spirit can change the face of this Nation, but we will not do it by sitting on our donkeys or by asking God to do it alone.

We spend hundreds of hours a year watching television yet will not spend a few minutes once in a while to make our nation once again a "nation under God."

Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret
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Columnist Disappoints

Editor:

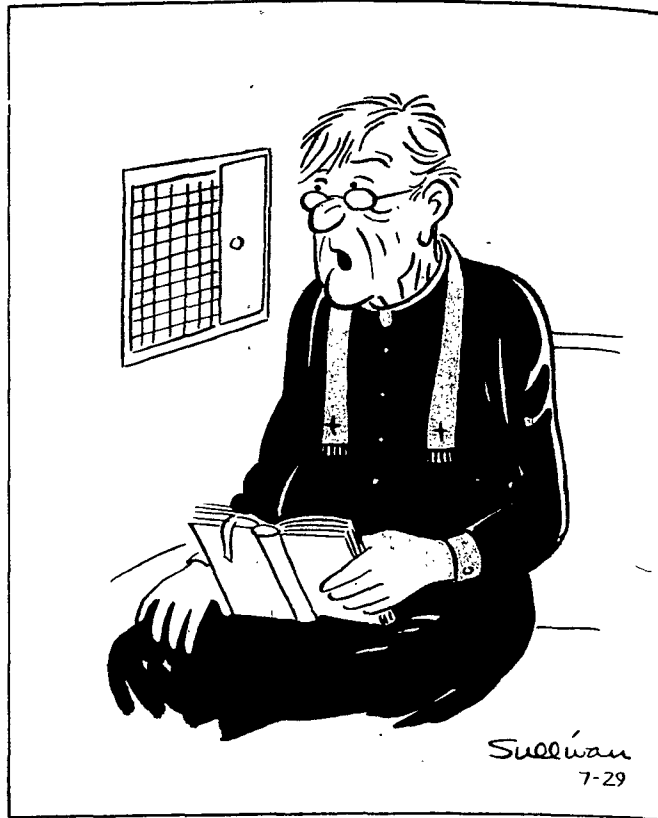
For many years I have looked upon Father Albert Shamon as a respected homilist and spiritual guide. So, it has come as quite a surprise and disappointment to me to read his column in the Courier-Journal of July 27. The text for the first reading for the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time was Genesis 18: 20-32. It gives the account of Abraham's intercession for Sodom.

To place the passage in proper context, I read on to Chapter 19 which relates the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the footnote to verse 20, the New American Bible states that in this account the sin of Sodom was homosexuality. However it further states that according to Isaiah it was a sin of social injustice; to Ezekiel, disregard for the poor; and to Jeremiah, general immorality.

It occurred to me that this may be the basis of current thought that the "sin" was one of inhospitality.

The two basic solutions to the problem of homosexuality that Father Shamon offers are what he terms a Liberal and a Church one. Both of the descriptions appear to be shot through with cliches, halftruths and downright bad argumentation.

Although there is not space or time for dialog here, I would like to plead for that "healthier and more just approach to the homosexual question" suggested in the page 2 Courier-Journal article of the same date. Also, I ask



"STOP WORKING SO HARD! RETIRE! ENJOY YOURSELF!"

unbiased Catholics to be on the alert for more opportunities to learn about "the facts" about homosexuality.

For now, may I suggest that perhaps homosexuality is not curable, because it is not a "disease"; that the homosexual is not merely "redeemable" as a child of God, but already redeemed by the blood of Christ as are all members of the human race, and that the homosexual who must make himself "fit into" heterosexual society might end up as a total misfit.

It is comforting to hear that "the Church looks beyond sinners against sexuality to their hearts." I assume this applies to heterosexuals and homosexuals alike.

Finally, pastoral counseling and probably statistical evidence will bear out the fact that many, many men and women have tried to negotiate "their way into normal sexuality by a combination of resolution, psychological help — and a social sanction!" only to find themselves in destructive relationships, impossible marriages, and/or painful neurotic or psychotic states.

Sister Mary Claude
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Parish Council Training

Editor:

I'd like to share some information about a project that's beginning soon in the Southwest, Yates-Ontario-Wayne and Chemung-Schuyler regions of our diocese. During the coming year, groups of people interested in encouraging and developing parish councils will be forming in those regions. I will be training these groups to assist the council members in understanding the purpose of the parish council and carrying it out more effectively.

I would be grateful for any suggestions or comments on this project which Courier-Journal readers might wish to make. Most important, however, I'm looking for dedicated and experienced people — sisters, lay people, priests and deacons — who would be willing to join a regional group, participate in the training sessions and then be available to their own or other parishes in their region.

If you are interested please write to me at the Office of Pastoral Ministry, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, or call (716) 328-3210 before

Aug. 17 and I'll send you details of an information meeting to be held in September in each region.

I would especially encourage people from these three regions to consider prayerfully whether the spirit is calling you to such a ministry, come to the information meeting, and then decide.

Sr. Jean Rodman
Coordinator of
Education for Councils
Office of
Pastoral Ministry

Mercy Sisters Thank Donors To Mission Fund

Sister Judith Heberle, superior general of the Rochester Sisters of Mercy, has asked the Courier-Journal to publish the following letter conveying her congregation's thanks to the "mission-minded people" of the diocese.

Dear Friends:

It is with deep gratitude that I acknowledge your generous gift of \$20,000 for our missionary endeavors in Santiago, Chile.

The Sisters of Mercy are grateful that we are able to continue serving the poorest of the poor in South America because the people in our diocese have responded so generously to the Diocesan Mission Appeal.

Our missionary apostolate in Santiago is shared with all who have contributed in supporting our endeavors in the Third World. Your love and concern will touch the lives of many people through the hands of our missionaries.

In the name of The Sisters of Mercy, I thank you for listening to the cry of the poor and those who are unable to help themselves.

May God, our Father, match your generosity with His richest blessings.

Gratefully in Christ,
Sister M. Judith Heberle

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.