

BULLETIN – NOVEMBER 27

“How did we get it so wrong?” part 2. For those in the media and academia, as well as for others who are still reeling from the results of the recent election, an insightful article by columnist Nicholas Kristof in *The New York Times* last May 7 might be very instructive. Much of the problem, he opines, is that people of a progressive mentality tend only to talk to one another. They operate on the primary assumption that no one who thinks differently has anything to contribute to a discussion. And since that’s been going on in university faculties and hiring practices for at least half a century, the inbreeding has created a deformed and ultimately self-destructive closed society.

The media have inherited what began in academia. On average, professors with a more conservative inclination only number 6-11 percent in humanities departments, and only 7-9 percent in social sciences. Only 2 percent of English professors are conservative, although a larger share are independents when it comes to voting preferences. Similar numbers apply in fields like sociology, anthropology, history, and literature. However, some 18 percent of social scientists in the nation’s universities claim to be outright Marxists. So it’s at least twice as likely that a student will have an openly Marxist professor in some disciplines than a conservative. When the whole range of perspectives is unrepresented--or roundly mocked--in classroom discussions, is it any wonder that the universities become echo chambers rather than sounding boards?

With those built-in biases in English, history, literature, and the social sciences, it’s no wonder that schools of journalism have turned out at least a generation or two of news reporters and commentators who have virtually served as an extension of the campaign staff for progressive candidates. And since they only talk with each other, and write off as lunatics any who disagree with “what everyone knows,” the discrimination in the way news reporting and interviewing is handled is obvious. Ultimately, we arrive at the point at which so many have found themselves: anyone who doesn’t share my beliefs or values is guilty of “hate.” There can be no other explanation. And when the national discourse sinks to that level, democracy--and even conversation--becomes impossible, and we all lose.

The whole concept of a university means that it must absolutely require that people challenge one another, so that truth can emerge from limited, biased, flawed individuals. Christian believers would see the effects of original sin at work there. If the schools lose intellectual diversity, or if they establish norms of political correctness so that everyone will forever feel “safe,” the schools as institutions of learning will die. And that’s been happening, bit by bit, for well over two decades. When teams of grief counselors have to be brought on campus to help students cope with the results of a national election, the university is advertising its decay for all to see. Universities ought by definition to offer their students a full range of political and other perspectives from A to Z, not just from V to Z. They might also rediscover that, in the long run, it doesn’t cost as much to simply challenge students’ minds with a variety of perspectives than to have to hold students’ hands because they’ve never experienced challenge.

Advent already! The coming of Christ at the end of time draws ever closer, not because of the prophets of doom, but because we are one year nearer to it than we were *last* Advent. Jesus tells us in Matthew’s Gospel to pay no attention to those who go about

trying to predict the date of the end of the world. What they are doing with all their calculations is directly contrary to the expressed will of Christ, who says only that we mustn't waste our time trying to figure it out. All that fussing over the exact date, and not one person has gotten it right yet! Doesn't that tell you something?

Our waiting for Christ is to be done in *constructive* ways, being of service to others both individually and in society as a whole. We are empowered by Christ not to play calendar games or biblical bingo, but to be his presence and speak his word in the midst of the world in which he has placed us.

Our Advent penance service will take place this coming Saturday morning, December 3, at 10 a.m. We hope and pray that as many as possible will take advantage of this opportunity for confession before Christmas. Our friend Father Charles Dautremont will not be having a penance service at St. Dominic's this year. The state of his health has prompted his "early" retirement at the mere age of 82. I have always enjoyed his reminding his parishioners that a season of expectation (Advent) or penance (Lent) should not lead up to the sacrament of penance, but rather *begin* with it, giving us the entire season of four to six weeks to carry out the works of penance and reform which we have taken upon ourselves. So, don't wait until that last week of Advent to start looking for confession times. Just because we plan to have a priest or two available at that time doesn't mean that you should put it off. Confession as we begin a new season, a new relationship, a new job, a new commitment, is *always* a good idea, but that should not restrict us. Part of our Advent waiting is whetting our spiritual appetites for growth, stirring up in us a longing for heaven even while we plunge into our duties here on earth. How can you tell if you've had a successful Advent? If each year, you seem to be more open to the Lord, more enthusiastic about being his disciple, than you were *last* year at this time. There's no better way to assess that than a careful examination of conscience in preparation for a good confession. The soul you save will be your own!

We can tell you that, besides our penance service next Saturday, there will be confessions at the Cathedral on **Friday, December 2, 8:50-11:45 a.m. and 12:30-2:50 p.m.** These confessions are scheduled especially for Catholic Central students, but we'll have numerous confessors and will be glad to work you in. The same arrangement will be in play in the cafeteria at West Catholic High School on **Thursday, December 15, 2-3 p.m.** We usually have ten or more confessors on hand for that.

Our September and October CSA paybacks amounted to **\$2,578** and **\$1,338**, respectively, which amounts have been deposited in our checking account to assist us in paying the bills that some days seem to be like the leaves falling from the trees. This brings us to a total so far of **\$10,387** returned to us, thanks to your generosity, to be used in the variety of apostolates which we endeavor to carry on here at the parish. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Smile like you mean it, even if you don't. Because then you will. It's not hypocrisy. It really can change things for the better at a crucial moment.