

**Editorials**

**'Catholic Racists Give Scandal'**

At the recent meeting of the U.S. Bishops, a pastoral letter on racism was approved. Following are some excerpts which need no amplification.

"Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our church. Despite apparent advances and even significant changes in the last two decades, the reality of racism remains ...

"We do not deny that changes have been made, that laws have been passed, that policies have been implemented. We do not deny that the ugly external features of racism which marred our society have in part been eliminated. But neither can it be denied that too often what has happened has been only a covering over, not a fundamental change. Today the sense of urgency has yielded to an apparent acceptance of the status quo ...

"Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that mocks the words of Jesus: 'Treat others as you would have them treat you.' ...

"With respect to family life, we recognize that decades of denied access to opportunities have been for minority families a crushing burden ...

"Racism is only too apparent in housing patterns in our major cities and suburbs. Witness the deterioration of inner cities as well as the segregation of many suburban areas by means of the unjust practices of social steering and blockbusting. Witness also the high

proportion of Hispanics, blacks and Indians on welfare and the fact that the median income of non-white families is only 63 percent of the average white family income ...

"Racism is apparent when we note that the population in our prisons consists disproportionately of minorities; that violent crime is the daily companion of a life of poverty and deprivation; and that the victims of such crimes are also disproportionately non-white and poor. Racism is also apparent in the attitudes and behavior of some law-enforcement officials and the unequal availability of legal assistance ...

"Racism obscures the evils of the past and denies the burdens that history has placed upon the shoulders of our black, Hispanic, native American and Asian brothers and sisters. An honest look at the past makes plain the need for restitution wherever possible ...

"Christian ideals of justice must be brought to bear in both the private and the public sectors in order that covert racism be eliminated. The new forms of racism must be brought face to face with the figure of Christ ...

"It is important to realize in the case of racism that we are dealing with a distortion at the very heart of human nature. The ultimate remedy against such evils such as this will not come solely from human effort. What is needed is the re-creation of the human being according to the image revealed in Jesus Christ. For he reveals in himself what each human being can and must become ...

"How great, therefore, is that sin of racism which weakens the Church's witness as the universal sign of unity among all peoples! How great the scandal given by racist Catholics who would make the body of Christ, the church, a sign of racial oppression! Yet all too often the church in our country has been for many a 'white church,' a racist institution ...

"Each of us as Catholics must acknowledge a share

in the mistakes and sins of the past. We have been prisoners of fear and prejudice. Many of us have preached the Gospel while closing our eyes to the racism it condemns. We have allowed conformity to social pressures to replace compliance with social justice ...

"The Church ... must be constantly attentive to the Lord's voice as he calls on his people daily not to harden their hearts. We urge that on all levels the Catholic Church in the United States examine its conscience regarding attitudes and behavior toward blacks, Hispanics, native Americans and Asians. We urge consideration of the evil of racism as it exists in the local church and reflection upon the means of combatting it. We urge scrupulous attention at every level to ensure that minority representation goes beyond mere tokenism and involves authentic sharing in responsibility and decision making ..."

**Ring Them Bells**

Helplessness in the face of danger is an agonizing feeling as we all have learned with the Iranian crisis.

We agree with our administration in Washington that the first and only consideration should be the safety of the hostages. And one of them, Bruce Laingen, our charge of affairs in Iran, has suggested that church bells throughout our country be rung at noon each day until the hostages are released.

Bishop Clark has endorsed this idea and has asked diocesan pastors to join in the effort. To be sure, it isn't much, but it could serve as a reminder to all of us of the daily plight of the hostages and together could constitute a communal prayer for their safety.

President Carter has also noted that it might be helpful if Americans wrote the Iranian Mission at the United Nations demanding release of the hostages.

**and Opinions**

**President Asks Help**

Editor:

Many Americans are looking for a way to express concern for their fellow citizens being held hostage in Iran that is consistent with this country's respect for law. As you know, the American Charge in Iran, Bruce Laingen, who is being held at the Foreign Ministry, has suggested that church bells be rung each noon until the hostages are released. Several members of Congress and the attorney general also have suggested that Americans write the Iranian Mission at the United Nations to demand release of the hostages.

The President endorses these suggestions.

It is of overriding importance that Iranian authorities understand that Americans are united in their determination not to yield to blackmail and in the demand for the safe return of the hostages. Your support for these two suggestions will help prevent any miscalculation of where Americans stand in this time of crisis.

Joseph L. Powell Jr.  
Press Secretary to the President  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

**Communist Threat**

Editor:

The Nov. 28 letter, "Communism Inhuman," by Phil Langan, raises compelling issues.

He points out the failure of the press to make known reasons for the advance of communism. He deplores the silence of many in leadership in the Church in this country. He said what

had to be said. I first heard the formula for takeover about 20 years ago ... "External encirclement, plus internal disintegration leads to progressive surrender." Fulfillment now seems a chilling reality.

There are a significant number of Communists, the sympathizers and dupes within the United States and they work energetically. However, they are not entirely responsible for the pervasive disintegration and our failure to detect propaganda. Much of this is due to the apathy, ignorance, avarice, and atheism of those who do not recognize the threat to civilization and freedom and that it can "happen here."

Catholics should be the best-equipped to detect insidious propaganda and to recognize the seemingly respectable causes which serve as "fronts" for Communist objectives. They are not ... they are indifferent. They have the scholarly and enlightened teaching on atheistic communism in their own official instruction in this survival matter. It is the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI on "Atheistic Communism." It is only 50 pages. It sets forth the most cogent analysis of the nature and tactics of the conspiracy.

The Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation has prepared a four-lesson course based on this encyclical. It is designed for discussion and study groups. The foundation which is guided by our council of about 30 members of the clergy who have personally suffered under communism works through knowledge and fact to expose the forces at work to

destroy our church and our country. Among the accurate, current sources of information the foundation supplies is the competent analysis of the Communist press from around the world, "The Red Line."

The foundation will help with advice and material. They even provide three copies of the encyclical with study guidance sheets for a token price of \$1. I will be happy to help those interested. The foundation address is PO Box 11321, St. Louis, Mo. 63105.

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**Asks Clemency For Priest**

Editor:

Recently it was revealed that a member of the inner circle at Buckingham Palace

had confessed in 1964 to being a Communist spy. For 15 years his friends in the government covered up his treason and he is still accepted in the "best" society.

How different is the justice meted out to Father Patrick Fell, a working class priest of Coventry with the double handicap of being one of the Irish so despised by Princess Margaret. Father Fell was given 12 years in prison, not for any overt crime, but for conspiracy, the legal way to describe bad thoughts. The case is similar to that of Jesus against whom there was no evidence of wrong except that his ideas offended those in power.

Father Fell has already served six years, some of the time in solitary confinement. He has been beaten by his guards, and the European Court of Human Rights will hear the case against the British government for

violations of his rights. The treatment is extremely vindictive. Father Fell is denied visitors. Bishop Drury of Corpus Christi made two trips to England and both times was refused permission to see him. His applications for parole have repeatedly been turned down. Of course, the British public is ignorant of the abuse he has endured.

Amnesty International has found that letter writing is effective in getting political prisoners freed in totalitarian countries. Perhaps it will secure justice for this priest. I appeal to your readers to perform a corporal work of mercy by writing the British Home Office asking for clemency for Father Fell.

The address is Home Secretary William Whitelaw, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W. 1, England. The letter should be courteous but point out

that the mistreatment of Father Fell is contrary to the British sense of fair play and will bring British justice into contempt.

Rev. Cosmas Korb,  
OFM Conv.  
St. Anthony-on-Hudson  
Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144

**Missions Helper**

Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines to the foreign missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Write direct to me.  
Mary Conway  
14 Castle St.  
Cork, Ireland

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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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"HE'S JUST SPOILED! YOU'VE BEEN READING TOO MUCH ABOUT THAT REINCARNATION STUFF!"