

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Attacking Women Religious

From an angry reader:

I am very mad. Not at you, but at Sisters who meanly attacked Mother Theresa of Calcutta. In a column in a New York daily paper, two American Sisters complained that Mother Teresa has not become a prophetic voice attacking the institutions of society which create poverty. They also complained that because of Mother Teresa's traditional image and ways "she gives the impression of lacking acceptance and support for the life style and image of American religious women."

My response: Well, someone sent me the article and I thought, "How goofy can these two Sisters be?" One of their heaviest complaints was the spiritual life of Mother Teresa's community. They complained that it is anti-Vatican II. By this they mean that Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity has a strong sense of community which supersedes individuality. The Sisters pray together. They have meditation before Mass and daily Mass together. They eat together. They have a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament in the evening together. And they

recreate together after their work. All this was common before Vatican II, and is still observed by many strong communities of Sisters today. It is pretty much rejected by the Sisters who align themselves with the philosophy of the LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) to which many communities belong.

Do not lose your indignation entirely. These Sisters who have substituted activism for the supernatural in the religious life have done great harm, and their communities are disintegrating. However, one must be fair. While some communities are run by women's libbers who thrill with shrillness, contestation and ERA politics, there are other Sisters, who, although they do not follow traditional religious life, do have a valid religious life and do great good, for example our own Bethany House and Melita House communities.

And though they are less visible than aggressive progressives, there are many Sisters who are still faithful to the religious traditions of their communities.

The Sept. 7 Poughkeepsie Journal had a picture of two beautiful nuns in habit. These are Sisters of the Resurrection, a community which belongs to the Consortium Perfectae Caritatis, which is oriented

to traditional life. The article read:

"Sisters of the Resurrection are a common sight, walking down the main street of Castleton-on-Hudson in their A-line habits. Pedestrians comment on the changes in their clothing, but few venture up to the Sisters' hillside home to see how time has altered ancient practices. Sister Valerie (novice director) says the Sisters' Order is squarely in the middle of current Catholic practices. Sisters generally own a few black habits and perhaps one or two white habits for summer use. They cost \$24.95 if purchased. But most are made by the Sisters themselves. Cutting the cost of clothing is critical because expensive clothing is not consistent with the vow of poverty. Neither is jewelry

"They live in a dormitory-style building. Novices, who are still five to nine years from taking vows, live in rooms designed for at least six. Few personal effects are allowed. Daily attendance is required at half-hour meditations, morning and evening offices, noon prayers and spiritual reading, and saying the rosary. Sisters do their own house cleaning and help prepare buffet-style meals. Professed Sisters help, instruct and advise the others. Some of the postulants and junior professed Sisters teach in local schools.

"The nuns don't seem deprived. One thing that has not changed through the centuries is that Sisters feel their primary purpose is to serve God and His creation."

Mumford Church Renovation

Mumford — St. Patrick's Church here, a mission of St. Columba's in Caledonia, has begun a renovation program under the chairmanship of Timothy McGinnis.

McGinnis represents the sixth generation of his family to be involved with the church built in 1854.

He, Barbara Leo and Mrs. Virginia Skivington are

working with a large group of volunteers on the renovation.

According to McGinnis, work so far has included the installation of a new, donated roof, painting of the interior of the church, sealing the windows, restoring the original decor and restoring the church's original organ.

The renovation work is also accompanied by fund-raising

and social events, McGinnis reported.

Volunteers have been treated to a dinner, and recently, an ice-cream social was held at the church.

McGinnis said that more fund-raisers and social events are planned for the future, with an eye to ongoing restoration of the church.

The pastor of the mission is Father Ronald Gaesser.

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