

Editorials

Public Assistance

Through their bishops, Catholics have been instrumental in pushing state leaders to the realization that the public assistance cash grant must be increased.

The State Catholic Conference, the public voice of the state's bishops, as part of the State Coalition for Fair Public Assistance, has worked effectively to bring to the public mind and to remind state lawmakers that the public assistance has not been raised since 1974 despite startling inflationary increases.

Our own diocese, following the leadership of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, has been a forerunner in this work to help the poor.

The effort has been widespread and since its inception, both political parties have come up with plans to raise the public assistance level.

Gov. Hugh Carey, a Democrat, has proposed two increases of 10 percent, the first in July 1981 and the second in July 1982.

Sen. Warren Anderson, a Republican, has proposed a 15 percent increase.

Carey proposes that the increase should be funded 50 percent by the federal government, 25 percent locally and 25 percent by the state. Two difficulties seem obvious — the new national administration does not seem to cherish such federal subsidization for the poor, and on the other extreme, localities also do not want to foot the bill.

Carey reportedly is willing to free localities of Medicaid funding in exchange.

The Anderson proposal, while for a smaller increase in the long run, is less encumbered; he suggests that the state would absorb the 15 percent increase itself.

This diocese has been conducting public hearings to get a fix on where people stand. Bishop Clark will pass on his findings to area state legislators at an Albany meeting.

While things look brighter for more realistic aid to the needy, State Comptroller Ned Reagan has dropped a fly in the ointment. Assuming a tight-fisted mien in face of the obvious need of impoverished families, he says New York State should wait until the Sun Belt states do something first.

This view is not worthy of this great state which has always recognized its responsibility to its poor citizens. Ridiculous it would be for New York to follow the lead, if any were ever forthcoming, of other states

which have never developed a conscience as regard to their poor.

Unfortunately, the Church has too often been put in a seemingly negative position regarding many modern issues — we are anti-abortion, anti-artificial birth control, anti-casino gambling. But when it comes to helping the poor, a distinctly Christian endeavor, the Church can put its best foot forward.

And Catholics and other concerned religious groups in every part of the state have been doing just that. The results look hopeful.

Sisters on Target

We warmly applaud the action of the Diocesan Sisters Council in calling for a diocesan holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

For years, the Courier-Journal has been advocating such recognition of this black Christian who showed the world that oppressed peoples can achieve human rights through peaceful means. In this fragmented, bitter, violent world, we should have figuratively kissed his feet. Instead, he was literally murdered much as the man he emulated.

We pray that diocesan officials pay heed.

and Opinions

St. Mary's... A Great job!

Editor:

I recently spent three weeks in St. Mary's Hospital as a patient. I could not speak more highly of the people who work there or of the care I was given. There is such a genuine care and concern that is evident in all those who served and cared for me. To all whom I may not have thanked personally, I wish to do that now.

I would also like to say that since St. Mary's is the only Catholic hospital in the city, I would like to see more encouragement and support in all ways by the Catholic community. It seems to me that it is important to keep this hospital alive and well by our affirmation of it. St. Mary's is also committed to the neighborhood community in which it exists and most especially to the poor and needy. It is commendable for them to take this stand in this day and age.

Also being the only Catholic hospital in the city, St. Mary's provides an option for those persons who are opposed to abortion and for those who desire their healing in which it exists and most especially to the poor and needy. It is commendable for them to take this stand in this day and age.

Often we complain about the things we don't like or approve of and tend to just let go by without acknowledgement those things for which we should be most grateful.

Thanks, St. Mary's, you're doing a great job!

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Prison Policy Questioned

The "Angolite," Louisiana State Prison newsmagazine, has been the recipient of many journalism prizes, including the 1980 George Polk Award. Last year, I subscribed several of my Attica inmate friends to it.

The November-December 1980 issue reported that "a copy of the Angolite sent to an inmate subscriber in the Attica Correctional Facility has just been returned to us with the note that it is not allowed in Attica. Apparently, prison authorities there regard The Angolite as a threat to the security of their institution."

Attica Superintendent Harold J. Smith replied to my inquiry, "I, as superintendent, choose not to have other institutions send their papers to inmates here. If some have come in it is by mistake."

Although I feel that the departmental directive that gives Mr. Smith the authority over inmate newspapers is unconstitutional, I have appealed to him on the basis that the Angolite is also a commercial magazine. As such its ban must be sanctioned by the Media Review Committee. Since the Angolite is not obscene or crime-provoking, I doubt that media review would uphold Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith did not refer the matter for media review. On Jan. 29, he wrote me a one-sentence letter: "I have reviewed the newspapers and my decision remains the same as it was."

Russia or America?
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Priests, Stay Out of Politics

The case of Rev. Darrell Rupiper, American Catholic priest, is a classical example to all priests of why they should not enter or become involved in politics. Rev. Rupiper, along with two Protestant clergymen, received messages from some of the hostages with the understanding that they were to be delivered to their families; instead, these American clergymen turned these messages over to the Iranian government because their sympathies were with the Iranians. When these hostages were released they

bitterly denounced the clergymen and referred to them as hypocrites.

When I read in the paper that Father Larry is a Marxist priest, or Father Tom is working for the poor, or Father Leroy is a clown or actor, or Father Bart is with the Chavez cause and Father Darrell with the Iranians, I cannot help but recall the words of St. Paul from I Cor. With modern interpretation it would read something like this: "One of you will say, 'I belong to Marx,' another, 'I belong to Chavez,' another, 'I cast my vocation with the poor,' and the fourth, 'My sympathies are with Iran.'"

"Has Christ then been divided into parts? Was it Marx who was crucified for you? Was it in Chavez's name that you were baptized...?"

The priest's vocation is that of mediator — between God and the people and the people to God through prayer, sacrifice and love. Love is open to all, forgives all and cannot belong to anyone or any one cause. All people should be able to come to the priest for solace and comfort and forgiveness, for the priest represents Christ on earth who was in the world but not of it. Listen to what the Vicar of Christ said to all priests. Pope John Paul II, our saintly pope, when he advised priests to stay out of politics!

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Evaluating Class Books

I would like to list nine recommendations given by columnist Father Robert Fox in the National Catholic Register on how to evaluate religious books used in the classrooms.

- 1) Is the child taught he has an immortal soul created by God and destined for Heaven, our eternal home? Social justice is a vital part of Christianity, but the book must not make life on this earth the ultimate concern of Christianity.
- 2) Determine the book's teaching on Original Sin...

Adam and Eve were historical persons who fell from grace through pride and disobedience. The sin of Adam is inherited by his descendants.

3) Check the book's handling of the Incarnation. Does it clearly present Jesus Christ as the eternal son of God become man to redeem us from our sins? Or does it merely present Christ as a model in faith and love?

4) Does the book maintain a supernatural goal throughout — the adoration of God and Heaven as our primary aim in life — or is the book naturalistic, presenting the Christian life as simply an effort to build a paradise on earth? Does it look forward to the resurrection of the body when it will be reunited with the soul?

5) Check to see if the saints are presented as living in a state of eternal happiness, seeing God face to face and able to intercede for us.

6) Does the book clearly teach the meaning of transubstantiation, that is, the Real Presence of Jesus Christ — Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the appearance of bread and wine? Is the Mass a perpetuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross or merely a time of experiencing community at a meal? Is the Holy Eucharist taught as Sacrifice and Sacrament in a concentric manner explained more fully each year according to age level?

7) How does the book present the Catholic Church in relationship to other Christian churches and religions of the world? The Catholic Church should be presented as the one true, historical Christian Church which has the fullness of true faith. It must present the pope as the visible head of the Church who speaks infallibly in faith and morals in his ex cathedra teachings and whose critical pronouncements must at all times be respected.

8) Does the book explain the Ten Commandments or simply list them? In a graduated sequence, as the child grows older, fuller explanations should be given so the child learns gradually how to apply them to daily life.

9) How does the book treat



SPECIALTY OF THE HOUSE

Sacred Scripture? Does it present both Tradition and Scripture as God's revelation to man? Do the scriptural interpretations agree with the doctrines of the Church, or are they merely private interpretations stemming from the conjectures of individual scholars?

unexpected, a health crisis, a broken marriage or the shattering of a lifelong dream. This is our time of hardship and tribulation — a test that God is sending our way to bring us back to loving him.

Why does God allow such tests? Because they are supposed to do something for us. They should allow the painful process within us known as refining or maturing to take place. During these times, we are reminded of our helplessness. It's not so much our faith in him but it is God's faithfulness and love that gets us through these moments.

Most of us emerge neither looking nor feeling at all victorious but admitting that we barely made it. This is how God sends for us to come through — chastened, bruised and repentful of our sins but most of all trusting and looking up to him.

When God seems to be sending a lot of bad luck your way, take courage and remember that he is only testing you.

Being a Catholic has taught me a basic truth that we should all be familiar with. When life is serene and all our troubles are small ones, then God is good to us and he is working in our behalf. At these times, we usually seem to be at the top of the world and everything appears to be going good.

Then suddenly comes the

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Hardships Are God's Tests

I know that God works miracles and answers prayers in our lives but many times I find it hard to believe that hardships can be a part of his plan for us.

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COURIER

ALARM

CITY APPROVALS
alarms, Fire Systems, 32

ALTERATION
seamstress, 458-4763.

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