

Editorials

Christmas Fund

Obviously, there are many reasons why we should be thankful for the Church.

One of the more pragmatic, or perhaps more earthly, is that its structure affords us the opportunity to help those in need. So many persons of goodwill have the means to help others but often don't know how to go about it. What channels should be used? Is this organization or that trustworthy? Will the assistance go directly to those in need?

But through the Church and its various offices, it is possible to help the needy, locally, nationally and worldwide. You can get there from here -- and effectively.

For such reasons, the Courier-Journal in 1969 established its Christmas Fund to help the poor right here in our diocese. Diocesans have made good use of it by contributing more than a half-million dollars to the needy via the fund. And Catholic Charities has seen to it that the money is distributed effectively.

These days with the situation for so many made particularly dire through inflation and unemployment, the fund seems more than ever needed, to enable the assistance of so many who have been so generous so often.

Rochester diocesans always seem grateful for the means to assist. Thankfully, the Christmas Fund provides such an opportunity.

Vatican Ties

It is not the most pressing issue in today's world but still it should have been gratifying to American Catholics to learn that their Congress had approved ending a ban on formal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the Holy See.

As of presently, President Reagan had not yet signed the bill into law, but he is expected to do shortly. This does not necessarily mean that he will follow through by appointing a fulltime ambassador. But it does mean that he is now legally allowed to do so if he wishes.

It probably does not mean very much if he does or doesn't. Through informal ties, the two national entities have managed fairly well.

The significance, however, lies in the fact that the country has risen above the bias at the foundation of the banning of formal relations. It took some time. Several administrations have tried to effect the change -- most notably Harry S Truman's. But efforts have been blocked until now.

Not earth-shattering, to be sure. But in these days when so much of the news does rock the earth, a bit of conciliatory progress is a balm.

The Good Fight

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, who is succeeding Cardinal Terence Cooke as the head of the national bishops' pro-life committee, has come up with a solid hook on which to hang his efforts.

Cardinal Bernardin believes that there is a definite link between the issues of abortion and nuclear warfare -- human dignity.

Few could argue with that viewpoint but the cardinal feels that the bishops' letter on war and peace didn't allow enough room for amplification of the theme.

Thus, he feels, that "opens a field for further reflection and development, which we can now pursue as a conference."

And he intends to enter the public sector with arguments linking the two crucial life-and-death issues of our time. He, and his fellow bishops, are to be wished well because not only are there many in the secular world at odds with the bishops on either or both of these issues, but many "liberal" Catholics cannot see the validity of anti-abortion and many "conservative" Catholics do not support the quest for nuclear disarmament.

The bishops, however, intend to fight the good fight and reconcile these opposing together. Hopefully they will know the fruits of their efforts. Hopefully, that is, for the sake of the world.

and Opinion

Literature Needed

EDITOR:
Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines 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.

Mary Conway
14 Castle St.
Cork, Ireland

Apology For Movie Ad

EDITOR:
I was appalled to see the advertisement on Page 5 of the Nov. 16 edition of this paper. Are we in such desperate straits that we must accept advertisements for R-rated movies? I am sure that many of us would rather pay an extra few cents a copy than to advertise immorality.

Karen M. Miller
153 Holley St.
Brockport, N.Y. 14420
Editor's Note: The Courier-Journal apologizes to reader Miller and any others offended by the advertisement. It came in late for the edition and because of a mixup did not go through the customary screening channels. The Courier-Journal

wishes to assure all that it will not accept advertising for R-rated movies.

Let the Spirit Move You

EDITOR:
I read with interest Judy Echaniz's letter titled, "Church Music Requirements," but came away confused. So I went back and re-read it many more times and still haven't a clear idea as to what the point is.

The first image that comes through to me is that it would seem that both she and Pope John Paul II are opting for a return to the institutional model church that Vatican II inspired us to grow beyond. For me, Vatican II was a call to grow, to broaden our horizons, emotionally and spiritually -- not to mention broadening our hearts.

I grew up in the institutional Church, and at times it was, for me, "a mad-house." We had high Masses at which the men's choir sang in sophisticated Latin, which droned on and on; and we had low Masses at which as a general rule there was no music, but the language was still Latin and foreign so it facilitated daydreaming much more easily than prayer; and of course there was the ever-prevalent Requiem Mass where everyone bemoaned the fate of the

dear departed, which more often than not sounded like a pagan ritual bereft of any hope!

And at all these liturgies we had so-called "sacred music" and a countless number of gestures and blessings and antics that I know were meant to convey meaning, but for some reason were lost on me. That is, unless they did speak to my un-conscious mind -- perhaps that's how I survived.

But on a conscious level, I was struggling for survival in the House of God -- couldn't wait until it was over because it had a stifling effect on me. The only Mass I truly enjoyed being at and participating in was the children's 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday morning, where we sang in our own American version of the English language, such songs as "Heart of Jesus, Meek and Mild" which to me was a song-prayer, worship adoration and communication. It helped me to focus on the essential while allowing me to participate with my whole being.

Perhaps what I need to know is what Judy means by the word "integrity" and sacred music. If all of life is sacred, then what is the unsacred? I can listen to contemporary songs on the radio like, "You Needed Me" and "You Light Up My Life" and sing along with them to the lord in my heart with my whole being at home, or in the car, wherever I might be. And I can also sing the same songs to any member of our parish -- to the person as well as to the presence of the Lord in that person.

Vatican II stated that "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the Liturgy, and to which the Christian people, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Peter 2:4-5), have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism." (Sacrosanctum Concilium; Vatican II; Dec. 4, 1963; Par. 14)

If, in our churches we are going to return to music of taste, then my question is -- how do you get ALL of the FAITHFUL in attendance to

participate on a FULL, CONSCIOUS and ACTIVE level?

For me, it is not the beauty of our church, the fine linen on the altar (or the lack of it), the paintings, banners, stained glass windows, music, etc. that make the Eucharist important. It is the Spirit that is present and the message that is being communicated.

I don't live in Rome, I live in the U.S.A. and have need to relate to what mediates to me. And I don't want tokenism. As many times as I have read the Book of Acts, I have yet to see it mention that officials of the Jewish hierarchy were present in the cenacle when the Holy Spirit filled the primitive church. That says to me that the Lord intended that grass roots people also have a share in His life. And that He chose to speak through them also, not just from the so-called "top" down.

Perhaps we should take a real long, deep look at Philippians 2:5 -- "Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus; His state was divine, yet He did not cling to His equality with God, but laid aside His mighty power and glory, taking on the condition of a slave, and becoming like men." There's a lot of meat for thought and reflection there, ideal for broadening one's heart and mind.

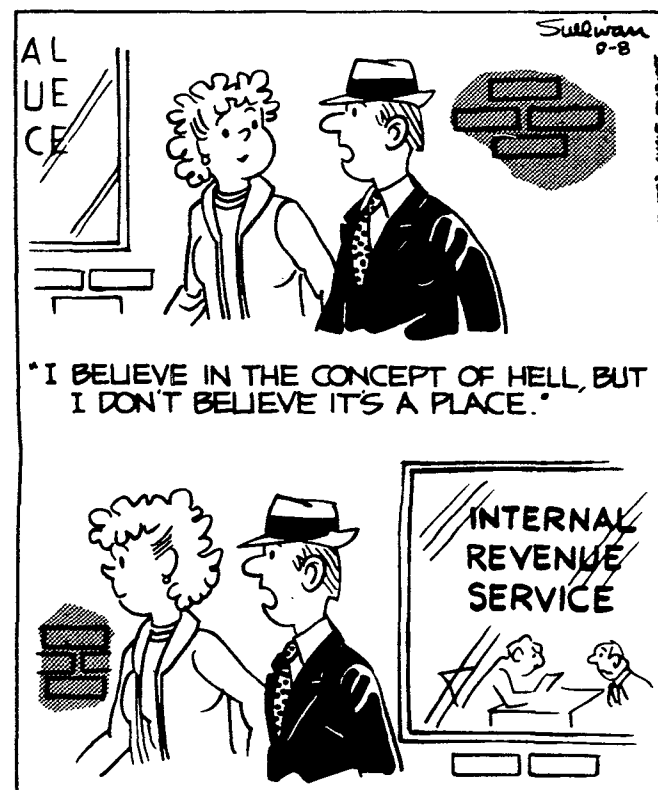
Patti Federowicz
17 Clover Road
Apalachin, N.Y. 13732

Social Worker Gets Plaudits

EDITOR:

I am an inmate at Attica Correctional Facility who admires the sincerity and consistency of a man who has written numerous articles to the editor of your newspaper concerning the past, present and future conditions of various incarcerated individuals within the state. I am referring to Joel Freedman, who is a social worker with a VA hospital, as well as a writer, philanthropist, humanitarian, citizen, community worker and friend to many of society's old and young, sick and poor, black and white, chosen and rejected people.

As you can imagine, there are a great many inmates who have grown to trust and



respect Mr. Freedman because of his struggle for the truth regardless of the obstacles along the way. I challenge anyone, be it the governor, the mayor, the congressman, the judges, the commissioners of corrections, who has communicated with as many inmates, investigated as many injustices within the prison system, written as many articles, published as many findings of inhuman and systematic corruption within our prisons and informed both the public and governmental administrations, as well as the inmates themselves, without collecting as much a dime for the paper he has used.

This is just a small part of the work Mr. Freedman has done in the name of concern, compassion, faith and liberty and justice for all!

I, for one, would not have believed this if I had not seen it for myself because in the enclosed environment from which I come (ghetto streets) actions like these were only done for a price -- to sell a product, to win a vote, to con and get over. They were known as fairy tales for dreamers, weaklings and fools! And now, 20 years later, I find that I am very much in need of people like this to help me when I can't help myself, look at me in

even a better way in which I never even looked at myself, and most of all, someone who doesn't buy or sell truth yet struggles to propagate it by any morally sound way possible.

It goes without saying that we all owe Mr. Freedman a standing ovation as a minimal gesture. His letters to the editor have been vital warnings to a community that say they do not want a recurrence of Attica 1971. But their actions have yet to substantiate their words.

Al Long #78-A-1242
Attica Prison, Box 149
Attica, N.Y. 14011

Patience With Refugees

EDITOR:

There is presently a new influx of Indochinese refugees into our area. As parish volunteer for over 20 refugees, I would like to share a thought from my experience with them.

Do not expect them to join the community's activities, even liturgies, despite your efforts, for a very, very long time. They are trying heroically to become part of us. Give them four or five years of time.

To know them well is to love them dearly.

Mary R. Locke
1009 Park Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14610

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.