

Editorial

**His Holiness
His Power**

The involvement of the papacy in the secular world has not always been to the good of humankind. Indeed, there have been not a few popes who were far more concerned with temporal power than with spiritual leadership -- even using the trappings of the latter to secure the former.

But in modern times, the stands taken by the popes vis a vis secular matters have always been well-intended and often salubrious. Pope Pius XII at risk of person as well as of far-reaching consequences worked behind the scenes on behalf of persecuted Jews during World War II.

Pope John XXIII was such a spiritual giant that when he mixed with the world's Caesars he automatically motivated them to at least think twice over the possible consequences of continued bellicosity. When in his famous Peace on Earth, the first encyclical ever to be addressed to the world at large, he spoke of human rights and the need to end wars, he was heard because he was trusted.

Paul VI, called in many quarters the Pope of Peace, worked and spoke often of the folly of war, of the arms race. He traveled far and frequently to bring his message to the peoples of the world. Perhaps his most notable visit was to the United Nations in October of 1965 when he intoned the inspiring challenge, "No more war, war never again!"

John Paul I, the September pope, served too short a tenure for us to know what inroads he might have made into a cold world. But his successor, our first Polish pope, born into freedom but molded by oppression, an intellectual giant and physical powerhouse, combining the common sense of a schoolmaster with the touch of the poet, a streets

smart leader imbued with the Spirit, seems to have evolved all the attributes and capabilities of his predecessors into one unmistakable and potent center of influence.

While probably taking a very intense role in the spiritual formation of his flock he indefatigably takes on the rest of the world with an eye to its betterment. His list of pilgrimages, all with secular as well as spiritual significance, is lengthy and continuing. He has pronounced forcibly and intelligently on every world crisis. He is sought out by temporal leaders for advice and leadership. He has raised the papacy, if not to a position of world leadership, most certainly to a prominence respected by those who do make the decisions affecting all of humankind.

Thus when the adversarial leaders of the two most powerful nations in the world come to the table to talk arms reduction they, as in the television commercial, stop and listen when John Paul addresses the subject. No longer does anyone ask in Stalinesque fashion how many divisions he commands.

When the pope condemns almost with equal vigor both communism and capitalism, it gives pause for thought. That may not have been so with even some of our more illustrious popes but when this one speaks thusly it carries clout. Many react as he intends by questioning our systems and motivations.

Because of his obvious contempt for racial injustice and oppression, this Polish Roman is sought out by an American black and asked to visit South Africa -- his very presence seen as a blow against the evil of apartheid.

True, not all Catholics welcome all the spiritual pronouncements made by John Paul II but true leadership is never without problems. Making decisions means making people uncomfortable, even making enemies. But the church is on a journey and the pope is at the helm. He probably understands

with the ancient Greek philosopher that a ship is always safe in port but that's not what ships are made for.

Somehow this amazing pope has found the time and energy to confront the difficult problems of his spiritual flock while at the same time influencing the decisions of the world at large. It seems the depth, benevolence and clarity with which he speaks is nearly as important as his actual pronouncements. Perhaps because he is a man fashioned from diverse influences and drives, he is able to mold form and substance into a formidable force for good.

Not Pro-Life

Headline: Florida Bishop Denounces Christmas Bombings of Abortion Clinics.

And Bishop J. Keith Symons of Pensacola-Tallahassee couldn't have been more correct. Three abortion clinics were bombed Christmas morning in Pensacola. Fortunately, no one was killed or injured.

Violence runs counter to the spirit of Christ. It is particularly insulting to be practiced on His birthday. It cannot be condoned.

It also damages the pro-life cause. It plays into the hands of those who paint the anti-abortion movement as retrogressive. It helps prove the contention in some quarters that pro-lifers are not really that at all.

Such action is no less than another patch in the mad quilt of terrorism. This modern-day aberration must be condemned whenever and wherever and for whatever purpose.

Bishop Symans expressed his revulsion perfectly: "We have available to us appropriate channels for expressing our convictions regarding the dignity of human life. Certainly the wrong of willful bombing cannot right the horror of abortion."

and Opinions

**Tax Plan
Dangerous**

EDITOR:

Every so often, an issue confronts us that is so clearly dangerous that all of us in public life, Democrat and Republican, must come together and fight as one.

Recently, Treasury Secretary Donald Regan sent the president a tax simplification

program. My Department of Taxation and Finance analyzed the plan and pinpointed one provision that, if enacted into law, would destroy this state, and other high-tax, industrial states like ours.

The Regan plan calls for the elimination of state and local tax deductions from federal income tax returns. If that one provision were to stand alone, our people would pay \$6 billion more

each year in federal taxes. If the entire Regan plan were enacted, with lower tax rates to reduce the impact of the loss of deductibility, our people would stay pay \$1.5 billion more each year.

The Treasury plan would hurt our state very badly. I've said that it would be a regional death sentence for New York and the old industrial states. It pulverizes New York's greatest strength -- not the few who gross their

millions and enjoy it in New Jersey, but the middle class, the people who make between \$30,000 and \$50,000, who earn their bread in New York and live in New York, who are lucky enough to own a home. It would penalize high-tax states such as New York that have been forced to pay for the failure of federal policies to curb illegal immigration, to stop the illicit drug trade and to shelter the permanent victims of the worst economic downturn since the depression.

I'm not alone in this fight. Sens. Moynihan and D'Amato have forcefully opposed the loss of deductibility. Sen. D'Amato's opposition is especially welcome, because he is a Republican, and his voice is heard in the White House if ours is not.

This is a fight that none of us may run from, a fight that must be fought and won.

Gov. Mario M. Cuomo
State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, N.Y. 12224

Fr. Louis J.
Hohman



The Open Window

**What Ever
Happened to
Ecumenism?**

Dear Father Hohman,

On Thanksgiving three generations of my very large traditional Catholic family spent the day together. It was just wonderful.

After dinner, conversation was lively and we naturally got into remembering the way it used to be. Grandma and Grandpa (my parents) were married in the rectory because Mom was not a Catholic. They love talking about it. My brothers and sisters and I all had stories about standing outside Protestant churches waiting to get a glimpse of our best friend who was getting married inside. I made the comment that "since Vatican II all that has changed and the ecumenical movement makes so many things possible."

Well, then the civil war of tongues started, some thinking it was better way back then before the council, some thinking the

way it is now is better, and some not even caring.

When my 18-year-old niece, who missed one question on the verbal SATs and has been accepted at every Ivy League college in the country, said, "What's the ecumenical movement?" I was stunned.

What has happened to the ecumenical movement? Is it still around, and why don't smart young people know about it? Or should they? Or what?

G.B.

Dear G.B.

As far as the ecumenical movement is concerned, it is as alive and well as localities choose to make it. In one part of the country, little or nothing is done about getting people of various traditions together. In other parts, it is active, growing and effective.

Our own diocese is of the latter kind. We have a great deal of grass-roots ecumenism, with churches of many denominations cooperating at the level of prayer, worship, forms of spiritual renewal and social activities. One of my favorites is an ecumenical project

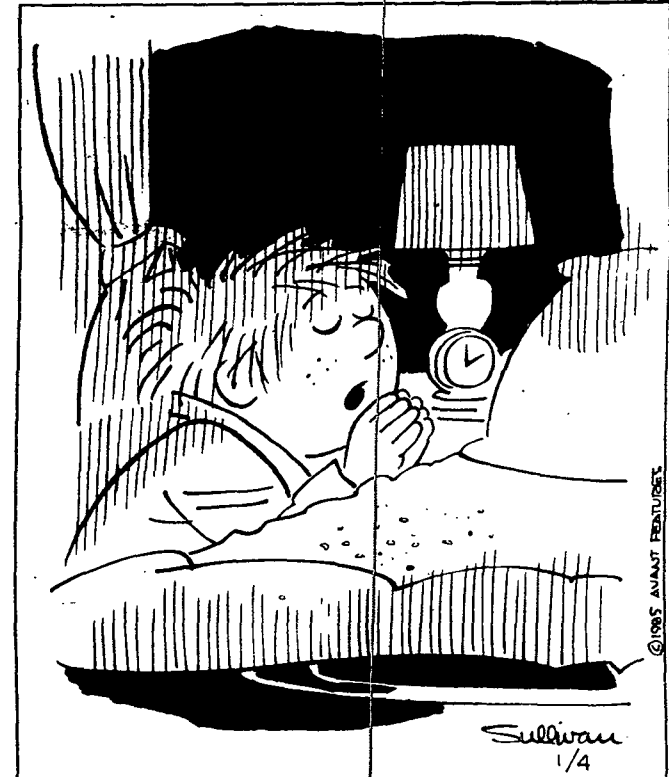
held in Churchville each year with the proceeds donated to the cause of world hunger.

We have Genesee Ecumenical Ministries which is the cooperative effort of many denominations to have the social message of Christianity heard in the public forum. Its activities are not limited to social concerns, but at this point in history, it seems to lean heavily in that direction.

At higher levels, theologians from many churches have met for years in an effort to understand each other and probe for areas of actual or possible agreement. The talks among Catholic, Lutheran and Episcopal theologians have been especially fruitful.

Finally, the overall atmosphere which now exists among the churches is markedly more friendly and cooperative. That your friends (knowledgeable as they are) know nothing about it, can be due only to a relative non-involvement in church activity.

I guess I would summarize my reply with, "We've come a long way, baby" but add that we have a long way to go. Only love and understanding, particularly the understanding that unity is not uniformity will bring us closer to the realization of our Lord's prayer, "that they may be one."



"COULD WE SET UP A NEW STARTING DATE FOR MY RAIDING-THE COOKIE-JAR-AFTER EVERYONE'S-ASLEEP RESOLUTION?"

Thank you all for your compassion and generosity.
Maurice Tierney
Executive Director

Catholic Charities
50 Chestnut St.
Rochester, N.Y.

**Appeal Donors
Thanked**

EDITOR:

Thanks to all the contributors to the Courier-Journal-Catholic Charities annual Christmas Appeal for their generosity in helping to meet the short-term, emergency needs of people throughout the diocese during Christmastime and throughout the year.

The Christmas Appeal benefits more than 16,000 persons in the diocese, thanks to the efforts of staff and volunteers in the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier offices of Social Ministry, the Office of Urban Ministries and Catholic Family Center.

The appeal's success is largely due to the efforts of the publisher and staff of the Courier-Journal who promote the appeal through "the 100 neediest cases."

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 St., 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.