

'State of Union' Embraces Catholic Issues

Washington (NC) -- Calling for a strengthening of "our traditional values," President Reagan addressed several major Catholic concerns in his annual State of the Union message to Congress Jan. 25.

He called for legal protection of the unborn and for tuition tax credits for parents of children in private schools. Both those policies have strong public backing by the Catholic Church.

In words that sounded like they could have come straight from the Catholic bishops' war and peace pastoral, Reagan declared, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in...possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used."

The president also appealed again for voluntary prayer in public schools, a position supported by many

religious groups but approached cautiously by the Catholic hierarchy. He did not back a right to receive voluntary religious instruction in public schools, which Catholic officials see as the more fundamental issue, historically and constitutionally.

President Reagan also singled out a Catholic priest, Conventual Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter, founder of the Covenant House for runaway children in New York City, as an example of the "unsung heroes" of American society whose private initiatives tackle social problems.

Linking issues of school prayer, tuition tax credits, abortion and child pornography under the heading of "strengthening traditional values," Reagan said that values of "faith, work, family, neighborhood, freedom and peace" define "what

makes us good and loving people."

He acknowledged that "efforts to restore protection of the law to unborn children" are "very controversial."

"But unless and until it can be proven that an unborn child is not a living human being, can we justify assuming without proof that it isn't?" he asked.

"No one has yet offered such proof," he added. "Indeed, all the evidence is to the contrary."

On education Reagan stressed a return to basics and parental control of education.

"I will continue to press for tuition tax credits to expand opportunities for families and to soften the double payment for those paying public school taxes and private school tuition," he said. "Our proposal would target assistance to low- and middle-income families."

The U.S. bishops, reflecting papal teachings, have argued that the double burden of taxation for public schools and tuition for private schools constitutes a restriction on religious freedom of parents who choose non-public education

for reasons of religious and moral conviction.

While parents of children in private schools of any kind would benefit from such legislation, those with children in Catholic schools would stand to gain most because Catholic schools are the largest element in the private school sector.

Addressing the controversy over administration-backed efforts to reinstate voluntary prayer in public schools by an amendment to the Constitution, Reagan noted that Congress begins each day with prayer.

Speaking of world peace, Reagan defended U.S. international policy, saying it is based on principles of peace and freedom. Addressing the people of the Soviet Union in language that was more conciliatory than he has used in previous speeches, he stated that the "only value" of nuclear weapons is to make sure that those weapons "will never be used."

"But the..." he added, "would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"

When the U.S. bishops in their war and peace pastoral last year stated the principle that nuclear deterrence can only have prevention of use, not use, as its aim, one of the

direct conclusions the bishops drew from that principle was a rejection of any policy of nuclear first-use in response to non-nuclear attack.

Reagan did not elaborate on his statement to indicate whether or not it implied any changes in U.S. nuclear defense policy.

The president mentioned Father Ritter at the end of his speech in a paean to the convictions and values which he said make America the "last, best hope of man on earth."

"There are the unsung

heroes: single parents, couples, church and civic volunteers -- their hearts carry without complaint the pains of family and community problems," said Reagan. "They soothe our sorrow, heal our wounds, calm our fears and share our joy."

Blue Army Vigil

The monthly vigil in reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary sponsored by the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima will be held 9 p.m.-midnight, Friday, Feb. 3 at Holy Rosary Church. Leading the rites will be Fathers Robert Werth, Frederick Helfrich, and William Endres.

SEED Offers Signing Class

Free lessons in sign language is being offered by Project SEED for persons wishing to communicate with the hearing impaired.

Classes are 10-11:30 a.m. and 7-8:30 p.m., Thursdays, beginning Jan. 26 at the Edgerton Recreation Center, 41 Backus St. The facilities are accessible to the disabled.

Further information is available through Adele Carlson, Project SEED, 458-7994.

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All in the Family

Did She Knock Legs Out from Under Treasure?

As a newcomer to Rochester some 21 years ago, I set about furnishing my bachelor girl apartment -- a third-floor garret in one of the old homes on East Boulevard (Needless to say, it was on the opposite end of the street from the Frank Lloyd Wright house and other distinguished residences.)

Still it had plenty of charm from both its under-the-eaves architecture and the leftover color scheme from the previous tenant.

One room was painted violet and the other a soft sky blue and the kitchen a rose beige, a color I came to hate as it turned up in every apartment thereafter.

It had a romantic air, this little apartment with its slanted ceilings and little alcoves. In one of the nooks, I placed the record player and would listen to La Boheme in the dark with the moon shining across the painted black floor.

I furnished the entire three rooms for about \$75, including kitchen table and chairs, desk, chest of drawers, a wicker couch and two wicker rockers. I sprayed the wicker couch white and covered cushions in chintz picking up the blue and the violet and moss green.

Almost everything came from the Opportunity Shop which had by far the most interesting merchandise and the best prices. With a folding bed borrowed from Grandma B., I was set, I thought. But on a day off while rummaging through the Shop's third floor, I came upon a round waist-high table of a simple design, a yard wide. I thought how nicely it would fit into my Victorian-Garret-Bohemian decor.

It cost \$2.50 but it was solid oak and I liked the classic, solid lines very much.

Bringing it home, I negotiated the first two levels of the old house just fine. The problem came with the third set of steps to my apartment, narrow and turning on the landing into the narrower-than-usual door that was my main entrance. Optimistically, I started to push the very heavy table through the doorway ahead of me, taking care not to fall backwards.

But, to my dismay, only three of the long legs would go through. I tried everything. Revolving the table, revolving me, etc. Nothing worked.

Finally frustrated, I went downstairs and borrowed a saw from my neighbor and cut the necessary amount off one leg and squeezed it through.

Though I hadn't intended to use it as such, it would become a coffee table, by shortening the other legs to match the sacrificed one.

Over the years, it was painted black, then green, then white, then stripped of all paint, then white again, depending on my decor.

Long after my children had grown and stopped utilizing it as a play table, it was put into use on the sun porch. Finally, it went to the basement where it has been for years. Every time, I looked at it I admired the lines as I did when it was in use.

Then six months or so ago, the evening paper featured an article about American antiques, dating back about 100 years or so.

There, pictured at the top of the page, was my table, without paint, minus sawed-off legs, a museum piece. Horrified, I went downstairs and looked at the table. No, it couldn't be. Or could it?

For some time I've been debating asking somebody who knows a little about such antiques to take a look at the poor, beat-up thing in my cellar. But I always put it off. The truth is I don't think I want to know.

Diocesan Official Speaks At Ecumenical Gathering

Trumansburg -- As part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians of many denominations gathered at St. James Church here, Sunday, Jan. 22. Father Robert Kanka is pastor and the speaker for the event was Ms. Marge Nurenburg, diocesan director of the office of ecumenical and interreligious affairs.

Ms. Nurenburg told the congregation that "the cross of Christ -- at the heart of this year's prayer for unity is

also at the heart of all the churches. It is the center of preaching, liturgy and witness. The cross that reconciles us with God, our Creator, has the power to destroy our separation."

"Our baptism is our ecumenical starting point and is the most fundamental tool we have not consistently worked with. We need to remember that the existing bonds of unity among Christian communions are more important than the differences that separate them."

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