

Editorial

WOKR, Please Be A Good Neighbor

Although we can understand the emotions of those who would have lynched "Soap" without giving it a hearing (or viewing in this case) we cannot condone censorship.

Thus we were disappointed when the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) urged potential viewers to call for the removal of the series before they had a chance to make their own judgments. And we were equally as pleased when two weeks later, in a mild reversal of form, the U.S. bishops joined with other religious groups to first watch the show and then let local ABC affiliates know their reaction.

In the interest of fairness, this newspaper's TV columnist Pat Costa also urged a wait-see attitude. Now the first episode has been aired and reviewer Costa has found it "a bore ... heavy-handed tripe ... with little of merit." (See Page 1.)

The hub-bub over this show has assured a massive (economy-sized might be the sponsor's choice of words) audience. Those who insist it is their right to televise such trite nonsense before the eyes of children will point to the size of the audience to support their stubborn irresponsibility. After all to them it is a business decision, not a moral one.

Thus, those who find "Soap" unpalatable, particularly at 9:30 p.m., must work for a large enough public reaction to overcome such argument.

Regrettable side issues about this little show abound. First of all, those who stand by the show have cried "censorship," particularly by church groups with the implication that there is something un-American about working to have a television show removed from the air waves. Nothing could be further from the truth. The air waves belong to the public and it has not only a right but a responsibility to decide how they will be used — particularly when television executives and sponsors are acting irresponsibly in pursuit of financial gain.

As for the tired argument that religious groups are the only objectors, we ask those involved in the decision-making process to read the New York Times of Sunday, Sept. 4. An editorial points out the fact that ABC will make about \$175 million in profits this year and if it wants to "accept the risk" of standing by "Soap" then "that is their right, just as it is the right of all citizens to object as strenuously and effectively as they can to whatever they deem offensive on the public airwaves."

There is further disappointment in the fact that ABC has been a kind of sympathetic hero for many viewers. It has long seemed the underdog in comparison with the other two major networks and we sense that many felt a kind of kindred glow when it began to overtake NBC and CBS in the ratings. This glow grew even stronger when the network screened "Roots" last year, a television masterpiece. It is regrettable that ABC would risk this wholesome and earned prestige in defense of the right to air what one affiliate has termed a "dirty joke" in prime time.

We have worked at being fair in this issue. But the show has been aired and it is time to speak up. We find no reason that this empty, sleazy show should be allowed to despoil the air waves. We urge our friends at WOKR-TV to be good neighbors and turn it off. If they can not, or will not, then we ask the network to take the needed step. If it can not, or will not, then we ask sponsors to withdraw their support.

If, however, the network and local affiliates feel duty-bound to parade this inanity then let it be done late at night, behind the barn, so to speak, where those so inclined can snigger and titter to their heart's content over dirty jokes.

Opinion

Canal Treaty Pure Politics

Editor:

I am truly amazed that the Courier-Journal (9-7-77) has once again involved itself editorially in a purely political issue such as the Panama Canal treaty. A tremendous amount of money has been spent by the U.S. Catholic Conference (Department of Social Justice and World Peace) to convince American Catholics that the renegotiation of a new Panama Canal treaty is an issue of social justice and "challenges U.S. Christians to participate in a search for justice and reconciliation as part of their Christian witness."

Nowhere is there any mention that in our concern for "human rights" Panama's government is one of the most despotic in the world. There have been no free elections since Torrijos ousted the elected president, Arnulfo Arias Madrid. Panama is a one-party Marxist state. Freedom House, an organization that monitors the state of liberty around the world ranks Panama in terms of political and civil rights below Rhodesia and South Africa and on par with Communist Cuba and the Soviet Union.

In the light of these facts how can the bishops of the U.S. ask Catholics to support ratification of this new treaty? It would be much more appropriate to spend these enormous sums of money (collected from Catholic parishes) for causes which would lead to a resurgence of religious faith and a greater interest in the salvation of the immortal souls of so many Catholics exposed to the heresies and temptations of modernism. Or, perhaps, the Panama Canal is more important than one immortal soul.

Richard J. Brzustowicz, M.D.
909 W. Main Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

Canal Articles Fine Journalism

Editor:

I would like to commend you on your very informative article and your editorial concerning the Panama Canal. As a people of God and as a nation we have long respected (at least for ourselves) that people

COURIER-JOURNAL

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

Anthony J. Costello
Publisher &
General Manager

Carmen J. Viglucci
Editor

Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

Vol. 92 No. 20 September 14, 1977

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 20¢, 1 year subscription in U.S. \$7.50, Canada and Foreign \$12.00. Offices, Richmond Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604 (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal 1

have certain inalienable rights—rights which no treaty or intergovernmental negotiations can squander. It may cause some dismay for us to realize that the "American Dream" is not the same as the Vision of Christ, but where our prime loyalty and responsibility lie must never be in doubt.

I look forward to seeing more fine journalism of this type in your paper.

(Rev.) Dennis J. Shaw
77 Whitney Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

Communism Deceitful

Editor:

"We must never allow the Communists to be the only ones concerned about social reform." This quotation is from a statement by Cardinal Luigi Ciappi on the "moral obligation" of the Church to make itself heard on social issues, Page 1, Aug. 24, The Courier-Journal

Could the hurried reader or one who is not familiar with the tactics and nature of communism be influenced to believe that communism is as capable of improving the lot of mankind as the Catholic Church?

Social justice as it is practiced under atheistic communism bears no resemblance to the bait that is used in target areas... the bait that hides the fish hook. Communism used religion in the non-Communist world, not only in undermining and attacking the Church itself, but as an ideological tool for subversion. The Communist technique of "winning friends and influencing people" often includes the same goals as the Catholic Church for the appearance of virtue. However, implementation of these goals becomes the antithesis of justice once their power is secured. An example of the difference in implementation might be in redistribution of wealth. The Catholic ethic (without alien influence) would follow the traditional method of subsidiarity. The conscience would be awakened with gentle persuasion to the miseries of the poor. They would not eliminate those who through their efforts amassed wealth but would have them help and use their skills to encourage "know how."

The current psy-war objective of atheistic communism is the mind of man... the long-range struggle is for the soul. The name of the game is "deceit" and even the elect can be deceived unless they know the enemy.

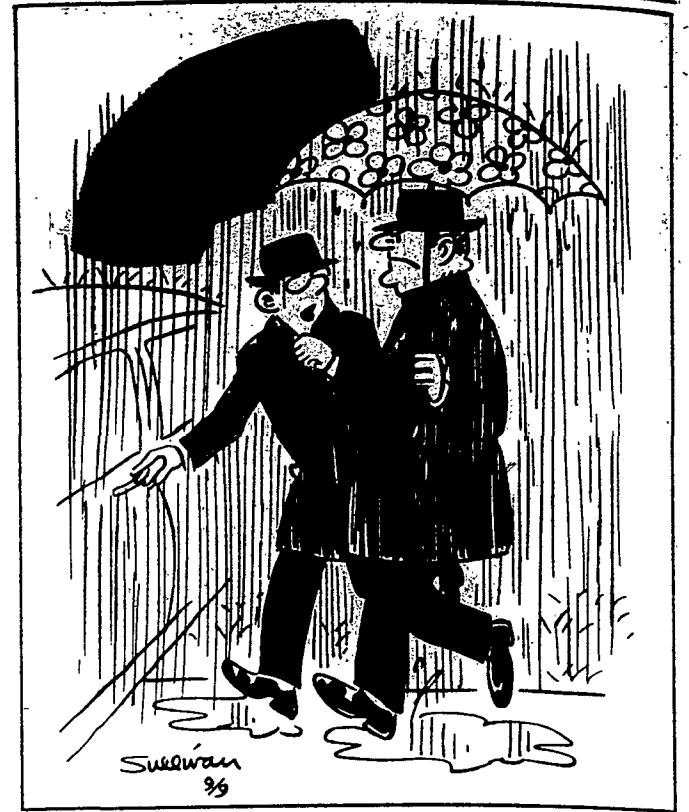
The most trustworthy source of knowledge is the historic Papal Encyclical Divini Redemptoris, available for under \$1 at religious goods stores, the Daughters of St. Paul, in Buffalo and the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation which makes available a study guide. For those who wish, a free copy of a related Mindszenty Foundation report is available... send No. 10 stamped, addressed envelope

G. F. Newberry (Mrs.)
160 Azalea Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14620

Rite Excludes Female Lectors

Editor:

The article on Ministry of the Word (Courier-Journal, Aug. 31) gave a good summary of the develop-



"LOOK, SO SHE MISPLACES THINGS—SHE'S A GOOD HOUSEKEEPER OTHERWISE, RIGHT?"

ment of the office of reader and critiqued the clericalization of that role. It is good for our Church that we have recovered a sense of shared liturgical ministry. Laity and clergy alike benefit from such renewal as it calls us to be faithful to liturgy's definition as "the work of the people."

The 1972 document, Ministeria quaedam, did indeed mean that the ministry of reader was "reestablished as an office in the Church, no longer reserved to candidates for the sacrament of Orders," as the article stated. The writer omitted one important point, however. The installation rite for this ministry is limited to men, while the practice of the ministry is officially open to both men and women.

That installation rite, while not a sacramental rite as is Orders, is, in effect, limited to potential candidates for Orders and closed to some of the persons who perform the service for the community at worship. The reestablishment of the ministry will only be complete when the installation ceremony is open to all who proclaim the Word.

Sister Susan Schantz, SSJ
34 Monica Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14619

Questions For J and P

Editor:

Several aspects of diocesan planning described in recent issues of the Courier-Journal leave this reader in an uneasy frame of mind. As a person concerned about the attitude-forming experiences of our youth, I would like to know, for example, in some general sense, at least, what the theological orientation is of those who will be instructing in the various Justice and Peace programs cited in the education issue of the Courier-Journal, 8-17-77, e.g., the diocesan-wide Education for Justice Task Force, the Social Justice Study at Nazareth Academy, the new course at St. Agnes titled Justice, Liberty and Law.

A first observation, however, pertains to the parents' point of view. The document that culminated the establishment of the ecclesiological foundation of the Church's social mission appeared only as recently as 1971 — the Bishops Synod Statement of that year, "Justice in the World." With that publication (a continuation of thinking in certain Vatican II documents) the Church's ministry in social

justice moves toward a status that parallels her centuries-long, two-dimensional role — preaching the Word of God and administering the Sacraments. The Church's ministry in social justice is now seen as "constitutive of the life of the Church." Because of the recency of this development it seems probable that many parents will not have a viable context within which to discuss with their teenagers the orthodoxy of what the latter are being taught vis-a-vis "Justice and Peace."

To focus on such a topic in the schools is of course, most appropriate since major issues denoted by it are crucial in today's unsettled world. However, the cited programs must inevitably include directing the students' attention to our American international political philosophy as well as other matters. It seems fair to infer, therefore, that, however indirectly, our young people are being primed by these proliferating Justice and Peace programs for their political stance a few years hence. The uneasiness I speak of is perhaps rooted in the fact of the alarming numbers in which those holding leadership positions in the Church unhesitatingly embrace some version of the so-called "Christian Marxism." It is in light of this point that I suggest that we Rochester diocesans show an appreciation of our rights and concurrent responsibilities by calling for information. Are the teachings in diocesan programs such as those cited wholly in accord with the magisterium? In any and every human rights effort sponsored by the Rochester Church, for example, is it a recognition of the sacredness of the human person and his immortal soul that is the informing principle?

And as for a clear grasp of what the mind-set is of those working in the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, more than one effort has been made to acquire that (e.g., I attended the DPC meeting in Waterloo, Spring 1976, when the proposal for the J and P Commission was formally made by a volunteer consultant). To date, I have seen no adequate account of either the rationale or the activities of the Rochester Justice and Peace Commission.

Alice Crozier, Ph.D.
1063 St. Paul St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14621