

Editorials

Martyr

Those would-be isolationists who have been saying that events in far-off lands have little bearing on us must admit that events in Iran, Afghanistan and the Middle East have weakened their position.

Surely no one could deny with much success that foreign entities can and do influence our way of life — witness the oil situation as an economic factor in addition to the political situations alluded to above.

So while we cannot ignore what is happening downstate or down the block, neither can we with any sense of security attempt to be oblivious to what is transpiring in Asia, the Middle East or down continent.

Thus, when an archbishop in Central America is shot down during the consecration of Mass, it is not just sacrilege that should concern us; we also should be upset at the political injustices, the state of violence, the aura of disaster prevalent just at our doorstep.

Assassination — and suddenly Archbishop Romero is a household name. His cause, because of his murder, will now advance much quicker and with wider sympathy than if his killers had not acted. When will the minds behind the triggers understand this fact? The Emiliano Zapatas, the Martin Luther Kings, the Robert Kennedys and now Archbishop Romero loom larger than life following the assassin's bullets.

Archbishop Romero had written to President Carter in February asking for a cessation of arms shipments to that country. Although the target of bitter criticism from extreme rightists, Archbishop Romero was not a political man, except in the sense that he was involved in the struggle to help the impoverished of his country. His was a voice to be heard; he was on the scene; he sought no worldly prize.

Yet even after his death, Johan A. Bushnell, deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, was supporting aid for the El Salvador government. His argument is that such reforms as land distribution would not be possible if it were not for the "protection and security provided by the Salvadoran military for the new owners and the civilian technicians and managers helping them."

Sounds plausible. But the question that must be asked is why did Archbishop Romero, a proponent of land redistribution, disagree? Because we have more

than a pocketful of instances of faulty U.S. intelligence reports from foreign lands, we are not willing to hitch our national star to another one, particularly in light of such contrary opinion as provided by Archbishop Romero.

Another archbishop, John Quinn of San Francisco, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, has taken up the slain archbishop's cause, albeit from a less dangerous vantage point.

"There could be no more fitting tribute to the heroic life of this holy man than the fact that as a nation we would follow his advice," Archbishop Quinn said.

And he is not alone. Dr. Jorge Lara-Braud, a leading Protestant Latin American specialist, joined Archbishop Quinn's plea. "At stake," he said, is "whether we shall honor or dishonor the memory of the peacemaker whose life was taken by the very violence which this military grant would escalate."

Many other voices, big and small, including our own diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, will be raised against such military aid, in the wake of Archbishop Romero's martyrdom.

A lesson for those who think killing erases problems — a voice from the grave often gains amplified distinction.

and Opinions

Letter Called 'Childish'

Editor:

Father Bill Shannon is an old friend of mine. I don't agree with his views in every case but I always respect them. I was offended by his recent letter relative to Father Cuddy who is also an old friend of mine. To use the "head liturgist" slip of the pen if indeed it was . . . how has Bishop Clark designated Father Kennedy? . . . to make fun of Father Cuddy is being rather childish. I am surprised that the Courier printed it; I am even more surprised that Bill Shannon wrote it.

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TV Religion Too Slick

Editor:

As a non-expert in theology but as a garden variety priest who prays and struggles, I deplore the giddy praise with which Msgr. John Foley told of his interview with Pat Robertson of the "700 Club." Of course, as a "highly respected Catholic journalist," the Monsignor was impressed by the club's studio complex, "one of the most beautiful and modern in existence." Money, after all, can do some wonderful things.

But as for Mr. Robertson "beaming his amazement at the effect of the pope's visit to the United States," how could even the media-struck Msgr. Foley fail to identify cause and effect? It is a truism of the TV industry; when somebody is hot, use him. So use the pope's visit Pat Robertson did! Besides, what better opportunity to lock his Catholic viewers and supporters into place than by using the pope's TV coverage as a topic?

I have watched the "700 Club" with increasing concern. Not for its devout though simplistic adjuce, but at the manipulation of their faith in the name of Christ. What makes me sick is the underlying message of this TV Religion — that to believe in Christ means to be Suc-

cessful, Superior, and Secure. What becomes of the Cross of Christ, which Jesus told his followers they must "take up daily" to follow him?

Jerry Sholes, a minister's son who served more than three years as TV producer for Oral Roberts, brings this out clearly in his recent book, "Give Me That Prime-Time Religion." As James McKinley points out in an excellent review, "Mr. Sholes courageously documents that Oral Roberts and his ilk represent, through their mass media appeal to God-fearing people sitting in their TV rooms, the final technological estrangement of the individual from his society, his community, his neighborhood. These media messiahs all are volume dealers, promising the best benefits, eternal life, or financial happiness. They destroy the community of religion, the neighborhood concerns, the touching and being touched by those of your faith. They imprison you in your home . . . while the money they spend is on themselves, and on monuments to themselves. The only solace the poor, the hungry, the homeless might have is the glittering cathode-ray pictures, the sounds of a highly paid choir, and the slick messages about giving, and then receiving."

I am for the use of TV for the good of church and Christ. But I am against an Electronic Church which offers slick religion and isolation.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen used the media for God and church. But never did he try to create the aura that he and the TV screen were the church.

Msgr. Foley stated that the opportunity to participate in the "700 Club" was both a privilege and a revelation. I suggest that to share in one Mass at which Christ Jesus represents himself among us — even when that Mass is offered by the least priest in the humblest chapel — is privilege and revelation far greater. A major task, I think, of the bishops today is so to use the TV technology which can reach millions as to set hearts afire with love for that Gift which is Christ Living Among Us.

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Read Letter With Dismay

Editor:

As a former student of Msgr. Shannon, it was with sadness and dismay that I read his uncharitable comments (Courier 3-26) about Father Cuddy's column. In my opinion, it was written in poor taste! How can we set an example of peace and love to the world if we cannot maintain it in our own house!

You should both be free to express your feelings but ALWAYS with charity and love. Truth has many aspects and LOVE is large enough to encompass them all.

I am writing this letter on the first day of Holy Week, the week we follow LOVE to Calvary — there is room at the bottom of that cross for all of us. Let us put aside our petty differences and concentrate on the qualities that unite us.

May the Risen Christ's blessing be upon both of you!

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Article Praised

Editor:

The article, "To All of Good Will" (CJ, 1-23) by Father Edward Shamon, pastor, St. Aloysius Church, Auburn, warmed the cockles of my heart. I wanted to stand up and cheer. And I did! But no one could hear me, thus this letter.

Father Shamon's rebuttal to cartoonist Oliphant's diatribe regarding the Holy Father and Father's equally brilliant and incisive tongue-lashing meted out to Andrew Greeley, cutting him down to size, was inspirational. A terrific shot-in-the-arm for every Catholic worth his salt. It should have had "pride of place" in every publication possible, that all might thank God for the courage and dedication of this wonderful bundle of dynamic traditional Catholicism at a time when few of these kinds of voices are heard.

The caliber of this priest is phenomenal. He is first and foremost among priests

dedicated to the Blessed Mother, an unsung hero of Fatima and the Pilgrim Virgin visits, Rosary rallies, novenas, holy hours, benedictions and unspoiled, reverent and sacrificial Liturgy. A large order for the "Devastated Vineyard" but the Lord meant it when He said He would not leave us orphans! Small wonder that St. Alphonsus contains wall-to-wall people when Father Shamon conducts his annual Lenten novena to the Mother of Sorrows, bringing together the faithful from within a radius of 50 miles.

Little wonder, too, that his privately paid for radio broadcasts, "On Guard," are fast becoming the most discussed enrichment of basic values for God and country since Father Coughlin. Finger Lakes coverage of this program is limited and not as widespread as we would like, it is hoped that through the printed media, especially the Catholic press, the works of such a dedicated priest should be rewarded and encouraged.

Anyone wishing to having a copy of the article of which Father speaks should send a self-addressed envelope to the rectory, St. Alphonsus Church, 160 Van Anden St., Auburn, N.Y. 13021.

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Nitpick Award Of Month

Editor:

The "Nitpick Award of the Month" goes to Msgr. William H. Shannon. His letter to the editor (3-26) qualifies him for this uncoveted award.

Monsignor points out an "odd error" in Father Cuddy's column of March 12 and concludes from the alleged error that Father Cuddy "does not seem to know who his bishop is." He arrives at this logical (?) conclusion because Father C. called Father Robert Kennedy "our head liturgist."

In the Official 1980 Directory of the Diocese of Rochester (p. 48), Father Kennedy is listed as Director of Liturgy. If we are to follow the Monsignor's line of authority why not go right to the very top?



"A LOT OF THE FOLKS HERE HAVE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE! COULD YOU SAY SOMETHING IN YOUR OPENING PRAYER ABOUT BAD SEPTIC TANKS?"

Come now, Monsignor, you can do better than that.

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3 Articles Commended

Editor:

The March 26 Courier-Journal had three good articles concerning liturgy. Many of us are so busy at this time of year that we sometimes skip over them, missing out on some excellent thoughts.

If you are on a liturgy committee, I would urge you to read, or even re-read: 1. "Springtime in the Church," Page 4, and perhaps you will want to save it and bring to a liturgy meeting next year; 2. "Lent Is a Continual Summons," Page 17, a beautiful Lenten message which somehow became relegated to the back of the paper instead of the place of honor; and 3. "Pope Cautions against Innovations," Page 1. This article has some very positive suggestions which I hope those preparing liturgies will want to study, and possibly even ask their pastors for the complete text.

Don't be put off by the paper's negative attitude. The reporter used the words: cautions, took priests to task,

strictures, warning, deplored, stern language. But Pope John Paul II doesn't speak that way. His words are strong, positive and full of hope and joy in the Lord Jesus and in his "sacrament of love."

A thank you to the Courier for printing these selections and hopefully in the future our Holy Father's words will be given a more prominent place.

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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.