

Editorial

Good Ole Max, Cheating Again!

The wide receiver suddenly cuts back toward the quarterback, dives toward the ground and catches the pass, angled low to avoid interception by the opponent. In so doing, the receiver cuts off the official who does not see the player trap the ball. The official rules it a catch and is made a fool of by the instant replay camera.

The runner slides hard into the catcher and the two hit the dirt in a tangled pileup. The catcher momentarily drops the ball but quickly re-mits it. The umpire, shielded by the broad back of the tumbling catcher, does not see this and signals the runner out. Again instant replay shows the umpire up.

The two soccer players collide near the sideline. The one quickly grabs the ball for a quick throw-in, thus intimidating the referee who couldn't quite tell who touched the ball last. Again not only the instant replay but others saw the error.

Kill the umpire!
On the sideline, the coach of the reprehensible player looks on approvingly. In the broadcast booth, the ex-player or the professional announcer chuckle at Max really "getting away with that one!"

And the fans are part and parcel of the whole mess, only getting excited when the other team gets away with it. Or when the official makes a legitimate mistake.

A plea for instant replay officiating? Far from it. Rather a serious way as to why athletes cheat as part of the game -- no matter what game. What is wrong with the football end saying, "I really didn't catch that ball"? Or the catcher, saying, "I dropped it"? Or the soccer player letting the opponent have the legitimate throw-in?

Don't be naive is the obvious retort of the athletic priesthood. Why would anyone do that?

Well, isn't it cheating?
No, it's part of the game. It's not the player's job to officiate. Nor the coach's.

Is it their job to cheat? When you deliberately mislead, isn't that lying? Isn't that making a sham of sportsmanship? Does anyone ever notice how indignant the victimized player acts toward the official -- as if cheating is only wrong when the other fellow does it? Aren't sports supposed to be a kind of training ground for the greater role of life? Isn't the player taught to cheat in order to win being done a disservice? Isn't society? And when money hangs in the balance as to the outcome of the game, isn't criminality involved?

Correctly, athletic stewards, such as the National College Athletic Association, often catch cheating coaches, alumni, even administrators in recruitment cheating -- a transgression made even more odious because it's done in dealing with impressionable youngsters -- and under the aegis of education. But though we are scrupulous, at least sometimes, in this area we condone cheating everywhere else in sports. And even in the instance of recruitment violations, the act is not considered that wrong -- it is only being caught that is of importance.

Lest anyone get the impression that such miscreant behavior is limited to the college level, it is even more ominous in that youngsters are taught to cheat, lie and steal on our athletic fields as early as they began to play competitively. And in recent years, with the advent of equalization of the sexes in our sports, females have been finally let in on the fun.

Ridiculous? Making a mountain out of a molehill? It would be interesting to hear or read a reasonable defense of such fraud. Would some enlightened coach explain publicly why it is acceptable to swindle under the guise of sport? Will some announcer say, "Max is cheating again. The just outcome of this game has been jeopardized. And his coach knows he is lying. And his college condones it."

Ridiculous? Why?

Christmas Appeal

A reader complained, not in a self-centered way but under the pressure of legitimate pain, as to the necessity of this newspaper printing the 100 neediest cases in the diocese at Christmastime?

Every time I read those cases, it depresses me almost unto sickness was the gist of this reader's lament. She explained that she is a willing contributor to the fund and only needs to be nudged, not so graphically challenged.

Clearly, there are many reasons for running the true cases of the needy right in our own diocese. And to be honest the most obvious is to move people, who might otherwise put off helping, to act now and generously. Many of us need dramatic proof before we act.

But it is also very important to note that there are indeed cases of abject poverty in our own backyard -- that our very neighbors are being victimized through no fault of their own by the blight of need.

And there is ancillary lesson in the great number of the poor in our diocese. Most of the cases represent more than one person and the 100 combined are only symptomatic of even wider indigence.

True, Rochester diocesans have always reacted generously to the opportunity to help through the Courier-Journal/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal. But the need is too great, too urgent, too real to risk any legitimate means of alerting old diocesans or informing new ones that they can help.

Yes, it can be upsetting to read of the dire circumstances some are experiencing. At the same time, it is edifying to realize that good people of the various agencies of Catholic Charities encounter these victims every day of the year and are devoting their time to trying to remedy the situation. Sensing the hope engendered by their efforts makes it easier to contribute to the fund and also helps us live with the vicarious brush with misery.

and Opinion

Tridentine Mass Needed

EDITOR:

Recently, the Vatican has permitted the use of the Tridentine Mass on a limited basis. As reported in the Nov. 7 Courier-Journal, this has generated sharp criticism toward the Vatican by some church leaders.

In 1980, the bishops throughout the world were asked their opinions on the need for the Tridentine Mass. Ninety-eight percent of the bishops reported that "this was not a problem in the church but rather the concern of a tiny minority who have contrived to create the impression that it is a much greater issue." This claim by the bishops that interest in the Tridentine Mass is "the concern of a tiny minority" is a presumptuous statement. In 1980 when the bishops were asked by the Vatican to report on interest in the Tridentine Mass they were asked to poll their people about the old and the new rite. Most bishops gave their own impressions to the Vati-

can rather than go directly to the people and seek their opinions like the Vatican wanted.

There is another aspect to this issue. At this time in our Church's history there is a great emphasis on pastoral concerns in Church matters. Great efforts have been made to reach Catholics who have drifted from the Church or have felt uncomfortable with its teachings and practices. Yet, when traditional Catholics express their concerns they are often treated less seriously and I would say with less compassion and charity. This recent criticism of the Vatican for permitting the use of the Tridentine Mass on a limited basis is an example.

In a recent article in the National Catholic Register, one Vatican official was quoted as saying, "A molehill is being turned back into a mountain. The vernacular, even with all its problems, is here to stay. The reforms of Vatican Council II are here to stay -- or to be updated. And giving permission to say the Tridentine Mass to a relatively small

number of faithful -- under strict conditions -- is not at all preconciliar but well in keeping with council ideas of reaching all the faithful."

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Are Teachings Compromised?

EDITOR:

Planned Parenthood, with the aid of the professional educators, has finally achieved its goal -- to obtain the official endorsement of the Diocese of Rochester, for its moral-free sex education program in the public schools. One can only wonder about the significance of this. So, what do we Catholics have to offer to a program based on a values system which must have neutral and non-judgmental "teaching"? How come so many representatives of our Church have spent over two years working on the same 20 year old curriculum? Why are we now "reassured" that that same curriculum is for use only in the city public schools and not in the diocesan schools? Could it be that our "Catholic" program is better? Has it been given as much priority as the one we chose not to use? Are there plans for our public school students to receive the same "Catholic" teachings as our diocesan students? The questions come more quickly than the answers. Most certainly, we must decide whether, as a result of our participation, we Catholics have taken a leadership role in our community or whether, in fact, we have compromised the teachings of our faith.

If we really care about our teens -- spiritually as well as physically -- we will realize that 600 pages of PP philos-

ophy cannot replace the 10 short sentences called The Ten Commandments. Rather than listen to the "experts" who, for 20 years, have claimed that teen pregnancy is caused by lack of education, we would do well to pay attention to the wisdom of the popes who, for the past 50 years, have spoken on the subject of sexuality. Pope Pius XII, for one, made the statement that the reason young people get into trouble sexually is not ignorance, but weakness of will and poverty of spiritual life. If that is, indeed, the problem, who better than the Catholic Church can provide the solution?

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Church Biased On Campaign

EDITOR:

The decision of the bishops' committee to postpone sending the first draft of "Catholic Social Teaching and the American Economy" to the nation's bishops until after the election, in order to avoid any possible political exploitation, was distinctly curious -- in light of the essentially political pronouncements concerning abortion that Catholic bishops made prior to the election; the Voter Education Pamphlet distributed in this diocese (vague and muted on war and the economy, prescriptive on abortion), and the pre-election issue of the Courier-Journal.

From my point of view, the Church has shown a distinctively Republican bias this fall and so perhaps the postponement must be seen in that light. I do hope the social Darwinists in Washington will be listening to the bishops, but this is one



"HE'S NOT CRAZY ABOUT THE JOB, BUT HE LOVES THE PERKS."

Democrat who is not too happy with the Church's recent ventures into politics.

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Used Stamps Needed

EDITOR:

May I ask your readers if they would save their cancelled stamps for Sister Claire

Adrian, OP, St. Catharine PO, Kentucky, 40061.

Please send the stamps to Mr. J. Lane, 118 Rogers Ave., Somerville, Mass., 02144.

Mr. Lane is collecting stamps for me in the New York and Massachusetts areas.

The proceeds from the sale of these stamps are used for our retired and sick sisters.

Sister Claire Adrian OP
St. Catharine, Ky., 40061

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.

