

Editorial

Simple blessings overlooked

There is something special about sharing a meal. Perhaps it's the vulnerability of chewing before a crowd that creates a sense of intimacy, or maybe the act of eating in itself has the power to create a family out of near strangers.

Whatever the cause, when you share a meal with others, you come to know them in a way like no other. You learn about their social graces or lack thereof, about their tastes and idiosyncratic preferences, about their abilities to compromise and respond diplomatically to the "chef's" shortcomings.

Eating together also forces conversation, for in most cases, a silent meal is tense and oppressive. The words exchanged over a meal are often more candid than those said elsewhere because it's difficult to maintain pretenses with drops of spaghetti sauce on one's chin.

In short, meals allow individuals to see each other more clearly and honestly, to experience in some way the joys and problems of another individual.

Unfortunately, the importance of meals and food itself can become lost to many of us who grab a burger — alone and on the fly — as we hurry through our busy days. Meals can even become an inconvenience when our schedules conflict with those of friends or family members. The significance of

food fades in a world of plenty to eat and plenty to be done.

With many people, however, meals are of extreme significance. Finding food and a friend to share it is no small consideration for many people in our own cities and towns, people society at large often forgets.

This past week, local religious and social-outreach agencies have placed the spotlight on hunger at home and abroad. Radio talk shows, dramatic performances, speakers and films have presented the causes of hunger and means of eliminating it. On the "Hunger Awareness Tour" Wednesday, a group of local business and religious representatives had a chance to visit local food cupboards and soup kitchens; to see first-hand the importance of meals to those who are seldom assured of them; to see the pride and the poverty of those who must turn to those kitchens for daily sustenance, both physical and psychological.

It must be a humbling experience to see how others highly value that which we take for granted. As we approach the season of bags filled with Halloween treats, of pumpkin pies and Thanksgiving turkeys, it is time to give thought to the blessing of sufficient food and companionship, and to what those who have can do to aid those who have not.

Writer laments inaction of clergy members in fight to regain legal protection for unborn

To the Editor:

I would like to address the NOW feminists, Planned Parenthood, Catholics for a Free Choice, and any pro-choice or pro-abortion forces that have in the past or will in the future direct their anger and energies against the Catholic Church as one of their main opponents.

Don't waste your time or resources with us. There is nothing to fear or oppose from the Catholic Church. As an institution, the Church has taken a public stand against abortion, but somehow the institution has failed to inform our pastors and clergy that they should also denounce and oppose abortion.

The uphill battle is fought valiantly by the pro-life forces in the parishes, with little or no results. We are met with apathy, obstinacy, and more and more, frigidity from our "ministers of God." Every inch has been a bitter struggle. A few weeks ago, you published a letter from a pro-lifer who said "ice drips off the clerical garb." How very true! She was also right when she said anti-nuke or almost any other issue gets open doors, but not so with anti-abortion. This opinion is shared by many Catholic pro-lifers from the parishes in the Rochester diocese, and from pro-life Catholics across the nation.

Prayer services for peace are common.

Programs for hunger and social justice are in every parish. But the most basic injustice of all, is all but ignored. And the question we always come back to is "Why?"

What are clergy so afraid of? Of stepping on toes and offending their precious parishioners, with the end result of losing the almighty buck? Bingo, parish festivals, 40-week clubs and other social fund-raising events are sacred in our parishes, not LIFE! If the construction of our children goes unabated, there will be precious few parishioners to drop their donations in the basket. If our clergy are worried about a decline in funds now, think about the baskets of the future!

In our hearts, we cannot accept and believe this is the answer to that "Why?" But the answer is as elusive as strong pro-life priests in our churches.

To our priests who support us, we love you, we pray for you, and we need you more than ever. To our priests who quietly love life, where are you? Why are you hiding? Our babies are crying for you! And to our lukewarm and negative priests we ask: "Why?"

And to Jesus, "Please come back soon!" Amen.

Janet Dash
Rochester

Father O'Malley commends Father Cuddy

To the Editor:

Over the years, except for the irreducible core of the gospel and a common devotion to Chesterton, Father Paul Cuddy and I have not found too much on which to agree. But his wonderful compassion expressed in his last two articles on Rock Hudson demand the response of my heartfelt praise.

The disgruntled reader who wrote Father Cuddy complaining that he (Cuddy) did not censure Hudson for "the sin that caused (Hudson) to contract AIDS" is under the same corrosive delusion as many others: that homosexuals choose their sexual orientations. Homosexuals don't choose to be homosexuals any more than others "choose" to be left-handed or color-blind. Yet people ignorant of that feel nonetheless free to lob stones.

I have no right to judge another's sinfulness. But the one sin that tests my forbear-

ance on that score is pharisaic self-righteousness.

Again, my gratitude to Father Cuddy for his priestly compassion.

William J. O'Malley, SJ
McQuaid Jesuit High School

Catholic literature sought

To the Editor:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines directly to the foreign missions.

Those who wish to do so may send me self-addressed envelopes, and I will send them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Mary Conway
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And opinions

Writer urges protest against U.S. foreign policy

To the Editor:

The nature of genocidal wars in Central America — funded and masterminded by our U.S. government — should inspire all God-fearing citizens of this nation to inform themselves about these crimes and to protest them as vigorously as possible.

In El Salvador, we are told, President Duarte is effectively controlling the infamous government "death squads" of that country; we're told that civilian murder in El Salvador is a thing of the past. Our national television and big-time newspapers tell us about these "developments," word for word from our government. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only thing that's changed regarding civilian atrocities in El Salvador is the tactics of the terror.

Today, a U.S.-inspired air war saturates whole ground areas of El Salvador with fire power from C47 gunships. These attacks, according to a recent Americas Watch report, "kill, maim and terrorize the civilian population and deprive them of the food they need to survive." At least 700 civilians have died and many thousands have been made homeless in such attacks during the first half of this year alone. It is the largest bombing campaign ever seen in the Americas.

Your tax dollars are paying to shed this innocent blood and to spread havoc.

In Nicaragua, the institutionalized U.S. death squad known as the "contras" continues its spree of carnage and rape against the civilian population — a fact validated by numerous independent human rights observers. In five years (since President Reagan), the contras have caused nearly 8,000 deaths and gravely depleted that poor nation's economy, preventing the Sandinistas from expanding the impressive benefits their revolution has already brought the people. A whole nation is being bled

to death — tortuously — because of the Reagan administration, the CIA, and those who support genocidal methods of coercion in the name of "anti-communism."

Apparently, any political program that brings dignity to common folks; any policy that attempts to establish equality, education, health care or employment opportunity; or any social movement that refuses to deplete the national resources of its people to the super wealthy capitalist bosses on Wall Street is automatically classified as "communist." And, as in the demented mind of that first great Red-baiter, Adolph Hitler, "commies" deserve only death, the more gruesome the better.

Odd. Communism is never defined in political terms, only in bogeyman language.

Anyone with the slightest knowledge of history knows that imperialistic Uncle Sam has never brought democracy anywhere, including the United States — where only millionaires become president, to serve the interests of billionaires.

Our government won't change until our good people revolt against U.S. fascist-supported policies around the world (the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, South Africa, Chile, etc.). So, refuse to eat your drumstick with the rest of the crowd this Thanksgiving; donate the materialistic expense of Christmas toward efforts to educate yourself and your children; experience the change of heart Christ most urgently requires and work for the liberation of all God's children.

Otherwise, your apathy and silence will only add to the crushing weight of Uncle Sam's big cowboy boot on the neck of that mass of poor people around the earth.

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Ithaca

Imbalance perceived in urban school committee

To the Editor:

A diocesan study is being conducted in order to ascertain the most feasible option for administering urban Catholic education. This is an important, necessary and major undertaking.

The membership of the Urban School Study Steering Committee consists of: Sister Roberta Tierney, Sister Anne Guerin, Sister Sheila Luber, Sister Edwardine Weaver, Father Robert Miller, Father John Mulligan, a parish business manager, a representative of the diocesan finance department, an Hispanic male parent representative, and a Caucasian female parent representative.

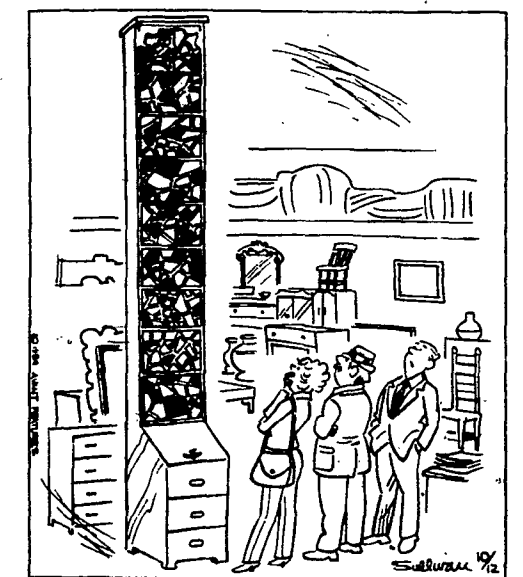
The following should be noted: 1) no professional lay educators sit on the committee, 2) the female parent representative is neither married nor does she have children, 3) the committee is weighted heavily with clergy and religious, 4) some of the information that is presented to the next higher echelon in the urban school decision-making process is not made available to all members of the steering committee, and 5) there are no black representatives on the steering committee.

While no option has been endorsed by the diocesan planners, one option does merit some attention. It was suggested in a recent article in the Courier-Journal entitled "Options presented for reorganization of urban schools" (October 2, Page 1) that four schools (may) be closed: Corpus Christi, St. Boniface, St. Anthony and St. Augustine. If St. Augustine School is closed, then elementary students could attend either St. Monica's School, a predominantly non-parishioner black school, or Our Lady of Good Counsel School, a predominantly Catholic, parish-oriented, white school. The Diocesan Education Committee, is, it would seem, practicing segregation on two counts: race and parishioner/non-parishioner status. That is, in the southwest quadrant of the city, there would be an isolated "pure"

Catholic school and an isolated "non-parishioner" black school. Then busing becomes an issue! The closing of St. Monica's School was never considered as a viable option — such an action would be political folly.

Education should be the issue, not the edifice in which education occurs. It would seem that the diocesan planners should be more sensitive to the educational, cultural, ethnic and racial differences that constitute a neighborhood. These concerns could be addressed responsibly if the steering committee had a balanced representation of individuals who were involved in the intimate daily routine of conducting educational practice.

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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 1½ 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.