Editorials Thanksgiving

The religious significance of Thanksgiving has been become more apparent in recent years. And justly so, for it is a time to reflect on our blessings and to thank God who has provided them.

But it also time to remember that there are many who have not been invited to the banquet. It would be fitting as we enjoy our own plenty that we do something, by deed, to help those we can. And that we pray for all the hungry and miserable beyond our reach.

Not Funny

Few would argue that humor is often required to lift spirits and provide some needed perspective in this ultra-serious world. Therefore, most would probably agree that it was correct that steps be taken to encourage a dash of levity in the lives of West Point cadets after an Army report showed a "pervasive lack of humor" among the student body.

So perhaps it was understandable when Point officials began looking the other way at certain student

frivolities. But when the hijinks sank to the depth of future U.S. Army officers tonning Ku Klux Klan garb, tying up and painting black other cadets, then someone should have should halt.

According to accours, there were no racial overtones (although in or sense such could be seen as intrinsic) to the shenanity is; in one instance a white cadet was hazed while a lick cadet stood by laughing. Regardless, all American should have engraved indelibly on their hearts the horror of nightriding thugs lynching men, women and children, practically at will. The specter of hooded criminals desecrating American homes, dragging families out into nights of terror, should never be the source of humor.

And lest it be thought that those days are gone forever, the KKK is still with us, witness the recent killings in North Carolina.

It should also be noted that the West Point incident is not an isolated affair. At Ithaca College, in our own diocese, seven students were expelled and four others suspended after they dressed in KKK sheets, tied a rope noose around the neck of a blackfaced student and led him around the campus and into the downtown business district, according to college officials.

Either such students are totally ignorant of American history, painfully oblivious to current events, cruelly insensitive guilty of deprayed humor or a combination of all these actors.

The fact that faculty, other students and townspeople protested strongly and that college officials took appropriate and swift action is commendable.

Satire is a worthy but difficult literary or dramatic ploy. Healthy it is to shoot down our societal sacred cows, to expose our inanities, to ridicule our ridiculous pursuits — especially when the satire implies corrective measures.

But in this age of the cynical, the sardonic, the sarcastic, the market is glutted with would-be satirists. Magazines, television, movies so cater to satirists that they are becoming caricatures of themselves. They are inheriting their own sneers.

The art of satire requires restraint; to keep the knife sharp it cannot be used to flail and cut haphazardly. Too often our so-called professionals chop at anything or anyone in sight, such as the recent ill-conceived ridicule of Mother Teresa on Saturday Night Live. When such a selfless person as Mother Teresa can be the object of derision, then almost any enormity can be excused.

But it is not Mother Teresa who is diminished by such, but rather those abusing the art form. The same applies, in converse manner to those students who would ape KKKers — it is they not the Klan who are injured.

and Opinions

Poem Of Thanks

Editor

Thanksgiving is always a special time to think of the gifts we're given and I was gifted with this poem. I want to share it with you.

Thank you God for everything —

The big things and the small,

For "every good gift"

comes from God" —
The giver of them all.
And all too often I
accept

Without any thanks or

praise
The gifts God sends as blessings

Each day in many ways And so at this Thanksgiving Time I offer up a prayer

To thank you, God, for giving me

A lot more than my share . . . First, thank you for th

First, thank you for the little things
That often come my

way,
The things I take for granted

But don't mention when I pray,

The unexpected courtesy, The thoughtful, kindly deed

A hand reached out to help me In the time of sudden

need . . .
Make me more aware,

dear God,
Of little daily graces
That come to me with
"sweet surprise"

From never-dreamed-of places —
Then thank you for the

miracles
I am much too blind to

see,
And give me new
awareness,

Of my many gifts from thee,
And help me to

remember
That the key to life and living

living
Is to make each prayer a
prayer of thanks and
everday thanksgiving

Patty Genco 262 Desmond Road Rochester, N.Y.

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Already A Priest

Editor:

I am a woman. I am a Catholic. I am a Christian. I am a child of my Father and a sister of my brother, the person I call Lord. I have dwelling within me the Spirit of my God. I am, according to my Father's Word, a priest, a member of the Royal Priesthood.

No Pope, no bishop has ordained me, nor has my Father called me to the ministry of ordained priesthood. But, a priesthood has been confirmed on me by God Himself. He has confirmed this same priesthood on every Christian. I have accepted this priesthood and nothing and nobody can remove it from me. I can give up of my own accord my priesthood, but it cannot be taken from me for it is a gift of God.

I cannot give sacramental forgiveness of a person's sins. But I can remind anyone to go to the Father for forgiveness. This forgiveness is never withheld by my Father when the petitioner sincerely asks for it. I can share with those who hurt me the forgiveness the Father extends to me when I hurt others.

I cannot change bread into the body of Christ. But I can have within me Jesus' love and life. I can share His love and His life with others. I can allow myself to be changed by Jesus into Jesus for others.

Each person, upon accepting Jesus as the center and reason for life, enters into the Father's Royal Priesthood. We, each of us, are called to share God's forgiveness with others. We, each of us, are called to share the love and life of Jesus with others.

I call upon you, share God's forgiveness with those around you. Share God's love and life with everyone you meet. In everything you

do, share Jesus' love and life with others.

In Jesus' love, I love you.

Joyce White 973 Pear Tree Lane Webster, N.Y.

Treat Pope Like Christ

Editor:

It was with great satisfaction that I listened to Pope John Paul when he visited the Unites States and spoke out strongly on the subjects of divorce, abortion, ordination of women to the priesthood, celibacy and Religious dress. Too long have we endured the looseness brought about by misinterpretation of Vatican II. Instead of pulling along constructively, many, members of the clergy, Religious, teachers and laity are ripping the Catholic structure apart. Which is better, a strong Church with a united front where the important thing is to strive to be like Christ or a Church which in its weakness allows the watering down of its worldly designs?

If all the energies used by Catholics in all the

' movements, marches, protests, ego trips and power struggles were directed toward prayer and getting behind Pope John Paul, what would happen? Certainly something badly needed. Would such words as humility, charity, love, patience, respect return to our lives? Too many wounds have weakened our faith and too much of the spiritual blood has leaked out. Our young people and even the rest of us need a Catholic Church which knows where the right direction is.

We can help Pope John Paul by building pride in our religion, visible ways, like saying grace at all meals, attending Mass as a family, letting people know that we are Catholics, etc. The Religious community should be visible, easily identifiable not by just a tiny cross on the lapel. A tiny cross by itself does very little because many lay people wear ornamental crosses. Football and baseball players are proud to wear a uniform to identify them, likewise the Religious should be proud to be easily identified by distinctive clothes.

Many nuns, priests and brothers, before joining the Religious community, were influenced, I'm sure, in part, by the sight of distinctive apparel worn by a nun or a priest. If John Paul had visited the U.S. in lay clothes, would he have had the same effect?

The Pope is strong and he is God's visible head of the Church. He is a man, but more, he represents our first priest, Christ, and should be treated likewise.

Michael Tarkulich 288 Curtis Road Hilton, N.Y. 14468

Likes Death Penalty

Editor:

In a recent editorial (Oct. 24), the Courier-Journal again opposed capital punishment.

Despite the fact that murder has been on the increase and the majority of people are in favor of capital punishment, the vocal minority continue to block its return in some states.

After the outbreak of World War II, many Americans, Catholics included, volunteered for service in the armed forces. At no time do I recall a priest, minister or rabbitelling their congregation

that it was sinful to kill an enemy soldier in battle.

Hasn't the murderer declared war on society? And isn't the murderer as threatening to society as the enemy soldier?

Today our elderly and infirm who live in large cities are particularly vulnerable to violent crime. And what do we do about this deplorable situation except to suggest that these people buy extra locks for the doors and remain home at night.

To remedy this situation we must first separate the Violent criminal from society. The rehabilitation of the criminal must then depend primarily on the criminal.

However well-intentioned our Church and civil leaders may be, they seriously endanger all of society by not punishing the violent criminal adequately.

The return of x number of years on the rock pile and capital punishment is long overdue.

Rohert Bart PO Box 594 Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

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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

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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