

Editorial

CHD — Now More Than Ever

Maybe it is an unfair conclusion. Yet it is intriguing. The Campaign for Human Development received some of its birthing impetus from such programs as John F. Kennedy's War on Poverty and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society.

Those programs were products of the times back in the 1960s and early 1970s when Americans were coming to grips with the evil of poverty in the U.S.A. The CHD received further momentum from the teachings of Paul VI who was disturbed by the gap between the haves and have-nots in this world.

Because of the political nature of this nation, both of those anti-poverty programs have been dismantled to be replaced in the present day by a kind of laissez-faire attitude toward the poor. But while shifting political winds can be fickle even on such life-and-death issues, the Church program continues steadfast with the CHD going strong in its 13th year. It seems fair to conclude that this is an example of the stability of the Church vis a vis American politics.

The government classifies as poor any members of a

family of four with a total annual income of less than \$9,300, which means there are 32 million Americans living in poverty.

The Campaign for Human Development says that 90 percent of those poor are elderly, disabled, children under 16, mothers of young children or underpaid workers.

CHD, in an attempt to dispel a popular, and biased, myth, points that only 2 of every 100 of the poor are able-bodied males out of work. This figure may change with the increase in unemployment of recent months.

Another unusual statistic is provided by CHD — nearly two million people work fulltime in low-paying jobs and are thus considered "poor."

Some of the other facts presented by CHD:

- Two out of every three adults in poverty are women.
- More than 12 million children live in poverty.
- Nearly seven of every 100 poor people are white.
- Nine million Americans are victims of chronic poverty.
- In the last two years, the number of impoverished increased by 5.4 million.

That last statistic is notable. When the president announced his cutbacks in social programs, he said it

would be up to independent agencies, such as the Campaign for Human Development, to take up the slack. That is why, Francine Patella, the diocesan CHD coordinator, said this year's collection is the most important in years.

"The increased need" is a phrase that is used frequently in her rhetoric as she speaks of the 1983 campaign.

While there is no denying that charity is involved to some extent, the CHD collection is far more a pursuit of justice. Paul VI provided its motto, "If you want peace, work for justice." And Father Marvin A. Mottet, national executive director of CHD, takes that a step further. "When you contribute to the campaign," he points out, "you become an active partner in the Church's mission to pursue justice."

True, there are other collections to help the needy. By and large, however, they address the immediate needs of the poor — for food, for shelter, for housing. The CHD, set up by the bishops of the U.S. in 1969, strives to chop out the root causes of poverty. It promotes studies to learn the basic causes of poverty and it gives monetary assistance to those groups working to change systems to enable the poor to gain some control over their own destiny.

For all of these reasons, Catholics have been generous supporters of CHD over the years. It is safe to predict that they will continue to do so this April 24 when the poor reach out to them in their parish collections.

and Opinions

Love Affair With a Parish

Editor:

It was refreshing to read Joan Smith's report (3-23): "Schools Are Part of Dramatic Change in Urban Ministry" and Father William Barrett's accompanying article: "Sense of Mission." One rarely hears about the positive aspects of urban education, whether it be in public or private elementary schools.

In mid-December, I had the opportunity to work for a few days with Sister Mary Ellen Cragan, principal, the faculty and students at St. Monica's in preparation for their Christmas program. Their enthusiastic cooperation (though it meant interruptions in class routine) did not obscure the fact that, here, education is a serious business. One need only visit any classroom, from the superb pre-school program to the upper grade levels, to affirm all the qualities highlighted in the research report of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, as described in Mrs. Smith's article.

The marvelous thing about all the above is that it is not classroom-contained, but spills out into the daily lives of the youngsters and their parents — the neighborhood and

community. Now this kind of phenomenon doesn't just happen — somehow it's all wrapped up in that mysterious human gift, LOVE! I felt it in the smiles of the children. I felt it in their hugs. I felt it in their shy and not-so-shy "thank yous." I felt it in the respect for and appreciation of the children's efforts by the jam-packed audience of parents.

How many audiences do you know who will listen with perfect attention while a second grader shares her simple piano version of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" as a pre-program feature? And then applaud as though she were a concert artist, or at least a rock star?

It didn't seem to matter that the Christmas story was told five times over — from the pre-school's "Little Drummer Boy" and "Littlest Angel" to the more sophisticated presentation of the fourth and fifth grades. There was always the same warm response, punctuated by chuckles of amusement or spontaneous bursts of laughter. And the children played the audience to the hilt!

Let you think I have overplayed all the "good things" let me assure you that not every child at St. Monica's is angelic — principal, teachers, parents will be the first to agree. But there is LOVE!

And as Father Barrett said in his article: "Love, after all, is what the missions are all about." Is it any wonder, then, that since Christmas, I have had a love affair with St. Monica's?

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Why Nuns Need Habits

Editor:

The pros and cons of religious in lay-image garb rages on.

Yet the reason for uniform dress is to set one apart from the crowd, to make those so dressed recipients of a respect due the uniform.

One of the fondest memories I have stems from a first Holy Communion. When our daughter was in the second grade, the nun in charge of their instruction said, "All boys will wear blue suits and all girls will wear white dresses." Whereupon, our daughter said, "I don't have a white dress but my mommy will make one." The nun was so moved that she reiterated the story to us later. What are "blue suits and white dresses?" They are the uniforms of innocence, befitting the confrontation of Christ in the Eucharist. And the little ones were respected in their dress: elders were present, families gathered, cameras flashed.

The opposite side of this uniformed-or-nonuniformed situation showed its ugly head in the college classroom where a nun in lay-image garb was "passed at" by one of the students in the same manner as any supposedly available co-ed. A nun is not average. A nun should be set apart so that she can receive the respect due her as the bride of Christ. I hope they are not dressing in lay-image garb so that they will receive the temptations of the world. One of the prerequisites for the forgiveness of sin

is that the confessee promise to avoid the occasions of sin. But then who goes to confession any more? What is sin in 1983? Has the Act of Contrition been updated by the pope?

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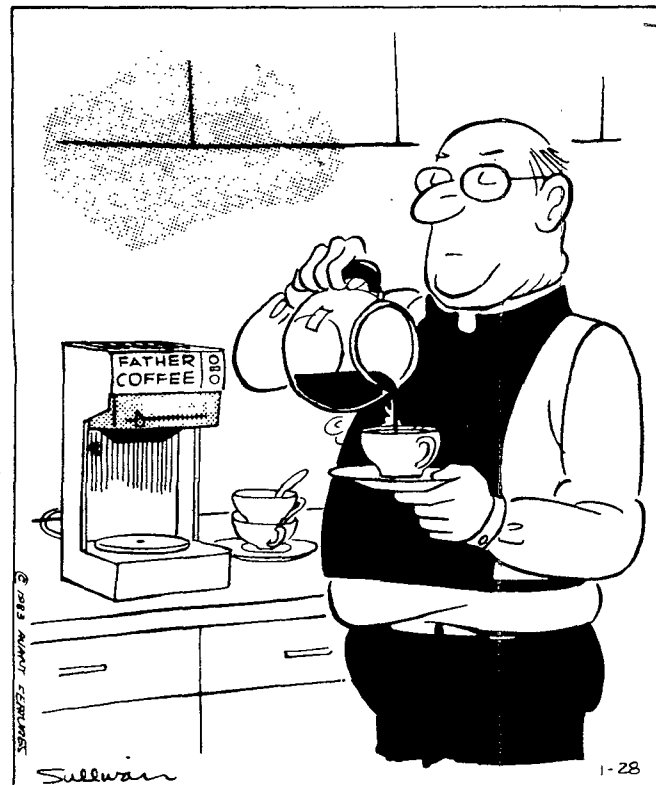
Don't Let Them Bury Us

Editor:

I saw two articles in the March 2 Courier-Journal that interested me greatly. One was "American Catholics Unfit for Combat?" and "Mindszenty Group Raps Pastoral Letter."

I am a registered nurse; my husband is a lithographer. We have six children and have been married for 32 years. My youngest daughter has just recently passed her physical to join the Army Reserves. Two of my children were born handicapped and Karyn, my youngest, is the fourth of my children to join the military. My youngest son returned for the holidays from Lebanon and his brother Joe, who was graduated from Aquinas, traveled with us to Russia in 1976 when he was already a U.S. Marine waiting to attend school for electronics training. I pray every day for peace, but not at any cost.

If I were Mr. Andropov and Communist, I would divide and conquer by setting everyone against everyone else. Liberate the women, black against white and vice versa, dilute and destroy the religious, have a generation gap and widen it to destroy the family; rich against poor, let the inmates out of mental institutions — by all means let's liberate the murderers from death row so they can kill several people the next time; let's destroy any future leaders with drugs, promiscuity and play on government corruption. Let's get God out of our lives and legalize abortion and next will come euthanasia where we can eliminate the old and undesirable persons who rely



on the strong and the loving for care. Instead of encouraging prayers to Mary to save our world from slavery and destruction let's enlist the help of those who would like to prevent nuclear holocaust by disarming ourselves. How shall we then protect ourselves from nuclear destruction? Will you be willing to arm my children with outdated, outmoded weapons? Or shall we use sticks and stones against people who have promised to bury us and are at the present time using an illegal weapon of yellow rain in Afghanistan against civilians and military alike and who destroyed half of Cambodia with their liberation army. The Communists have promised to bury us and unless people turn to God, they will not have to — for in the present we seem to be on a path of self-destruction.

Hurray for people like Eleanor Schlafly and Co. LeRoy Foreman who are "telling like it is" because the Russians liked President Nixon and when I said "that crook" they replied "if we spoke about our leaders that way we would be in prison or Siberia immediately; even if we thought it we would not dare say it!" Many Russians are good people but their government is slavery and it stinks!

In traveling there I learned to be able to worship God as I choose, to be free to speak my feelings and to live in a free country is a gift from God.

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Church Decor Commended

Editor:

For those of you who attended any of the Masses at St. John of Rochester, Fairport, we are sure you were aware of the enhancing beauty that was captured in the beautiful floral arrangements and decorations in the church. We would like to commend those who put all their time and effort into making this such a beautiful and inspiring Easter season for us at St. John of Rochester.

It is understood that all the flowers will be transplanted on the grounds of the church so that in the upcoming years we may be able to recapture the great beauty the Lord has given us in His new life and Resurrection.

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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 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.