

Editorials

Open Letter To Bishops

One of the items on the agenda for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops next week in Washington, D.C., is a proposal for a new annual collection proposed by the bishops' Communications Committee. The collection would be used to fund diocesan and national use of press and electronic media.

The Courier-Journal has opposed the collection for some time. The bishops themselves defeated the proposal last November but their Administrative Committee has seen fit to put it back on the agenda.

We address the following editorial as an open letter to the bishops of the United States.

Dear Bishop,

We take this unusual approach to capture your attention because we think the communication collection proposal and its ramifications are of extreme importance not only to you, your diocesan

newspaper, the need for evangelization but to each and every pastor in your diocese.

As you know, the proposal calls for a national collection, half of which will be disbursed on the national level and half of which will remain at the local level, to be used at the ordinary's discretion. Presumably it may be utilized to assist the diocesan newspaper, to pay for radio and television air time, to purchase audiovisual materials or for any other form of communication.

We have stated before and we reiterate - this diocesan newspaper would reject such funding.

We feel that such a collection would only serve to confuse, perhaps even nettle, already strapped pastors. We do not want the Catholic press, even indirectly, to add to the financial problems already troubling pastors.

Furthermore, we worry that such a form of subsidization would hinder our journalistic objectivity.

We want to stress that we do not see the issue as a form of print versus electronic media. Any such thinking at this late date would be absurd. There is room for both.

All other things being equal, such as the

professionalism and effectiveness of the approach, we could help promote such an endeavor, provided it was clear that the collection were strictly for radio and television and not for the diocesan newspaper. In short, we do not want it called a "communications collection" or some other general term but rather a radio-television collection.

We wish to make a further point: Communication comes in many forms. The addition of still another annual collection bears a message all its own to the man and woman in the pew. It may be telling them that we are not being considerate of their current financial plight. It certainly may be telling beleaguered pastors just that.

If you are in favor of the communications proposal we ask that you add the following corollaries: that the people be told before the collection as fully and as specifically as possible just how the money will be spent; and that perhaps some other collection be dropped to make way for this one.

We beg of you to think twice, maybe three times, before adding any more straws to the financial load already burdening many parishes.

And we ask that if you vote for the communications collection that it be plainly labeled for radio and television.

and Opinions

Latin Masses Possible

Editor:

Father Atwell has recently presented Courier-Journal readers with a rebuttal of the outlandish claims of Malachi Martin. And yet, he has unfortunately stated a position which may be terribly misleading.

I am referring to the following statement: "In 1974 the Vatican's Commission for Divine Worship authorized blind, elderly, or infirm priests to say Mass in Latin, but only in private without a congregation, and according to the interim missals of 1962-1965-1967..." While his information is certainly correct, it is stated in a manner which would imply that only blind, elderly or infirm priests may say Mass in Latin. The permission to which he refers was meant to apply to those situations where priests may be legitimately excused from the obligation to use the new rite. But any priest - not just those who are blind, elderly or infirm - may say Mass in Latin, providing they use the new Missale Romanum issued by Pope Paul VI in 1969.

Such approved Latin Masses have occurred in our own diocese, and have been celebrated and encouraged elsewhere as well: in the Washington Archdiocese with active support of Cardinal Baum; in the Rockville Centre Diocese at St. Agnes Cathedral, at Blessed Sacrament Church in Seattle, St. Therese in Milwaukee, St. Ann's in Stanford, St. John the Evangelist in Philadelphia, etc. I do not mean to suggest that the liturgical use of Latin is either very widespread or in any way superior to the vernacular. But Latin still may occur and does occur in legitimate forms of Catholic worship.

I am writing this letter because I feel that there is

already too much misunderstanding on this point and would not want Father Atwell's remarks to further confuse people on this issue.

Vincent A. Lenti
41 Tamarack Drive
Rochester, N.Y.

Editor's Note: Father Atwell replies to reader Lenti: Mr. Lenti is correct in stating that the Latin text of the 1969 Roman Missal is both normative and authorized for use by "any priest." The American edition of this Roman Missal, however, and, to my knowledge, all other vernacular editions provide indeed Latin texts for several Masses but only as a supplement to be used by priests who are traveling in a country whose language they do not speak. Pope Paul VI, in a talk to the Commission on Divine Worship in 1967, at the time the commission was preparing the proposed Missal of 1969, told the commission members that the primary purposes of the reform of the liturgy called for by the Second Vatican Council were the "intelligibility and participation" of the people in the rites of the Church. To celebrate Mass in Latin, even in accord with the 1969 Missal, therefore, must be done to enhance the "intelligibility and participation" of celebrant and congregation and not for mere nostalgic or cultural reasons, not to satisfy the pious habits of either some priests or some people.

Human Life Program

Editor:

About 13 years ago I personally witnessed a debate in Henrietta between Father Bartlett and a fellow Jesuit on abortion. The surprising view: Father Bartlett presented included his statement that between conception and birth God could change His mind about an individual life.

Father Frankhauser quietly, firmly and gently

defended God's unique love for each one of us from conception according to Church teaching. Father Bartlett's kind of thinking was a crucial turning point in this area's rejection of life that includes a pathway to sterilization and euthanasia and an Attica kind of solution. Public health at that time offered some true alternatives that allowed individual family decisions without strong pressures from society's view and pocketbook control.

I am positive that our human and loving bishop, a spiritual father to us, respects and supports life from conception as the Church teaches. Will others join committed laity and clergy with public support of the truth? Are you prepared for the stoning experienced by Stephen when he spoke the truth in Acts 7?

Is it true that we are the only diocese in New York State that did not have a Right to Life collection this year?

Maureen T. Shapley, RN
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Editor's Note: We discussed reader Shapley's letter with Maurice Tierney, director of

Catholic Charities, and Frank Staropoli, director of the Office of Family Life. They pointed out that Right to Life is not an official part of the Church. Under strict guidelines set down by the State Catholic Committee other dioceses allowed Right to Life collections provided they were outside of the churches, that collections did not go through church accounts, and that there was no accounting to the churches. Our diocese took the opportunity of Respect Life Sunday to kick off its own Human Life program. It will be three-faceted, following recommendations by the Bishops - legislative, pastoral and educational. Each parish was asked to participate. The funds went to the Family Life office which in Rochester gave half to Birthright and retained half for other Human Life causes. Outside Monroe County, half went to regional coordinators to be distributed at their discretion to local Birthright or similar agencies.

Intelligence No Criterion

Editor:

Msgr. William H. Shannon briefly com-

mented on the function of theologians (Courier-Journal, 10/4/78). This topic requires expansion to lead people to learn primarily the Church's Teachings, its deposit of Faith, and to avoid the evils of false teachings of dissident theologians.

The Homiletic and Pastoral Review magazine contains trustworthy theological reviews on Church teachings and contemporary errors and heresies, as well as homilies for the month.

The Wanderer, a weekly newspaper, frequently contains Church documents, and commentaries by sound theologians and Catholic philosophers.

Dissident theologians have faith in their hermeneutic analyses rather than in the Revelation data itself. Some have proposed, and others demanded, official authority for approving Magisterium teachings. Our Lord does not choose human intelligence as the criterion for authority; "Peter, do you love me more than these do?"

His apostles were "uneducated men of no

standing." (Acts 4:13)

Though officially unsuccessful, dissident theologians have captured the allegiance of many religious and priests by means of the illusion of "loyal dissent." Their dichotomous allegiance within the Church structure is what Father Thomas Dubay, SM, rejects as the establishment of "two Magisteria." (Theological Studies, 35, 1974) The result of two Magisteria is manipulations, divisions and chaos in the Church.

In "The Catholic, the Magisterium and the Theologians," (The Wanderer, 3/3/77) Father Herbert F. Smith, SJ teaches, "... in the development of doctrine, faith and prayer are more necessary than even study, learning and brilliance. Jesus made this evident..." He cautions against being "unwise Catholics who think they can follow the doctrine of a theologian until it is condemned." Father Smith advises that "Revelation attests that above all we should be attuned to the authoritative voice of the Magisterium."

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To 5

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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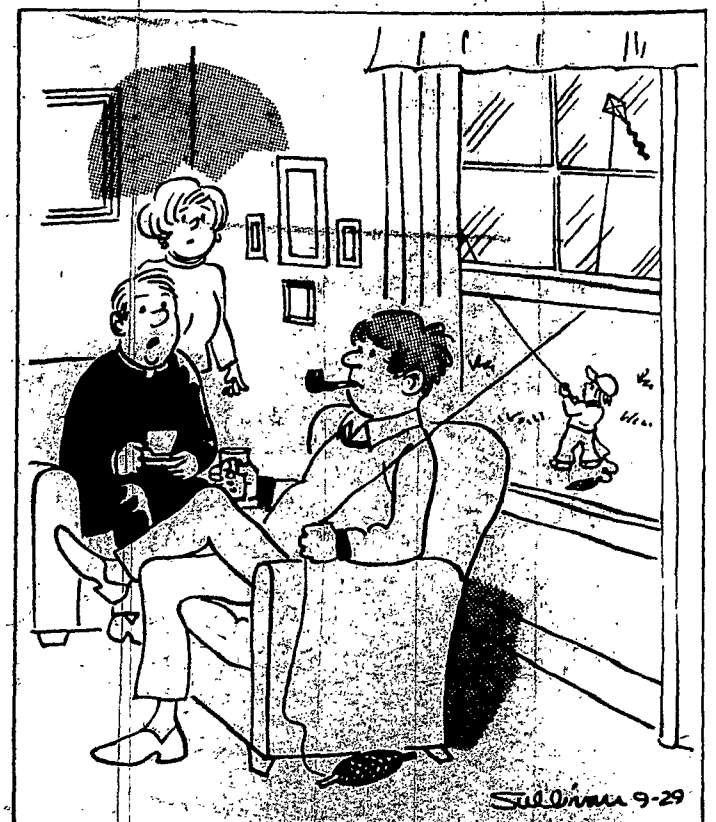
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