

Editorials

Let Luke Tell It

God created the heavens and the earth. Thus, one of the three greatest news happenings of all time was told in just seven words.

For the Bible often can serve as a proper example of telling great news briefly and concisely. Today's academicians, bureaucrats and, yes, even some news writers couldn't possibly approach such a stark and yet perfect description.

So, too, it is with another of the three greatest news stories of history - the birth of Christ. Imagine what some of us would do with reporting that in today's office-jargon world. And it would be forgivable, for it would be indeed an awesome task to describe the significance of that first Christmas, and every one since, without wilting in its splendor.

Yet, a simple man managed the task. Luke told it like it was, thank God.

And it is more than just coincidence that this event should be told in the simple, chiseled words and economic phrases of the skilled journalist. Who could improve on this?

"Now it came to pass in those days, that a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world be taken. . . all were going each to his own town to register."

The words by now are probably are familiar to the point of blunting their sharpness, but they are indeed journalese. Who, what, when, where and why.

"And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn."

Unembellished reporting. No interpretation. No placing the literary capabilities of the writer between event and reader. Luke is the conduit perfected. He uses a mere handful of words to describe what ranks with the Creation and Resurrection as one of the world's three greatest news stories.

"And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid for today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord.'"

Super. And think of all the music, drama, art and words that have been devoted to this event by the finest minds, hearts and hands in all creation. Then rejoice in the fact that none can surpass Luke's simple and deft handling of the birth - "And when they had seen, they understood what had been told them concerning the child."

And despite, or maybe because of, the lack of frills he creates an atmosphere of a kind of sacred mystique - the things we will never understand or know in this world.

On Christmas Eve, or any time between now and Dec. 25, carve yourself a quiet interlude out of the frantic pace. Read Luke to yourself, aloud but softly. The words have meaning; together they form a masterful job of expository writing. Journalism at its finest.

Let Luke tell it. As it is.

Opinion

Recent Book 'Spineless Work of Satan' Christians'

Editor:

I have just finished reading Father Louis Hohman's review of 'Human Sexuality, New Directions in American Catholic Thought' in the Dec 11, 1977, edition of the Democrat and Chronicle. If a man in his position, a man with his education can come to the conclusion that this work of Satan is a 'carefully thought out and documented work' then may God help us all.

By his own admission, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has denounced this study. Why then, does our bishop permit him to spread lies throughout the Catholic community? Why is he permitted to put his stamp of approval on this anti-Catholic trash? The people who are most in need of God's help are the ones most likely to read and mistakenly follow the directives in this piece of fiction. It is not new, it is not truth, and it most certainly is not Catholic! So, like the shepherd calling for his lost sheep, I now call for my bishop to use his God-given authority and either get his priests who need help into line or cut the cord and let them go their own way, outside the Church where less harm will be done to His flock.

May I suggest to the reviewer that he take a trip - one to St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, and have a talk with one Father William Smith, STD. He obviously missed the opportunity to hear Father Smith when he was in the city a little while back. Hopefully, if he listens carefully and prays hard he just may come away with the same conclusion that St. Paul experienced when the truth was revealed to him, namely that when he persecuted His Church, he was in fact persecuting Christ. That is what this book does, more subtly perhaps, but that's the way of Satan, isn't it?

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Courier-Journal 1

Editor:

How hypocritical we would be if we women were to heed the advice of your editorial (Courier-Journal, 11/30/77) and 'get together.' The very reason for the two simultaneous meetings in Houston was that the problems confronting us cannot be separated into individual issues. On Oct 16 in Seneca Falls, our delegates from this area explained that the three main issues (abortion, homosexuality and ERA) could not be discussed because they were already 'committed' to back all three. The Catholic Church has officially taken a stand against abortion and, yet, there is no sign of 'commitment' to stand up for our beliefs (based on the teachings of Christ himself). What a weak, spineless group of 'Christians' we are! Have the great saints of our Church no message for us today? After all, they, like Christ, were willing to die for what they believed.

How many of us remember the phrase, 'Show me your companions and I'll tell you what you are,' when we were growing up? All we have to do is to quote from the feminists themselves in order to get an idea of what they really are.

"No deity will save us; we must save ourselves." (Humanist Manifesto II, p. 16, signed by Betty Friedan, an avowed atheist, founder of NOW and present at the National Board of Directors for the Girl Scouts of America.)

"By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God," and "we have to abolish and reform the institution of legal marriage." (Gloria Steinam, editor of Ms Magazine.)

"Children must be seen as the responsibility of an entire society rather than individual parents." (The Document, declaration of feminism.)

The sources are endless. Much of the language and many of the ideas, in the name of "progress and sophistication" are unprintable!

You can gather all First Ladies and other "nice" women in Houston or anywhere else, but I, as a Catholic woman, want no association with any of them if I have to lower my standards. If the feminists had really wanted to represent me, they could have at least started the national meeting with a prayer (instead of a moment of silence) and they could have had an American Flag on the stage! (Could either of these have offended too many of their members?)

Mary L. Greisen 6283 Pittsford-Palmyra Rd. Fairport, N.Y. 14450

Council Lauds Page

Editor:

We wish to commend you for your support of the Spanish Community by publishing the page on the



"NEXT YEAR, CARL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET A PROFESSIONAL TO PUT THE SANTA AND REINDEER ON YOUR ROOF!"

interests and activities of this group

Not only does this publicity foster the spirit of the Spanish-speaking people but it also helps the larger Catholic community by educating them.

Please continue this valuable service.

Ronald Goetting, President The Parish Council of Holy Name Church Rochester, N.Y. 14616

the news of the Catholic Church.

We agree with the remarks in the Courier-Journal's Dec. 7 edition by P. Henry Leach of St. Bernard's Seminary. We hope too that you will continue this section in the future. These "Living Stones" are so very important in strengthening the Church.

Elizabeth Johnson, Secretary, Our Lady of Mercy Parish Council

New Page Important

Editor:

At our last Parish Council meeting we discussed the importance of the page the Courier-Journal has dedicated to the Hispanic people. We all agreed how important this page is in keeping them abreast of all

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.



Dear Father Hohman,

Is confession a must or is being truly sorry enough? Do we still have to go to confession during Easter-time in a confessional box to a priest, or can a penitential service take the place of this? I ask this because it seems as though I must have missed something along the way. Every week when I attend Mass there is a penitential service before the Mass.

(Signed) S.A.

Dear S.A.:

The Catholic Church believes in the existence of the Sacrament of Penance, an outward sign, celebrating our forgiveness by the Lord Jesus Christ. The exact form of this sacrament has never been terribly consistent throughout Christian history. For example, it was only in the tenth century

that individual confession to a priest came into being in the form that we know. So the discipline of the Church has changed quite frequently in the course of its history. The basic fact that remains is that we meet Jesus as our forgiving Lord in a sacramental sign. The form of that sign can vary considerably.

As far as confession during Easter-time is concerned, we are not obliged during that particular time but rather once a year if we are conscious of being in the state of serious sin. (That is, alienated from Jesus Christ in a substantial way.) If we are not in serious sin, we never have an obligation to go to confession (that is, receive the Sacrament of Penance). Under the present discipline we are obliged to individual confession if we are in the state of serious sin. When general absolution is given, one may receive that general absolution but subsequently individual confession must be sought before another general absolution is received.

The Penitential Rite before Mass is indeed a true reconciliation but it is not considered to be the Sacrament of Penance. It would not suffice in the case of serious sin. In that situation, sacramental absolution would be required.