

# Editorial

## Idea for Pontiff

The Rev. Jesse Jackson's fortitude is to be admired. He has become known for actions as bold as his pronouncements.

Now, concerning the shameful legalized system of apartheid in South Africa, he has gone almost to the top, so to speak.

He has met with, what a Vatican spokesman termed "an old friend," Archbishop Pio Laghi, the Vatican pruncio in the United States, on the situation. Although the Vatican was its characteristically mum self, Rev. Jackson told a news conference that he hoped to convince Pope John Paul II through Archbishop Laghi to visit South Africa and denounce its biased policies. The Baptist minister said he wants to visit that country himself but it is not difficult to guess what chance that scenario has with Johannesburg.

But the papal visit may not be as outlandish as it appears at first blush. First, the Vatican is more of a kindred soul with the Baptist minister on this sore subject than, for instance, are the American bishops.

After the pope met with South African President P. W. Botha at the Vatican in June, the Holy See issued a statement criticizing apartheid as "contrary

to the Christian principle of equal dignity of all men." In addition, the Vatican has often assailed the South African system and it has done far more to promote blacks within the Church than, again for instance, the American bishops.

So there is evidential support that such a proposal would not be greeted inimically in the Vatican. What about South Africa? It would be far more difficult for Johannesburg to reject such a request from the pope than it is to turn away the Rev. Jackson.

## Sniglet, Please

A cable television show regularly features what it calls "sniglets" -- coined words to describe situations not already covered in the language.

It would be nice if some reader could come up with a sniglet for rumors that refuse to die. Targets would be such as the false report, now going on 10 years old, that Madalyn Murray O'Hair has petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to ban all religious programming from the air waves. This one has generated more mail to the FCC than any other issue in history and it is completely untrue.

Now another such whatchamacallit has entered its seventh year -- that a movie is being produced on the

"sex life" of Jesus Christ. The Illinois attorney general, whose office has received 180,000 letters since last December and an average of 15 telephone calls a week concerning the nonexistent production, is begging the media to help squelch the rumor.

This one began as a valid report that such a film was being considered in Denmark. The idea was dropped but the spinoff rumor which has developed has a seemingly immortal life of its own.

Please add it to the list of, until a better sniglet comes along, "phonieports."

## Name Change

Considering that their principal base of operations is Africa, it seems that the erstwhile White Fathers made a wise move in changing their name to the Missionaries of Africa.

Actually, the previous name really should have no racial overtones -- but it did. The missioners were so-called because they traditionally wore white habits. But as the 2,800 priests, brothers and laymen in recent years increasingly got into work situations, the white habit grew obsolete. For all reasons, a name change was decreed.

## and Opinion

### Missioner Reflects on SSJs' 20 Years in Brazil

EDITOR:

On Aug. 13, 1964, the people of the Rochester diocese filled Sacred Heart Cathedral to send forth the first group of diocesan missionaries to a foreign land. Bishop Kearney spoke of the importance of supporting the missionaries by their interest, their prayers and their financial contributions.

During these 20 years, we have felt this support often. In the beginning, individual donations and messages sustained us. Then in 1969, while Msgr. John Duffy headed the Propagation of the Faith, the annual contribution from that fund was initiated. That has been our principal sustenance ever since, enabling us to work fulltime in the poorer areas.

Besides enabling our presence with the poor, these contributions have allowed

us to respond to crises moments of hunger and sickness. These moments are frequent in a country that has no organized health programs or social services and no unemployment program.

In addition to this annual diocesan contribution we have received individual donations for specific programs and campaigns. Most famous of these was the Courier-Journal sponsored water filter campaign. Other gifts have been used to supply medicines, subsidize water and garden projects, food programs, catechetical programs and the cost of Bibles and other materials for reflection groups.

More important, however, has been the personal interest of diocesan personnel. Bishop Hogan twice visited our places; on Dec. 7 Bishop Clark is scheduled to be with us in Paranaiguara for the

second time as we celebrate our 20 years in Brazil. Several clergy as well as members of our congregation and our families have been here. The visits of Cliff Carpenter and Tony Costello also provided more adequate communication of our Brazilian reality to Rochester.

At this time, we can only say thank you for all the interest, prayers and support you have provided. As the Brazilians say, "Deus lhes pague (May God reward you)."

To the oft-repeated question, "Has the situation improved during these 20 years?" we have to replay honestly, "No."

We have been able to offer short-term responses to urgent problems. However, due to the presence of and exploitation by multinationals, we are rowing against a very strong current. A total

social, economic and political restructuring is necessary. In this restructuring, new relationships of first and third world are vital to the existence of millions.

We offer one more suggestion to those presented by Bishop Kearney at the first sending ceremony. We invite all who are seriously interested in Third World countries, in our missions, to reflect seriously on the American bishops' pastoral letter, "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy." It is our hope that this document will raise the questions and present the values that can create the basis for new directions and new economic relationships between first and third worlds.

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### Curriculum Criticized

EDITOR:

In response to "Diocesan Divisions Reaction to City Sex Ed Curriculum" which states, "We support a human sexuality course within the public school system. We affirm with Pope John Paul II the primary role and responsibility of parents to educate children in human sexuality; therefore, we urge parents to take an active role in the implementation of the curriculum."

The pope indeed urges PARENTS to take the responsibility of educating their youngsters in the area of

sexuality! However, to say that it follows that parents should help implement this purely humanistic program is pure distortion! This program questions all basic Judeo-Christian absolutes and espouses the religion of human secularism. A stated principle is values clarification which is the stated teaching tool of the humanists (Refer to "Values Clarification; A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teacher and Student," Simon Sidney B. etc.)

Let me give you a few quotes from the sex ed curriculum and you decide if this is what you want 11, 12 and 13-year-olds to learn.

"In Christian liturgies, the faithful sing and share the

sacramental food, thus keeping alive the ideal of brotherhood that they are unable to practice outside the church walls." "Morality can put you in a psychological prison. This is when the rules of your game are written by others." "The principles of our forbears and the commandments of the Bible (all of which have been interpreted in different ways by different people under different circumstances) are no longer seen as constituting a set of moral values which can or should be taught to our children."

As you read on, they do suggest a substitute for your children. And I quote: "Religion by itself isn't enough to understand the meaning of morality ... philosophy is what is required of you." "Nothing is more practical than your philosophy of life."

This is another complex way of saying that each person shouldn't be guided by a God-given absolute (theos) but rather by an individual, self-made, self-centered belief as to what's right or wrong at a particular time to that particular person. In our me-istic world, we call this philosophical trend "situation ethics." Using it you can justify any moral aberration (dare I say sin?) by stating simply that

the aberration is OK for me in these circumstances at this time.

The curriculum goes further and points out that those who believe and teach absolutes are bigots and what they are really doing isn't teaching but indoctrinating. Yet when the curriculum comes to redefine "Sin-Virtue," we see where the bigotry really lies: "Sin-virtue. This is the religious sense of bad-good. Again it does not necessarily coincide with immoral-moral. A Roman Catholic female practicing artificial contraception because another pregnancy would kill her would be called sinful by her pope."

This same paper assures your junior high students that "most people" are bisexual nowadays; that the IUD and mini-pill PREVENT pregnancy when indeed they end an already existing pregnancy; that to insure every child being wanted (you know like a car or a wedge of pie) "a couple MUST decide on a method of family planning."

If you find anything distasteful or blatantly against your beliefs in the preceding quotes, I urge you to go to your public library and read the program in its completeness.

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### The Rosary Is the Answer

EDITOR:

In this age of great activism and social awareness, I am afraid that we have lost sight of a marvelous truth that I came across again just recently in a book published in 1934 titled "Marvels of Grace."

The French author Victor Many tells us "...each one of our good works, even the most secret thought, is re-echoed in the souls of all; it is like a current of pure air invigorating the vital sap that runs through the Mystical Body of Christ. If we would ponder over this mystery of Christian solidarity, if we would realize that countless souls, even without any sensible contact with us, profit by all the good we do, and likewise suffer a loss by the evil we work, how careful we would be to avoid the slightest fault."

"And if we wish to live a life that will have far reaching influence on the history of human progress and the salvation of souls, let us apply ourselves to the work of our own sanctification."

Truly, what wonders even the poorest and weakest of us can work in the realm of grace for the good of mankind, even if we are shut-ins.

And one of the surest and most efficacious means to sanctify is the devout recita-

tion of the daily rosary, meditating on the mysteries.

How sad that the Christian world has lost sight of this wondrous secret.

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### Merton Book Released

EDITOR:

This is "Merton country," where there are many people eager for information about whatever is new in Merton studies. I am happy to inform them that the long awaited "official" biography of Thomas Merton is at last available. More than that I can tell them that it was worth the wait. Superbly written, it takes its place at the top of the list of books about Merton. The title: "The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton." The author: Michael Mott, professor of English at Bowling Green University in Ohio.

I assure you I get no royalties or other benefits from sharing this information. I am simply fulfilling my duty as director of the Merton Society of Rochester.

Msgr. William H. Shannon  
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### 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.

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