

Editorials

'Reaching' Youth

"How do we reach youth?"

How many times have we heard that question, usually muttered in frustrated tones?

Perhaps if we thought a bit we would realize that the reason for the frustration lies in the fact that the question asked is not the question meant. "How do we make youth conform?" probably is what is meant in many cases. And often, to be honest, it is a matter of trying to make our young people espouse a lifestyle and ideals often no longer applicable.

With that in mind it was refreshing to read some of the thoughts expressed by the Holy Father in his message for peace recently.

Most of his message was devoted to urging world leaders to see the folly of the arms race and intransigent views concerning international politics. He urged imaginative efforts to speed up disarmament and thus peace.

But Pope John Paul II is a man of many insights. He not only urged such positive values on the leaders of the world's nations but also on the more common folk — including youth.

He urged parents and teachers "to help children and young people to experience peace in the thousands of everyday actions that are within their capacity, at home, at school, at play with their friends, in teamwork in competitive sport."

In short, he did not worry about "reaching youth" but he said that setting an example is the best means of communication.

This man who has lived so many years behind the Iron Curtain praised the United Nations Year of the Child as a project "that should draw everyone's attention to the original contribution of children to peace."

Then he talked directly to the young people of the world. "Be builders of peace," he told them.

And he had some advice which may not sit well with the adults who want youth to accept and promote certain ways popular in the past.

Resist "the sterile violence," he told them, "in which adults who are not at peace with themselves sometimes want to make use of you."

"You," he told the young people, "are the hope of peace."

Potent words from a wise and formidable man. We pray that the future leaders of the world take them to heart. We hope that many older citizens of the world

who had to cope with wars as a way of living will begin to realize that it is time to change the pattern, to reshape the mold, to become imaginative in an effort to make peace the world's lifestyle.

It just could be that with such new idealization we will not have to worry about reaching each other. We will all be one.

Root Causes

We hope that all those editorialists and publications who dredged up such worn phrases as "back-alley butchery" and "return to the Dark Ages" in criticizing anti-abortion measures, will now have the grace to admit that liberalized abortion laws have not eradicated unethical practices of the abortionist nor have they given any sign of moving into an enlightened future.

A series of stories in the Chicago Sun-Times has revealed that get-rich-quick abortionists are performing crude abortion procedures to the point of probably causing deaths, "aborting" women who are not pregnant, and pursuing openly tawdry practices blamed in the past on the lack of liberalized abortion laws.

The lesson, of course, is that unless we change society's mores and conscience, and in this case we mean specifically fostering a respect for life, we will never be rid of such heinous pursuits.

and Opinions

Another Cult?

Editor:

If a national Gallup Poll were taken between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus as to who was more significant this Christmas, Santa would undoubtedly win a landslide. Every year, he emerges more strongly as the Messiah of Madison Avenue, Savior of our gross national product, and prophet of the Almighty Dollar. Santa's a nice, colorful concept for youngsters, but so many adults themselves never seem to have grown beyond this diverted, economic symbol of Christmas. Meanwhile, buried and forgotten beneath tons of materialism, Christmas wrappings and decorations, lies the real answer of why we have Christmas.

The greatest Christmas of all time, was not a new house in the suburbs or a Lincoln Continental; it was the gift of God's own Son, Jesus, with His lifesaving message of love and promise of eternal life. All the money, wealth and riches of a commercialized Christmas, will never alleviate the great depression, emptiness and suicide that accompany the season. That only Jesus, the true Messiah, can fulfill men's hearts: "My peace I give you, not as the world gives, give I to you." (Jn. 14:27).

If Christ and His vital message can not be recognized on His own birthday, then when will He ever be? Consequently, for so many today, there's just no compelling relevancy to the Gosepl (meaning Good News) any more, that our great nation was founded upon. No wonder some 10 million American youth today are now tied up in various cults just as bizarre as People's Temple. Millions that have never heard the true message of Christmas

and Christianity, are now hopelessly flocking to everything from astrology to witchcraft in search of spiritual truth and direction. Our nation's moral values and standards continue to crumble and decay, as we try to exalt ourselves instead of God.

Let us be honest about this day we call Christmas: it's true spirit has become twisted, exploited and lost throughout much of our society, and annually it becomes further and further removed from the real Messiah. How about re-establishing Christ back into Christmas, back into our nation and back into our lives — and get our priorities back in order.

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Urges Stronger Defense of Unborn

Editor:

In a recent letter, four members of the diocesan Office of Human Development took it upon themselves to attack the Right to Life movement. I was not surprised since the opinions expressed in the letter merely reiterated what many liberal, "broad-minded" critics of Right to Life have been saying for several years.

Having been associated with the Right to Life Committee for nine years, I have noted how consistently and predictably our attackers have either ignored completely, watered down, or severely diluted the critical issue of abortion by their failure to deal with the abortion issue in its own right. In such a failure the attackers have refrained from pointing out the magnitude of the slaughter of millions of innocent, helpless unborn children by abortion. Instead, for some reason, these critics, many of whom claim to be pro-life, continue to "lump" abortion with the issue of capital punishment and other "life-related" issues: to such an extent, in fact,

that one seriously wonders just where these same critics do stand on the question of the fundamental right to life of the unborn child and on the morality of induced abortion.

For a period of nine years, I have yet to hear some of our critics ever come out publicly against legalized abortion-on-demand or against the current spending of millions of dollars of our tax money to finance these abortions through the state's Medicaid program.

I find it illogical to place the question of the killing of millions of innocent, helpless unborn children, none of whom have any recourse to a court of law, on the same level with the execution of a handful of criminals, all of whom have been tried in our American courts, have been found guilty of heinous crimes, and still have access to numerous appeals through the American court system. Yet, so many "broad-minded" Catholics have devoted hours to attacking capital punishment and showing their "moral indignation" over any attempt to restore the death penalty in our states

while saying virtually nothing publicly in defense of the most innocent and helpless of human beings.

I believe that the directors of Human Development and other critics of Right to Life would display much more courage if they were to expend their efforts to defend the most defenseless; I would suggest that they direct their criticism to State Sen. William T. Smith, Gov. Hugh Carey, Sen. Jacob Javits, Sen. Edward Kennedy and other politicians in a position to exert their influence to restore legal protection for unborn children. This would be far more constructive than continuing to attack the Right to Life movement and its leaders.

Jane E. Callahan
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Columnists Appreciated

Editor:

DEO GRATIAS for Father Cuddy and Father Shamon, whose columns give strength, peace and insight to an otherwise neo-modernist approach to the Holy Roman Catholic

Church, its doctrine, obedience and faith.

Father Hohman's views seem much closer to the Protestant (and sometimes more radical than even theirs) and more liberal than ever intended by the Vatican II council, or any of the popes themselves. It must be great to pick and choose what suits you and discard what does not. His latest concerning indulgences seems to say it all regarding obedience and rules ("and sometimes find regulations, even from Rome as obstacles"). Kudos to Dorothy H. Polzinetti of Seneca Falls for her enlightening article on "Indulgences".

Notwithstanding Father William J. O'Malley's letter commending Father Hohman for his reminder that "believing and thinking are not mutually exclusive," a reminder to Father O'Malley that he do all the private thinking he desires so long as it does not impinge on Catholic beliefs, nor distort them to the point of influencing the faithful toward the exclusive Protestant "free interpretation."

As for the title "Father" and the dissertation in his letter to the editor by John

J. Overlander, let me congratulate him on his involved research. However, I doubt that it included the centuries old titles of "Padre, Father, Pater, and not the least of which, Abba, Father, forgive them, entails." After all, the holy priesthood is a reverence, comparable to no other vocation on earth and the distinguishing title, sets apart from the ordinary layman, the special order to which each man of God belongs.

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Editor's Note: The quote from Father Hohman is taken out of context. The complete quote, from his Open Window column of Dec. 20 is "As far as I am concerned your letter expresses very clearly and beautifully what I feel about a whole group of people who are honestly searching for deeper faith and sometimes find regulations, even from Rome, as obstacles. I do not think this is disrespect to Rome, but rather a way of saying that these things need to be talked about and re-examined in the light of new developments or new insights."

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 1½ 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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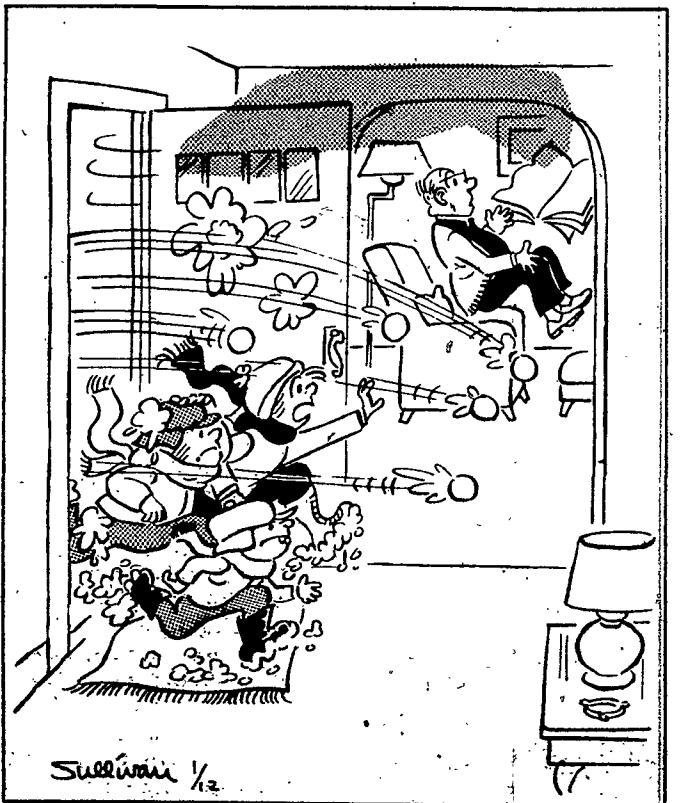
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