

Editorials

A Parish Is Born

If joy serves effectively as the yeast for a new parish's growth, then a burgeoning future is in store for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish in the Hamlin area of northwestern Monroe County.

Although it was Ash Wednesday, a fitting day for new beginnings but also the first of the somber days of the Church calendar, it was impossible to quell the joyful anticipation, the bubbling spontaneity and warm kinship as the prospective members of the new parish gathered for their "first" Mass.

Father William Amann chose a barn as setting for this historic ceremony and as parishioners made their way among cows and chickens, the comparison with another birth long ago was impossible to miss.

To be sure, the Mass was properly serious and

Father Amann reminded his new flock that "only in the Lord can we have hope." He also quoted from the saint herself: "You are children of eternity."

But when a chicken perched on a startled parishioner's shoulder, solemnity was displaced by good cheer.

As is fitting with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it was a time for other transformations — simple farm animals assumed grandeur, a country barn became a cathedral and the abstract ideas for a new parish became a real community.

To be sure, there will be rocks and holes for the new parishioners on the road ahead. But, judging from the natural spirituality and hope of their first Mass, it will lead home.

The Courier-Journal hopes to capture some of the warmth of achievement for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish and share it with readers throughout the diocese. As events warrant, we will report not only the logistical and historic milestones of the new parish but



Father William Amann asked his new parishioners each to make a straw cross following his example to commemorate the first gathering last week in a Hamlin barn.

also hope to convey the spiritual essence of the growth of our diocese's latest sign of Christian community.

and Opinions

Amendment Immoral?

Editor:

The Feb. 17 issue of the Courier-Journal reveals to me that the diocese has swallowed the Hatch Amendment hook, line and sinker. I would like to show by quoting just two very knowledgeable persons,

however, that this may not be the best policy to pursue if we are serious in ending the slaughter of unborn babies.

Prof. Charles Rice (professor of law at Notre Dame) has stated the following: "The Hatch Amendment is a disaster... it would worsen, not improve, the abortion climate in this country... Because we had

implicitly accepted in the Hatch Amendment the non-personhood of the unborn child, we could no longer argue that he is entitled to protection... the general tendency would be for abortion to become generally and increasingly permissive." (Laywitness, Jan. 1982; N.C. Register, Feb. 21, 1982)

In the Feb. 21 National Catholic Register's letter to the editor, John Muggeridge (son of Malcolm Muggeridge) wrote: "For the last 12 years now the situation envisaged by Sen. Hatch has existed in Canada... Yet these have not been happy times for anti-abortionists..." The 1969 amendment "has done more to legitimate prenatal killing than to restrict it... The telling sign, however — that abortion is now officially regarded as a moral alternative to giving birth — is that it is covered under government-funded medicare in every province and territory in the Dominion... and few should have been surprised when a Montreal hospital faced with having to close either its maternity wing or its abortion facility was ordered by the Quebec government to keep open the latter."

In view of these cogent arguments against supporting the Hatch Amendment it is also worthy of remark to mention the Declaration on Procured Abortion of 1974 and ratified by Pope Paul VI. It says: "It must in any case be clearly understood that a Christian can never conform to a law which is in itself immoral, and such is the case of a law which would admit in principle the licitness of abortion. Nor can a Christian take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law or vote for it." Hatch is such a potential law.

I hope those so energetic in supporting Hatch will take a wait-and-see policy and educate themselves more in the Helms-Hyde Human Life Bill which clearly states "that for the purpose of enforcing the obligation of the States under the Fourteenth Amendment not to deprive persons of life without due process of law, each human life exists from conception, without regard to race, sex, age, health, defect, or condition of dependency, and for this purpose 'persons' includes all human beings."

Teresa Houwers
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Rochester, N.Y. 14619

She Prefers Bare Cross

Editor:

Re: "Crucifix Above Law," Feb. 17.

I would just like to comment on the woman's sentiments that the "Catholic Church should never be without a crucifix at any time... and that... the crucified and suffering Christ in our Church..."

First, Christ the King is no longer the suffering Christ nailed to a cross. He is glorified!

I am eternally grateful for all Jesus has done for me and I accept Him as my Lord and Savior. There would be no eternal life for any of us without the shedding of His precious blood to cover our sins and our accepting personally this gift of His love.

I prefer the plain wooden cross, not to deny His suffering but to see beyond the cross to the purpose of the agony: His glorious resurrection of triumph and victory!

The cross represents to me the attributes of God, His greatness and His goodness toward man; also Jesus' love to God and to man, a love binding us all together.

So let us deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him to the glory of His heavenly kingdom, not forgetting His presence in our lives daily to guide us homeward.

Mrs. Mary Post Guinta
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Thank You' Unnecessary

Editor:

Re: Thanksgiving Appeal:

If there is a need for an appeal, then every cent should count.

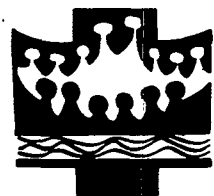
It is totally unnecessary to send a formal "Thank You" to each contributor.

The amount of money sent to do so should be used to better advantage — namely, what it was collected for.

Rosemarie Twietmeyer
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Insights In Liturgy

By Father Robert J. Kennedy



Lent: A Reconciling Season

When each of us was baptized and confirmed, we were anointed on the forehead with the Oil of Chrism and were thus consecrated priest, prophet and servant-king in the Spirit of Christ. We were so marked that we might "live always as members of his body." It is a dramatic action, then, to accept, as we did last week, the anointing of ashes, for it acknowledges what our baptismal consecration and innocence have become: the dry remains of a once vibrant life.

But to accept the ashes is to already set oneself upon the road of repentance and reconciliation; to begin to recapture our baptismal innocence and the vitality of the Christian life. As we acknowledge our sinfulness, we are also invited to contemplate the God of steadfast mercy and to draw close again to this compassionate God who is welcoming back his prodigal sons and daughters.

Where does such reconciling activity take place? Like the forgiving father who runs out to meet his prodigal son (Luke 15), it takes place "on the road." Reconciliation is the sum and substance of the Christian life. Its fullest and best celebrations occur in the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Penance, but these do not happen in isolation. Reconciliation permeates all of Christian life; or better, if we are to be faithful to our baptismal consecration, then we are about Christ's way of living: reconciling and being reconciled.

This is done in many ways. First and perhaps most basically, it is done by the attitude we develop toward life. Do we find life a burden, full of problems and difficulties, every situation and most people obstacles in

our path? Do we have a sense we are being defeated by life and its circumstances? Or do we understand life's difficulties, sufferings, failures, frustrations and problems in the light of the cross, which symbolizes their reality but also the way to victory over them? "Your attitude must be Christ's... he became obedient, obedient even to death on a cross." (Philippians 2:1-11) Christ's was an obedient attitude that was paying close attention to what God was doing in his life and the life of the world. Ours must be the same.

Second, works of mercy and charity are where we are reconciled with God and our brothers and sisters. In fact, such works are the school where we learn what reconciliation really means. For to do these works, we must have the very heart of our merciful, compassionate and loving God who tolerates no barrier to the delivery of his care. All, without exception, are our sisters and brothers whom we are called to serve with God's love. To do the works of mercy is to see the way God sees, and to allow no wall, label, or description of difference to stand in the way of our doing them.

It should be understood that this is not just a good deed here and there. Rather, the works of mercy and justice are an integral part of Christian living.

This leads to the third way reconciliation happens: the reflection in prayer upon the Gospel message so that its outlook can be evermore fully adopted. This can be done by prayerful reading and study of the scriptures, by attentive listening to the proclamation of the Word in the liturgy, by prayer in the solitude of one's room or in the strengthening bondedness of the company of other Christians. Penitential services and the sacraments of reconciliation serve as well to make us into living signs of conversion to God (Rite of Penance 4).



"I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, TED, BUT ALL THOSE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER SESSIONS HAVE REALLY HELPED ME TO BE MORE HONEST ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP. GET OUT."

Educational Programs On Hatch Amendment

March 14 — St. Mary's, Ontario, 7:30 p.m.

Lenten Regulations

Today, Ash Wednesday, is a day of fast and abstinence from meat. Good Friday is the only other day of both fast and abstinence.

Other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

The fast is defined as one full meal a day, with two lighter meals. It is required of those 21-59 years of age.

The prohibition against meat on Fridays applies to those 14 years of age and older.

A Catholic should not likely excuse himself from these practices.