

Editorial



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

The January blues

Psychologists often speak of the midwinter doldrums and related emotional and economic depression. The annual business slump arrives in January, bringing with it

budgetary cutbacks and layoffs. But in the Southern Tier, where this picture was taken, the situation is not merely psychological, and unemployment remains high year 'round.

And opinions

Youth group offers suggestions for teens

To the Editor:

Regarding the article by Father Paul J. Cuddy on "Why Youth Leave the Church," Father Cuddy asks the question: "What would you suggest for youth troubled about their religion?" We asked our Reality Group (a group of teenagers who meet weekly to pray, study and discuss problems) and the teenagers offered these suggestions:

1. Get involved! Attend youth groups, reality groups, folk group, teen Masses. If your parish has none of these youth programs, start them. The Diocese of Rochester

offers retreats for ninth through 12th grades and the Antioch Retreat for those aged 18-30. The retreats run from October through May and are excellent ways to meet other people in the diocese with similar problems and solutions. The important thing is to get involved! It's our Church, too!

2. Ask questions! Talk to your priests, sisters or youth leaders. Ask them questions about things you don't understand or things that bother you. Don't complain about things that bother you if you don't understand them.

3. Approach religion with an open mind. Give ideas and people a chance. Don't be too harsh on adults who don't understand

teenagers. Get to know people! Introduce yourself to the lady sitting next to you in Church at the sign of peace and smile! Be open to the Church and to the Holy Spirit, and be willing to learn.

4. Priests should aim homilies toward the younger crowd occasionally.

5. Parents shouldn't force their children to make their confirmations. This should be a personal choice. They also shouldn't force teenagers to attend Mass. We should go because we want to go. It's more interesting if you can get involved, like with singing in the folk group (even if you don't sing very well) or by volunteering to usher or lector.

6. Clergy and parishioners should be more

accepting of young people and should be more friendly. We are the Church, too!

7. As a last resort, change churches, but it is better to stay and try to make changes than to give up and go somewhere else.

These are some of our suggestions. We hope they can help!

Mike Kovaleski, Stacey Appel, Mike Osterhardt, Stacey Craddock, JoAnne Knapp, Marureen Rutherford, Mike Clayton, Nate Chamberlain, Matt Frank, Tom Adam, Jeff Bonanno, Brenda Wilcox, Becky Chamberlain, Sue and Rich Versluys
St. John the Evangelist Church
Spencerport

Choosing between profits, prophets of morality

To the Editor:

The story is told that when someone asked W.C. Fields why he was reading the Bible, he replied that he was "looking for loopholes."

The favorite loophole of affluent conservatives is the one that can be interpreted as saying that belief alone, without good works, is all that is needed to be saved. They use it to bypass the commandment (to them a mere suggestion) to love thy neighbor as thyself.

Together with the commandment to love God, Christ said, "On these two commandments depends the whole law." This is

the Catholic gospel of peace and justice upon which the papal social encyclicals and the bishops' pastorals on peace and economic justice are based.

This demands positive action to prevent as well as correct injustice. Neither kind words, prayers nor philanthropy are a substitute for justice.

Neither is voting for conservative candidates who will shift the tax burden of armaments to the backs of the poor, with the excuse of a single issue, when in our hearts we know we do it to save ourselves tax dollars.

But the conservatives have rejected the moral teaching of the popes and bishops on the grounds that they are uninformed. Yet they verbally accept the advice of these celibate men in matters of sex. Of course, they know that the affluent have ignored this advice with impunity for years, while only the poor are distressed and afflicted by such laws.


The conservatives prefer to follow the advice of Pat Robinson, Falwell and Reagan.

The conservative Mr. Bouscaren was so disappointed when the right-wing dictator of Venezuela was overthrown that he persisted in calling the democratically elected President Bettencourt a communist, until the attempted assassination by Castroites woke him up.

Who do you accept as teachers in morality, the prophets in Catholic religious garb or the profits in conservative business suits?

Walter O'Hagan
Auburn





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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.

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