

Editorials

The Armed Forces And the Pastoral

Implications have been made that because of the bishops' letter on war and peace, that the loyalty of Catholics in the armed forces is now suspect; that they may follow the "orders" of the hierarchy rather than of their military superiors.

And in all honesty, our Catholics in the service are in a difficult spot. Not that the pastoral constitutes a "direct order" but that it does call on all Catholics to question personal attitudes on war and peace. It is

not an easy document; it requires study and thought. Its chief demand may be that it calls on all of us to reappraise the issues involved in war, particularly nuclear confrontations. And although that is not easy for those in the armed services; it is no less difficult for the rest of us.

Perhaps with such things in mind, Cardinal Terence Cooke, head of the U.S. Military Ordinariate, recently wrote to all Catholics in U.S. armed forces. He had cogent advice. Read the whole pastoral, he advises. Do not accept incomplete reports about it.

"Look beyond the headlines, the abbreviated reports and the exaggerated emphasis being given to some of the letter's proposals at the expense of its overall purpose and meaning."

"The pastoral does not pretend to have the last word," he said but invites continuing reflection and dialogue.

He was empathetic with the service people, inviting opinions particularly from those who are "highly skilled professionals." He reminded them that they must consider the moral implications rather than just the technical implications.

"Your profession is peace," he wrote our men and women in uniform. "Your vocation is peace. Your ministry is peace. As you respond to the 'Challenge of Peace,' you do so with the appreciation, understanding, support and prayers of your nation and of your Church."

A direct application for the military -- but no less so for all of the rest of us as well.

and Opinions

The Mystery Of Life

EDITOR:

There is hidden power in words. Our bishop is gifted in his use of words, especially in their effectiveness in creating an atmosphere for catharsis. In this is a powerful healing element.

"Fire in the Thornbush" has that effect of reflecting and releasing very mixed, even opposing emotions. For every woman who feels truly called to the ordained priesthood, there is also a woman sincerely contented in living hidden in the shadows of Christ tending to His needs in small-subtle inconspicuous ways. Each has a right to personal feelings and neither should be made to feel less of a person for having the curious inner stirrings which can cause profound puzzlement and anguish at times.

The bishop's articles also often express deep inner emotions which is not always easy to do. There is a certain courage on the bishop's part in saying what is possibly the plight of every celibate: "A longing for children and for that kind of day-in, day-out spiritual union and friendship which one can hope to enjoy with a spouse." However, is not this a basic human longing, this need for intimacy? Whether married, single, religious or priest, the heart's desire is for day-in, day-out soul union with the Beloved. Although marriage seems to be the ideal place for it to happen, practical realities allow couples in the best of marriages the goal of someday reaching the ideal. Day-in, day-out intimacy, spiritual union, friendship is not automatically patterned into marriage. It unfolds unexpectedly in moments of grace into relationships of all kinds.

The celibate's poignant lament "that there is no one of my blood and name

behind me to whom I can pass on the things which I cherish" is a legitimate one. Still, there are two sides to everything. Consider that the celibate is spared the heartache of seeing one of blood and name turn his back or even trample upon the sacred things cherished.

Offspring, whether of our blood and name or adopted, are brought forth to become their own persons. They are not possessively "ours." "Ours" for any given time are those individuals with whom Divine Providence surrounds us. Each person we have encountered to some degree carries on the things we cherish.

There are advantages and disadvantages in all walks of life. Particular joys and sufferings are unique to each vocation in which is discovered that freedom has limitations. The vocation to which any of us has been called is the vehicle in which we travel searching out the meaning and purpose of the mystery of life that is personally ours. The miracle is in the divine interweaving of the threads of our beings that make us another's flesh and blood in Christ Jesus Whose Mystical Presence breathes in all. It is in Him and through Him that we receive and pass on the things we cherish.

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Where Is The Division?

EDITOR:

Your editorial on the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace deserves comment (C-J 5-18). On the critical issues of war and peace our Holy Father has clearly stated Catholic doctrine which cannot be changed by the American hierarchy. The following is a summary of Pope John Paul II's positions on these matters (quoted from Eagle Forum Newsletter of May

1983):

(1) "Self-defense is a moral right of individuals and nations."

(2) "Governments have the moral duty to protect their nation against aggression."

(3) "We cannot endorse disarmament unless it is mutual."

(4) "The use of weapons can and must be proportionate to the threat."

I believe that the U.S. bishops made some poor political statements concerning the defense of the Free World. Archbishop Hannan, one of the nine to vote against the pastoral letter, said that "Catholics are free in conscience to disagree" with the document. Let us listen to the Holy Father for guidance on these important issues and avoid controversy and divisiveness in the Church.

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Editor's Note: Items 1 and 2 in this letter are reflected very clearly in the pastoral. For instance it quotes Vatican Council II: "As long as war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level, governments cannot be denied the right to a legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted." As for item 3, the pastoral very specifically addresses the U.S. and the Soviet Union and urges "bilateral" agreements against the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons. It is unclear where Eagle Forum Newsletter gets the quote in item 4; it is usually stated conversely that the use of force must not be disproportionate to the threat. The bishops quote extensively from all the nuclear age popes, including John Paul: "In current conditions 'deterrence' based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with this minimum which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion." There is little divisiveness within the Church on this issue. Rather the difference arises as to moral and political viewpoints. One of the bishops' overriding purposes is to ensure that morality be part of our nuclear consideration. And that it be used to promote peace in the world.

Let's Pray For Captives

EDITOR:

"Story Good . . . But,"

6-1-83 by Laurymas Vismanas, is remarkably perceptive. How many people in this free country would have noted the flaws in the story he told of the arrest of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas? Only those who were well-informed. Mr. Vismanas pointed out the error of describing Lithuania as a "Soviet Republic" when, in fact, this beautiful Baltic state, along with Estonia and Latvia are three of the Captive Nations.

We in the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation follow the guidelines of the great papal encyclical on atheistic communism, "Divini Redemptoris," the prophetic caveat issued nearly 50 years ago which predicted the advance of communism as the result of the lack of knowledge of its nature. The Mindszenty Foundation informs with authority on the tactics, strategy and objectives resulting from the nature of communism.

The Baltic countries were invaded and brutally conquered just a short time after Moscow ratified "peace treaties" with them like "pie crusts made to be broken."

There are many dedicated prayer groups in this country and this area. They might become the spiritual force which would direct attention to the plight of the faith under communism. A remarkable opportunity will come for them the third week in July. That week, by presidential proclamation, is "Captive Nations Week," established by President Eisenhower. Would it not be a reminder to all of us who might tend to forget, to dedicate that week as a time of prayer; to inspire others to pray for the captives and to thank God for our freedom? A news release indicating this prayer-week schedule might well provide the turning point leading to restoration of God-given rights. Perhaps this work of mercy might serve to remedy the lack of knowledge which Pope Pius XI so deplored.

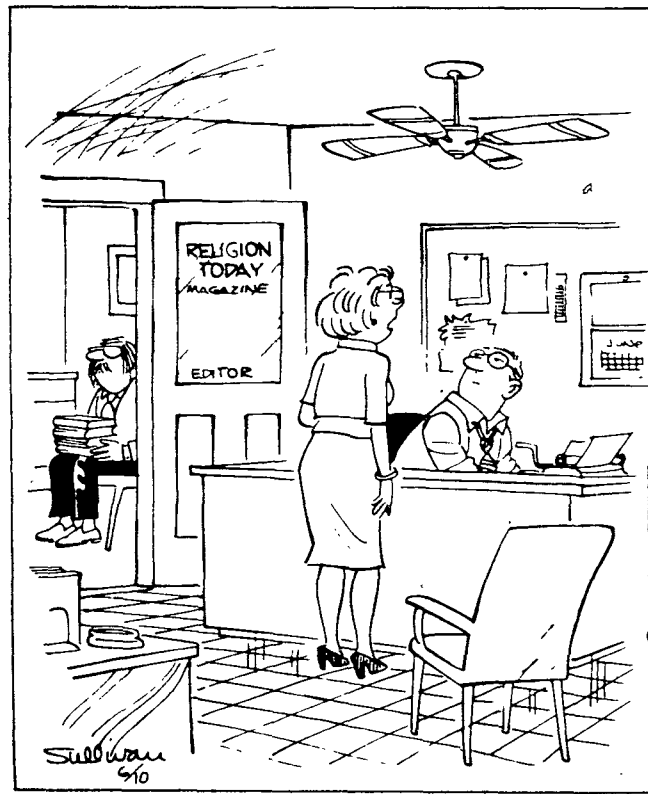
Be the Good Lord willing, I will try to initiate these prayers for captives in the national Catholic press.

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Man to Join Dinosaurs?

EDITOR:

The newer environmental health problems are multiple -- created by radiation in all its forms, born of the never ending stream of chemicals of which pesticide and weed killers are a part, chemicals now pervading the world in which we live, acting upon us directly and indirectly, sepa-



"THERE'S A MAN HERE WITH SOME RECENTLY-DISCOVERED DIARIES OF ST. PATRICK."

DeValera Clarification

EDITOR:

The recent article, "DeValera's Forgotten Mother," by Jack Tucker, made interesting reading but some facts were forgotten or overlooked. First of all, Catherine Wheelwright was known for who she was by the Irish community of Rochester. Of the two children of the Wheelwright marriage, the boy, Thomas, became a Redemptorist Father -- not a Benedictine -- and survived his mother who died in 1932. Father Thomas Wheelwright offered his mother's funeral Mass at Blessed Sacrament Church and I as a youngster served that Mass and at the various retreats and services he conducted there during those years. The pastor of Blessed Sacrament at the time was Father Thomas Connors, not Father James Connor. At the time of Catherine DeValera's death, Father Connors was only in his 60s; he was not an old man nor "old fashioned." In fact, he seemed in very many things to be far ahead of his time.

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Literature For Missions

EDITOR:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines direct to the foreign missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

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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.