

Editorial Christmas Gifts

● To all those who contributed to the drive to aid Ethiopia. And also to Father Robert C. Bradler and his staff at the Missions Office for their work in the campaign.

● To Toronto's Cardinal G. Emmett Carter for refusing to meet with recently acquitted abortionist Dr. Henry Morgenthaler. While it is a valid precept for church leaders to meet with even the worst sinners in hope of changing hearts, in this case Morgenthaler was aptly criticized by the Toronto archdiocese for his "publicity-seeking stunts."

● To the Vatican for its warm praise for Bishop Desmond Tutu, this year's Nobel Prize winner. Bishop Tutu, who has endangered his life by open criticism of his government's apartheid system, was termed by the Vatican's Roman Observer newspaper one of the "prophets of peace" in the modern world for his struggle.

● To Archbishop O'Connor for his quick and stout defense of his Auxiliary Bishop Emerson Moore who was arrested for demonstrating against apartheid at the entrance to the South African consulate in New York City. Thus Bishop Moore became the first American bishop to be arrested for civil disobedience -- and his superior had the courage to support him in a just cause. Leadership with a capital O'.

● To the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester for establishing a new diocesan newspaper, The Chronicle, indicating their recognition of the need for such communication. May their role of spreading the Good News be blessed.

Christmas Appeal

The way the calendar falls this year, this last edition of the Courier-Journal before Christmas comes almost a full week before the day itself. That is of

importance because this is the last chance to remind all those who wish to contribute to the annual Christmas Appeal to do so now -- last minute reminders will be impossible.

Diocesans face many demands for their hard-earned income and yet have never shirked the opportunity to help others, especially through this particular drive, coming as it does at Christmastime.

The various agencies of Christmas make the most of your donation, streamlining it directly to those in serious need. Many of you have gone through the difficult chore of reading the individual cases appearing in this newspaper for the past four weeks. While the cases are heart-rending, many of the donations, too, are poignant -- often coming from persons who have far more goodwill than resources. Still, reminiscent of the widow's mite, their sacrifice to help others they feel are more unfortunate.

Let's not let the hubbub of the season distract from sending that contribution. At least one person will be glad you did -- yourself.

and Opinion

A Word Of Gratitude

EDITOR:

Christmas is more than a day at the end of the year

More than a day of joy and good cheer

Christmas is really God's pattern for living

To be followed each day by unself giving

Then Peace on Earth will come to stay

When we live Christmas every day.

(Catholic Relief Service)

The people of this diocese and surrounding areas are truly living this message every day by their generous giving to those in need.

On the first Christmas night the eternal God became present to our world in a new way, in the form of a little child born in Bethlehem. This God-man, Jesus Christ, remained physically and visibly present on this earth for he next 33 years.

Nineteen hundred years later, this same Lord Jesus is still with us in a number of ways. He is present in the Eucharist; in the person of everyone who loves Him; but especially in the lives of the people who have reached out in a special way to help our starving brothers and sisters in Ethiopia.

We at the diocesan Missions Office are most grateful to the people of our diocese for the gift of \$61,778 to the Ethiopian Aid Fund.

May the joy of Christmas be increased by knowing that you are making Christ more easily recognized in Ethiopia.

May the Infant of Bethlehem be present in your life -- and give you and yours an abundant sharing in His life, Peace and Love in the new year.

Father Robert C. Bradler
Diocesan Director
Society for the Propagation
Of the Faith
123 East Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14604

Bishops Seen Wrong Again

EDITOR:

Our bishops have struck again. In so doing, they have in 16 years struck out on religion, national defense and economics. Three outs make an inning.

They don't seem now to understand that there can be no welfare without wealth. Whatever system provides the most wealth can provide the most welfare. This system will not be the welfare state socialism their latest intellectual debacle envisions.

The bottom line is that like liberal intellectuals everywhere they have no solution but welfare -- which doesn't work. Welfare does not produce wealth, but can only consume it.

John Starkweather
1840 Middle Road
Rush, N.Y. 14543

Our Lady's Truck Driver

EDITOR:

When two friends and I left Rochester about 6:15 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 5, for a meeting in Geneva there was not a snowflake in sight. At 10 p.m., when the meeting was over, there were millions of them.

Driving in the City of Geneva, because of the lights, we could find the road but as we left the Geneva exit onto 490, the snow was frightening. Our driver tried to keep to the right of what we thought was the road. We decided to pray the rosary, to ask Our Lady to get us home safely.

She didn't stop the snow but a truck passed us and swung over into our lane. Because it was slippery, we were driving 30 miles an hour. The truck was going about 45 and was soon almost out of sight. We prayed harder. Suddenly we noticed the truck had slowed to about a car's length from us. We could see the nine tail lights and the truck blocked the blinding snow from us. All the way from Geneva to the Rochester 45 exit, he drove 30 miles an hour.

Not only did we pray for the safety of everyone on the road but especially for Our Lady's truck driver. We were deeply grateful to her and to him.

Anna Mae Tette
28 Dakota St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

Priests, Nuns Defended

EDITOR:

Mr. Joseph J. Murray's letter (Dec. 12) is a scathing

diatribe against our priests and religious, albeit clothed in soft language. Pushing aside the verbiage, we can cull the following indictments which, in my view, border on calumny.

1. The Church is infected by "deadly spiritual famine and plague."

2. Our priests and religious are "pathetic victims" who must choose faith in Christ, "The Divine Physician."

3. In the past 20 years, diocesan priests and most women religious have rejected Church canons and the Church magisterium.

4. Worldly forces rationalize away their burdens to teach and defend Catholic faith, doctrines and morality.

5. The "plagues" (mentioned above) become worse if women religious are appointed as spiritual directors for seminarians.

6. Women religious occupy themselves in seminars on women priests, self-fulfillment and a sexist Church.

7. Priests tacitly accept or collaborate in these and other "subversions."

After the above indictments, Mr. Murray presents a mini-treatise on ascetical theology and puts forth the solution. Magdalen College, conducted by lay people, reports that a number of its women have entered into a "sound religious order" and more than 35 percent of its men have entered seminaries.

I do not quarrel with Mr. Murray's Magdalen College but the above indictments are a tissue of falsehoods and half-truths which show a supreme lack of charity toward our priests, nuns, deacons and dedicated lay people who are assisting us on our pilgrimage to salvation.

Most of the indictments above must result from a lack of knowledge of what these people are really doing. Mr. Murray, many of our priests have died in their 50s, often from overwork. Would they reject faith in Christ, The Divine Physician? Mr. Murray, would you object to Mother Teresa being the spiritual director in a seminary? Mr. Murray, because a nun attends one seminar a year on the woman priesthood, does that mean that she spends 365 days a year dwelling on and gloating over this possibility?

Mr. Murray, you indict and condemn these people. I thank God for them and their work.

Daniel L. Davis
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Penfield, N.Y. 14526

Brazil SSJs Send Thanks

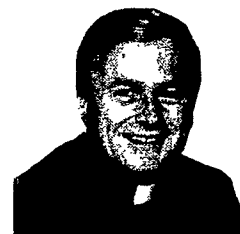
EDITOR:

The 12 Sisters of St. Joseph in Brazil and our three Brazilian postulants join in wishing all the people of the Rochester diocese a

new coming of Christ for Christmas. We also want to thank all for their support and prayers for our mission here. Their help enables us to carry out their desires to correct some of the injustices under which these people suffer.

The Sisters of St. Joseph
Brazil

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Critiquing Criticism

For some time now, I have been listening to a great deal of angry criticism of the bishops of the United States (and sometimes of our own bishop in particular) for their part in publishing the pastoral letter on peace and the letter now in preparation on economics and economic policy.

The principal thrust of the criticism on the letter on peace seems to be a way of saying, "The president and leaders in government and in the Pentagon know so much more about the world situation than those bishops do, that the bishops should keep their noses out of an area which does not involve their competence."

"In regard to the letter on economics (even though it's not yet published in its final form) is that it calls for a redistribution of wealth and is a definite leaning of the bishops in the direction of socialism if not outright communism and therefore in our democracy it should be rejected out of hand."

It seems to me that we have two issues here: 1. the relative incompetence of the bishops regarding the hardnosed politics of war and peace, and their equal incompetence in the area of economic policy and structure; 2. the from-time-immemorial Judeo-Christian tradition that calls for prophecy in areas where injustice or moral evil prevail.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the bishops have a right to speak up in terms of the danger of the destruction of the human race which would come from nuclear war as well as what any balanced person must admit are

serious evils in our economic structure.

It seems therefore that we have contradictions here. On the one hand the bishops shouldn't speak because they don't have the height of competence required; but on the other hand they should speak because they need to proclaim the word of God in season and out of season.

The consequences of nuclear war should be evident to everyone and the call to avoid nuclear war is absolutely required of our spiritual leaders. The consequences of ongoing injustices in our economic world as well as gross inequities are also clear and therefore need to be condemned. How much of crime, for example, is directly attributable to inequity and injustice?

Granted that there is a line beyond which the bishops should not go in their proclamations, but there still is a large area where they must speak forth or be delinquent in their role as spiritual leaders. Prophets were never accepted very graciously in any period of human history and it is to be expected that they will not be accepted in this time.

But if we are intent upon arguing with the bishops let us merely in good faith call to their attention when we believe they have overstepped their bounds, and why we think so, rather than simply declare the bishops are speaking on matters that are none of their business.

Sometimes it seems that in these outcries against the bishops, the people are saying this is our world and we don't want you tampering with it. The question that comes to mind is, "Is it your world? Or is it God's world?" And shouldn't we be seeking His word about how to run it?



"WOW! AND YOU MEAN WE GET THIS PACKAGE OF MACADAMIA NUTS, TOO?"

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.