

Editorials

Where Are The Models?

It is generally agreed that one of the prime generators of vocations among young people is the happy and purposeful priest or sister providing a model worth emulating.

The contented priest, the busy sister filling a needed role probably, do more to make their vocations desirable than all the carefully written and edited brochures extant, worthy though they may be. The idea of a priesthood without vivid examples to follow would be somewhat akin to Christianity without Jesus.

If that is an important part of the general scenario as regards vocations, let us try to imagine what it is like for the young black person who has the potentiality for a Church vocation. That is precisely the question confronted by Father Giles Conwill of the National Office of Black Catholics in a recent talk.

He pointed out that there are only 270 blacks among 59,000 priests in the United States; 700 blacks among 135,000 sisters, and 100 black brothers among 8,000 nationwide. Where are the models for vocations, Father Giles asks. And there is no sign that the numbers will be increasing as we seem trapped in a kind of vicious circle.

Of course, there is an underlying reason. The Church in America has, like many of our institutions, been hampered by racism. We have accepted the premise that we are a white Church — not only in color but also in custom. Many of us are still unwilling to accept blacks and women as they are — with their own customs, their own cultures, their own psyches.

We Americans like to think of ourselves as democratized, as free, as shining examples of equality to the rest of the world. Yet the fact is we can learn a great deal from Pope Paul himself who often has called for the Church to take advantage of the "gift of negritude." The Holy Father has shown through action that these are not empty words; he has taken every opportunity to raise the Church in Africa to full acceptance within the worldwide communion.

The American Catholic Church must follow Pope Paul's lead — in practice as well as in spirit.

And if the moral reasons are still hazy then we should do it for pragmatic reasons. At a time when we are suffering a vocations crisis, there is a vast and rich lode to be tapped.

For Heavens Sake

In case anyone has the idea that atheists, because of their monolithic disbelief in God, do not have their own schisms, we would like to point out what has been happening with Madalyn Murray O'Hair and her constituents.

What has been described as a "massive withdrawal" has taken place from American Atheists of Austin, Texas, an organization headed by Mrs. O'Hair.

Seems Mrs. O'Hair expelled some members and then chapters from at least five states withdrew from her organization in retaliation.

Mrs. Jane Conrad, head of Quest for Truth, the Colorado chapter of American Atheists, said, according to Religious News Service, that Mrs. O'Hair uses "storm trooper tactics" and that many members believe that "some of Mrs. O'Hair's suits have been disruptive and without real significance." They also suggested Mrs. O'Hair recognize her abrasive manner "generated hatred and violence which was then projected on all atheists."

Mrs. Conrad said the "less than 25" Colorado members will reorganize, adding that she always thought the O'Hair organization had 60,000 to 70,000 on its mailing list. She said she has found out that the mailing list actually numbers 2,517 and the membership is actually 1,207.

Where did she get this information? Why, from Mrs. O'Hair son, William Murray, who earlier split with his mother and formed his own organization.



Ah, Spring

Photo by Susan McKinney

The heartbeat of the Creator can easily be felt in nature, perhaps never so dramatically as in the annual return of the Canada geese from their winter sojourn.

The sound of their honking announces that life once again is renewed, a symbol of the eternal Spring promised to all of us.

Christians the world over celebrated the Resurrection of man last Sunday. As the new season unfolds its many wonders, let us joyfully note and heed the signs — the crocus busting through the dirt, the tulip opening itself to the world, the trees of God popping with life. All reflections of the incarnation.

Opinion

Congratulations On Award

Editor:

I want to congratulate you for your performance in the "1977 New York Press Association Better Newspaper Contest." The recognition awarded the Courier-Journal reflects the high quality newspaper produced by your staff, and I know you must be proud and pleased with your achievement.

Our weekly press is the most effective and direct common denominator of community communications. I hope you will continue your high standard in this increasingly vital field of news publication.

Perry B. Duryea
Minority Leader
The Assembly
State of New York
Albany, N.Y. 12248

COURIER-JOURNAL

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

Anthony J. Costello
Publisher &
General Manager

Carmen J. Viglucci
Editor

Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

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Dislikes Texts

Editor:

We are the parents of four children, the oldest being 7. After much serious prayer, discussion, and research, we have decided to educate our children in the public schools and teach them the Catholic religion at home.

We have reviewed two of the most widely used First Communion texts in the Rochester diocese, namely those of Sadlier and Silver Burdett. Although they mean well, there are many obvious deficiencies. A few of these are: no mention of Original Sin, no mention of the immortal soul, no mention of the Blessed Virgin Mary, no mention of Christ's divinity, no discussion of actual sin, no mention of Transubstantiation, no mention of the Redemption, no mention of the Blessed Trinity, no mention of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is referred to as a memorial and the Holy Eucharist as merely a symbol and Jesus is our brother.

In my opinion, this is extremely diluted Catholicism. No wonder the Catholic Church is in such a decline today. The Catholic religion is definitely not being taught from these two texts.

Mrs. M. Martha Foley
180 Devonshire Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14625

Annoyed With Writer

Editor:

For some time now I have been more than a bit an-

noyed with Father Hohman's failure to present Catholic truths accurately. The interminable "liberal theology" being flung at us through "The Open Window" lately, has impelled me to seek the necessary intercession of St. Pius X to withstand the deadly mediocrity that too many succumb to.

Father Hohman's latest opinions on homosexuality and contraception, Courier-Journal, 2/8/78, 3/1/78, are prime examples of the persistent, erosive measures used to undermine the truths of the Catholic Faith.

Anyone so permissive towards the "abstractness" of homosexuality, and its ultimate, disastrous finality, must surely have had their minds engaged upon other matters, at least since Vatican Council II. The Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics states: "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of."

It is only a society denurtured in spiritual vitality that will use "conscience" as a ploy to justify contraception, then abortion and euthanasia. If people have lost the meaning of life, life must ultimately end at each newly opened grave. And if life is only that, then why bring new life into a world so empty of meaning and so full of unhappiness? Hopelessness is deadlier than the sword.

Although Father Hohman is promoting NFP, a most praiseworthy cause, it does not justify the condoning of contraception. Do you not know, father, that the IUD and the pill are abortifacients; devices used to kill human beings in their most defenseless stages. Do you not know that Pope Paul's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, on artificial birth control, is an infallible

teaching continuously taught by the Church since apostolic times? As Catholics we are admittedly obliged to follow our conscience, but we are first of all held responsible to educate our conscience to the teachings of the Church. Do you not know further that when our Blessed Lady spoke at Fatima she told Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia that "more souls go to hell for sins of the flesh than for any other reason?" Look around you, father, are there not more souls going to hell now for sins of the flesh than in 1917, "in conscience?"

The Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand, a man who suffered intolerably at the hands of the Communists for 14 years rather than deny Christ, wrote extensively in many of his books that "an angelic intelligence (Satan) is behind all liberal theology." If this is so, as I firmly believe, then this is certainly no time for mediocrity on the part of the Faithful. For "your opponent the Devil is prowling like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour." And just as our Blessed Lord remained silent as He was subjected to all sorts of abuse, so too is He remaining silent today while His body, the Church, is being abused. Will none of His Faithful speak up for Him?

Theresa M. Hussar
340 Jordan Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14606

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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.