

Editorials

Greatness

It was about 20 years ago when a young reporter in Syracuse, who also a stringer for Variety magazine, reviewed the Jimmy Durante nightclub act at the Three Rivers Inn.

The reporter had been told that the Durante act was a smash, one of the very best ever. It included the great Eddie Jackson who with Durante formed two thirds of the classic Clayton, Jackson and Durante team of the past. Sonny King was the replacement for the late Lou Clayton.

The show proved to be everything it was reputed to be. Fast paced, funny, polished, athletic (at one point Durante threw King over a piano), it was entertainment at its highest. And it was emotional.

That particular night, a woman who appeared to be in her 60s, crawled onto the stage and grabbed Durante. Stunned, but only for a moment, Jimmy

turned to the orchestra and commanded in that so often imitated, gravelly voice, "Play!" Then he waltzed the spontaneous performer around the stage to the roaring approval of the audience. "Live it up, live it up," he told her. And when they had finished, she said, "Mr. Durante, you've got God in you!"

Afterward, the young reporter and a couple of his newspaper friends visited Durante's dressing room. A first impression was surprise at just how tiny Durante was. Then in his late 60s, he was stretched out on a table, in his underwear, while a masseur worked on his legs.

"Gets tougher all the time," Durante smiled. "But my man here makes me young again."

Fans, of all description, kept coming in and out and Durante, not fazed by his lack of attire, would exchange greetings, sign autographs, joke a bit, despite having just finished two acts in one night. His protege, Sonny King, remarked, "This man is one of the biggest stars of all time and he doesn't even know it."

Durante had trouble remembering names. Names that were household words - Doris Day (that blonde

girl who sings), Johnny Mercer, Raymond Massey. But when asked what he considered his greatest achievements, he had no trouble. He hoped he had done his best by his family and friends. And he was proud that "I never told a smutty joke."

3 a.m. The massage completed, the parade of the curious ended, the interview completed, the reporters reluctantly got up to leave. But they were stopped by that raspy voice, "You guys going to eat some breakfast? C'mon, I'm buying." The twinkling eyes, the squeaky laugh, "And that don't happen too often."

Jimmy Durante had all the qualities most of us would like to have. And, yes, that includes success. But he also was modest. Much of his humor was directed at himself, especially at his oversized "schnozz." He was a patient, kind and warm man. He, at the top of his profession, was still able to have a good time kibitzing with some working people in a small town.

Sonny King was right. He didn't even know he was a star.

And that impromptu woman performer also was right. Jimmy Durante did have God in him.

and Opinions

On Pope's Message

Editor:

After reading your section of the Holy Father's speeches in our country, I feel his message was not a strong enough call to the discipleship and love that we need to hear.

The Holy Father should have told us to pray daily, to read the Bible every day, and to gather in groups and talk about the tremendous love of Jesus and how we should respond. Instead, the Holy Father talked of tradition and Church structure, which have spread the Word of God but not always the love of God.

If this diocese is to be the avant garde, a witness to the whole world, like Mother Teresa of feeding the poor and living the Gospel we must change tradition such that clergy and lay people come together and humbly seek the will of God.

Our Holy Father spoke beautiful words to a hungry people, but he gave us just a sample and not a fullness of the way we must live.

Bill Gustafson
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Theologians Put in Place

Editor:

Three cheers for Pope John Paul II. He is bringing order out of chaos in a strong, fatherly fashion. He is gently guiding the members of his Church who have stepped out of line with their egotistical, intellectual, worldly outbursts and is bringing them back to where they belong... as obedient members of the Church; not the self-appointed

spokesmen for the Church they thought they were.

Many big companies hire public relations people to speak for them. They are especially trained to do this. They will not allow their employees to speak out publicly about the companies... the Church would do well to follow this. People who vehemently object that their freedom is being curtailed need only to look around them to see where freedom without responsibility has brought us today:

1. Freedom to use drugs.
2. Freedom to abort.
3. Freedom to have firearms.
4. Freedom of pornography.
5. Freedom of divorce.

There never has been a time in history when murder, rape, burglary, etc., has been at such a high rate. Freedom for the prisoner's rights, freedom for everyone, but the victim!

Now, a bright, new dawn is rising with Pope John Paul II. The Greeleys of the world may refer to this era as an inquisition, but I call it a liberation, a freedom from the tyranny of the theologians (and I use this term lightly), who could have been a force for good, but now have lost their opportunity. They are now being shelved for the next 100 years; the laity will no longer listen to them, as they now hear the voice of a true shepherd, who leads them to the green pastures of holiness.

Anne B. Christoff
154 Crittenden Way, No. 3
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Suggestion Endorsed

Editor:

I was heartened to see the Courier-Journal letter of Jan. 9 suggesting we resume the practice of calling on St. Michael for help in defending the Church

during these very difficult times, and we know that the difficulties will increase.

For years, a prescribed prayer to St. Michael was prayed following each Sunday liturgy. Perhaps its resumption could be considered by the Liturgy Department and by parish liturgy committees.

This powerful prayer of exorcism was composed by Pope Leo XIII following a vision he had of a fierce battle being waged between Satan and St. Michael over the Church of the future. Here it is:

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into Hell, Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Mary, Queen of the Angels, pray for us!

Prayer cards may be obtained by writing to:

Christopher House, 2386 Pontiac, Columbus, Ohio, 43211.

Wilma M. Higgs
10A Portsmouth Terrace
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Tears, But No Alternative

Editor:

I would like to express my feelings about the closing of Our Lady of Mercy School on Denise Road.

I have taught in our school for 16 years. I have watched many youngsters pass through our portals and go on to greater things in high school, college, and a worthwhile place in our community. They have been "Special" to me!

One of my first classes had 45 children. With that number you can barely scratch the surface in teaching. Today, I have 12 great kids. I love them! I can do so much with 12 - knowing their weaknesses and strengths. There is so

much individual attention, so much communication,

to perceive an unemotional, well-structured position.

But with today's costs, 12 children in a class is a luxury no parish can afford. I feel like crying but I think our Parish Council did what it had to do.

I believe this is only the beginning of our school closings. Until more of our people really believe what the Catholic Church teaches and are willing to pass this on to their children in their homes as well as in school, we will not have enough people who care to keep our schools open to make the operation financially sound.

Mrs. John Morphy
255 Cloverdale Rd.
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Opinion Refreshing

Editor:

I would like to thank Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret for their thought-provoking letter in the Jan. 23 Courier-Journal. It was refreshing to be able

The d'Audiffrets chose to consider, for themselves, the ramifications of the Kung-Schillebeekx matters; they exercised the right of intelligent, genuine truth-seeking persons.

The attitude of the writers was potentially inclusive. At no time did they adopt the feeble stance of safeguarding their position, through the attempted exclusion of the opposing view; nor did they don the boxing gloves of the self-righteous.

Clenching tiny, futile fists in anger? I think not; rather, they are representative of the "open, gentle-strong" hand, which is ever-ready for holding. They are representative of those Christians whose belief in Jesus Christ is not threatened by genuine truth-seeking. Their voices deserved to be acknowledged. Their witness cannot be swept away by the narrow-minded and the ignorant.

Mary Pietrzykowski
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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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