

Editorial

Circuit Riders?

In his column "Along the Way" last week, Bishop Matthew H. Clark addressed perhaps the most perplexing problem facing the organized church -- the present shortage and upcoming dearth of priests.

"By the year 2000 in the United States we will half the number of active priests we have now," the bishop wrote. If that prognosis applies to our diocese, and there is no reason it wouldn't, we would have 150 priests in 2000, with 161 parishes, as the bishop pointed out.

Further, Bishop Clark wrote, though such possibilities are frightening, they are not only in the future -- the crunch is here -- now.

What is to be? Obviously, there must be consolidations of parishes. That will be a necessity -- a painful one for many, but something not to be avoided.

Then perhaps, and this is strictly in the realm of "science fiction," we will revert to the circuit riders of yesteryear, whereby a priest will travel from church to church on Sunday mornings, the only day of the week when a eucharistic liturgy will be

possible. In 1968 the Courier-Journal published a magazine on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the diocese. An article took a look at the church of the future and envisioned mobile units bringing Mass to street corners and priests in space backpacks flying hither and yon to serve geographically diverse communities.

Fantasy? Probably. But we must all join our minds and hearts, as Bishop Clark proposes, to come up with realistic answers to a worsening situation.

The bishop in his column this week continues his consideration of the problem. Diocesans should read what he has to say, ponder on it, pray over it and seek solutions.

New World

Dick Dowd in his "Behind the Headlines" column passes on an amazing (but true) fact from Bishop J. A. Fiorenza, head of the American bishops' missions committee.

Within 15 years, make that the year 2000, white Caucasians will make up less than 40 percent of Christians in the world. The bishop feels that "the axis of Christendom will shift from Geneva, Rome and New York to Kinshasa (Africa), Buenos Aires

(Latin America) and Manila (Oceania). The Catholic Church at large is on top of this development, witness 904 mission jurisdictions around the world -- with 376 in Africa, for instance.

Unfortunately, the so-called American Church still suffers from a cultural, or is it spiritual, lag. Some individual dioceses, most pertinently our own, maintain a strong missionary presence in Latin America. However, when it comes to those of other races, American Catholics are woefully and shortsightedly color-conscious. We do not seem to understand the word catholic, or the meaning of the term universal church.

Armed with the greatest message ever told, why have we been able to turn out only one model of Catholic -- white Caucasian? Obviously because that's the way we want it. At a time when the shortage of priests is painful, the American Church cannot, or will not, produce black priests. Charged with the mission of evangelization by Jesus Christ Himself, the American Church shrinks into a fraternity of whites, accepting the dictates of society rather than those of God Almighty.

And we show no inclination to change even when a future fraught with obvious threatening significance is closing in us.

and Opinions

Being Woman Is Enough

EDITOR:

Our Church is beset with problems. Stressing one so minor as sexist language, which panders only to a paranoid few is unworthy of the emphasis it is receiving.

It takes no stretch of the imagination to realize that "mankind," a generic term taught in the fourth grade, refers to humanity at large -- men, women, male, female.

Many of us are happy with being the women God has created us. We are not appreciative of the maudling breastbeating designed to create discontent with our role. We know we are part of the Almighty's plan. He will continue to create both male and female creatures, with their marvelous physical and psychological differences, not superior, not inferior, each complementing the other.

We do not want to usurp the role of the male. We prefer to strengthen it.

We do not want to be priests.

We feel that any clergyman, be he bishop or parish priest, does not have the right to question our Holy Father's decision in this

or any matter. While he does not always speak ex cathedra, he does not speak for the pleasure of listening to his own echo.

When and if women priests are accepted, it is to our Holy Father we shall look for guidance. His position is demanding of respect. There is no need to point this out.

Let us not fail to remember that where Peter is, there is the Church.

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Let's Help Africans

EDITOR:

In biblical days, Joseph of the coat of many colors gladly helped his brothers who were starving because of famine beyond their control. In this Lenten season we have a wonderful opportunity to follow the example of Joseph by feeding the starving. In the entire panorama of history, you can play an important part. Write or call your congresspersons and/or the president and urge them to press legislation to provide enough aid to feed the starving Africans and help them to be able to grow their own food for a

coming harvest season. Congresspersons have local offices. The White House address is Washington, D.C. 20500.

Mary Rita Crowe
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Army Buddy Sought

EDITOR:

I need assistance in locating Edward C. Reichart, a World War II fellow crew member from the Rochester area. We were in Company E, 56th Armored Engineers, 11th Armored Division, training out of Camp Polk, La. in 1942 and 1943.

Our company became the 995th Engineer Treadway Bridge Company and served with the 4th Armored Division under Gen. George S. Patton during the march through France, Battle of the Bulge and on to Austria. Would Edward C. Reichart or any person who knows of him please contact me?

We plan to have a reunion of the 995th Engineers at Niagara Falls in September.

Alvin L. Schmitt
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2nd March Planned

EDITOR:

Thank you for your continuing coverage of the weekly rosary march in front of 220 Alexander St. I think this is a very useful group. A second group has now begun to pray and walk in front of the Highland Hospital.

It is the hope of the group that prayers and presence there will result in assistance and referrals for pregnant women considering abortion; a change of heart for those involved in the abortion process, and public education on the issue.

Janice Cardenas
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Should Be Glad for Life

EDITOR:

Would the people who favor abortion be around to favor it if their mothers had gotten an abortion?

They should be thankful that they're alive and campaign for those who are unborn.

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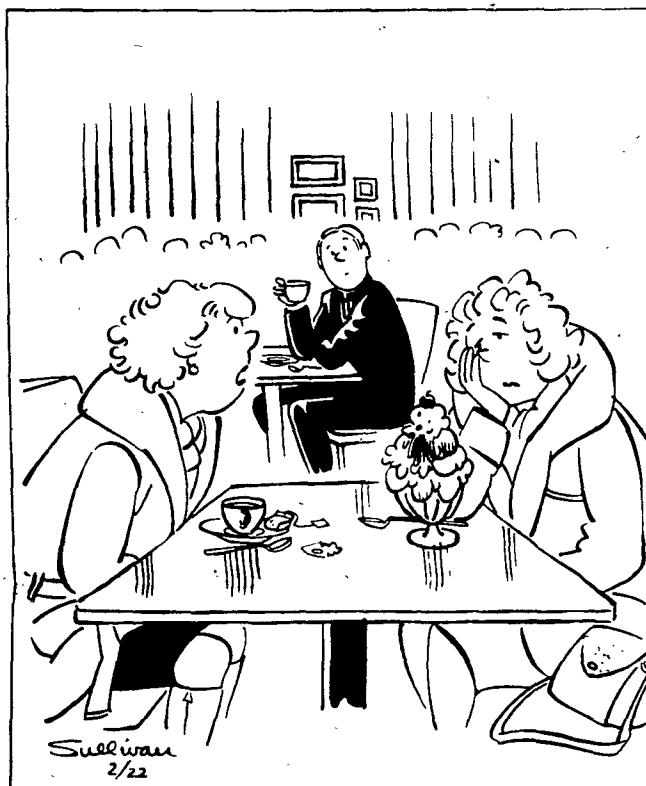
Help Irish Prisoners

EDITOR:

As St. Patrick's Day approaches, we will be told again and again not to aid the Catholics in northeast Ireland because they are "terrorists." Nothing will be said about being victims discrimination in employment, wretched housing, government lawlessness and military repression.

For those who fear their dollars might be spent on guns, may I make a positive suggestion for aiding a few of these unfortunate humans? There are some Irish political prisoners in English jails in addition to several thousands in places like Long Kesh. Sister Sarah Clarke has as her apostolate the care of these prisoners and their families. You may be sure any help given through Sister Sarah will not be spent on guns.

Charles Dickens exposed the vindictive English prison system more than a century ago. Things have not im-



"I'M SURE HE'S JUST ADMIRING YOUR SUNDAE, ELOISE. GLUTTONY ISN'T EVEN ENTERING HIS MIND."

proved, but life is especially hard for those Irish who are not criminals but are viewed as mortal enemies by their keepers. Five Irish political prisoners have died from maltreatment in the past 10 years. Guards are no respecters of persons; Father Patrick Fell had his nose broken during a beating by guards.

Among the "corrective" treatments used is "tourist therapy" in which prisoners are switched about among prisons at frequent intervals. John McCluskey did time in 17 different prisons in 10 years, half the time in solitary. This instability of life tends to disorient and break the prisoner psychologically and causes extra suffering for

the family who do not know where their loved one may be. Some families make the long, expensive trip from Ireland for a visit of a few hours only to find that their relative has been moved to another part of the country. Sister Sarah does what she can to relieve the loneliness imposed by the prison.

For those who can offer financial help, Sister's address is: Sister Sarah Clarke, La Sainte Union Convent, Highgate Road, London NW5 1RP, England. Sister can also furnish a list of political prisoners who would be encouraged by a card or letter from outside.

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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 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.

