

Editorials

**Lithuania . . .
A New Revolt?**

Hopefully, no one ever really forgets those oppressed people on the dark side of the Iron Curtain. But while very few forget, it probably also is true that not enough emphasis and concentration of thought is given their plight. Not by the media and not by policy makers.

The Helsinki Accords, at least initially, were a step forward. However, the Soviet Union constantly disregards its provisions and continues in its repressive way.

The emergence of Pope John Paul II and his intelligent and fearless support for the union movement in Poland presented the Kremlin and its hirelings with a giant setback. Because the pope drew world attention to Poland, it probably enhanced the power of Solidarity in the first place and later on was a factor in holding off the Russians amassed along the Polish border.

If Godless communism is a thorn in the side of religion, then Catholicism is an equally painful weapon for the Russians.

And Moscow seemingly faces a new cross. About

two thirds of Lithuania's priests have announced that they will not accept the new Soviet regulation that gives the state complete control over priests' assignments and the admission of candidates to the priesthood.

Thus a new confrontation is in the offing and the Kremlin should handle it quickly before that man in Rome steps in again.

It is probably difficult for us in the free world to understand what it is to live in the long night of oppression. Thank God for the lesson that the peoples of Iron Curtain nations continue to show examples of courage and idealism. The souls of all are enriched because of them.

A Bit of Irish

With St. Patrick's Day just around the corner, it would be apropos to pass on some Irish humor, as provided by himself, Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich, primate of all Ireland.

He recently recounted a meeting with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"When she came into the meeting room, she asked if I would like something to drink." I answered, "I'll have a bit of Irish."

"Of course," he added, "there was nothing Irish in the room."

Canadian Sunset

Though the intent is not to demean our gracious neighbor to the north, Ontario, Canada, it is still necessary to criticize its new law requiring family planning courses in the province's high schools. Critics of the law say it was developed in consultation with Planned Parenthood and includes contraception and abortion in the curriculum.

Only a last minute move by provincial Premier Bill Davis excluded Catholic and other nonprivate schools from the regulations. But — make that an upper case BUT — even those schools must establish family planning curricula and have them approved by a provincial health official.

It is difficult to understand why Canada must resort to such measures as government-enforced family planning. Why must the state inject itself into the private sector? Surely, Canada is in need of populace; it is not overcrowded.

Not to be cynical, but such puzzling questions usually indicate that making a buck is involved somewhere. Could it be that the contraceptive industry is benefitting?

Sad but true, perhaps no one in New York State, one of the abortion centers of the world, has the right to cast stones. Yet, it is impossible to remain silent as yet another government gets in line behind abortion.

and Opinions

**1984 Year
Of Destiny**

Editor:

As unemployment and privation dog the heels of the nation's poor, the stock market soars into the stratosphere. The powers that be would serve the hungry with facilities for their incarceration should they take sustenance wherever they can find it. In Christ Jesus we have the solution to this, and to every other problem — the population explosion included. We are not listening!

"A new heaven and a new

earth" is a solution, of course. Be assured it is the only one. Our depleted environment precludes all others. The year of 1984 has long been heralded as the world's year of destiny. This conclusion is presently borne out in every manner in which we choose to observe it. True, there is a solution, but there is no indication whatever that it will be adopted. Should we perchance survive 1984, the lot of human kind — as a whole — won't be worth a thin dime

Edward A. Veith
2952 Atlantic Ave.
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

**Xavier Group
Offers Service**

Editor:

We of the Xavier Society for the Blind, the national Catholic Press and Library for the Visually Handicapped, would appreciate bringing to the attention of your many readers the existence of the society's free library service.

At the present time we are sending our Braille, large print and tape books to persons in all 50 states and Canada. We are most anxious to reach even more people who require their reading in these special forms.

make personal selections. Books are then mailed free of charge to each borrower for a period of one month.

The society libraries are also a source for devotional reading. Among these are the Sacred Scriptures, the Manual of Prayer, Rite of Penance, etc. Also available in Braille and large print are the Sunday Mass readings and the Ordinary of the Mass. For visually impaired priests, the society has transcribed in large print a special book of five votive Masses.

For further information on any of the society's free services your readers may write to:

Miss Betty J. Dott
Xavier Society for the Blind
154 East 23rd St.
New York, N.Y. 10010

The society publishes a catalog in the appropriate media to enable all readers to

Lenten Regulations

Good Friday is the only remaining 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 lightly excuse himself from these practices.

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 S., 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.

Fr. Louis J.
Hohman



The Open Window

**Priorities
In Discipline**

Dear Father Hohman,

I am 12 years old and in the seventh grade in a parochial school. I would like to know why at some schools girls can serve (Mass) and not at others. Unfortunately, girls at our school cannot serve. We asked a priest at our school the answer.

He said, "You aren't supposed to. But you can do something else."

We said, "Why do girls at other schools serve?"

NO ANSWER!

I say, "If God made man and woman equal, why can't we serve him equally?"

E.T.

Dear E.T. (I presume not the one of movie fame),

Your problem is shared by so many people, especially — but by no means exclusively — girls and women, that our bishop saw fit to issue a pastoral letter entitled "Fire in the Thornbush."

The reasons for the prohibition of girls serving Mass are indeed hard to understand, so much so that the observance of the prohibition boils down to simple blind obedience to the will of our Holy Father. The fact that women are allowed to be readers but not servers is hard to understand. The only thing I can possibly imagine is that serving is in closer relationship to the Eucharistic Liturgy than

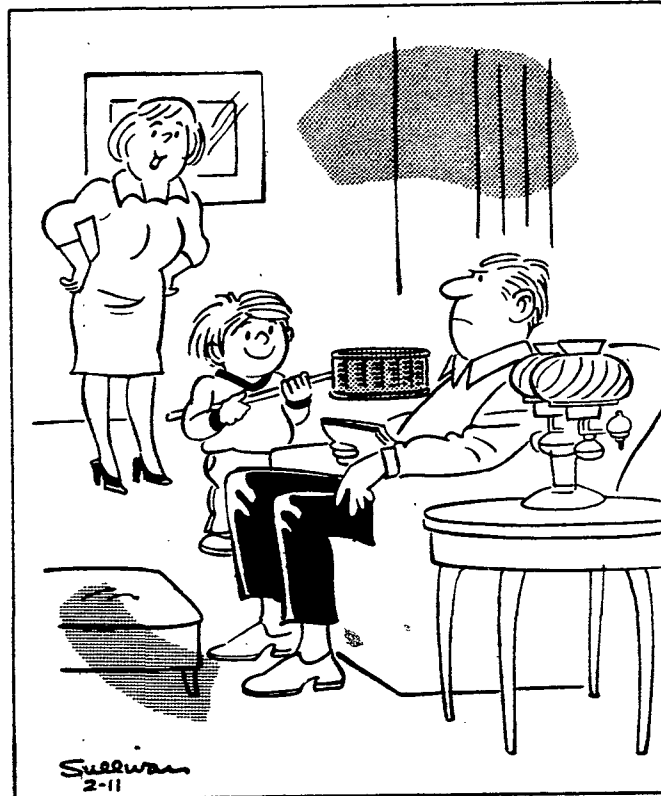
reading. But then, how come women can give Communion and receive it? The whole thing is to me and many others quite incomprehensible.

The fact that some parishes allow it can be understood only from the point of view that some pastors, having allowed girls to serve previous to the explicit prohibition, felt it would be less evil to disobey in this relatively unimportant matter than to shock these young girls by rescinding the privilege. One put it this way. "Who's going to squeeze the toothpaste back in the tube?" I know there are some people who will be furious at this because they say, "A law is a law." Mine is not to judge them or the pastors who allow it.

May I quote Bishop Clark in regard to the business of girls and women seeking alternative service?

"For the present, there is much which can and should be done to affirm the rights and responsibilities of lay men and lay women to participate in the teaching, shepherding and sanctifying work of the church." He calls on us to be creative in finding ways in which women and girls can be inserted into liturgical and other service in the church. In your case, you might well be preparing to serve as a reader. Ask your pastor.

At the same time we need to continue our study and dialogue about change in the future, so that the total and unconditional equality of the sexes may be more manifest in their having access to every kind of service in the Church of Christ.



"HE DOES THAT WITH ANYONE WHO READS HIS COMIC BOOK ON THE LIFE OF POPE JOHN PAUL."

**Catholic Relief Service
Collection this Sunday**