

Editorials

Bias

Is anti-Catholic prejudice alive and well in the United States of America? It is difficult, if not naive, to answer no. And many of us who don't want to appear paranoid or thin-skinned avoid the problem entirely, in search of more positive pursuits.

The fact is, however, that such discrimination cannot, and should not, be allowed to go unanswered.

In a short space of recent time, three instances of anti-Catholic feeling surfaced, in varying degrees.

The first, although we are not listing the instances chronologically, arose at the City University of New York and is the most vicious and frightening. The next came from the typewriter of a midwestern Protestant editor, whose particular religion we won't identify since we don't feel it should be maligned by association. And the third and perhaps least offensive concerns a Rochester radio station editorial.

In the New York City case, a student newspaper, the *Observation*, ran cover art and a series of pictures inside of a woman dressed as a nun performing a sex act with a crucifix. This kind of sick, immature and irresponsible abuse of the free press, as offensive as it is to the onlooker, reflects even more damagingly on the perpetrators. Such blatant exhibitionism leads one to wonder how such minds ever were given the responsibility of a newspaper.

Some measure of balm was provided by several sources, principally the chancellor, Robert Kibbee,

who wrote Cardinal Terence Cooke a public apology in which he described the students responsible as "crude and insensitive" and the pictures and accompanying article as "vulgar and offensive."

More than 3,000 students -- a quarter of the entire student body, according to Religious News Service -- signed a petition calling for a referendum to stop funding the newspaper through student fees. Other students called for cessation of the paper while still others wanted the staff fired but the paper continued.

The case has not been resolved but that is not as important as the enormity that has been committed which leaves a queasy feeling about how some Americans see Catholics.

The Protestant editor, in an official religious publication, called the doctrine of the Pope antichrist. He wrote that people who do not believe that the papacy is the antichrist have "no real love for God's Word . . ."

We hope that this editor does not speak for many of his co-religionists.

The final example is no less vicious as the first or as seriously hostile as the second. Yet it fills its space neatly in the overall fabric of discrimination.

Aired on WROC-Radio on April 16, the editorial, delivered by the general manager which would seem to make it the official policy of the station, discussed a Supreme Court ruling that the National Labor Relations Board has no authority over labor disputes that might arise in parochial schools.

The editorial did not make clear its position on that matter but then its intent obviously lay elsewhere. Witness such aimless statements as "Year after year

bills are passed providing aid to parochial schools" or "They are eventually ruled unconstitutional, but those funds are never given back to the state, by the Church."

Even lack of air time does not excuse such general treatment of issues which should be discussed specifically.

Then came "Parents who want private religious education for their children should be prepared to pay for it."

They are and they do.

And they also pay for those parents who wish to send their children to nonpublic schools.

The editorial concludes: "It's not fair to expect the rest of us to pick up the tab for their kids' private education."

Wow! "The rest of us" and "their kids." Does this mean that WROC-Radio, using public airwaves, has become "we" and Catholics "they"? It would seem to indicate that. Surely a responsible journalist wouldn't allow his personal feelings to be heard as the station policy, even if he does belong to the "we" group as opposed to "them."

This final example, as we said, is not as reprehensible as the first two. But it does provide a point: in light of the kind of bigotry which does exist, it behooves those in responsible positions to use tact and sensitivity in discussing controversial issues, such as aid to nonpublic schools.

There are two sides to the issue, neither is helped by the injection of prejudice, no matter how subtly done.

and Opinions

Fr. Ammering Commended

Editor:
On June 3, Father Bruce Ammering will be celebrating his 25th anniversary as a priest.

For 21 years, Father Ammering has been at Monroe Community Hospital and Infirmary bringing a spirit of hope, love, helpfulness, consideration and understanding. He goes through the halls bringing Communion and pushing patients in wheelchairs (often two at a time) for Mass and always with a smile and a kind word for everyone. God has truly sent to the patients at MCH a human guardian angel.

Let us all say a prayer of thanks that God has sent such a dedicated priest in our midst and may He continue to shower him with the graces he needs to continue with His work on earth for another 25 years.

Cecil Kwarta
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Favorite Writers

Editor:
In your May 9 issue, Father Paul J. Cuddy in his column gave a list of prominent Catholic writers (1940s) whose books inspired and instructed both Catholics and non-Catholics. He then invited readers to give a comparable group of Catholic writers of this day.

I doubt if Father Cuddy would understand or agree with me but I am sure that many Catholics and non-Catholics (Christians) would agree that the following group of writers have done more to inspire and instruct today's Christians: (St.) Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, James and Peter, along with Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, David Wilkerson, Hal Lindsay, Katherine Kuh-

mann, Jimmy Swaggart, Marilyn Hickey, Pat Robertson, Judson Cornwall, J. Oswald Sanders, Don Gossett, Larry Tomczyk, Rex Humbard, Ernest Angely, Jimmy and Carol Owens, Charles Sheldon, C.S. Lewis, Merlin Carothers, Don Stivers, James McNutt . . . the list is inexhaustible but the one message that all of the above mentioned writers have in common is the love of God as revealed to us in the Lordship of Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

Regardless of the particular subject they write about they confirm what they are saying in the only book we can ultimately rely on -- the Holy Bible, the Word of God.

J. Heta
Ontario Center, N.Y.

Lectures Columnist

Editor:

I find it impossible to explain the colors of the spectrum to a person who is blind. I have tried in vain to express the beauty of Beethoven to one who is tone deaf, and I have the similar sense of loss conveying the message to Father Hohman that in delving into the doctrine of Original Sin, he simply and resolutely refuses to see the grandeur and exactness of this dogma.

When I pick up a Catholic weekly, I have every reason to expect to read Catholic doctrine, just as when I pick up the Episcopal or Methodist or Jehovah Witness newspapers I would normally expect to read the precise and appropriate information on each particular denomination.

After reading the Open Window these years, I have

often put down the paper and sat shaking my head in utter bewilderment. What can he mean when he says, The first 11 chapters of Genesis in no way intends to present in detail human origins . . . ? Does he mean that the Holy Spirit concocted the whole account of the human race deriving from one single man so that modern man can correct Him? What can he mean when he says that we (whoever that includes) see things radically different than "the early Church and even the Council of Trent?" He can only mean one simple and solitary thing. He is seeing it all wrong, and radically wrong at that.

Hopefully, for at least my peace of mind, in the near future the heterodox writings in the Open Window will cease its impotent flow and it will be replaced with sound Catholic orthodoxy.

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School Policy Criticized

Editor:

During a recent Natural Family Planning presentation I gave at a local Catholic high school, it came to my attention while speaking with a marriage teacher, that Planned Parenthood has visited this school over the last five or six years and continues to do so. The Planned Parenthood speaker explains and demonstrates how to use contraceptives.

It greatly surprised and upset me that a Catholic school continues to allow Planned Parenthood in their school to speak with students. I have been aware that at least three public school districts have not allowed Planned Parenthood in their school systems over the past several years due to their overall goals and

philosophy.

I have been invited to speak in over 50 classes over the past one and a half years, teaching students about their fertility and how beautifully and delicately God has created our bodies, so that we can understand and know our fertile and non-fertile phases. I am quite pleased continuously at the reaction I get from the students, both male and female, once they learn about their fertility cycles and understand how Natural Family Planning fosters care, communication, respect and reverence for our God-given fertility.

If parents, students and teachers feel that Planned Parenthood should be allowed in the schools, I would suggest they obtain Planned Parenthood literature, its five-year goals, and its proposed sex education curriculum for New York State schools.

It is one thing to teach students about their reproductive systems and their capacity for procreation, and quite

another to invite Planned Parenthood in to demonstrate the use of contraceptives.

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Chance Encounter

Editor:
It happened by chance. On a recent Sunday afternoon at about 1:30 p.m., I stepped into the church to say my rosary and make the stations of the cross. Just like Alice stepped into her mirror, I stepped into something I didn't know what.

The body of the church was empty but the sanctuary held about 40 people milling about. To be sure, being an oldster, I had heard that baptisms were no longer being performed in the vestibule, but for this display I was entirely unprepared. The people had been given booklets which they were reading, others were signing

papers while some youngsters were running up the altar steps on one side and down the other.

Most of the guests carried cameras. The celebrant had to leave the sanctuary several times to do something in the sacristy. Then it started, the ceremony began. Cameras began to flash and click, this during the entire ceremony. Those taking pictures began to lurch and shove trying for better positions. It looked like a bag of worms let loose, one person crawling under another's arms to get a better spot. Some were lying across the table of the altar focusing their cameras. It was like one of Dickens' pictures of bedlam in Victorian times. Needless to say, rosary and stations were probably worthless and as to the validity of the sacrament, I wonder. Thank God they work "ex operato." So much for Modernism and Advancement.

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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.

