

Editorials

The Pope's Teachings

Pope John Paul II, in his annual address on peace, reiterated some of the uncomfortable lessons he has been trying to teach us.

He voiced the strong conviction that "peace is possible" if we all truly want it and are willing to work and sacrifice for it.

He mentioned some obstacles to peace "the escalating arms race... the imperialism of one nation over another... the quest for material possessions."

"A society built on a purely materialistic basis denies people their freedom when it submits individual freedoms to economic dominations," the pope declared. He also posed an ominous thought:

"One can even wonder if war may not become — or remain — a normal factor of our civilization, with 'limited' armed conflicts going on for long periods without exciting public concern, or with a succession of civil wars."

Freedom was the specific theme of the peace

message and the pope said it was threatened by permissiveness in modern society. He added that abortion is an example of the modern "mistaken idea of freedom."

He condemned with equal force the arms race among nations in which "weapons of total annihilation are stockpiled."

Thus the pope's message covered a rather wide range of issues and the demands he voiced show that it is not easy being a Catholic in today's world. One of the intrinsic dangers is the temptation to pick and choose our favorites from among the pope's teachings, cite his words in their support and either ignore or even distort others. Such pursuit flirts with hypocrisy.

Gov. Grasso

In a new column appearing in today's Courier-Journal, which will be written by various members of the area communities of religious women, Mother Teresa and the late Dorothy Day are commended as fulfilling proper roles for women.

We realize that there are many, many more women who could be added to such a list. But we would like to mention just one — Gov. Ellen Grasso of Connecticut.

She has stood by her principles, popular or not, and because of that, or perhaps in spite of that, has become

one of the most admired persons in this country. She has succeeded in a field still largely reserved for males. And she has accomplished this in a firm, positive but unabrasive way.

Now locked in mortal combat with cancer, this beautiful woman continues to manifest a courageous and positive posture, though she had had to resign her governorship. Gov. Grasso is a person for all, men and women alike, to emulate.

Give Blood

Blood is an extremely valuable and easy gift for anyone to offer. And right now the Red Cross is in dire need of this precious commodity, which almost anyone has for the giving.

Many excuses are given by people as to why they will not donate blood but most simply do not hold water. It does not take much time, it is far from painful, expert medical attention is at hand at the Red Cross stations, and it is worth while feeling to know that you have given of yourself liberally.

During and right after the holiday season, blood is in short supply and the Red Cross begs your help. Call them for an appointment or just drop in at your local Red Cross headquarters. Friendly people there will guide you through the simple and short procedure and you'll like yourself for it. As well you should.

and Opinions

Contraception Serious Sin

Editor:

The Church has taught since the first century that contraception is a serious sin. This teaching has been definitively re-emphasized in recent years by Popes Pius XII and Paul VI, and by John Paul II in several instances. This moral directive of the Church, about which there is no doubt whatsoever, is simply a reflection of the natural law.

At present we have the following situation: statistics show that about 75 per cent of married Catholics practice contraception, almost everyone who attends Mass receives communion, and very few people regularly go to confession. So apparently a large percentage of Catholics commit the sacrilege of receiving holy communion when in the state of mortal sin.

Despite the unequivocal teaching of the Church on this subject, it may be that some Catholics are simply not aware that contraception is really evil. If so, this clearly indicates a dereliction of duty on the part of bishops and priests, who have not in-

structed their congregations about what is right and wrong.

As a recent article in the periodical Laywitness states:

"If so many people today no longer believe what until 1930 was the common and universal Christian teaching about contraception, even among Protestants, could it not be that they haven't been told, recently and authoritatively, that they are supposed to believe it? ... Few are going to believe the 'hard saying' about contraception unless it does begin to be preached seriously in the Church again. The Pope himself has made this clear — among other places, in his message to the U.S. bishops in Chicago."

So it seems obvious that bishops and priests must bear a large share of the blame for the proliferation of the evil of contraception (as of fornication and adultery), because they do not teach. Instead of inane "sweetness and light" sermons and homilies about "community," we need priests who will declaim from the pulpit in season and out of season, that certain acts are immoral.

Robert Knille
102 Lynwood Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14618

Preaching, Main Duty of Priests

Following is the text of an address given by Pope John Paul II to a group of priests from the U.S.

Dear Brother Priests,

I am happy to have this occasion to meet with you as you complete your course of continuing theological education at Casa Santa Maria, and as you prepare to return home.



We know that, during these moments we spend together, Jesus Christ is in our midst because we are gathered in his holy name and in the fraternity of the priesthood.

By God's grace and with the encouragement of your bishops and religious superiors, you have had the wonderful opportunity for a prolonged reflection on theology and Sacred Scripture. At the same time I am sure that you have known the other advantages which the Second Vatican Council sees as linked with courses such as yours: a strengthening of the spiritual life and a beneficial exchange of apostolic experiences.

And now, you are going back to your people, to all those communities in which you exercise your pastoral ministry. You are going back, please God, to proclaim with ever greater understanding and zeal the Good News of salvation, which was revealed by a merciful and loving Father, and which the Church, in fidelity to Christ, communicates from one generation to the next.

The proclamation of the Gospel is your primary task as co-workers with your bishops, and it reaches its fulfillment in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It is the mission to which you were called; it is the reason for which you were ordained.

But to be totally effective as priests, your whole life must be dedicated to the word of God and to him who is the Incarnate Word of the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, our one High Priest.

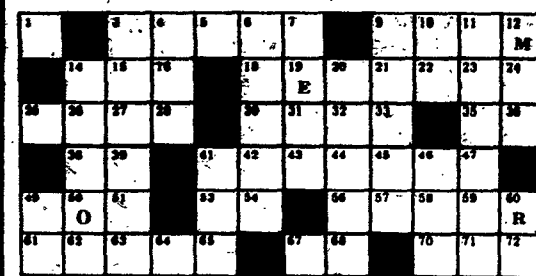
The word of God is the criterion for all our preaching. The power inherent in the word of God is what we offer to our people, and it is this power that unites the faithful and builds them up in holiness and justice. The word of God is a challenge to the People of God — and to the heart of each one of us — but it brings with it strength, immense strength; and when embraced, it produces joy and gladness. The word of God which we are called to proclaim, and on which every community of faith is built, is the message of the Cross. As we gather, day after day, week after week, to celebrate this mystery of faith, let us endeavor to present and explain its various aspects, which are so vital for the life of the Church: the healing and forgiveness, the suffering and deliverance, the victory and everlasting mercy held up to us by Christ. Like St. Paul we may indeed be conscious of representing ourselves "in weakness and fear and with much trepidation" and without "the persuasive force of wise arguments," but with the word of God we do possess always "the convincing power of the Spirit." And with St. Paul let us be always ready to speak truthfully to our people, saying, "your faith rests not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God."

May the lasting results of your course in Rome be a renewed commitment to God's word. Continue, dear brothers, to study the word of God, to meditate on it and to live it. Believe in God's word with all your hearts. Preach it, in union with the whole Church, in all its purity and integrity. And finally, surrender your own lives totally before its demands and inspirations.

And may Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of priests, sustain each of you in your ministry of the word and in your priestly consecration to Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Sunday Scripture Quiz

I. Gospel Reading: Mt 3, 13-17 — Jesus is anointed for his justice ministry. Below is a key passage from Scripture. You can determine what this passage is by finding the answers to the questions below the puzzle and then putting the letters in their appropriate box. The first one is done for you.



- 1. Eternal City: R O M E 60 59 12 19
2. Came from heavens: 21 67 27 6 62
3. Our final home: 70 42 1 45 16 23
4. Life-giving liquid: 41 43 11 4 47
5. Liked best: 56 28 56 44 10 32 14 22
6. Clenched hand: 9 71 63 30

Following are key passages from 2 Scripture readings. Fill in the missing words.

II. First Reading: Is 42, 1-4, 6-7 — God anoints his Servant to ministry of justice. Phrase: A bruised he shall not and a smoldering he shall not until establishes on the the will for his teaching.

III. Second Reading: Acts 10, 34-35 — Peter brings Cornelius the good news of peace. Phrase: addressed and the assembled at his these: I to see how it is that shows partiality.

Answers on Page 2

Passage I words: Rome, 1st, mayhem, blood, voice, 1st, dove, ash, heaven, ins, hymns, favorite.
Passage II words: earth, bench, wait, road, coast, and, wick, justice, he, seek.
Passage III words: Cornelius, begin, God, Peter, words, no, true, people, cause.



"IT'D BE NICE IF SOME OF OUR MONEY COULD BE SPENT FOR HEAT."