

Editorials

Anti-Catholic?

We are leery of going as far as Father Andrew Greeley did in labeling the Carter Administration "anti-Catholic" yet we wonder when Joseph A. Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, and the President come out so strongly against the Packwood-Moynihan tuition tax credit bill.

Despite campaign promises to help Catholic schools, Mr. Carter and his HEW secretary are not only downright stubborn about opposition to the bill but seem to be taking devious measures to defeat it. For instance, Califano recently put out the claim that the administration would be aiding nonpublic schools to the tune of between \$100 million and \$250 million.

Hogwash, says the United States Catholic Conference, which cited an analysis by its Education Department, that federal expenditures in this area are about \$54.2 million.

Now we realize that it may sound silly to impute

anti-Catholicism to Califano who is a Catholic. Yet it wouldn't be the first time that a public official bowed to pressure from others above and below in bureaucratic Washington.

We do not expect, indeed it would be distasteful, an official to be pro-Catholic or anything else simply that happens to be his own religious persuasion. But neither do we think it wise for such persons to bend over backwards to show off their objectivity to their associates.

The diocesan schools office has sent out a flyer to parishes asking all who support the Packwood-Moynihan bill to write to the President as well as their senators and representatives in Washington. The President's address is the White House, Washington, D.C. 20510; the senators care of the U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510; the representatives care of the House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

The schools office includes Rep. Al Ullman, chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee (a member of which is Rep. Barber Conable from this diocese), also at the House, Washington, D.C., 20515.

We suggest that Joseph A. Califano also be written at the Department of Health, Welfare and Education.

'Leper' No More

We appreciate a point made by the Damien-Dutton Society for Leprosy Aid.

"We ask," said its president in a letter to this desk, "if you will join us in abolishing the word 'leper.' The scientific world has joined in a declaration against the word . . . yet keeping leprosy as a viable term. It is stigmatizing to call a person a leper who has leprosy just as it would be to call a person a cancer who has cancer."

We think this is a point well made. It is much more appropriate to use the term "a person afflicted with leprosy" or "a person suffering from leprosy" or simply "a person who has leprosy."

We will join in the effort to end the use of the word leper and also in the more general objective of ending the disease itself.

and Opinions

On Christian Education

Editor:

Re Father O'Malley's three-part series on Christian Education (Courier-Journal May 3, 10, 17):

It was only in the final segment that this question of mine was answered — "Would Fr. O'Malley retain or re-establish the kind of religious training that the past had fallen in love with? Or would he favor the 'life experience' approach that has been developed?"

His final paragraph seemed to favor the "life experience" approach. "In four years of Catholic high school," he wrote, "a student should have had the opportunity to investigate, question, articulate and internalize his own personal answers to questions in the following areas . . ."

These were some of the questions Fr. O'Malley would ask the student to give "his own personal answers to:

"What is human fulfillment? Is there a God? What is God like? How can I relate to God? How does God's idea of human fulfillment affect my relationships with my neighbors? How can I tell what actions are really right or really wrong? Finally, to what degree do I want to commit myself to continue probing the Christian Message? When?"

The formal approach to religious education would hardly tolerate such a stress upon "personal answers" to religious questions. Nor would it develop meaningful religious ideas that a student could apply to every-day situations. It long has been known that many religious concepts are too abstract and vague for children and adolescents. Trying to teach such concepts to such groups would only produce further confusion and misunderstanding.

Some religious educators believed

another way was better. Why not develop religious ideas and practices by stressing desirable conduct in everyday living? Their answer created at Union Theological Seminary in New York City the so-called "Life Experience Approach" to Christian education. The experiment was carried through to success by teachers working with a group of "superior 8-year olds." Its aim was "to help children to achieve moral growth in all the relationships of life, including their relations to God, to the universe, to other human beings and to themselves." The history of the universe and the origin and evolution of life was the focal point of their discussions. Such attention to the wonders of nature and of the human body inevitably led the children to an affirmation of God's existence and His singular creativity. In the same classroom, much emphasis was placed on helpful conduct and human responsibility.

The children's constant and consistent involvement with religious ideas caused them to utter comments and opinions such as "Science hasn't yet been able to tell us how the first life came to be . . . You can't say whether there is a God or isn't, but you can call whatever started life in the world God . . . I think there is surely a God after all we've studied. We went right back to the beginning, just as our chart shows, and saw how the world began flying off the sun. How could that ever have happened if there hadn't been something behind the world? And that something must be God."

By now I'm sure Fr. O'Malley would favor the "Life Experience Approach" to Christian education. If a student after all can find "personal answers" to the kind of questions Fr. O'Malley has already asked, by following the same path as the children did in the foregoing account, why cannot the "Life Experience Approach" be similarly followed everywhere?

John J.A. Overlander
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Fatima Message No Fairy Tale

Editor:

It has been one year since I made my first trip to Fatima, Portugal. Never will I forget the faith of those people. With bandaged legs many had walked, yes, several hundred miles, having started out a week before the event.

All night long people could be heard reciting the rosary (a sure weapon for peace) on their way to the basilica.

Just lately, Our Blessed Mother told Sister Lucy about her concern for the priests and religious that are leaving their orders, also the lay people who are leaving the Catholic Church. She said chastisement was near, and for the people to do more prayer and penance.

When will we realize this is not a fairy tale, that it truly comes from Heaven.

Learn, heed, practice and spread the message of Fatima. God wills it, Our Lady wishes it, Our Holy

Father asks it. Help return the world to Jesus through Mary.

Mrs. Mary Harris
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Segregation Can Not Be

Editor:

Father Benedict Ehmann's Insights in Liturgy in the May 10 issue was excellent. He stated that "the Holy Spirit expects you to bring to the parish Masses the verve and joy of spirit which your prayer groups foster. This will be your witness and gift to God's people; they do not have your charisms, but they do have others and can be helped by yours." I would like to add that we can be helped by their charisms.

It is unfortunate that priests who are not charismatic are segregated and alienated. I have heard Mass said by priests who are not "charismatic" but their love for the Lord has been expressed in a beautiful way and, as a participant in the Mass, you can feel this love and concern enveloping you. As individuals, each of us has his own way of loving and praising the Lord, and one way is no better than

the other. As Christians we must follow our Lord's teaching and "Love one another as He loved us."

There can be no segregation as we are all equal in His eyes, and we are dishonoring Him when we allow this segregation to occur.

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Fr. Ehmann Appreciated

Editor:

Let us thank Father Ehmann for a very valuable "teaching" on the meaning of the word "charismatic" in our Courier-Journal of May 10.

The Mass has been the high point of my day for years. Some days I am unable to go, but the desire is there and I'm happy with that.

At this point in time I find a prayer group most consoling. The persons who find their way there each week are very sincere, good Christians— searching, giving comfort to one another, renewing themselves for the week to come. The group praises

the Lord in song, Bible reading and prayer for many other people and for themselves. The trials, agonies and problems of these Christians are many. With Christ in that room with us, we help to heal each other every time we pray together. If this is "A Gift of the Spirit," much joy and healing is carried out into a very uncaring world today.

Only in "Teaching 4" do I disagree some. In many cases, these people were first turned away by a priest who was not a bit interested. They found priests who were in tune with them, or found some priests speaking out and answering questions that they had been thinking about.

Father Ehmann's "charism" is music. His good brothers in Christ each have their own gifts.

Thank you, Father, for saying "Praise the Lord." Some of our very good people are being most upset with this expression of prayer.

The "Teaching" and Fr. O'Malley's series added much to the Journal this week.

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Guidelines

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

Expressions of opinions should be brief, no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with names and addresses.

We reserve the right to edit as to length, offensive words, libelous statements, or to reject altogether. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and letters will reflect the writer's own style.

We encourage readers to submit opinions but since we try to print letters from as many different contributors as possible we will publish no more than one letter a month from the same individual.

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