

Editorials

Mafia Low-Lives

Concerning the ongoing atrocities attributed to the Mafia both right here in our own diocesan see city and also in Sicily, we have no patience with those who say, "Leave them to their own justice, let them kill each other off."

The implication that society is insulated from such internecine activity is ridiculously false. Crime in our midst rubs off on all of us. But even more important, members of organized crime in the United States do indeed kill off more than their fraternal low-lives. The syndicate, or whatever other name it crawls under these days, controls drug trafficking, prostitution, and the various "pornographic" enterprises, including those utilizing underage children in sexual acts. Not only are organized crime members responsible for physical murders but to a large extent to the spiritual death threatening our country.

Two timely reports in recent days point up the seriousness of this matter. In our series beginning today on Covenant House which operates in the midst of the pornographic jungle known as Times Square, officials make pointed accusations at

organization crime's profiteering on the most despicable pursuits affecting our society.

Someone dare tell us that we should leave such pervers to their own devices! Anyone with any true concern should have realized the true worthlessness of syndicate members when they victimized their own immigrant people back at the turn of the century: people already afflicted by poverty and bigotry from without!

The gravity of the situation is made evident by the fact that Pope John Paul II, in the midst of other monstrous tribulations, took time recently to make a stinging denunciation of Masifosi and their ilk. He called the society "aberrant" and rejected the mentality of silence which cloaks Mafia misdeeds.

This "omerta" or vow of silence also was assailed by Cardinal Salvatore Pappalardo of Palermo, Sicily. He said such silence was tied to "generalized fear of vendetta" and also to a "not properly understood conception of honor."

He might have added that there is no "honor" among the stinking jackals, pimps, child abusers, deviates and hoodlums of organized crime who would rather terrorize, cheat, steal, main and live off the miseries of terrorized children than do a decent day's work.

No false homage should be paid to such thugs, no matter what clothes they can afford to try to hide their untidy souls.

Nor should society let thugs be thugs. Nothing other than an untiring and unyielding rat-hunt will do. And a public campaign should be launched to let all know the true makeup of such criminals.

Helping Poland

Poland, dear Poland! What can we add to the so many things already said by great men such as Pope John Paul II and other world leaders? What can we do to assuage the obvious grief in Polish eyes and in the hearts of good people everywhere?

All the world is stung by the oppression of a nation often subject to such tyranny in recent years. First the Nazis and then the Soviets and now the military puppets, taking orders from Moscow.

We, of course, can pray. But, through the efforts of concerned citizens in our own community, we can also offer substantive assistance.

Contributions may be sent to the Tribute to Poland Fund, Diocesan Missions Office, 123 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

and Opinions

When To Retire

Editor:

As a priest of the diocese who will be retired in June 1983, according to the present decree, I was especially interested in the Dec. 16 issue of the Courier-Journal.

It seems that to single out Father Ehmann as the model priest in his retirement was rather unfair. Few priests in their best years possessed the talent and energy of Father Ehmann.

When the decision was made for the mandatory 70-year retirement, it was due to the fact that so many of the younger priests were becoming pastors rather late

in their priestly ministry. With so many defections, deaths, and retirements, it seems we have reached that goal. Most of the priests today become pastors comparatively young.

I recently told Bishop Clark that I would willingly accept his decision as to the year of retirement. I only asked that it be made soon so that we may plan for our future accordingly. Secondly, I asked that it be his personal decision, not necessarily based on a popular vote.

Our class of 1940 has been very faithful in our alumni meetings over the years. We still represent five dioceses besides Rochester. All of our classmates, God willing, will retire at 75. I ask myself the question: "Why did we in the



"VERY FUNNY, BUT I'M SERIOUS ABOUT WANTING TO GET BACK TO CHURCH."

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 1 1/2 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.

Rochester diocese age so much more quickly than they?"

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Provokes Comment

Editor:

In a letter in the Courier-Journal for Dec. 16, Neil Murray reproaches Vatican II for changing the words of the consecration of the Mass, "Which shall be shed for you and for many," to "shed for all men."

I have heard from a priest of the Congregation of St. Pius X, a congregation founded by the somewhat disoriented Archbishop Lefebvre, that the words "shed for many" were put into the canon of the Mass by the Council of Trent. Like Father X, Mr. Murray seems to think these words are cast in stone. Having studied eight languages and done a great deal of translating, I look at things somewhat differently.

Murray asserts that "All the Bible accounts of the Last Supper have Christ using the phrase, 'shed for many,'" but he does not say which version of the Bible he is following. The Jerusalem Bible, however, has Matthew and Mark using "shed for many," but not Luke nor Paul (1 Cor. 11). Even if all four had used this, I fail to see how "for all men" is incompatible with "many." Given Jewish exclusivism at that time, it took a special vision to jar St. Peter into realizing that Samaritans were to be included in the Kingdom. Christ may have said "shed for you and for many" to broaden his audience's understanding.

The Nicene Creed says, "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven." (Like "men," the Latin "homines" means both men and women. Had women been excluded, "vires" would have been used.) Since it is a dogma of the Church that Christ died for all men, "shed for all men" seems to be an improvement.

Murray notes that Pope John Paul II has given the U.S. Catholic bishops permission to change the phrase "shed for all men" to "shed for all." In his fatherly solicitude the Pope is willing to accommodate even those who, ignorant of the English language, do not know that "men," in this context, is like

the word, "chairman," epicene.

Kenneth O'Loane
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Large Doses Of Generosity

Editor:

The Office of Black Ministries wishes to take this opportunity to thank the many kind persons who responded to our pleas through the Courier-Journal for winter clothing for the Haitian refugees unjustly incarcerated at Ray Brook Prison, Lake Placid. Thanks to all of you, far more clothing was collected than we had anticipated, and this will prove an invaluable source of physical comfort in supporting the Haitians through the winter.

For those who donated money, that will be utilized to defray the expenses incurred to truck the clothing to the prison.

OBM also wishes to applaud the Courier-Journal for its consistent sensitive reporting of events relative to the oppression of the Haitians. Such reporting, we feel, was a factor in the government's rescinding of the order to dispatch over four thousand this to the military facility at Fort Drum, Watertown.

The Lord bless all of you.

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Family Thanked

Editor:

We would like to thank publicly the unknown family from Fairport who brought great quantities of homemade foods to St. Joseph's House of Hospitality to share with God's precious poor on Christmas Day.

As a volunteer there, I know that not only money but great labor went into that family's gift. May they be richly blessed for their generosity.

Evelyn Russo
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Fr. Albert Shamon

Word for Sunday



Why Was Jesus Baptized?

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 1:7-11. (R1) Is. 42:1-4, 6-7. (R2) Acts 10:34-38.

It sounds strange to modern Christian ears to say that Jesus was baptized. There is a popular emphasis in traditional catechetics which connects baptism for us with forgiveness of sin. But all know that Jesus was not a sinner. So why was He baptized? Was He playing some kind of game?

Jesus' baptism was a proclamation, a revelation and an inauguration.

It was a proclamation, for at baptism the voice from heaven told who Christ is: "This is my beloved Son." This expression was an echo of Psalm 2:7 where the Messiah is spoken of as a divine king. "The Lord said to my Lord, 'You are my Son, this day I have begotten you.'"

Jesus' baptism was a revelation, for at His baptism the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove and the voice from heaven went on to say, "My favor rests on Him." These words and actions reflect the words of the prophet Isaiah in the first reading. The prophet speaks of God's Servant as being a man who suffers. By using these words of the prophet at the baptism of Jesus, Mark is telling us that Jesus is this Servant and His kinship, divine though it be, will not be one of earthly triumph, but rather one of suffering. To fulfill this difficult role is why the Spirit was given Him.

Finally the baptism of Jesus was an inauguration. It was a formal beginning of His work of salvation. By

submitting to John's baptism, He identified Himself with sinners and was ready to suffer the consequences. The temptations following immediately after His baptism demonstrated how fiercely beset with struggle His life would henceforth become and they also presaged His ultimate victory and His unflinching obedience to His Father's will, even when it meant the cross.

Jesus' baptism teaches us what our baptism is. It too is a proclamation that we are sons of God. It also is a revelation that our purpose in life must be the very same as that of the Son of God Himself. We must, in other words, live like the Son of God. Jesus' whole life was lived for others, to save others, no matter the cost to Himself. Let us think this is too hard, the Spirit of God is given us. How beautifully Isaiah put it: "I, the Lord, have called you... I have grasped you by the hand... I have formed you..." In a word, all this is His doing, not ours. Our doing is to let what He has begun be done. He has lit us as a light to the nations. Our job is to let the light shine, to let others see our goodness.

This calls for an inauguration, a striving to be:

meek; that is, not crying out, not shouting at others.

understanding; that is, not breaking the bruised reed or quenching the smoldering wick; not kicking people when they are down.

broadminded; that is, showing no partiality, seeing people as persons, and not as things.

Then one day, God will be able to say of each of us: "You are my beloved son."