

Editorials

**Christians ...
Not Marxists**

Something Archbishop John R. Quinn, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said at the opening of the Spring meeting of the U.S. Bishops in Chicago is worth airing again and pondering.

The archbishop recalled the "sacrilegious murder" of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, whose "keenest suffering must have been the ignominy of being called a communist."

Archbishop Quinn said that often "complete fidelity to the truth" can lead to the "most inconsistent accusation that we are too liberal, too conservative, or that we are untrue to the Gospel."

Archbishop Romero's way of being faithful to the truth was to stand up for the oppressed and the victimized against the powers that be. For that, he was labeled a communist, ridiculed and eventually martyred during Mass.

Too often, we, and that includes many of us right here in the 12 counties of our diocese, jump to erroneous conclusions about others. Too often, sisters and brothers who are selflessly performing the noblest of deeds are labeled communists or Marxists. Unthinking persons who tag as Marxists those working

with and for the poor unwittingly raise Karl to a level he could never have foreseen.

We should all keep in mind that it was a man who predated Karl Marx by some 18 centuries who said:

"Come. You have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me."

"Then the rest will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?'"

"The king will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.'"

What would some people label Jesus Christ Himself for such fidelity to the truth of the Father!

And even longer before the brief time on earth of Karl Marx, the Word of the Lord in Deuteronomy: "You shall not violate the rights of the alien or of the orphan nor take the clothing of a widow as a pledge. . . . When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf there, you shall not go back to get it, let it be for the alien, the orphan or the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings."

Or in Proverbs: "A rich man who oppresses the poor is like a devastating rain that leaves no food."

Or the Prophet Isaiah:

"Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?"

"This rather is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke."

"Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own."

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed. . . ."

Later in the same chapter, Isaiah admonishes us to "remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech."

We must remember these things when ensnared in the mundane socio-political events of the present day. These are eternal truths which must be applied and to which we must be faithful.

At the risk of being labeled with unkind and untrue names, we must stand by, at least spiritually, our sisters and brothers who give their very lives to follow the teaching of the Lord.

And in addition we all in our own lives have ample opportunities to be among those blessed by the Father — by helping the refugees on our shores, by working for greater public assistance for the needy, by supporting the missions.

and Opinions

**Roused
To Anger**

Editor:

Being much too lazy, I rarely write a letter to any newspaper. Only two emotions, gratitude or anger, are strong enough to rouse me from my customary literary lethargy. It's the latter, a reaction to Mrs. Dorothy Macaluso's letter (June 25), which prompts this response.

Mrs. Macaluso seems to believe Father O'Malley's main reason for writing to the Courier (June 11) was to defend Father Drinan's pro-abortion vote. If memory serves correctly his expressed purpose was to indicate his distaste for the reception of anonymous letters which make unfair and untrue accusations. In writing to the Courier, he chose the only avenue open to him in dealing with what must have been a sense of helpless frustration.

He clearly stated his disagreement with the Drinan

position on the abortion matter. While he didn't say so, he would surely be aware of the many highly complex issues dealing with the separation of Church and State which are unique to this country and, most likely, had a bearing on the Drinan decision. What he did say, was that there were other important "right-to-life" areas, namely, the reprehensible situation in El Salvador, on which Drinan has done much.

In so doing, his statement seems much more in line with Gospel values than does Mrs. Macaluso's statement. "One cannot be with God on one issue and against him on another."

To the contrary, don't most of us operate in precisely that fashion most of the time? Well over 30 years ago, Frank Sheed put it well when he wrote, "Most of us are pagans with Christian patches." If our Father not only loves us but always extends to us the opportunity to expand the size of those patches, should we strive to do any less for each other? And wasn't it exactly

in that spirit that O'Malley's statement affirming Drinan was made?

It particularly bothers me when some people seem to be unaware there are a number of fundamental human rights which flow from the right to life, one of which is the right to one's good name. To publicly disagree with the intellectual stance of another is perfectly valid. Creative tension has been present in our Church since its infancy. However, to presume to judge the motivation of one with whom we disagree, particularly in a public forum, seems directly counter to the very God-given rights with which we're all concerned. May I suggest that, in the future, judgments on anyone's integrity be reserved to the only Persons Who have both the right and competency to do so.

Mrs. Jean H. Cardinali
154 Greenaway Rd.
Rochester, N. Y., 14610

**Supports
Papal
Decree**

Editor:

Since the publication of the recent declaration from the Vatican on abuses in divine worship there have appeared various attacks on it and criticism of its content.

This declaration was issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship and approved by Pope John Paul II, who ordered it to be published and to be observed by all concerned. For such a declaration to be a cause of dissatisfaction is something that shouldn't be. We believe that it is under the influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the renewed liturgy came into being and new formulations were developed, not by accident, but through the efforts of chosen members of the church. Surely the church has the right and duty to safeguard its purity, for (as the

declaration states) "the glory of God and the good of the church."

It is a cause of gratitude that such a document be issued, since our spiritual life is so dependent upon and woven into the liturgical life of the church.

Sister M. Felicita
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Fairport, N.Y. 14450

**Xavier Group
Seeks Blind**

Editor:

The Xavier Society for the Blind, the national Catholic press and library for the visually handicapped, depends on the sighted person to bring its free services to the attention of the visually handicapped.

For the past number of years you have been of great assistance to us in reaching the totally blind and partially sighted person to inform them of our free services in Braille, large print and tape.

We are hoping to reach many new visually impaired in your diocese. Our sincere thanks to you, your staff and your many subscribers for their concern and help.

Betty J. Dodt
Xavier Society for the Blind
154 East 23rd St.
New York, N.Y. 10010

**'Chutzpah'
Involved**

Editor:

Surely, it takes a great deal of courage to call a fellow Christian a "hypocrite" in print. There is a certain amount of "chutzpah" also involved in further insinuating that he or she is a pharisee. But to put him or her in the company of Pontius Pilate requires a truly Olympian self-confidence. In response to such reasoning in my regard on the part of Mrs. Dorothy Macaluso, may I commend to her prayerful attention the words of our Savior in Matthew 7:1?

William J. O'Malley, SJ
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Rochester, N.Y. 14618

**Fr. Louis J.
Hohman**



The Open Window

**What Is
And Isn't
'Occult'**

Dear Father Hohman,

I read your article of June 16 about the mysterious and the occult. You didn't give any Scriptures (the Word of God) but rather the world's view of right and wrong in these two areas.

As a Catholic I need to know what God says as I find every priest consulted has a different view and most don't even take the subject seriously. Unfortunately very young children think some of these are just fun things to do at parties and later find they become dependent on them.

We never hear this mentioned in our Sunday homilies and are generally ignorant. Could you pursue this topic a little further? Just what is the occult? How do I know what to avoid? How do I know what are fun things in this area? I need some answers.

Sincerely,
M.E.Z.

Dear M.E.Z.,

I did not use any Scripture quotes because there is no way of knowing if what Scripture is talking about is the same thing we are talking about. The idea of extra-sensory perception was not explicitly known when the Scriptures were written. Your reference to my giving "the world's view" sounded like you were objecting. The views I was giving are derived from reason and science and so belong to God because God is Truth and truth is one. We cannot

expect that Scripture has something to say on every subject that ever might come up or has come up. That is far beyond its scope.

To answer your questions: what is the occult? The occult comes from a Latin word meaning "hidden" but its meaning goes beyond that to refer to hidden powers outside the influence of God or beyond his control. As such, any appeals to these powers is superstitious. Here we get into the question of things like astrology which is so popular today. I know this will get many people angry but it is simply a superstition and one can be doing great wrong to self and others by letting one's life and actions be guided by astrological "calculations." Some people just like to fool around with it and I suppose no harm is done; but where does one draw the line? Many people have been sucked into its influence as have come under the influence of fortune-telling, another superstition.

On the other hand we have a certain evidence of extra-sensory perception and mind over matter. Until relatively few years ago we didn't know that sound and pictures could be sent over air waves. Perhaps thought and energy can too.

How can we tell the difference — which are right and which wrong? Generally speaking if we are seeking influences to guide our life in the "occult" we are on the wrong track. God has given us his own guidance. None other is needed. But if we are merely exploring the frontiers of human mental powers with caution, that is O.K.



"I REALLY ENJOY HAVING YOU AS A JOGGING PARTNER, BOB, BUT DO YOU MIND IF I MAKE A SUGGESTION?"

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