

Catholic Press Month

Free to Spread the Good News

By Norman J. Muckerman, CSSR
Editor, Liguorian Magazine
CPA President

In the New Testament there are more than 150 references to faith. Some of them are the words of Jesus Himself; most of them are found in the writings of His apostles, men inspired and fired by the Spirit to teach as Jesus taught.

It was through the Spirit and through these writings, the nascent Catholic press, that the "good news" was confirmed and spread. And through the centuries that followed, even to the present, the process has continued. Today, this combination of Spirit and written word is needed possibly more than ever before, if people are to "see the world through the eyes of faith."

Unfortunately there are today too many agents and influences that seek to distort or even block our vision. It is the high mission and special privilege of today's Catholic press to point out and make clear the way that leads to the Father

and His own eternal Word. The Catholic press will do this in lasting and permanent fashion by giving its readers the truth that sets them free, "forming and informing" them, "reaching and touching directly their superior faculties" as Paul VI once declared to a group of Catholic journalists.

We should be very grateful, I think, that here in America this unique mission of the Catholic press can be fulfilled. We have a free, strong, growing Catholic press. In many other parts of the world, this is not the case. In some countries the Catholic press is not even allowed to exist; in others it is completely controlled or so severely restricted that some publications must put potential subscribers on a waiting list.

The results of such limitations on the Catholic press are reflected in the diminished vitality of the Church in those countries. Here in America, as we celebrate Catholic Press Month this February, let us resolve to be more aware of the role the Catholic press plays in bringing to our Church, our nation, and indeed to a darkening world, the bright and shining light of truth and the piercing vision of faith.

See the World Through Faith

By Bishop Norbert F. Gaughan
Greensburg, Pa.
Honorary President, CPA

The Gospels say those who "see" Jesus as the Redeemer are making an act of faith. This "seeing in faith" is a hallmark of John's Gospel. Only those chosen by the Father can truly see Jesus; seeing is "to believe in Him and in the One Who sent Him. The others who can see Him in the flesh but do not believe in Him are "blind." The prologue to His Gospel states: "We have seen His glory" (some had not), and Christ's last words relate what Christ said to Thomas: "You became a believer because you saw Me. Blessed are they who have not seen and believe."

This is not a visible perception of which John is speaking. We see rightly when we see Christ with the eyes of faith. This faith is not belief in the incredible, the simply marvelous. It is perceiving a heavenly reality behind the miraculous; i.e., what Jesus continues to reveal about God and Himself, through the activities of the community of believers today. But people must always come to faith first through the visible.

The healing of the blind man is important in the Gospels. Luke's version differs in a way. His blind man needs help from others. His friends first tell him to be quiet, then when Jesus calls him, they help. But even if they see, they do not have faith. The blind man receives sight because his faith is greatest. What happens to him in turn impresses the others, who as yet have not found faith in Christ.

The Catholic press has chosen for its February 1982 observance the theme: "See the world through eyes of faith." The question immediately comes to mind: Does this mean to see the world as it really is, or to see the reality behind the real: God, Jesus, His Son, and their Spirit Who "over the bent world broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings" (as poet Hopkins puts it).

One thing is certain: it does not mean to see the world through rose-colored glasses. Some, even Catholic leaders, would have the Catholic press do just that — paint lovely pictures, tell warm stories, hide the sins, faults and failings of humans. This is in the "let's pretend" mode to ignore the real. Nor does it indicate we are to see the world distorted as if by amusement park mirrors. There is a brand of journalism, mostly secular, sometimes "religious," which believes the function of the press is to show the warts, the meanness, the nasty contrivances that arise when men pursue private enterprises for power or fiscal gain. In short, they want to

depict a world without redemption, with man steeped in sin; they are not friends of the Catholic press.

What about those over-zealous souls who ask the Catholic press to tell the story of humans as if they were angels, to concentrate on the miraculous to the point of unreality? These want "blind" faith, which is without man's reason, his intelligence, his talents. The Gospels never portray blind faith; faith is never blind, but another way to see the real. Even those who want the Catholic press to portray the world in monochromes — blacks and whites with no in-between shadings — demand that we deny the Gospel. They have fallen prey to a very ancient heresy which held that Jesus never became a real man. But Christ did; and when He embraced our creature-state, He gave us reason to believe in it. He still invites disciples to utilize human skill to the utmost, to discover all they can about God's world and creation.

This is where the Catholic press can truly shine. It speaks the real about the world that "God so loved" as to send His Son. It tells the truth about men, made by God, fallen into sin, redeemed by Christ's passion and death. It speaks of human struggles and tribulations with hope, for they are seen in the light of the Resurrection. Catholic papers, journals, newsletters, magazines tell the truth about the Church: it is made up of human beings and it is not God but it is the instrument of Christ, its Head. It shows life's great moments transformed by Christ's coming, to become our sacraments: birth, growth, nourishment, marriage, healing, worship. It does all this and more when it invites us to find beneath the appearances of the world the permanent, the lasting.

We must be warned: the world "which did not receive Him" is not impressed. It asks us to pay our way, to prove our message. We are called to sacrifice, to face hardship in telling that story week after week. The Catholic press always needs the support and encouragement which only Catholics can give. It needs it more than ever.

But with Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Catholic press wants us to believe: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." If we see the reality of God behind our world, then we are the ones spoken of in the first letter of Peter: "Without having seen Him you love Him; though you do not see Him, you believe in Him." That can be our joy, our salvation.



Memorial Chalice

Rev. Mr. Rosario LaDelfa, center, receives a memorial chalice inscribed with the names of members of the Knights of Columbus who have died in the past year from Father Thomas B. Mailloux, CSB, pastor of Christ the King Church and faithful friar of the Bishop James E. Kearney Assembly of the Fourth Degree of the organization. Also present for the event are knights John C. Schottmiller, faithful navigator; William F. Schmitz, faithful pilot; and John T. Kelley, faithful captain. Deacon LaDelfa is serving as deacon intern at St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls.

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.

LENTEN SPECIALS

Lunch on Spruce

Broiled Haddock \$3.75

Broiled Filet Sole \$7.95

Antonio's

PARTIES UP TO 80 PEOPLE

621-0550

More Opinions

Irish Priest Held Too Long

Editor:

Charles Dickens exposed the injustice and stupidity of the English penal system in his novels more than a century ago. This sordid side of British life persists as the Establishment attempts to "teach a lesson" to the poor and powerless, especially if they are Irish.

The case of Father Patrick Fell concerns those interested in prisoners of conscience. Father Fell served in a working class parish of Coventry. He was accused of membership in the Irish Republican Army. Although he was not charged with any criminal action, he was sentenced to 12 years for "conspiracy."

His prison treatment has

been extremely vindictive. His nose was broken by his jailers. When his mother died, letters of sympathy and Mass cards were withheld. Although he is ill, a broken man, and no menace to society, he has been repeatedly denied parole.

The excess of Father Fell's punishment may be judged by the fact that if he had shot at the queen, as a young man did last year, he could get a maximum sentence of seven years. Father Fell has already served nine years. The tradition of English penal laws that attempted to wipe out the

Catholic clergy is not yet dead.

Amnesty International has been successful in getting totalitarian governments to release prisoners of conscience by letter writing campaigns. Will this technique work in a democracy? Try protesting for Father Fell by writing William Whitelaw, Home Secretary, Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H, 9AT, England.

George M. Korb
St. Anthony on Hudson
Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144

Rosary on the Air

The Family Rosary Network may be heard at 6:30 nightly over the following stations:

WWWG, Rochester (1:50 AM); WXXY, Watkins Glen (104FM); WFSW, Seneca Falls (99FM and 1110AM); WOIV, Syracuse (105FM); WYRD, Syracuse (1540 AM); and WXRL, Buffalo (1300AM)

WANTED: Your Tired Kitchen!

We will replace your existing fronts with new custom Formica doors and drawers with over 50 different door styles and hundreds of colors to choose from! All frame work laminated to match. End result... a custom kitchen look without the custom kitchen price!

15 Doors & Drawer Fronts Was \$1195
Completely installed. Hardware included.
In Home **\$895**

FREE ESTIMATE

TEGH-FORM INDUSTRIES
777 Colver Road • 288-4100