

Editorial

Time to End Racism in Church

Racism in the Church. Just a few years ago there were many who refused to admit that it exists. Now, thanks to those who have helped bring this anomaly into the open light of discussion, ways and means of ending it are being sought.

When we speak of racism in the Church, it should be clear that we mean all of us, you and me, brother and sister. Us. Not some vague "they" or indirect allusion to the hierarchy. But us; we are the Church we speak of as being afflicted by racism.

General broadsides directed at this evil serve a purpose, but only up to a point. Racism in the Church will not end until each of us abandons it.

Bishop John R. McGann of Rockville Centre spoke recently on this evil, terming it "the disease of racism" ... with an "almost demonic power of divisiveness."

But he didn't drop the subject on a platitudinous note. He gave out some specific assignments. "It is time to ask ourselves," he said, "whether we will accord to our brothers and sisters of any color the same rights of housing and neighborhood choice which we properly value for ourselves."

He asked Catholic schools and religious education programs to be sure that courses in intergroup relations and programs be an important priority.

And he asked his priests to use their homilies, and the Eucharist on the relevant themes of Christian faith ... all of which are so opposed to the disunity and hatred of racism."

On Black Ministries Sunday, Oct. 16, all of us should ponder racism in the Church and what each of us is going to do about it.

October Again

October ... a time for cliches.

There's no tomorrow (no reference to the equally hackneyed predictions of imminent Armageddon); the House that Ruth built (and it's not the House of David); he's really smokin' (not the use of grass or other items injurious to health); they have their backs against the wall (not a Latin American execution); annual Fall madness (not election day).

For a brief time, certain places will take a stronger position in our vocabularies — Chavez Ravine (not Cesar's farm); the Ozarks (well, this is actually a person and not a place) and Greg Luzinski (another person, but big enough to be a place).

While the Jacksons, the Splitorffs, the Dusty Bakers, Ron Ceys, Schmidts and Randolphs may not exactly displace the Lances, Carters, Amins, Begins and Brezhnevs from our minds and newspages for the nonce, they will provide temporary mental balance for those fortunate enough to be vulnerable to accounts of their exploits.

"To tell it like it is," we are referring to the World Series of baseball and its corollary, the league championship series. Congratulations to all those, fans and otherwise, who take joy in the series. As for everyone else, please be patient, tolerant, and understanding — all will be back at its mundane normalcy in a week or so.

Opinion

Mass Idea Seen Good

Editor:

The idea for fewer Sunday Masses is a step in the right direction. Now while this is not possible in some large parishes, by and far most parishes could get by with three Sunday Masses and one Saturday Mass. A 7-9-11 or 8-10-12 combination would give a two hour spread between Masses and make possible a little longer homily. And after all it is the homily that the people need. One does not need to go into a brick building to talk to God. One does not need to go into any building to hear the Bible read. But one needs to have the word of God and social justice discussed.

In the same vein, daily Mass in many churches should be curtailed. To heat these enormous buildings in the winter months for a couple of dozen people must be considered a waste of resources entrusted to people.

Bernard H. Florack
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Column Commended

Editor:

Nancy Murphy's column, "Life, Liberty and Law", is so consistently excellent that it prompts this letter of commendation.

Pertinent issues are attacked with intelligence and with courage. And the conclusions are documented which certainly is proof that Mrs. Murphy knows whereof she writes!

It is refreshing, in these days of uncertainty, to read facts presented with clarity and authority and in highly readable style.

Dolores H. Lamb
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Father Baker Sends Thanks

Editor:

May I take this opportunity to express, through your Opinion Page, my gratitude to the people and clergy of Rochester who invited me to speak on the Magisterium, Sept. 28, at the Mercy High School auditorium.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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I am especially grateful to Father James Callan of the Rochester Psychiatric Center and to the Knights of Columbus who made all necessary arrangements. I am also grateful to Bishop Joseph L. Hogan for his fine letter, to Msgr. Leslie Whalen of Our Lady of Lourdes for his kind hospitality and to Mercy High School for the use of the splendid auditorium.

It was rewarding and encouraging to speak to an estimated 500 people who gathered to hear my talk on the Magisterium, a subject that should be better understood these days. A balanced treatment of the Magisterium is often lacking not only in the Catholic press and in religious textbooks, but also in the pulpit.

Because of the limitation of time I was not able to answer all the questions put to me after the talk. I want to thank those who submitted the questions and to assure them that the questions will help me in my day to day task of editing a popular magazine for the clergy and laity.

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Just What Befits God?

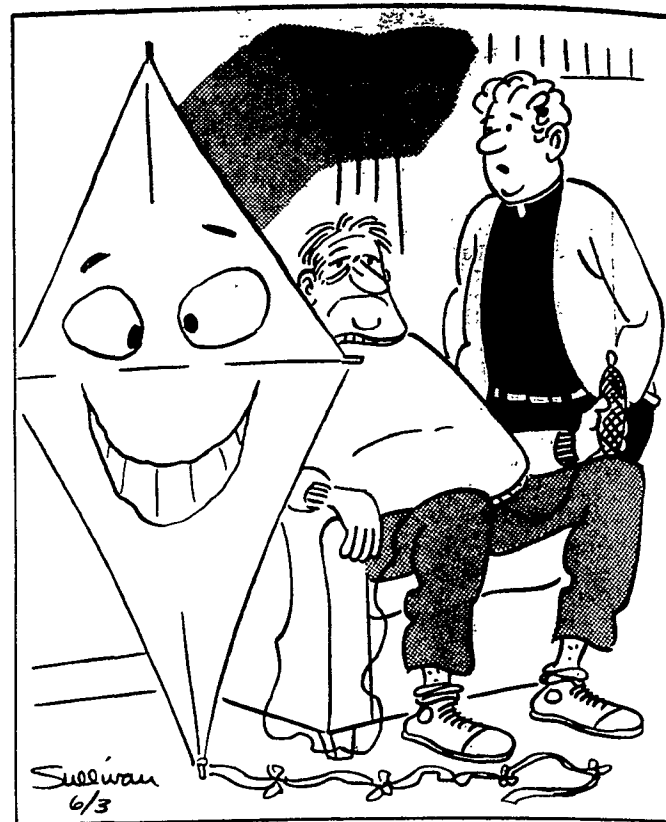
Editor:

Just what is befitting God? The Roman Catholic Church has, until now, always strived for a higher plane of excellence. This excellence was expressed in architecture, music, dialogue, art, philosophy and doctrine. Clergymen dedicated themselves to surrounding the Lord with the best that the mind could conceive and the hand devise.

The churches still stand, the art is now classified as treasured, but what has happened to the quality of the Mass? It has been degraded to the lowest common denominator in dialogue, music and decorum. The defense of this travesty is merely that different people have different taste.

My response to that is, "Since when did Rome dictate that the Mass be turned into a spectacle oriented at gratifying the lowest standards?"

We are supposed to be



"WHY DON'T YOU TRY A RETREAT, ED?"

pleasing the Lord, not greeting a visiting rock star. Consider the music at these "folk Masses." If people desire entertainment, the Mass is certainly not the place. Why not adjourn to the recreation hall where this type of performance can be executed fully and all performers receive their due acclaim?

If, at Mass, the music and dialogue are on a bit higher plane, one senses the reverence intended. One feels the expected decorum for the Lord. There are those who say one must lower the standards to the mentality of the people, a strange statement since the most majestic and befitting music was written in an era of ignorance.

We, the now generation, have only to turn the pages of history and sociological development to select the best that man has achieved. Why do we insult the Lord and completely distract the parishioner with what is left at the bottom of the bucket?

Doctrine is another story. The Church has its Magisterium responsible for the rules by which the Church functions. They are excellent rules, but unfortunately ignored by many of our bishops who live up to the prediction of the Apostle Paul when he said: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ear tickled they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their eyes from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

History shows that our leaders, the clergy, are responsible for the Church's periods of deterioration. History also shows that it is the people who have saved the Church from its own destruction. It is time for the people to demand that their bishops straighten up and fly to the navigational rules as stated by the Magisterium.

Carl E. Burrows
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How Is Abp. Sheen?

Editor:

Being a great admirer of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, and a Presbyterian, I find it very strange that your journal does not mention Bishop Sheen more often than you do. I understand from Catholic friends that there has only been the slightest mention of him in your journal since his open heart surgery, and that even the Catholic Church doesn't express an interest in saying a prayer for his recovery during their services.

Being a Presbyterian, I'm sure you find it strange that I would write you such a letter. But I have been an admirer of Bishop Sheen ever since his television programs in the late 50s and early 60s. He certainly is a giant of your church and because he is, I find it hard to understand why your church journal and your churches throughout the diocese aren't making it a matter of practice to ask that all your congregations say a prayer for him, every Sunday.

When your church loses this giant of the Catholic faith, you will have truly suffered a very deep and irreplaceable loss.

(Miss) Jennie A. Rector
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(Editor's note: For some time, Archbishop Sheen has been described as "convalescent" at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. That again was the hospital's word at press time Oct. 10. There is a new circumstance, however: In the course of his treatment, 100 pints of blood have been used. The Red Cross has assured diocesan officials that blood given upstate can be sent to New York, to replenish the hospital's supply. Courier-Journal readers who wish to give blood for this purpose may do so at the nearest blood bank. They should mention, of course, that the donation is for Lenox Hill Hospital.)

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

ANTHONY J. COSTELLO
Publisher & General Manager