

More Opinions

'Platform' Nonexistent

EDITOR:

Your correspondent, Mr. John Overlander (C-J, 3-7-84), offers a list of rhetor-

ical questions concerning what he terms "Catholic issues" that practicing Catholics should respond to. Rhetorical questions don't usually require an answer, but I would like to respond to his list lest some people are led to form a "Catholic

platform."

1) Many of the people working most efficiently in opposition to abortion do not want to label it a Catholic issue. It is far more important and wide spread than to be a sectarian issue. I could applaud Mr. Reagan's pro-life position except that he betrays it with the billions of dollars cut from health, nutrition, education, child care and family support programs which endanger the future of millions of poor children.

2) The school issues are very complex for Catholics. If tax credits for private schools are going to mean less educational funds for the public school system where the children of our fellow citizens (and the majority of our Catholic students) attend, it will pose a problem of priorities for us, especially in the light of our national deficit and Mr. Reagan's military budget. The school prayer issue is almost embarrassing. Long years ago we Catholics withdrew our children and set up our own schools precisely because there was prayer in the public schools.

3) In regard to the nuclear arms issue it is simply impossible to identify Mr. Reagan's position with the bishops' pastoral letter. It would be such an example of George Orwell's 1984 "Newspeak" that I've not even heard the president do that. The principle of deterrence allowed in the pastoral letter is substantially different from the deployment of missiles and the massive arms expenditures that have marked the present administration.

One issue, not mentioned, that is of crucial concern to many Catholics in this country, and to the bishops and people of Central America, is the blind and arrogant folly of our present Latin American foreign policy. In the light of so much death and violence our missionaries, as well as the local bishops and religious, have begged us to remove our arms and our troops. Mr. Reagan has ignored the pleas of our church people and persists in a policy that is not in the best interests of those countries, and not even in the self-interest of the U.S.A.

There probably has not been a "Catholic vote" for several decades; there certainly is not a "Catholic platform" this year. But if there were, I doubt very much whether Candidate Reagan could run on it.

Father Daniel P. Tormey
702 University Park
Rochester, N.Y. 14620

Columnist Refuted

Fr. L. James Callan

Pastor
St. Thomas The Apostle
4536 St. Paul Blvd.
Rochester, N. Y. 14617

EDITOR:

Father Hohman's column

Nativity Ruling Pleases U.S.C.C.

Washington (NC) -- The U.S. Catholic Conference said March 6 that it was "gratified" by the Supreme Court's decision that a city can erect a nativity scene as part of its Christmas celebration without violating the separation of church and state.

The court's 5-4 decision March 5 "appears to affirm the reasonable view that government can accommodate the interests of its citizens in this matter without doing violence to any constitutional principle," said a brief statement by Msgr. Daniel Hoye, general secretary of the USCC, public policy arm of the U.S. bishops.

Msgr. Hoye said that the decision reflects the "more flexible and realistic approach to church-state relations adopted by the Supreme Court in some other recent rulings -- an approach in accord with the Catholic conference's own thinking in this area."

in the March 14th Courier-Journal dealt with a question on the morality of masturbation, oral sex, and "going all the way." It is not particularly a living room topic, and I would guess it would not be Father Hohman's favorite subject. His response as to whether masturbation was a mortal or venial sin follows in part, "...I couldn't possibly give an answer...Rome has recently addressed the issue of masturbation and has said, 'it is a grave disorder'."

I am sure that Father Hohman was expressing his opinion honestly, "I couldn't possibly give an answer..." In a previous column on the same subject, there is apparently the same indecision. A Jewish psychiatrist acquaintance of mine claims that that previous column clearly indicates in his words, "that the Church does not consider masturbation a sin." That is really the problem here. Whether we are dealing with Father Hohman's opinion or the Church's.

The Church has always considered matters of the sixth commandment (sexuality) as serious. The penitent acknowledges any details which might effect volition and understanding, and judgment is made by the confessor. Pathological states, obsession and/or compulsive behavior, reduce and can totally eliminate moral culpability, but these are the unusual exceptions in the confessor's experience. And most confessors are quite well aware of the impact of a culture in creating erroneous consciences. So I would like to re-enforce the second sentence of Father Hohman's response: "Rome has recently...said 'it is a grave disorder'." "Rome" truly has "recently" traditionally, consistently and without deviation spoken about all the items of the question asked - masturbation, oral sex and fornication.

Father says that "In abstract, I suppose that it is rather easy to see (he) 'a grave disorder' is one specifically ordains all sexual activity toward procreation..." One who sees the issue in just this light is Pope John Paul II (and every pope before him), and he has repeatedly urged the bishops of the United States to so teach even if it may mean a type of martyrdom. Since the pope is the authentic teaching authority of the Church, it would seem that the Church is quite clear on such matters.

Two Reasons For Prayer

EDITOR:

The abortion tragedy is a terrible reality in our country today and perhaps our failure to pray about it has been one of the reasons for its growth. And now we are faced with a massive buildup of nuclear weaponry in our country and the threat of nuclear war. Should we not now pray for an end to this buildup and for

a movement toward peace between super powers? At St. Charles Church in Greece, 3003 Dewey Ave., we have a monthly Hour of Prayer for Peace at 7:30 each First Friday evening and all are invited. Also, let us continue to pray that those involved in abortions will be touched by the Lord and be led toward the way of concern for the unborn child.

Mary Studier
153 Mosley Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

A Visit To Precious Blood

When Bishop Kearney died at St. Ann's Home on Jan. 12, 1977, I was filling in as chaplain for Father John Hempel. The gale over the parking lot was so arctic, I thought, "This is the coldest spot in Rochester."

However, on Sunday, March 11 of this year I landed at Precious Blood Church to celebrate 12:15 Mass and conduct a mini-retreat. I transferred the prize for storm gusts and freeze to Precious Blood.

Mrs. Ralph Gordon of the Sacred Heart League had arranged with the pastor, Father David Bonin, for the mini-renewal exercises. I had never been in the church, but knew much about the parish from parishioners whom I often met in hospitals, and who have a great pride in their parish.

It was well-known from the venerable Father Sebastian Contegiacomo who was pastor for many years. The parish became famous when the Pastoral Office ordered the close of the parish school, shortly after the arrival of Abp. Sheen in 1977.

He must have been astonished to find himself and his staff picketed by determined and devoted groups of parishioners who wanted their school.

Since Vatican II the voice of the people has been urged to be heard. The Precious Blood parishioners certainly expressed themselves.

Archbishop Sheen decided if people were that earnest and willing to support their school, they should have it. So it continues its fine work, with four Precious Blood Sisters and a dedicated faculty. The Courier-Journal recently reported that Precious Blood School came in fourth highest in religion in the diocese.

As I met many parishioners I visualized the days of the revolution, with the determined roly-poly Rose DeRosa, now the cook, carrying a picket sign, and everyone jaw-jutted and determined that their Catholic school should continue. Some introduction for Abp. Sheen!

Despite the freezing weather, there were about 200 at the 12:15 Mass, and mirabili dictu, they bought 320 copies of the "Treasury of Prayers." Had nothing else been accomplished, that would have made it a great day.

Father Ron Mahan,

once at St. Anthony's, was visiting from Toronto where he is teaching at Chaminade High School, and celebrated the previous Mass. Father Bonin was amused at the influx of help and commented, "Usually I have all the Masses." He has a happy and loyal parish.

Mrs. Gordon and her helpers put on a brown bag lunch after Mass, efficiently set in the hall. The always interesting question period followed. Here are some samples:

Does the Catholic Church oppose cremation?

It used to, partly as a reaction to anti-Christians who used to have their bodies cremated to show contempt for the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. That reason no longer holds -- and other reasons, e.g. shortage of land in some places -- and the Church does permit cremation, though one ought to get permission from the Pastoral Office.

Father John Norris, who has always been a proponent of the new and the coming, has a columbarium, i.e., a special room in Assumption Church, Fairport, where cremated ashes are placed in a special niche. You can call him for rates.

Why are there no vocations to the religious life?

Studies show there is an abundance of vocations in the Far East, Africa, and India, and that the Church will soon become quite non-European in membership. Even in the United States there are some strong attractions to a demanding seminary life.

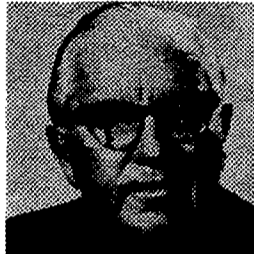
For example, the Legionaires of Christ, founded by a Mexican priest 40 years ago, has 180 priests and 800 studying for the priesthood. This outfit is strong for the pope, for the Magisterium, for discipline. It would seem that men are attracted by strong fidelity and strict discipline.

When we were in Africa in January, we visited a novitiate of native African Sisters, the Little Sisters of St. Francis, and they and many native seminaries and Sisterhoods are booming.

I wonder if part of the drop of vocations in the states is not because of the great publicity given to the contestation against the Holy Father and Rome by organized Sisters and priests.

In the older seminary days, the esprit de corps among seminarians was great, with less emphasis on individuality and more on community, and the needs of the Church.

TOUR OF SOUTHERN IRELAND
June 30-July 12, 1984
A Truly Unique Experience Hosted By Father Charles Lavery and Escorted By Bernard Travel. Includes Complete Sight-seeing, Most Meals, and a Little Merriment Thrown-In.



HOSTED BY
Fr. Charles Lavery
Call For Details
BERNARD TRAVEL
STONERIDGE PLAZA CLOVER COMMONS
1540 RIDGE RD. W. 2900 MONROE AVE.
621-5900 381-3600

September Place
Our Famous Deep-Fried or Baked **HADDOCK**
Served every Lunch and dinner

The Only Restaurant Offering Polish Foods by Harriet Kowalski
Pierogi • Golombki • Kielbasa

WE ALSO SERVE PRIME RIB AND OTHER DELICIOUS MEATS AND SEAFOODS

LUNCH & DINNER: MON-SAT.
5 min. W. of Rt. 390 on 104 W. Look for Tree Entrance
4742 W. Ridge Rd. 352-1060

Personally Escorted from Elmira and Rochester by Frank Troccia

CANCUN Mexico
"The Mexican Riviera"

1st class Hotel
THE WORLD OF TRADE WIND TOURS
AMERICAN AIRLINES
7 DAYS 6 NIGHTS
Departure May 12, 1984

\$675 from Rochester
\$695 from Elmira
double occupancy price per person from Elmira and Rochester

CALL G & T TRAVEL FOR DETAILS
"WORLD-WIDE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE"



1100 SULLIVAN ST. ELMIRA, NY
air-land-sea
1-(607)-733-4641
"World Wide. Travel Experience"