

Editorials

The Church And Blacks

It seems that the Catholic Church in the United States, after an eternity of doing little about racism and avoiding its role of evangelizer to black peoples, has finally begun to make some progress. Whether it is making strides or inching along is probably a matter of perspective.

But in the last few years, the problem has at least been recognized and although there may not be what could be termed a national trend, there are scattered signs of proper direction and one of the bright spots is provided by our own diocese.

Father Jerome Robinson, executive secretary of the diocesan Office of Black Ministries, is highly optimistic about 1979 citing "sufficient indications that this will be a long remembered year."

Speaking about the past decade, Father Robinson says it "witnessed slowly steady strides in the emergence of black peoples' religious and cultural heritage being reflected in the various dimensions of the Christian tradition. The evolution of black Catholic organizations on a national level coupled with the ordination of three bishops and the installation subsequently of one Ordinary are hopeful signs though the need for more indigenous leadership is far from sufficiently attained. Moreover, more localized accomplishments will require greater fiscal support if effective apostolates are to feasibly survive."

It must be reiterated that the journey ahead for the Church in the United States will be long, arduous and expensive, if we are going to be able to enjoy what Pope Paul VI called "the gift of Negritude."

We do not intend to intone platitudes about equality and rights. God knows if anyone still has to be lectured on such basics they are probably deaf to reason and blind to misery.

However, we do think we should all take it upon ourselves to try to awaken American Catholics, the

huge majority of whom are white, (and this should cause anyone who claims a universal church to shudder) to the fact that its exclusivity is self-defeating, morally, culturally, qualitatively, quantitatively and spiritually.

For a moment, let's be pragmatic. Forget that it is the primary duty of the Church to reach all peoples. Instead, briefly ponder the inconsistency of a religion losing schools, cutting back programs, failing to service its members properly in the ever-complicating problems of modern society which does not use every means available to tap an almost unused source, as far as this religion is concerned. And that source consists of our black brothers and sisters.

The Church, to its credit, has already established agencies to accomplish such goals - the National Office for Black Catholics, the Black and Native-American Missions, which also deals with problems faced by Indians. And in our own diocese we are fortunate to have the Office for Black Ministries. The rest of us get a chance to do our part next weekend, March 3 and 4, when the collection aiding these agencies takes place. We should keep in mind that we only get the opportunity once a year so let's not let it slip by.

and Opinions

Fr. Hohman Open, Honest

Editor:

In the Feb. 14 issue of the Courier, Father Louis Hohman wrote of our need for unity within the Catholic tradition. I heartily agree, and nowhere have I been more aware of this than through your paper. People seem to cling desperately to their personal ideas, "right" or "left", on what to wear as Eucharistic ministers, how to receive the Eucharist, and spiritual devotions, e.g. the rosary, as if their very salvation depended on it.

In his letter to us, Father Hohman was honest and open, without self-righteously defending his position. He showed sensitivity and compassion for those who do not share his position. His concluding paragraph echoes Jesus' desire for our unity, with our Father and Him, that the world may know of His love. (John 17). "Blessed are the peacemakers ..." Father Hohman.

Father Robert Kennedy also deserves recognition and thanks for his clear and firm response in Opinion, same issue. These external changes cannot alter Jesus' love, truth or holiness, or affect my relationship with Him in a negative way. For me, they have a natural enhancement of my worship.

I wish also to express my appreciation and thanks for the consistently good spiritual feeding through Father Albert Shamon's column.

Sharon A. Warner
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Time to End Arms Race

Editor:

The President's budget

proposes \$125.8 billion for national defense, up 10 per cent. Many experts - without axes to grind, and that's the point - say if we limited ourselves to defensive weaponry and eliminated the senseless multiplication of overkill potential and the incredible waste we could cut some \$50 billion from the budget.

Think what could happen. We could balance our budget and thereby do much to halt inflation and stabilize our shaky dollar. Think of the useful things we could do and still - day of days - pay off a little of our National Debt.

But we'll do nothing of the kind. We'll continue to ignore Dwight Eisenhower's warning of the dangers of an alliance between our military and the arms industry. We'll continue to let the generals and admirals, dancing to the tune of their partners in the arms industry, play their self-serving game. We'll continue to let them buy their wicked toys and squander billions of dollars without regard for the welfare of the country as a whole or the desperate needs of millions of people whom we might otherwise be able to help. We'll continue to let them dictate to the President, the Congress and us unless we citizens get up on our hind legs and start screaming. We need to start thinking about self-preservation and, more than anything else, our moral obligation to start facing this issue.

Let's not fool ourselves: There will never be any arms limitation as long as we continue to escalate our military spending. The Russians don't trust us any more than we trust them. Can we blame them?

Your congressmen and your senators should be told how you stand on this vital issue.

Adolphe and
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Little Mention Of Abortion

Editor:

I have a question. Pope John Paul II condemned abortion three times in one week. Right to Life groups have worked long and hard to get their message to the people and the politicians. The Catholic Church teaches that abortion is murder (6 million since 1973). Why do most of the priests in this area mention abortion once a year during Respect Life Week and in some parishes not at all?

Tom Freeman
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Wants Holiday For Dr. King

Editor:

I'm writing in response to Mr. William L. Louprette's "King Holiday, Who Needs It?"

You might say that the politicians have been pressured by the majority

of black heritage to recognize Martin Luther King Day as a memorial out of respect for all he stood for. Caucasians and all nationalities marched together as people for the rights that we all felt should be equalized, regardless of color.

Now if this created chaos it was the unintelligent ones who started it. If you remember the history of the marches you would see and know that Martin was a nonviolent person that practiced this, taught this and turned the other cheek even when people spat in his face.

This is a little more than I would have been able to take and I'm sure you wouldn't have tolerated this type of treatment either.

Martin Luther King's life still passes on the promise of liberation of the people for whom he gave his life.

Dr. King's leadership inspired an entire generation of blacks to press for civil rights.

I would be willing to compromise by sending my children to school on

George Washington's birthday and keep them home on Martin Luther King's birthday.

I hope I live long enough to see his famous words "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty I'm free at last" enforced for all people rather than to read it on his tombstone.

Minnie A. Garrett
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Incredible Scene

Editor:

When abortion champions use their religious connections to promote abortion and then dramatically castigate other religious groups who teach respect for every human life, the effect can be incredible.

Such was my reaction when I saw the Jan. 23 N.Y. Times picture of Rev. Beatrice Blair and Rev. Howard Moody standing before the door of St. Patrick's Cathedral after Rev. Moody hung a scathing

declaration there against the Catholic Church's teaching on the sanctity of human life.

Both these ministers worked long and hard to remove legal protection from unborn children in order to have the present national policy of abortion on demand. As the former Mrs. Harper Sibley Jr., Rev. Blair chaired Rochester Planned Parenthood and helped to overturn the state law which then protected unborn children. She went on to serve on the board of the Association for the Study of Abortion, then the leading national pro-abortion group.

Rev. Howard Moody was not only head of the abortion referral service, New York Clergy Consultation Service, but the catalyst of all other services throughout the country. He began an abortion clinic, now the Center for Reproductive and Sexual Health, as an outlet for the referral service. One of his medical directors, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, resigned after 18 months and stated in the New England Journal of Medicine, "I became convinced that as director of the clinic I had in fact presided over 60,000 deaths."

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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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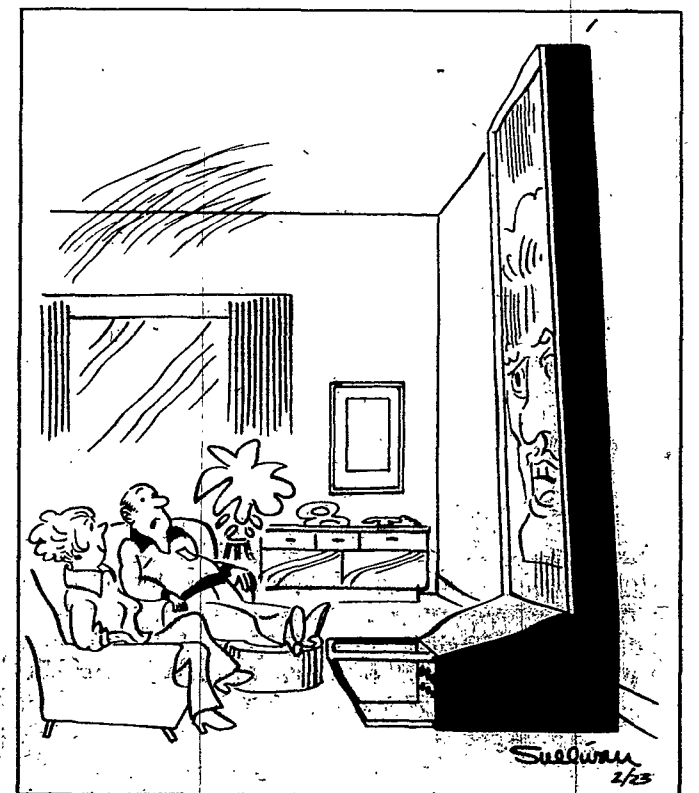
Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

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ISN'T THERE ANYTHING ELSE ON BESIDES BILLY GRAHAM?