

Editorial

September Pope

Hardly can the ninth month of the year come around without thoughts of the "September Pope," Pope John Paul I, who served in the pontificate just a tad over one month, almost all of which was during September 1978. He was elected Aug. 26, installed Sept. 3 and died Sept. 28.

Because of his warmth and obvious good nature, he also is remembered by many as the "Smiling Pope." True, we will never understand God's plan in giving us Albino Luciani as pope for such a brief period. At the time of his death, many were left dumbfounded. But given the perspective of time, perhaps the answer may lie loosely in providing a

needed transition, a kind of steppingstone, from Paul VI to Poland's John Paul II.

Or, perhaps, the reason may lie in another direction. There is no secret about the sunny disposition of John Paul I. A recent Roman Observer perhaps supplies a clue to that when it described him "as always attached to three truths: God is all-powerful, God loves me unceasingly and God is faithful to His promises." Armed with these truths, mundane trials and tribulations must seem truly insignificant.

Perhaps somewhere in that personal lesson he so radiantly communicated to the rest of the world lies the secret to the abbreviated pontificate of the unforgettable "September Pope."

Mary's Birthday

We all share in a common event tomorrow -- the birthday of our spiritual mother, Mary of Nazareth. Obviously, ways abound to remember Our Blessed Mother -- something special for one's own earthly mother, a special act for the poor or helpless, a kind gesture, a pledge to improve our surroundings or our own lifestyle.

Many will mark the day by saying a rosary -- a fine idea. Although it might be more appropriate to extend the gift by planning to say the rosary, perhaps weekly, throughout the coming year.

In any event, Sept. 8 is another reminder of our commonality, that, despite differences engendered by worldly concerns, we are in reality members of one family. That may serve as a proper thought for the day.

and Opinions

Will History Be Repeated?

EDITOR: Certainly this simplistic attempt at a poetic style leaves much to be desired. However, the message comes from serious reflection.

IN RETROSPECT What fools we mortals be Not to reflect upon our history.

Years of somewhat minimal calm Have awakened the symbolic palm.

Ours is the shame of the Holocaust

Deaf to the cries of humanity lost.

Speak sadly of the Hiroshima dread

Speak softly to the bones of Pearl's dead.

You gave us broomsticks for defense

A madman armed a nation's offense.

You took five years of my youthful living

So many more died in their giving.

Would the price have been so wrong

Had we at that time been more strong?

Along The Way

Bishop Matthew H. Clark is studying in Rome. His column will resume as scheduling and distance allow.

Where do we see nuclear arms protest:

Only in those nations free to contest.

Ours is the right to speak in dissent

Remember, the broomstick brought no peaceful consent.

Father John J. Hempel

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High School Seeks Grads

EDITOR:

Christopher Columbus High School will be celebrating its 25th anniversary during the 1983-84 school year, and we are desperately trying to find our earlier graduates. We have a group of people working on this locally, but so many of the alumni and their families are scattered over the country now that we are hoping you will be able to help us.

Our first event is scheduled for the middle of November.

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Likes Column By Bishop

EDITOR: I am writing to comment on how meaningful it is to have Bishop Clark's column "Along the Way" in the Courier. I really enjoy it and I really appreciate having a spiritual friend like Bishop Clark. He is the nicest bishop that I've ever met. May his love endure forever.

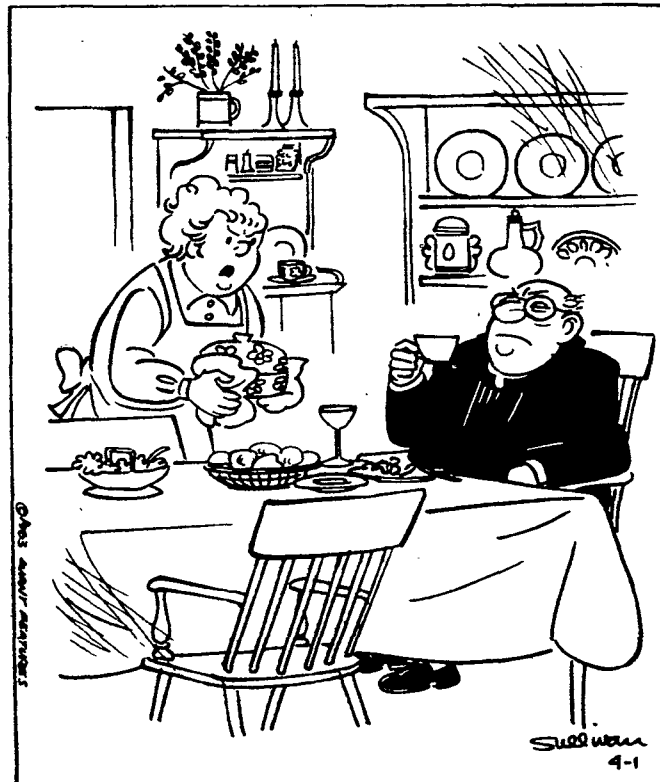
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Suggestion: Get a Horse

EDITOR:

I report that the Courier-Journal of Aug. 17 was delivered today -- 10 days late as usual. I fully realize not much can be done about U.S. Mail! May I suggest the Pony Express?

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"IT NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED IN A GREAT WAR BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IN THE WORLD AND STILL FIND TIME TO CRAB ABOUT MY COOKING."

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.

Fr. John Reedy

Looking for the Lord



The Sunday Obligation

A young man died -- suddenly, unexpectedly.

His mother, raised in the same Catholic tradition I knew so well, suffered not only from the sense of loss and from shock, she was also concerned that he had not lived according to the Catholic norms which were accepted by all of our generation.

Specifically, she was concerned about his apparent indifference to the Sunday Mass obligation. I couldn't say anything to relieve her grief, but I did try to say something about the way my own understanding of this tradition has changed. Even this wasn't easy.

As a priest, I accepted and taught the serious obligation of participating in the Sunday Eucharist. I still regard it as a serious obligation for Catholics and I don't feel like a follower of Archbishop Lefebvre in teaching it.

With my understanding of what the Eucharist is, I regard it as a tragic failure that so many Catholics today -- not just the young -- take such a casual attitude to this great gift which the Lord has left us, the gift in which we can meet Him and participate

in His own act of worship.

If we really understand and appreciate what the Eucharist is and still remain indifferent to it, our fault is much more than one of ingratitude and disrespect than of disobedience to a Church law.

But that's a big IF for the people of our generation, especially the young.

Observance was much easier in the parish in which I was raised.

Everybody who claimed to be Catholic got to Mass on Sunday. If a member of the parish missed very often, it was noticed. People began to talk. And we were convinced that our failure, without a good reason and without absolution, could leave us exposed to eternal damnation.

Those pressures were extremely effective in producing conformity, in assuring observance. But in our observance, did all of us in that parish really understand and appreciate what we were sharing?

I'm sure many of us didn't. Without much reflection, we were there because our presence was a condition for respectability in the Catholic community in which we lived, because failure would involve social sanctions, and to be on the safe side, in case we

were run over by a beer truck during the coming week.

Those motives don't have much to do with an appreciation of what it was that Jesus did at the last Supper, of what He asked us to do so that He would remain with us.

Do I believe that this young man who died suddenly is in danger of losing his soul because of his indifference to the Sunday Eucharist?

Not for one minute.

He was a good man who showed his respect for God and God's gift of life in many ways. I simply can't believe that the Lord, who showed such love and acceptance to the woman at the well, to the woman taken in adultery, the publicans and sinners, even to the man crucified next to Him, is unwilling to extend that love to a good person who did not fully understand and appreciate what the Eucharist is.

To some of you, who are my contemporaries, this will sound like a denial of Church teaching. It isn't. Even in the Baltimore Catechism we all learned about "sufficient reflection" and "full consent of the will" as elements of serious sin. But we paid less attention to those elements than to the "matter" of the act.

And if anyone considers this an endorsement of religious indifference or moral laxity, he'd better go back and read the whole thing again.

ANNUAL CATHOLIC

Thanks Giving

APPEAL