

# The Open Window

By FATHER HOHMAN

## What Are Peripheral Problems?

Dear Father Hohman,

In your "God in the Headlines" broadcast this morning, you spoke of Pope John Paul's expressed wish for a new emphasis on sound doctrine and discipline in the Church.

You spoke of a further scraping away of the "rust and dust" which had all but buried the central Gospel message, and how great it would be to have Jesus' good news proclaimed loudly and widely. Indeed, amen. But you also said that while this goes on we should not be concerned with the peripheral problems. If by peripheral problems you mean the yes or no about priestly celibacy, ordination of women, use of contraceptives and the like, we disagree.

How can you expect people, especially young, intelligent people, to accept the credibility of a message when included in it are disciplines and moral directives which do not make sense and are put forth as the will of God, when in fact they were originated by men.

Jesus' message that God loves us beyond reason and that his strongest desire is the wellbeing of us humans is clear and magnificent. It should not be distorted by man-made attempts to expand it or change its emphasis.

There is still a lot of "rust and dust" that needs scraping off.

(Signed) L. and D.

Dear L. and D.,

Maybe the expression peripheral problems is not an accurate expression of what I mean. There is basically a deposit of revelation which was closed at the end of the apostolic era. It cannot be added to in a sense of new doctrines being adopted as divine revelation, but what has been revealed can develop and grow in terms

of its explanation and its ramifications. Then there is a whole body of material which is of strictly human origin, and that includes private revelations and church laws and regulations, as well as discipline. The celibacy of the clergy would come under this particular heading. It is not a peripheral problem in the sense of being less important, but it certainly is peripheral when compared with the substantial revelation which is divine.

A matter of constant concern to me has been the tendency of so many people in the past to simply lump all papal pronouncements under the heading of ordinary magisterium and infallibility. This leaves me with a terribly important question whether the inquisition in which "error has no rights" was a part of the magisterium and therefore infallible? And did the calling of the Crusades come under the heading of the ordinary magisterium, and therefore bear the mark of infallibility?

The point I'm trying to make is that we must necessarily draw a line between that which is divinely revealed and therefore subject to infallibility, and that which is merely of human origin and therefore not subject to infallible declaration. There is no guarantee of infallibility in areas which involve merely human pronouncements or things of human origin. It is fighting that battle that has brought the most trouble to my column. I find that people are only too willing to take any papal statement and to label it infallible even though it has nothing to do with divine revelation.

What I am concerned with is this: that in the decision what things are infallible and what things are not infallible there must be an infallible decision. Under what circumstance is that decision made? When has it been made in the past and by whom? So if Pope Paul VI did not specifically declare his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* infallible, how can someone else claim it is infallible? These are real, honest questions on my part and I would appreciate answers from someone.

## THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"We Are Here To Help"

By Ed Sulewski

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# Business in the Diocese

Theodore J. Altier has been elected chairman of the board of trustees at Community Savings Bank, succeeding John E. Schubert, under the bank's policy of rotating board chairmen every two years.

Altier is chairman and treasurer of Altier Shoes and is active in civic affairs as president of Urbanarium and vice president and director of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

Kevin Skerett, a student at St. John Fisher College, has been selected by the Rochester Academy of Science to receive one of four awards for his original research.

Advising Skerett on his study of comparative effects of various

fluorescent light sources on growth, pigment composition and dry weight of Coleus plants is Dr. Melvin J. Wentland, professor of biology and head of the Department of Biological Sciences at Fisher.

As part of the RAS program to encourage an interest in science, the grants with a monetary value of \$50 are given annually to those undergraduate students whose original studies are considered most meritorious and practical.

Allen H. Neuharth, who has been president of Gannett Co. since 1970, has been named chairman and president. He also continues as chief executive officer of the nationwide newspaper

company headquartered in Rochester.

Neuhart, 54, also is chairman and president of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. He is a native of South Dakota

and a graduate of the University of South Dakota. He began his journalistic career as a reporter for The Associated Press in Sioux Falls, S.D., in 1950.

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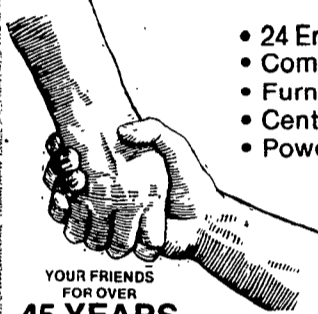
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Shedding light on some subjects that need it.