

Editorial

Bringing Our Faith into the World

We've received some comments from readers who feel the Courier-Journal does not contain enough doctrinal discussion, and focuses too heavily on parish events and such matters as the Catholic reaction to political events and issues.

We certainly understand that many readers seek doctrinal guidance and are not highly concerned with events and issues. But we note that doctrine and spiritual discussion is readily available in many other Catholic publications and, indeed, in several Courier-Journal features: Father Albert Shamon's "A Word for Sunday," Father Paul Cuddy's "On the Right Side" and our supplement Faith Today.

But nowhere else may Catholics read about the happenings in the Diocese of Rochester, about area Catholics' attempts to put our faith into action. And is not living the faith as important as studying it?

"You'll know they are Christians by their love" is a phrase so often used that it may have lost some of its impact. But the love and a "devotion to spirituality" evidenced by some

Catholic social workers is what drew the subject of our apartheid story to the Catholic Church.

Many, surely, would disagree with the protests and civil disobedience students at Cornell are using to make their point about divestment in South Africa. Nor can we advocate them. But the motivation espoused by Shantytown legal coordinator Richard Ryan is difficult to reproach. "This is where Catholicism becomes so important. It's a moral imperative that you can't go beyond a certain point of debate," Ryan says of the legalized system of racial segregation and discrimination known as apartheid. "On an instinctive moral level, you recognize investment in South Africa as repugnant, just as you recognize abortion as repugnant."

Ryan takes that stand, calling himself a traditional political conservative who bases his actions on concern for the welfare of his fellow man.

And is that not what we were taught by our greatest spiritual adviser, Jesus Christ?

Early Experiences Create Doubts

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a letter written to Courier-Journal columnist Father Paul J. Cuddy in light of letters to the editor responding to Father's column several weeks ago on Catholics falling away from the Church.

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the letters by Father Kevin P. Murphy and Deirdre M. Hetzler (Opinions, May 22).

I, too, had some personal experiences at the hands of our pastor during the first eight years at our local Catholic school.

1.) I was an exceptional student. The pastor asked the sisters to pick boys for service as altar boys. I was picked. The pastor was all smiles in front of the classroom, but as I walked to the front of the room, he said to the sister: "No Greeks."

2.) I graduated, attended the ceremonies, etc. As I walked on the stage, the pastor was there. He took my eighth grade diploma which I earned as a very good student and said that I must go to (Roman Catholic) services every Sunday for three years, then I would get the diploma. This applied only to two students whose parents had immigrated from Central Europe and who attended services at the local Russian/Greek Orthodox Church.

I decided to write to the bishop, but my parents didn't want me to make waves. So I thought, I will attend these services. After about three months, while I was at a Sunday

service, the pastor failed to see me, so he announced to all: "I see that the Greeks aren't here." That's the last Sunday service I attended at that time.

3.) During 1926-29, every Monday morning I and my cousin turned in a church envelope with 25¢ which, at that time, was about 60 percent of an hour's pay for my father. This was done in front of the class with the pastor coming in later to ask if the offering was made for all the class to hear.

As you can see, this memory stayed with me and my cousin for 60 years.

No doubt the pastor was a very good pastor if you happened to be of Italian, English or Irish extraction.

Eventually, my parents joined the Roman Catholic Church due to a change in the makeup of the original Russian/Greek Orthodox Church. Four of my children were educated at the same parish school. I still belong there, but there are moments of doubt.

Why Saturday Mass? We were taught Sunday was the Holy Day of Obligation. As the population becomes more mobile and less agricultural, it's a necessity.

However, it's covered during Mass: "Look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church."

Amien.

George A. Kapral
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Corning

Applauds Honesty Of WEBA President

To the Editor:

I applaud Karen Sullivan, president of the Arizona State Women Exploited by Abortion, on her courage in telling of her tragic experience with abortion. Her letter points out the terrible sale of half truths that are peddled by Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion organizations in their fervor to establish abortion as woman's greatest individual right.

Planned parenthood and those other pro-abortion groups have given a new meaning to the English language. One small example of their language engineering was in the May, 1985, "ALERT" that they published. When urging support for the Title 10 Family Planning program, they boasted that in 1981, the funds from Title 10 helped over 800,000 "unintended pregnancies" to be averted. "Averted?" To where? They have made this whole business of abortion seem so clean, neat and simple.

A whole new language is being established by these abortion-promoting groups filled

with half-truths, double meanings, hidden meanings and such running around the bush that it would make your head spin. Imagine what this kind of white-wash could do to a woman who needs options and support rather than a maze of euphemisms in her confusion or desperation. I always find a person or group that doesn't deal honestly with another a little more than suspect in their intentions and one well to be avoided.

The honesty and openness of Ms. Sullivan's letter can do so much to shine a different light on all the debate and controversy and help to bring down the smoke screen that pro-abortion groups use to promote abortion. Ms. Sullivan's letter ought to be required reading before a woman consents to abortion, but unfortunately that letter is just the kind of honesty that pro-abortion factions would just as soon ignore or try to discredit.

Mary Ellen Frisch
2 Blossomdale Circle
Hamlin

and Opinions

Vatican II Reaffirmed Wearing Religious Habits

To the Editor:

Your May 8 article, "A Changing Church Still Speaks to Its Older Members," gives the impression that the Vatican Council II proclaimed the adoption of secular clothing by religious. On the contrary! The council fathers voted overwhelmingly in favor of the religious habit. The documents of Vatican II say that the habit may be changed, if necessary, but no mention is made of abolishing it. Pope Paul VI said that the dress of religious men and women should be, as the council wishes, a sign of their consecration. New Canon Law #669 specifies the wearing of a habit, and Pope John Paul II has frequently asked for the return of the habit.

The changes that were really called for by the Church have, I believe, been generally well-received and put into practice. But Pope John XXIII did not expect his "breath of fresh air" to become a gale of hurricane proportions, hurling through the unscreened windows of the Church a deluge of dissent, false changes and misguided activism that would distort our Christ-given authority and teachings.

During this transition, it would be well for the Courier-Journal to return the word "Catholic" to its title — Catholic Courier-Journal — and to make sure it lives up to its name. It would be a great service to all people of good will if the actual teachings of

our Holy Father, whether given directly or through the Magisterium, were promoted regularly on topics where we find confusion, such as: personal confession vs. general absolution, confession before Holy Communion, women preaching the homily, altar girls, the approved bread for the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest alone saying the Per Ipsum, moral theology, etc.

Also, if "news" of doubtful character must be given space, such as the reaction the signers of the "abortion by choice" article had to Rome's decision, it should be balanced by a truly Catholic interpretation.

If we are serious about evangelizing and promoting unity, peace and justice by the work that we do, we must know and love Christ and His Church, lovingly obeying authentic authority, clearly teaching Catholic truths, and striving to be holy as Christ is holy. Then, with God's direction and help, our work will bear fruit.

Jeanne D. Sweeney
135 Nob Hill
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have to clarify. The article in question said nothing about whether or not Vatican II had approved religious men or women wearing secular clothing. The article merely discussed the obvious fact that many orders have adopted secular garb.

Concerned by Silence On Anti-Catholic Play

To the Editor:

We hear so much from our diocese about working for peace and justice. I wonder whether these are just words when no action was taken nor any public statement made by our bishop or other diocesan official to protest the highly offensive anti-Catholic play "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You," which recently ran for two weekends in Rochester.

"Sister Mary Ignatius" has gained notoriety as a medium for bigotry against Catholics and has been vigorously protested nationwide by both Catholics and non-Catholics. A local Democrat & Chronicle article (May 12, 1985) quoted the play's author, Christopher Durang: "The play is harshly critical of much conservative Catholic teaching." Archbishop John L. May described the play in the St. Louis Review (Nov. 12, 1982) as "a vile diatribe against all things Catholic" which "from beginning to end... caricatures and ridicules every doctrine in the catechism and every Catholic value."

I was told by Bishop Clark's office that nothing was being done about the Blackfriars' production of "Sister Mary Ignatius" because it would only bring more attention to it. How ludicrous! Is there any logic in ignoring anti-Catholic bigotry, hoping it will go away? Do our religious leaders feel no responsibility to defend our Catholic faith from public ridicule? I can only hope they would be enlightened by reading the booklet "Kicking the Habit," published by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

Indeed, there should have been a great deal of attention focused on this play to expose its comic camouflage for what it really is — a vicious public mockery of our Catholic faith and an insult to the entire Catholic community. Remaining silent implied not only indifference, but approval. How disgraceful for our diocese.

J.M. Weis
135 Edgerton Street
Rochester

Writer Says Continue Rosary

To the Editor:

To the person who would substitute one Our Father in place of the "multiplication of words" (Opinion: "Our Father for Peace," May 22) — undoubtedly they mean instead of the daily rosary requested by Our Lady at Fatima, certainly with God's permission — I would ask: "How big a part have you played in the redemption of mankind?"

So now, you know better than the Mother of God what we should do to save the world from annihilation?

Well, if that don't beat all!

Arlene O'Connor
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Abortion Options Available

To the Editor:

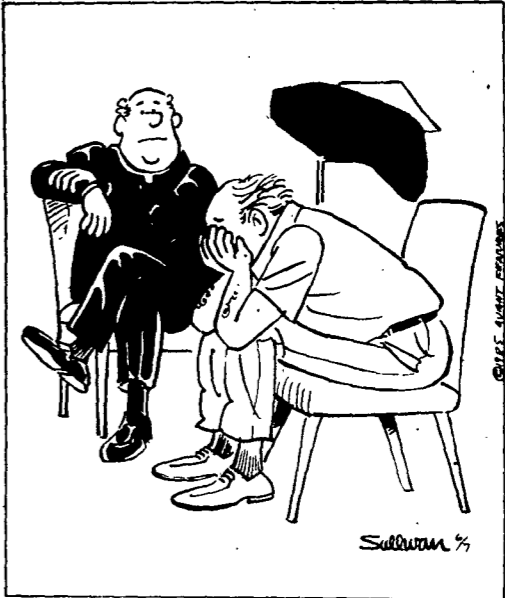
Your letter from Karen Sullivan (Opinion: "Woman Presents Another Side of the Abortion Debate," May 22), prompts me to inquire why she would need to have "explained" to her the options of single parenting or adoption over abortion. Hadn't she ever heard of them before?

I sympathize with her guilt, but I don't think women are "Exploited by Abortion" just because it's readily available. They have a choice and realize too late that they made the wrong one — death over life.

Kathleen Curtin
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Correction

A reader has pointed up a typographical error that could produce difficulties for those attempting to send donations to the Philippine Seminary requesting aid in a letter to the editor on May 22. The correct address for the seminary is: Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. We regret the error.



"THERE'S NO EASY WAY TO CONFESS THIS. I HATE PBS AND I ONLY WATCH NETWORK TV."

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.