

## Editorials

### Our Pastors

In the April issue of Today's Parish there is an article we think worthy of reflection by most of us. Father Bill Wiebler of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Bettendorf, Iowa, wrote the piece which concerns our appreciation, or lack of same, of our pastors.

"The prophet is without honor in his own country," Father Wiebler quotes Jesus. And then he adds, "Today he might say the pastor without appreciation in his own parish."

Regrettably, that observation is probably true. Too often we concentrate on what we think is wrong with the parish without ever giving the pastor the simple benefit of the doubt once in a while and certainly without walking a mile in his shoes.

"Why is that?" Father Wiebler asks. "We can't say anything good about our pastor while he is with us. . . . But when he's gone we canonize him and hold him up before his successor as the model of piety, the

epitome of virtue, and the voice of prudence. We can't say anything bad about him."

Ain't it the truth? So many new pastors must feel like that Daphne DuMaurier character following Rebecca into the mansion.

Now Father Wiebler does not ask us to take the "emperor's new clothes" approach. In fact, he advises that "we can see the pastor with all his warts and wrinkles but we could also acknowledge his virtues as well as his vices."

In general, what Father Wiebler suggests is that we give our pastors the simple benefit of Christian charity that we give so readily to so many others. "Instead of complaining all the time about his sermons, we can compliment him when he gives a good homily," Father Wiebler says. Most, if not all, pastors put in a good deal of time and effort on their homilies. We should remember that they, just like us, are human and appreciative of a warm pat on the back for their efforts. Or better yet, a brief note.

Keep in mind that today's pastor is pressured from many sides. The same as all of us he has to keep up with inflation. He also has to contribute to diocesan needs. He has to keep up with progress and changes in

the Church (remember, they are not of his making either). He often has a school to keep afloat in increasingly choppy waters. He has less help than his predecessors.

And for day-to-day support, whether material, spiritual or moral, he has only his parish family.

We don't think people should have to feel sorry for their pastors. Far from it. We realize that priests have a special calling and a splendid role. Yet, pastors take on extra responsibility within that calling. And the typical pastor carries his worldly burden cheerfully in emulation of Christ.

But like Christ, he is human and often thirsts for a kind word, needs a gentle sign, appreciates a simple reassurance that his life is worthwhile and at least somewhat appreciated.

We are merely trying to do that. We hope others will join in.

As Father Wiebler concludes: "We may wait until the pastor is dead or until he is transferred to appreciate him. But if we say the things in our heart, if we let him know of our love while he is yet with us, then we won't have the guilt of not honoring our pastor while he is yet with us."

## and Opinions

### Gratitude For Pastor

Editor:

To our devoted pastor, Father John Nacca, we would like to say, "Grazie, tanto." Thank you for all your generous deeds of kindness during our holy season of Lent. This Easter had a very special meaning to all of us because of your visit to the Holy Land. We are always so inspired by your beautiful sermons but they really touched us when you told of your visit. We felt we were there with you.

We thank you for the Masses - prayers offered for us while in the Holy Land. Father, we would also like to thank you for your unending devotion to the sick of the parish, for the needy.

We are a very proud parish at St. Francis. The reason is you, Father. You give so much of your time, your prayers. A devoted shepherd is what you are, always, always watching over your "flock."

Carm and Ralph Loicano  
Parisiers, St. Francis  
Church

### An Inmate's Advice

Editor:

Being an inmate of Attica State Prison has taught me many things about expressing love but most of all extending a helping hand to others. I would like to share my feelings on this.

When a friend is sick try to get them to see a doctor. Even offer to go with them if they don't want to go.

Check your clothes for something that you don't need any more and give it to someone who can use it.

Donate blood every chance you get.

Attend and take part in community meetings. It's where you live, show some concern by participating.

Visit a hospital or nursing home and spend some time with the patients.

Cooperate in neighborhood programs for children and youths.

If you know of someone with a drinking problem or a drug problem help them to seek assistance. They may be too weak to go by themselves.

Plan some charitable action in your neighborhood such as house cleaning, lawn cutting or snow removal for a shut-in or anyone in desperate need.

Bring some joy to a lonely neighbor by taking them on a family picnic.

Be more than generous to any beggar who asks for help.

Offer to drive an elderly or sick person to the doctor's or shopping the next time you go.

Next Sunday, ask Father if he knows of anyone in your parish who may need a ride to Mass; offer to take them.

Remember to phone or write to a loved one who hasn't heard from you in a long time.

Also remember that people who extend themselves on behalf of others will find tremendous personal satisfaction and will contribute greatly toward the brotherhood of all.

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### Come Back To Church

Editor:

To all lapsed Catholics, to the fallen away and all who have lost faith.

I entreat you return to the Church and the sacraments. Do not jeopardize the life of your soul. Jesus died a frightful death to found his

church. He suffered for you. Do not help to make his sacrifice in vain for you. He weeps over your weakness of spirit.

To quote from Scripture: "Speaking to the people of Capharnum, Jesus said, 'I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood, you shall not have life in you, I am the living bread sent down from Heaven and given to you for the life of the world. My flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. If you eat my flesh and drink my blood I will live in you and you in me.'

To refuse this gift of life is to deny the Holy Spirit. Can Jesus forgive this denial? I feel he cannot and should not. But repentance will wash away this sin in an instant by his mercy. Confession and return to the sacraments brings back tranquility to the troubled heart, it washes guilt away.

Come to him who loves you so much that your conscience may have peace. He gave his blood as a ransom for many. Can you do less than accept it in gratitude? Only one thing matters and that is the eternal life of your soul in Heaven hereafter.

Brother Francis  
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### Try Following A Sister

Editor:

In regard to the column of Father Cuddy's that asked people to express their feelings about the nuns in parishes. I am sorry we get the paper so late in California but I feel these people that write in should follow a nun in the parish around for a day. Please get up early and plan to stay late because of the long hours, 14 at least, they give in a day. Also get your running shoes on because they visit the sick in hospitals with Holy Communion as well as in the homes, do counseling work, attend meetings until all hours of the night, etc. Please visit one of their convents so you can answer and give advice to all the

people that call on the phone.

Many have no idea that these various activities are a significant part of doing God's work.

Mrs. Mary Louise Guerinet  
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### Coalition Address

Editor:

We have received a letter from a member of the American Security Council, G. F. Newberry, who had a letter-to-the-editor published in the Courier-Journal on March 14. It carried the headline, "No support for SALT." Sometime later, a letter in rebuttal followed with the headline "Misquotes on SALT II," which was signed by M. Lourdes Perez-Albuerne. In her letter, she indicated that she had not been "able to locate" the Coalition for Peace through Strength to which Newberry had referred.

I am enclosing some information about the coalition. It is the largest bipartisan organization focusing on national defense that we know of, and its Congressional Division includes 194 members of Congress.

In her letter, Perez-Albuerne quotes a Father J. Bryan Hehir, who was the author of a paper on SALT II to which Newberry referred, to the effect that he (Hehir) was relying on "testimony in Congress in favor of the treaty." Of course, the SALT II treaty has not been initiated as yet, and the Congress has not had official hearings on the treaty itself. However, the House Armed Services Committee did create a special SALT panel and that panel did hold hearings. Its report - the first official reaction of Congress to SALT II - entitled "SALT II, an Interim Assessment," is highly critical of the proposed agreement.

The Coalition for Peace through Strength was the host of a press conference for Congressman Charles H.

Wilson (D-Calif.) who released the report last month to roughly 100 newsmen in Washington. It may be of interest to you that neither the Washington Post nor the New York Times found that report or the comments by the panel members at the press conference "fit to print."

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Editor's Note: The address of the Coalition for Peace through Strength is 499 South Capitol St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20003.



"TWO YEARS OF PHILOSOPHY, FOUR YEARS OF THEOLOGY, TEN YEARS AS A PASTOR, AND HE STILL CAN'T HANDLE RECORD COMMERCIALS."

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### Guidelines

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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.