

Editorials

Pope Paul VI

The long journey for history's most traveled pontiff has come to an end.

Voluminous copy has been written about the significance of the life and times of Giovanni Battista Montini. Newsmen, theologians, world leaders and philosophers all have joined in the analysis and conjecture.

All of this is, of course, fitting, for the bishop of Rome is perhaps the most widely known person in the world.

We can add little to all that has been written and said. But we would like to remember briefly the great courage displayed by this frail man of God. And we do not mean the intellectual fortitude he displayed in standing by conviction and principle despite withering criticism from both right and left. Giambattista, as his family called him, also had rare physical courage. He offered himself to replace hostages held by terrorists. He attended the funeral of longtime friend Aldo Moro, knowing full well he would be a target of extremists. And it has just come to public knowledge that terrorists had him under personal surveillance as a kidnapping possibility.

He also was unafraid of the beliefs of other peoples. He was a champion of Africans; he built cordial relations with Eastern faiths; he spoke fearlessly on the foibles of the world. Like Christ, he was not afraid to rub elbows with the sinners of the world, even if they be Godless Communists.

And also much as Christ, Pope Paul suffered some jolting defeats in his term as leader of the Church. Abortion, divorce, bitter ness on the part of some of his own flock.

But that part of his life is behind him now. We the living must contend in his stead. Fortitude is supplied by the knowing that Giovanni Battista Montini, Pope Paul VI, has won his special place and reward in heaven.

and Opinions

'Good Fight' Said Over

Editor:

I think it time to give up my attempt to provide some balance to Father Paul Cuddy's oversimplifications. I've fought the good fight, but I seem to be the only one other than Father Hohman (bless him.) to argue for open-mindedness. Is it only conservatives who think enough of the Church to bother writing to the Courier? Let this, then, be my last hurrah, not so much a bang as a whimper.

But to set the record straight, Father Cuddy should realize that I already have directed "A Man for All Seasons" and, because of the eleventh-hour sickness of the boy who played the lead, I myself had to go on as Thomas More. For three nights at least, I walked around in that merry gentleman's shoes and I know, as Father Cuddy seems to overlook, that Thomas More was a man who grasped the core of the truth and was more than willing to compromise the accidentals.

Therefore, I'm sorry that I can't send Father a ticket for a production long

past. I did send him three of my books after he accused religious education teachers of intellectual flabbiness, but he never reviewed them or acknowledged receipt of them.

I've tried to debate fairly. I've never called Father Cuddy's copy "silly" or accused him of waging "an offensive against the Church" or resorted to name-calling like "our Father Scoffer." He, in turn, has used precisely those words about me, in print. Debate is one way of unearthing and polishing new insights into the multi-faceted Truth, but it is ludicrous when one side refuses even to listen. I fear someone else will have to wave the banner of commonsense in these pages from now on. My arms are getting tired.

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Coverage Lack Is Decried

Editor:

I write to you to question a news policy that allows a front page story on the locally famous "bus

transportation" issue in the City of Rochester and its impact on parents and Catholic high schools ("Busing End Adds to School Costs") and makes no reference in that story or any other story to the City of Rochester's decision to impose "user-charges" with a much wider impact on all city churches, on the elderly and on low-income people. Both issues are the result of the same budget crisis facing Rochester. It would seem to me that a more professional and more aggressive news reporting job is called for in a diocesan paper that prides itself on serving the parishes of our diocese.

At a recent City Council public hearing, widely reported in the secular press and TV media, several speakers, including the Chancellor of our Diocese, spoke out against the imposition of such charges, and yet our diocesan paper doesn't seem to recognize the news value of such a story for its readers.

At this same hearing, partly in response to one of the speakers, Councilman Paul Haney noted that city churches were being financially hurt, not only by government tax policies, but also by the diocese's own tax policy. He pointed out that the Diocesan Assessment tax on parishes exempts monies garnered from bingo games but taxes

every penny garnered through contributions. Since this highly sensitive issue was brought out in the public forum of City Council Chambers, I feel that the Courier-Journal could perform a real service for the people of this diocese by some investigative reporting on this policy. This would be particularly appropriate in view of the upcoming Diocesan Stewardship Campaign and all the publicity given to this type of motivation by our diocesan paper.

I write these remarks in the interest of good reporting and upgrading the "open policy" of dialogue which is constantly being urged upon us at the diocesan level.

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Dismissal Leaves 'Sour Taste'

Editor:

The circumstances surrounding the recent dismissal of John Salter from his position as director of the Office of Human Development by Father Charles Mulligan, director of the diocesan Division of Social Ministry, has left a distinctively sour taste in my mouth.

Brushing aside Father Mulligan's charge of "insubordination" which I find invalid, the real reason for Salter's firing seems to be simply that Father Mulligan wanted to run OHD and Salter, as its director, resisted.

The more insidious current running through the struggle is the fact that Salter had abandoned the "safety" plays of his predecessors and had moved out to challenge the local power structures. For example, it's one thing to support Cesar Chavez and Farm Workers Union in California and quite another to support a feasibility study of public power in Rochester. The lack of publicity from the Courier-Journal surrounding Salter's support of a public power feasibility study leads me to wonder that perhaps the diocese doesn't want to rattle any local corporate cages for fear of the consequences, whatever they may be.

Another subtle nuance to the whole Father Mulligan-Salter fuss is the fact that Salter is a layman. I don't know what bearing this has on the situation but it certainly makes a guy curious about what would have happened if Salter was a priest.

Adding fuel to the fire now is the way the conciliation-arbitration process is being handled. I understand that both Salter, in an effort to regain his job, and Father Mulligan have agreed to submit their claims to conciliation, and if necessary, to an arbitration board. What galls me is the delay in the proceedings. I learned the other day that the conciliation board might take as long as three months to act on the issue. This is indefensible. Whoever said, "Justice delayed is justice denied" must have had cases like this in mind. This matter will not dry up and blow away. I feel that simple justice demands that the issue be dealt with and dealt with now.

What truly hurts me and tempers my anger at Salter's treatment by the diocese is the sadness I feel about the effects this mess is having on Father Mulligan and John Salter. These are two good people in their own spheres. Surely, in our Christian Catholic community we can find a just solution.

Bill Schneider
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Columnist Defended

Editor:

With reference to the letters of Father Benedict Ehmman and Miss Dolan regarding wedding music, let me put my two cents' worth in.

First of all I think it was very unfair of Miss Dolan to say that the Mendelsohn Wedding March is hackneyed — it's beautiful, as is the Wedding March from Lohengrin. Maybe she can't play it right.

Second, she says she's been an organist for "several" years — what is several — one, four, twenty years? I assume it can't be very long as she also said she was planning her own wedding — so she must be a young lady. She didn't say what she planned for her own wedding — maybe she's planning to march down the aisle to the theme from "Star Wars."

Third, she's stepping on dangerous ground when she's criticizing Father Ehmman — he's not only an accomplished musician, but an authority on Liturgical music. I happen to know him and can attest to that.

Fourth, most young people getting married don't know a hill of beans about what music they want or don't want. Unless they are musicians, such decisions should be left up to the organist of the church. I'm not against some particular piece of music the couple might want, but I think most brides (and grooms) would agree to the traditional Lohengrin march for the entrance of the bride and Mendelsohn for the recessional.

What with all the changes that have gone on in the Catholic Church, let's not "throw out the baby with the bath water" as it were.

I'm sorry, Miss Dolan, but you are all wet in your thinking. And for my final remark, Father Ehmman has forgotten more about church music than you'll ever learn.

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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.