

Editorials

**At the U.N.,
Hope . . .**

Journalists, remote from the United Nations, and particularly those of the Christian persuasion, can get quite a jolt from a confrontation from those men and women who labor daily at the world organization.

And the shock comes in the form of an eye-opener on our possible negligence as purveyors of the Good News.

Case in point: In an address to some 100 representatives of the religious press, Robert Muller, director of the U.N. budget and a Belgian who has worked at the U.N. for 33 years in various capacities, said, "The U.N. will eventually become a spiritual organization . . . We (the U.N. and the religious press) can together send a message of hope, while daily papers print their message of catastrophe."

Earlier in his talk, Mr. Muller did not differentiate between the secular and religious press when he blistered journalists by saying that for them "the end of a conflict is a catastrophe" because there is then little for them to write about. We do not agree with that

completely and Mr. Muller runs the risk of "blaming the messenger for the message." Nonetheless, he persisted that the problem of journalism as he sees it is intensified because "the media are the nervous system of the world's biological system."

The reason why Mr. Muller's talk may be classified as provocative is because, although he allows that we in the religious press are spreading the message of hope, his own brand of optimism far exceeds ours.

Speaking about the possibility of a nuclear war, he said, "We are eventually going to emerge from this nonsense." He predicted, "There ain't going to be a third world war — ever! People around the world will tell the Soviet Union and the United States, 'This is enough!'"

He indicated that the key to world transformation rests with the individual who believes in "the miracle of faith," who believes, "I can do it!"

As dealers in the Good News we perhaps have not embraced the message as warmly and hopefully as Mr. Muller, who reflects it glowingly in words and manner after 33 years of dealing with the bruised side of the world's ego. Another miracle of faith.

Humiliation

And still another perspective came from one of the people who handle such problems as world hunger daily, "up-close and personal." Said Ethiopian Terkle A. Tomlinson, senior liaison officer of the World Food Program: "When you are really hungry it is not food you think of . . . but the kind of food to kill the pain — alcohol or smoking."

He also mildly criticized those who disdain handouts as an humiliation of the recipients — "What is not humiliating when you are poor?" Handouts, he offered, are needed while programs are developed.

. . . And Power

And another striking reminder came from Briton Brian Urquhart, undersecretary for special political offices. Speaking for Kurt Waldheim who has disdained public appearances until his situation as secretary general is decided, Mr. Urquhart offered another striking observation: "The U.N. was not set up by starry-eyed idealists but by the three great power experts: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin."

He added that these men used the word "united" as in United Nations as "united not in peace but as united in war." His message was that the U.N. should not be discounted as a pollyanna-organization but one which understands full well the manipulation of power.

and Opinions

**New Coalition
Hopeful**

Editor:

There is little doubt that teen pregnancy is one of the most serious problems in our society today. However, it is a well-known fact that, up until now, the "solutions" to the problem have not been effective. Therefore, it is good news to Catholic parents to read that Father Charles Mulligan has taken the initiative to form a coalition in the diocese (C-J, 11-11) which will counteract those methods which have not worked.

For too long, our children have been exposed to the Planned Parenthood philosophy that says that the only way to prevent teen pregnancy is to provide sex education which, of course, includes information on the use and availability of contraceptives. For too long, while the experts have said that parents should be the ones to teach their children about sex, they have also said that since we really don't know anything about it, we will have to be taught by them first! For too long, while these same experts have advocated "waiting" to become sexually active, they admit that it is "unrealistic" to do so. Of course, at no time do they ever give the impression that premarital or extramarital sex

is wrong! (That is oppressive, old-fashioned, religious teaching.)

Father Mulligan is to be congratulated for reaffirming the wisdom of the teachings of the Catholic Church when he said that abstinence should be emphasized as the primary pregnancy prevention.

How fortunate we are to have been given the Faith through which we have the means to rise above the human condition. We have the responsibility to pass that Faith on to our children.

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**Claim Termed
Pretentious**

Editor:

I would like to make an important clarification and to correct an error in the Letter to the Editor (C-J 11-11) of the InterCongregational Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of Mercy and School Sisters of Notre Dame, which letter was written to "make an important clarification and to correct an error in Father Paul Cuddy's column (C-J 10-21) entitled "Attacking Women Religious."

The letter states that the Leadership Conference of Women Religious "is the group officially recognized by

the Sacred Congregation of Religious." This is simply false.

The Conference of Major Superiors, which preceded the Leadership Conference, was in fact officially recognized by the Vatican, but once that group was replaced by the present Leadership Conference, the new group did not nor does it now enjoy exclusivity.

As a matter of fact, the Sacred Congregation deals with the Consortium Perfectae Caritatis, and with religious orders of women which are not happy with either the Leader Conference or the Consortium.

The confusion is enhanced by the fact that the American Bishops do deal exclusively with the Leadership Conference (which explains how Sister Kane got into the act when Pope John Paul II visited Washington), but to say that the Vatican through its Sacred Congregation of Religious dealt exclusively with the Leadership Conference is pretentious and not true.

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**Poor Hurt
By Liberals**

Editor:

Walter O'Hagan in his Oct. 14 letter criticized proposed defense spending and labeled conservatives pro-rich, anti-poor and anti-labor.

Contrary to Mr. O'Hagan's comments, as a conservative I am none of the above.

Union member and President Ronald Reagan realizes that the plight of the poor is the result of past liberal social programs and government spending on an ever-expanding bureaucracy.

Now that the president is trying a new approach, the liberals are crying that he is against the poor and for the rich.

As the president himself stated, the new economic policy will take time to bring the economy around.

Defense spending is another bone of contention that liberals complain about. But realistically, survival of our nation demands top priority.

What good are social programs when your enemy has conquered you?

Yet even with a large defense budget there is much that can be done to help the poor.

Each year, according to columnist Victor Riesel, there is one billion dollars in welfare fraud in New York City alone.

Imagine how many needy people would be helped if that kind of waste were eliminated.

President Reagan's concern is for all people, rich and poor alike. His programs, if given a chance, should benefit everyone.

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Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1½ pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.

**Fr. Albert
Shamon**



Word for Sunday

**Mary:
Bearer
Of Life**

Sunday's Readings: (R3)
Jn. 1:6-8. (R1) Is. 51:1-2, 10-11. (R2) 1 Thess. 5:16-24.

One of the intriguing stories in the annals of medicine and health is that of the search for Mary Mallon — better known as Typhoid Mary. Mary Mallon had a low-level infection of the typhus bacteria, and was a carrier of the dreaded typhoid fever. Seven epidemics were linked to her.

A detective, a sanitary engineer, named George Soper, who worked for the New York City Department of Health, was called to investigate an epidemic at Oyster Bay. He concluded that the sudden outbreak of the illness was caused by a human carrier. After some time and painstaking work, he traced the source of the outbreak to a cook — who had, by then, disappeared. Her name was Mary Mallon.

He continued his search for her in the fashionable Park Avenue section of New York City where it was rumored she had gone to work. Going door to door, he eventually found her and explained that he wanted to run some tests. She reacted by going after him with a carving knife. She disappeared again.

Later, an epidemic of typhoid broke out at Sloane Hospital. Twenty-five nurses and attendants were stricken simultaneously. George Soper discovered that Mary Brown had left suddenly when someone jokingly called her Typhoid Mary. Police found her just as she was preparing a bowl of gelatin for a friend. She was taken to a hospital on North Brother Island on the East

River where she remained until her death.

In another time and in another place, there was another Mary who was a carrier — Mary, who carried the baby Jesus.

Typhoid Mary was a carrier of death. The Virgin Mary Mother was a carrier of life. One Mary carried in her body fear; the other Mary carried in her body hope. The one Mary was rejected; the other revered.

Sunday's gospel tells of a carrier named John. "There was a man named John sent by God." He was a carrier: "He came as a witness to testify to the light." He was a carrier of the light — a messenger of the Christmas message.

What that message is the Third Isaiah tells us (R1). It is a hope-filled, life-encouraging message. Just zero in on the five "to"s in that passage:

"To bring glad tidings . . . to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord."

Everyone is a carrier of sorts: a carrier of fear or a carrier of hope; a carrier of that which leads to death or a carrier of that which leads to life.

We might ask ourselves, what kind of message is being carried in our lives: a message directed at self and the senses, or the message of Christmas which is directed toward others — a message that binds up, comforts, grants and gives.

In the Italian play, "Burnt Flowers," Ugo Betti has one of his characters say, "Everyone has inside himself a message — what shall I call it — a piece of good news."

