

Editorials

He Means Us

Is it possible?

President Jimmy Carter claims that the government has done much more than the churches to fight racial segregation. The president told a delegation from the National Council of Churches: "The government has done a great deal to eliminate segregation, one of the afflictions of our society. The churches have done less."

Lest his remarks be misconstrued, it must be pointed out that he himself has "fallen short of what I should do."

That last phrase is the crux of the issue. The church is each of us. When we say the churches are not doing their job in this humane area we are in reality saying "I am not doing my job. For we are the churches."

Over-Zealotry

A recent Harris survey shows that the American public has become less confident in the feminist movement as a source of "helping the cause of women" than it was a year ago. A 43 to 41 plurality of those polled felt that of the groups "trying to change women's status in society, only a few or none are helping the cause of women."

This finding is unusual in the face of the fact that the public supported many of the women's causes - ERA by a 48 to 40 per cent, for instance.

The National Women's Conference in Houston did poorly. Some 52 per cent had no opinion but of those that did, 29 per cent viewed it negatively against 19 in favor.

As to Phyllis Schlafly's counter rally in Houston, 63 per cent didn't follow it but of those who did most of the opinion was negative by a 24-13 per cent margin.

The poll was conducted concerning the feminist movement but it still points up an unhappy paradox. How can those interested in causes promote them without becoming overbearing and overzealous?

His Number

We have no idea what kind of man is Judge Donald Barbeau of Hennepin County District Court in Minneapolis but a recent Religious News Service news release gives us reason to like his style:

He refused to allow Michael Herbert Dengler to change his name to "1069" saying he would not give "the stamp of judicial approval" to a dehumanizing act.

At the risk of offending numerologists we cannot buy Mr. Dengler's reasons for wanting to become "1069." He said the numerals had symbolic significance for him and taken together, "describe what is inherent in me." Besides the fact that anyone would have his number when it came to writing checks, for instance, there are other difficulties with Mr. Dengler's proposition. What would one call him for short? Would his son be 1069 Jr or 1069son?

But the best objection, we believe, comes from Judge Barbeau who said that "dehumanization is widespread and affects our culture like a disease in epidemic proportions."

"To allow the use of a number instead of a name would only provide additional nourishment upon which the illness, of the dehumanization is about to feed and grow to the point where it is totally incurable." The use of a number for a name would be "an offense to basic human dignity."

Now if we could only convince the government.

Listen In

The Panama Canal.

As an historic corollary to this historic question, the U.S. Senate, for the first time, has allowed live radio coverage of the great debate. The local public radio station, WXXI, 91.5 on the FM dial, is broadcasting this coverage daily. Recommended listening for all - particularly students.

Opinion

Bishop Praised

Editor:

I would like to praise Bishop Hogan for the beautiful article of March 1, in his Pastoral Perspective

I especially noticed how he emphasized that: "we cannot be satisfied simply with a faith and a value system that has been handed down to us but that we have never made our own by 'personal appropriation.'" We cannot come to understand how much the Stranger at the well (Jesus) means to us until we have come face to face with the stark reality that life has no meaning for us without God and without the Christ who reveals God to us.

I feel that Bishop Hogan was very selective in how he phrased his sentences and I can understand why he would be, but in reading, between the lines or in paraphrasing what he said, it appears to me as though he is saying the same thing that many of our Christian brothers and sisters have been saying for years: "you must accept Jesus Christ as your personal saviour."

It is only when we come to the realization that we are sinners that we realize the need of a Saviour, and knowing that we cannot save ourselves by any other means, we must "accept Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour and trust in him by faith to save us." (Acts 4:12)

I pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to encourage Bishop Hogan and all of our spiritual leaders to stand on the holy word of God.

Praise the Lord.

Joseph Hetu
Ontario Center, N.Y.

Columnist Chastised

Editor:

As a member of St. Mary Our Mother's Church in Horseheads, I was appalled to read Father Cuddy's critique of Father Firpo's preaching technique. As a professional nurse, I cannot imagine graciously accepting a critique of my abilities in a community newspaper, however, maganimous the "bouquets" aforesaid. A private note may be greatly

appreciated... but a public critique to one so new to the priesthood who just happens to be doing a fantastic job seems a bit harsh.

Shame on you, Father Cuddy, for your poor manners.

Joyce M. Crandall
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Catholic Education

Editor:

Outside of life itself, the most precious gift that my parents gave to me was my Catholic education. The many sacrifices which they made to do so are, I believe, reflected in the sound values which are an integral part of my everyday life. It is little wonder, then, that my wife and I have decided to choose Catholic schools for our children.

God has given us one son and two daughters. All three have attended, or are attending Catholic elementary school. When it came to select a Catholic high school for our son, we, with our son, deliberated carefully. I believe that we were most fortunate in choosing Aquinas Institute. Many things entered into that decision, which, incidentally, was not easily arrived at, but in the past year and a half, I have become more aware of the quality of education which is offered at Aquinas. I am very much at ease, knowing that the son that God gave is, indeed, in the good hands of the Basilian Fathers, whose theology is sound, their adherence to the teaching authority of the Church is deeply entrenched, and their discipline is established on a firm basis. Moreover, as a teacher, I am also much pleased with the academic content of their course of study.

It is, therefore, with a great deal of confidence in Aquinas and in the extreme competence of the Basilian Fathers, that I urge other parents who are thinking in terms of Catholic high school education for their sons to give very serious consideration to Aquinas. In terms of value received for dollars spent, I believe there can be no regrets.

George A. Goodwin
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Station Needs Help

Editor:

Nicaragua is in the world news. But Nicaraguans haven't been hearing about themselves. A news blackout, ordered by West Pointer Gen. Somoza, has restricted reporting on events surrounding the national strike. We've been hearing about Western New York's weather nonetheless.

Only one newspaper, that of Pedro Chomorro who was murdered in January, continued to publish all the details. But remember, a good 50 per cent of the people can't read and those who can often don't have access to the papers. They depend on the radio.

The Catholic clergy of the city of Managua therefore



"THOSE ARE ALL HIS KIDS. HE RAN AN ORPHANAGE FOR 20 YEARS!"

agreed to open their church doors to radio news commentators, so that people can get the news in the safety of church.

Next "Catholic Radio" came under direct attack. Police entered and confiscated program materials they considered offensive. Then the government-run Light Company cut the juice. When the bishops of the country announced their upcoming meeting, power was restored. But one problem, unrelated to political upheavals, remains: The station's aging electronic gear limits broadcasts to a small area around the capital city, making it difficult, for example, to beam badly needed literacy programs into the rural zones.

Nicaragua has no Catholic newspaper. The radio is the only regular contact the Church has with the people, other than the pulpit. The bishop of Managua wants to keep the voice of Catholicism strong in Nicaragua via its radio. Can you help?

Father Bernard Survil
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Editor's Note: Anyone interested should contact Father Joseph Reinhart at the Diocesan Missions Office, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604, telephone 454-2926.

Remember The Shut-ins

Editor:

St. Augustine's parish has an extensive program of lay Eucharistic ministers which allows the senior adults and infirm of the parish who are unable to get out for Mass to receive Holy Communion every week. Late winter is a difficult time, especially for seniors and the infirm.

Early in February, Elizabeth McNeerney, a lady I'd been visiting for over a year with the Eucharist, passed away. It was a shock and we miss her but after 90 years of service to the Lord it was her time to go and be with Him.

A list of her various ailments would be long. The fact that she had lived a very vital and active life surely made the physical restrictions of later life that much harder for her to accept. What makes Elizabeth's story important is the triumph of Christ in her life.

Despite her suffering, she

never complained or focused on herself. She was always concerned about others and never grew tired of praying for the parish, priests and staff, the bishop, the Church and the Pope.

I feel this by no means an insignificant ministry. The action, the ministry of any individual or group within the Church must find its foundation in prayer. Our effectiveness in building the kingdom of God is dependent on our relationship to His son, Jesus.

There are, of course, many seniors and infirm in our diocese who are unable to get out. Yet in the midst of their trials they've dedicated themselves to interceding for us all. Their ministry is at the very core of the prayer life of the Church.

I praise God for Elizabeth and for all the people in our Christian family who are like her. In this time of Lent, this time of harsh weather, we should remember them in prayer and let them know we love and care for them. A letter, a call or visit is a little thing that can mean a lot to someone.

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Questions OHD Stand

Editor:

Because of questions the Human Development Committee of Blessed Sacrament Parish had concerning the Office of Human Development's positions on abortion, homosexuality and ERA, two members of OHD spoke at our parish on Feb. 22. It was there that I learned from John Salter, director, and Carol Schwartz that when OHD makes a pronouncement on a controversial issue it reflects the opinion of those people who work in the office and not necessarily the Catholic Church's official stand.

Knowing this, I find myself in the dilemma of indirectly financing (from parish to diocese to OHD) an organization whose views have sometimes been in conflict with those of my conscience, and whose attitude toward Vatican teachings seems to be one of indifference.

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