

Editorial

Withering Flower?

In a speech last week at the convention of the National Catholic Educational Association, Jesuit Father Paul C. Reinert, chancellor of St. Louis University, cited the decline in volunteer efforts at various U.S. private institutions and said that volunteerism, "one of the finest flowers of American culture and civilization," is in danger of disappearing.

Father Reinert called for professional fund raisers to join together to save the volunteer ethic, saying that both the volunteers and the recipients of their efforts share in the "spiritual benefits" of volunteerism.

Father Reinert is certainly correct in this belief, but what can be done to save volunteerism in America? With today's emphasis on careers and self-development, an economy that in many cases necessitates two-job families, and the hurried pace of our society, volunteerism has become a luxury many feel they cannot afford.

That is unfortunate, not only for the institutions in need of aid, but for the prospective volunteers and society as well. The true value of volunteerism is not just assistance to deserving organizations, but, from a broader standpoint, the effect the volunteer ethic has on individuals and the community. That effect can easily be recognized in the eyes of a nursing home resident playing shuffle board with a young volunteer or in the faces of those standing in line at a soup kitchen.

More importantly, perhaps, it can also be seen in the volunteers themselves. Donating time and effort to a worthy cause creates for the volunteer a bounty of self-esteem as well as clearer understanding and respect for those less fortunate than himself. The effect of volunteerism is unity — the unity of human problems and the unity of working to solve or lessen them.

Realizing this, perhaps we can learn to redirect the society's emphasis on self-fulfillment toward the growth we experience when helping those in need.

Consider Donating Organs

EDITOR:

This week is National Organ Donation Awareness Week. Organ donation is an important issue — one that must be considered carefully. Yet for the thousands who are awaiting transplants, there is no decision to make. They can only wait. In Penfield, a young woman waits. In Hornell, a baby boy waits. They must wait for liver donations — donations that will leave a legacy of renewed life.

Today, liver, kidney and heart transplants are well-accepted therapies performed routinely at specialized transplant centers, saving thousands of lives every year. Some liver transplant recipients have now survived for more than 13 years. Liver transplants have about a 75 percent one-year survival rate; kidney transplants have almost a 70 percent one-year survival rate and a 50 percent five-year survival rate. Transplants of the cornea of the eye have about 90 percent success at one year.

The need for organ donors is critical. This community has responded generously. Last year, eight livers, 36 kidneys, seven hearts, and more than 800 corneas were donated. What do we suggest to generous members of our community? Discuss organ donation with your family and physician. Make certain that they are aware of your wishes. Sign a Uniform Donor Card and carry it with you at all times.

Give a gift of life. Readers who have questions or wish to obtain donor cards may contact the Western New York Chapter of the American Liver Foundation, P.O. Box 18151, Rochester, N.Y. 14618

- William W. Faloon, M.D.,**
President
- James M. Stormont, M.D.,**
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- Barbara Timlin,**
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Find God Everywhere

EDITOR:

The writer of "General Cure-All?" (Opinions, April 10) compares a General Absolution Penance Service with an absurd story about general health care. I disagree. My God is a great God, and He can forgive one sin at a time or the whole universe all at once if all its people repent and are willing to change.

One can attend a church penance service, kneel by his bed, prostrate himself on the floor, be washing dishes or taking a bath, and at the same time pray to God for forgiveness of his sins and be cleansed at that moment by the precious blood of Jesus.

In the Bible, Peter having denied Jesus, went out and wept, sought forgiveness from God, and was cleansed. God continued to greatly use Peter. Peter did not wait for Saturday night confessional hours. The same goes for any sinner; God can forgive him on the spot.

God looks at the heart and the sincerity. Being in a confessional does not free a person from sin — it's a good step in the right direction, but if you're not sincerely

sorry for your sin, no confessional box or reciting so many prayers is going to make you cleansed before God, nor will attending a general penance service.

What if a man wants to seek forgiveness of his sins on Sunday night — must he wait until Saturday evening penance hours to become justified in God's sight? Does a bed-ridden person have to kneel in a confessional for God to

and Opinions

Book Casts Doubt on Beautiful Vocation

EDITOR:

The publishing of the book "Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence" was unfortunate and could very well be responsible for seducing impressionable youths into this particular lifestyle, for by giving national attention to this issue is, in a sense, giving it a stamp of approval. What is disturbing about this is that the Phil Donahue show has sensationalized it, resulting in more harm than good.

Nothing on this Earth is perfect, and that includes the Church. However, because of what the Church represents and the good it is trying to do, such things should be left well enough alone. Such revelations serve no purpose other than to aggrandize the position or status of the author and publisher.

Since this is a democracy, people are free to choose whatever lifestyle suits them. But when one considers the struggle churches are encountering — pornography in both books, movies and television; secularism; etc. — he will note that such things tend to exacerbate an already bad situation.

One of this country's proudest possessions is the minds of the youths, but when impressionable young people see this kind of conduct on the part of so-called responsible adults, and in a maner

as to make it appear acceptable and morally right, then it becomes deceit in its purest form.

Mr. Donahue uses such topics as a means of maninting ratings, for they are important to his remaining on the tube; the author of this book, and the publisher as well, do so to further their cause, and monetary gain — at a terrible cost.

I see no need to attempt to destroy the faith and confidence of people in the Catholic nuns. In the quest for recognition and money, suspicion has been cast on the beautiful and dedicated nuns. Simply by the publishing of a book, the decision of many who might consider serving in this capacity could very well be altered.

Unfortunately, there are those with prurient interests who will buy the book. There will also be those

who will purchase it out of curiosity, and in doing so, add to the wealth of those who were not strong enough to suffer the Spartan lifestyle of the nun. In the publishing of this book, one can see a betrayal and possibly an attempt to destroy this most beautiful of vocations. But this shall never be done, for there are those inside and outside of the convents who will see that they survive.

Every Catholic, Protestant and Jew should speak out against this attempt to stigmatize the Catholic nuns whose purpose in life is far more honorable and beautiful than that of those who are trying to discredit them.

William R. McLaughlin
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Horseheads

Saddened by Staff Changes

EDITOR:

I am saddened by the news that Mr. Costello and Mr. Viglucci are leaving the Courier-Journal.

Under their management, the Courier has become a newspaper that brought us news of the entire world. The paper ceased to be one publishing just local news.

There has been a professionalism evident about the paper since Mr. Costello and Mr. Viglucci have been its managers.

If the last two issues of the Courier-Journal are indicative of what we can expect in the future, I shall not renew my Courier-Journal subscription another year.

Mary F. Hannick
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'R' Rating No Sin for Writer

EDITOR:

The recent letter to the editor by Father Salem Faddoul (Opinion: "R-Rated? It's Sinful," April 3) making the assertion that attending an R-rated movie is a sin only represents his opinion and is NOT an official teaching of the Catholic Church. I found Father Faddoul's arguments insulting to my intelligence as an adult Catholic movie goer, and his assumptions inaccurate and irrelevant to my life situation.

An R rating indicates that the movie contains material not suited for young people, and that youths under the age of 17 should not be admitted unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. The presence of excessive violence, sexually suggestive sequences, or offensive language is, hopefully, disturbing to young minds; hence the R rating.

However, to say that for adults to see R-rated movies is courting an occasion of sin or risking the possibility of giving scandal is ludicrous in today's culture.

Furthermore, Father Faddoul states that he is unable to imagine that an R-rated movie is likely to

foster love of God. Both "The Killing Fields" and "The Breakfast Club" are examples of recent R-rated movies that provide touching insight to the human condition and teach understanding and compassion toward others. Certainly

this is one aspect of fostering the love of God.

Is it a sin to attend an R-rated movie? Not for me.

Meg G. Huff
R.D. 2
Holcomb

Diverting Funds to African Relief

EDITOR:

The money, over \$1.5 billion (which is over \$1,500 million) that the House of Representatives voted to spend on the MX missiles, could have been spent as aid to Africa. It could have been in immediate food aid and also to help them to be able to grow their own food for coming harvest seasons.

Thoughtful people of vision see real possibilities of drilling wells 500 to 1,000 feet under the Sahara where the water table is. It is common in this country, including in New York state, for gas wells to be drilled a mile deep.

This is not likely the best motive, but we may need Africa's help

someday when its people become food self-sufficient as the people of India did.

Our own country was able to recover from the Dust Bowl in the 1930s through good long-range conservation plans such as planting trees to control erosion by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

We have homeless and unemployed men in this country who used to make trucks. If they could go back to making trucks, the trucks could be used to distribute food in hard-to-reach places in Africa.

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Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They should be sent to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, and 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 writers' own styles.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space reserved for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent to other publications or persons. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.



"NOW, MOM! IF CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS, YOU MUST BE IN HEAVEN."