

Transitions mark decade of 'new' Courier

By Karen M. Franz
General Manager/Editor

For several years, Bishop Dennis Hickey has boasted a bit about the family atmosphere at the *Catholic Courier*. Everybody gets along so well, he has noted, that we experience an extremely low rate of employee turnover.

But it seems that Bishop Hickey's announcement of his own retirement as general manager this June signaled a time of transition for the Courier staff. If the time had come for Bishop Hickey to move on to such new experiences as world travel, perhaps it also was time for staff members to move on to other career challenges, some of our longtime employees may have reasoned.

Since Bishop Hickey's announcement last spring, Bernie Puglisi, Lorraine Hennessey and Kathy Welsh — with 23 years of combined service to the Courier — have left our staff. And this is the last week for Managing Editor Richard A. Kiley, who next week moves to public relations after nine and one-half years at the paper.

While we wish all of them the very best in the next phases of their careers, we will miss them greatly. I, for one,



BETWEEN THE LINES

see this as an end of an era, since Rich and I were the only remaining staffers to have survived the difficult transition period the Courier underwent from 1984-86.

Sad as these changes now seem, perhaps it's fitting that they occur a decade after the Courier was rebuilt. In those 10 years, those who are leaving and those who remain have reinvigorated this 106-year-old publication, giving it the strength to confront what-

ever challenges the future holds.

This past decade has been one of great accomplishment for the Courier; our talented staff has won so many state and national awards that I've lost count! And we owe much of that success to those who are moving on during the current transition — especially to Rich, whose leadership has spurred our newsroom staff to greater and greater professionalism.

Now, as you know, we've started on a process of reinventing the Courier — once again — to make it more relevant and useful in the lives of Catholics today. I noted last month that several staff teams are developing new feature packages for parents and young adults, and revamping our existing coverage for teenagers. We'll take another step in that process this week as we review the teams' progress to date.

Our thanks to those of you who have offered your input on this reinvention process. I hope you'll be pleased by the results when they debut this fall.

I also want to thank Rich Kiley for deftly managing the newsroom these past five years, as I became more and more immersed in the financial and strategic aspects of running a Catholic newspaper in the '90s. We'll miss you,

Rich, and we wish the very best for you and your family!

Next month, I, too, will be leaving the Courier — but only for two weeks! On Oct. 15 I'll start out for an Eastern European teaching junket sponsored by the U.S. Catholic Conference and organized by the Catholic Press Association. Led by Archbishop John P. Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, our eight-person delegation will visit Warsaw, Poland; Vilnius, Lithuania; and Bratislava, Slovakia.

I was honored by the invitation to participate in this project, which will provide a crash course in newspaper management for Eastern Europeans running fledgling Catholic publications.

It should be a fascinating experience. I'll tell you all about it in this column's next installment, which probably won't appear until November, since we don't return until Oct. 29.

For now, I'm trying to find time to prepare my presentations (Media Competition: Writing with Appeal; Graphics and Design; and Mission: Owner Relations).

Wish me luck!

Don't let habit blind you to those in need

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 16:19-31; (R1) Amos 6:1, 4-7; (R2) 1 Timothy 6:11-16.

A father knelt down to tuck his little boy into bed. The little boy began the prayer he had prayed so many times before: "Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."

This time, however, the little boy got mixed up and prayed: "If I should wake before I die..."

"Oh, Papa," the boy said with embarrassment, "I got all mixed up."

His wise father said, "No, son, you said it right. My deepest longing is that you may wake up before you die."

Oh, may we all wake up before we die. Some of us are asleep in some of the most critical areas of our life.

Psychologists talk about a phenomenon they call "habituation." It's a good word to add to our vocabulary.

You've probably heard the example of the frog in the tea kettle. Drop a frog in boiling water and it will immediately hop out. Drop it in comfortable water, though, and increase the temperature of the water very slowly and the frog will be swimming around in boiling water before it realizes it. It has become habituated.

Try this: close your eyes and de-



WORD FOR SUNDAY

scribe the room you usually sit in. You would not do very well. You have grown so accustomed to this room that you no longer really see it. You are habituated. We can become so habituated to something that we no longer even realize it is there.

Jesus was a great story teller. "Once there was a rich man," He said, "who dressed in purple and linen and feasted splendidly every day. At his gate lay a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, and longing to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs even came and licked his sores."

Note the contrast. Now here's the question: Do you think the rich man

Daily Readings

Monday, Oct. 2

Ex 23:20-23; Mt 18:1-5, 10

Tuesday, Oct. 3

Zec 8:20-23; Lk 9:51-56

Wednesday, Oct. 4

Neh 2:1-8; Lk 9:57-62

Thursday, Oct. 5

Neh 8:1-4, 5-6, 7-12;

Lk 10:1-12

Friday, Oct. 6

Bar 1:15-22; Lk 10:13-16

Saturday, Oct. 7

Bar 4:5-12, 27-29; Lk 10:17-24

saw Lazarus lying there at his gate? Of course he did — at first. But then he probably became habituated to Lazarus' presence. Lazarus' presence and his need made less and less of an impression on the rich man. Soon it was as if Lazarus wasn't even there.

Can that happen to you and me? You bet it can.

We are the rich man. We really are. Look how we dress, how we eat, how we live. If someone from a Third World country came to a salad bar in the average U.S. restaurant, he would think he had died and gone to paradise.

And who is Lazarus? All the needy around us. The world is filled with

needy people. And those needs are not always financial. People need love, recognition, encouragement. They need a friend. They need to learn about Christ.

Who is Lazarus at our gate? It may be one's spouse or a teenager in the family. Growing up is never easy.

Some older people were dining at a restaurant. One of them said, "I'd like to be 18 years old again but to know what I know now."

A waitress who had been clearing the table stopped and said, "I'm 18. What is it you know?"

Our young people need the benefit of our experience. And they need us to listen without judging them. Then real communication can take place.

Who is your Lazarus?

Once a botanist was studying the heather in the highlands of Scotland. While looking through his microscope at this beautiful flower, a shepherd approached him and asked what he was doing. Rather than trying to explain, the botanist invited the shepherd to peer through his microscope and see for himself. When the shepherd saw the wonder of the flower, he exclaimed, "My God, and I have been tramping on them all my life!"

So the Gospel parable says, "Wake up! Pay attention! Look around you. You may be tramping on the heart of someone nearby."

Who is the Lazarus at your door?



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