

Editorials

Blacks' Viewpoint

A recent Lou Harris survey commissioned by the National Conference of Christians and Jews turned up a very interesting finding about the attitudes of blacks toward white religions.

According to Religious News Service, the survey found that "the number of blacks who believe white Protestant churches are genuinely committed to full racial equality is only 12 per cent."

As for the blacks' opinion of white Catholicism, "28 per cent feel the Church is really interested in helping blacks achieve equality ..."

It should be kept in mind that this is only a survey of opinion and not "Gospel" for any number of obvious reasons. And a big ponderable, which cannot be measured, would concern whether 28 per cent is an improvement or falling off from the past.

And although 28 per cent is nothing to brag about, there should be some comfort in realizing that it ranks ahead of how the blacks views the Jews (18 per cent) and other Christian faiths.

We suggest that the NCCJ commission another such survey after a reasonable passage of time, say five years, and compare the figures to 1979's.

In a related report, Brother Cyprian Lamar Rowe, executive director of the National Office of Black Catholics, told an interviewer in Cincinnati that he does not think blacks are making the progress they should within U.S. Catholicism.

He feels there still are too few black Brothers, priests and bishops. And who can dispute that?

He also had some positive things to say, such as "tremendous interest in liturgical adaptation" to Afro-American culture; the diaconate as a ministry has taken on new luster, and minority education has moved ahead greatly in parochial schools.

So it may be that the lumbering giant that is the Catholic Church in the United States has begun to realize what Pope Paul VI meant when he cited "the gift of negritude." It is high time that the faltering steps toward true racial acceptance become huge strides quickly.

As Roman Catholics and as Americans we must keep pushing in such direction long after black history month itself becomes history.

Abusive

Think about it department.

Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois, co-sponsor of the Human Life Amendment, has called abortion "the ultimate in child abuse."

and Opinions

Grateful To CDC

Editor:

We wish to commend those citizens and organizations, especially Citizens for a Decent Community for their representations to the Rochester City Council opposing the \$22,870 CETA grant for the Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley.

It is not a legitimate function of government to subsidize homosexual activities in society and thereby in effect give a moral sanction to homosexual deviation.

The previous grant of \$35,000 given to the Gay Alliance by the Democrat members of the City Council was an affront to all citizens who still believe in a public morality that is supportive of pro-life values and the institutions of marriage and the family.

We wish to thank Councilmen Schiano and Ansaldi for their stand against the funding. They seem to be the only two who remember what the Roman Catholic Church does indeed teach regarding homosexual deviation.

We pray that all good people will stand together against this anti-moral life style.

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for the Faith
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Summing Up 11½ Years

Dear Editor:

Eleven and a half years of full time service to the Church. Times of joy and sorrow, struggle and growth, defeat but ultimate triumph. I could not leave this very special period of my life without sharing some thoughts with the people in this diocese whom I have worked with and for.

I felt the calling to speak

God's word early on in my life. It was because of my parents, and the priests, sisters and faith-filled lay people in my early life that I was able to pursue this vision further. Using the vehicle provided by the Church in the early sixties, I entered St. Andrew's Seminary. There and at St. Bernard's I benefited from new direction, friendship and encouragement that helped my faith life grow to greater fruition.

Eleven and a half years ago I decided I would like to teach theology as a lay person. I found my opportunity at Cardinal Mooney and Bishop Kearney high schools. It was here that I learned to face hard faith questions. I learned from my students as I shared in their struggle to make sense of their religion. I cherish the many relationships both with students and their families that grew from my work as a theology teacher.

Since that time I have worked with many people throughout the diocese in the ministry of religious education. As director of education at St. Paul's Church, I experienced great satisfaction by working with dedicated, selfless laity who are the heart of the Church. To watch faith grow in families and in individuals has been my great joy during these past years.

Through teacher training, speaking engagements and writing, I have shared with many throughout the total geography of this diocese. The many people I have met along the way have not left me untouched.

I hope those I have served will realize that there are many compelling reasons for me to move on from full time work in religious education. The age has not come when the Church will support a man and his family if he wishes to minister full time. Perhaps that day will come at some time in the future. However, the present seems more ripe for us laity to express the depths of our faith in the market place and in our daily lives so all the world can both see and feel our light. This is where I shall carry my calling.

Thank you to all of you who have touched my life. I will be strong because of the great preparation and caring you have given to me. I hope I have served you well.

Len Paganelli
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Send Message To Washington

Editor:

The Costa Rican priest who celebrated the funeral Mass for the young Nicaraguan resister on Feb. 11, addressed a congregation made up in large part, surely, by other resisters, young and old.

He said in the sermon that perhaps many more of them would have to die in the armed struggle against the Somoza dictatorship.

My pacifist inclinations were jarred to hear it come over the radio so bluntly; but I suppose that many an American priest said much the same thing at the funerals for U.S. soldiers during World War II.

Here, in Costa Rica, nonetheless, public opinion regarding events in nearby Nicaragua has not consolidated itself completely. Thus the editor of the archdiocesan weekly, Eco Catolico, wrote:

"It bothers us to think that there are many who

believe that by supporting the guerilla movement which is battling Somoza, one thereby supports communists. Those who are so convinced even use this as an excuse to harrass the guerillas. The enemies of Somoza are not enemies of his regime because they are communists. They are its enemies and want its downfall because it's a dictatorial regime with absolutely no respect for human rights."

The editor then concludes saying something every pro-Somoza American — and sad to say there are 77 U.S. Congressmen among them — should hear.

"And those who purport to support this regime, also champion its crimes and thereby make themselves accomplices to the massacre and humiliation of a people who deserve better treatment," he wrote.

Some of your readers may believe that President Carter did the right thing by Nicaragua recently when he announced sanctions against Somoza. Let's they get overly optimistic, these readers should know that there was little enthusiasm registered at the regional Conference on Human Rights, held here in San Jose.

Among the observations these seasoned jurists made to me was that Carter only

applied the sanctions to quiet his American critics; that he did it only after he allowed (encouraged) Israel to arm Somoza to the teeth; and that the sanctions don't really amount to that much after all.

So, unless Washington gets a different message from people of good will in the Rochester Diocese, and pronto, it looks like we'll be having many a Christian burial for more resisters here in Central America.

Father Bernard Survil
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Costa Rica

3 Church Problems

Editor:

We have a newly formed group of Orthodox Catholics that meet every Wednesday evening, 7:30-8:30 p.m., at Our Lady of Victory Church, Pleasant Street. (All welcome). At a recent meeting, the discussion centered around what we thought were the most serious problems the Church was facing today. For lack of space, I will list only three. These problems came from laity that were of all ages and all walks of life.

1 — Lack of consistency: laity are confused as to the rules re liturgy, confession, fasting before Communion, etc., so much so that most young

Catholics are making up their own rules.

2 — Breakdown of family values: inability to inspire love of God in the laity and thus in the family.

3 — Priests do not address the real issues of the day to the people, but rather hide behind the smoke screen of "scholarly" speculation.

I would like to quote the following excerpt from a Pope John Paul II speech last month to the Latin American bishops' conference at Puebla, Mexico. "From you, pastors, the faithful of your countries expect and demand above all a careful and zealous transmission of the truth concerning Jesus Christ. From the living knowledge of this truth will depend the vigor of the faith of millions of people. From it also depends the strength of their support of the Church and of their active presence as Christians in the world." [This is an awesome responsibility and one you cannot regard lightly.]

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More Opinions

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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 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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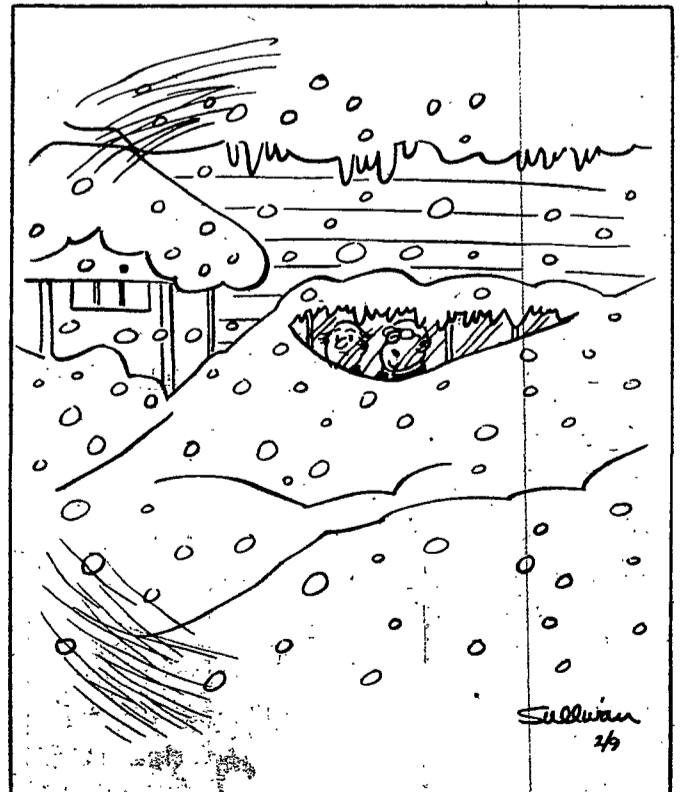
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HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TAKING THE EARLY BIRD MASS TOMORROW?