

Opinion

Spanos thinks diversity gets old fast

by Christine Spanos

"Christine, when something is taken to an extreme it can get really old, really fast." Someone I know said this to me in a telephone conversation just last week. No, he wasn't talking about my right winged conservative attitude and how I like to drive people crazy with it.

What he was talking about isn't as important as what those words imply. At times, an issue can be taken to such an extreme that a majority of people, who could have been supporters, are turned off.

I guess a perfect example of what I'm saying is this diversity thing that Behrend is so gung-ho about. Don't get me wrong, diversity is a great thing but haven't we heard enough about it?

Every time I open *The Collegian* or look on the walls around the mailboxes someone is yelling "DIVERSITY." It's starting to give me a headache.

I agree with a number of things encompassed by the diversity issue. I think that a number of people in this world are insensitive to racial differences. There are some people who need to open their eyes to some growing problems surrounding the racial relations issue.

What I don't agree with is the method Penn State's administration employs in its attempts to "educate" the students of Behrend. In last week's *Collegian*, (Wednesday, Feb. 14, 1990), the letter to the editor regarding the Sigma Tau Gamma incident, written by Dean of Students Chris Reber, was just about the most

ridiculous thing I ever read.

I'm well aware that some members of the fraternity were in the wrong. I am also aware that they have admitted to doing the things they were accused of doing. But come on, do you really think that making them write a couple apology letters and attend a lecture given by NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks is going to make a difference?

This is what I mean when I say I question the methods of this university in regards to "educating" it's students about diversity. Making students aware of a national problem is always important, but to beat them over the head is a pretty ineffective method.



Christine Spanos

In that same issue of *The Collegian*, there was a reference to a statement made by Penn State President Jordan regarding Diversity. He feels Diversity should be the highest priority of this institution and all of us at Behrend should do our part in making this idea of Diversity a reality.

Diversity *should* rank right up there at the top of the list, but to say it should be the top priority is to disregard the reason we're all here in the first place. I would rather hear someone say academics are priority one.

I'm paying for an academic education and if Diversity should become a piece of the pie then I will become a better person for it. But to have someone or some group beating me over the head with it is an incredible turn off.

I'm not trying to de-emphasize the importance of Diversity at this institution or any other institution. Diversity is important and should not be ignored, yet there are other concerns (less teaching time for professors because of mandatory research, for example) that shouldn't be ignored either.

To reiterate the aforementioned statement, extremities can get really old, really fast.

Mike Royko

Morally speaking, it should be private

by Mike Royko

I've been on the receiving end of many stern lectures this week because of a column I wrote about Gov. Mario Cuomo and the New York bishop who said Cuomo might end up in hell because he isn't trying to make abortion illegal.

One of the rebukes came from an anti-abortion group's telephone hot line. It summed up what other callers have told me:

"Bishop Austin Vaughan simply did what every good priest should do and is obliged to do: warn a public sinner that if he continues in his sin he may not enter the kingdom of heaven. ...So more power to Bishop Vaughan, who knew that he would be roundly criticized by a bunch of know-nothings but who did not let that stop him from doing his job."

The hot line message went on to explain why I was one of the "know-nothings."

"Royko seems to think that if a bishop tells one of his flock that he is in danger of hell, suddenly that bishop is imposing his morality on all of us. Why such a bad chip on your shoulder, Mike, bad conscience?"

No, my conscience feels OK. I haven't performed any abortions lately or encouraged anyone to have them.

As a matter of fact, it might surprise the anti-abortion group, but I don't think much of abortions. I particularly dislike abortion as a form of birth control.

There are all sorts of birth control methods available to men and women who don't want children avoid pregnancy in the first place and use abortion only in a life-threatening situation.

Unfortunately Vaughan's church doesn't approve of most birth control methods, so it sort of puts women between a rock and a hard place. His church doesn't even want the poor and uneducated told how to practice birth control. But that's another issue.

To get back to Vaughan's warning to Cuomo. I totally agree that if a Catholic priest believes that a member of his flock is doing something that could send him to hell he should warn that sinner.

I'm sure that before this day ends, thousands of American Catholics will have done something that could, according to their faith, prevent them from entering the kingdom of heaven. Goodness, the figure might be in the millions worldwide.

And I think it is the obligation of priests to warn them to mend their wicked ways, as I'm sure many of the priests do.

However, I've been in the newspaper business for 35 years as a reporter, editor and columnist. I've spent much of my working life in or near the newsrooms of three papers.

And not once have I ever received, or heard of anyone receiving, a call from a priest who said something like this:

"Hello, this is Father Shannon. I am calling to say that there is a member of my flock named Slat Grobnik who is a foreman at the Popup Spring Company. Mr. Grobnik, who is a married man, has been carrying on an adulterous relationship with a married barmaid who works near his place of employment. Every Tuesday in the Happy Noon Motel. If he persists in this



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sinful behavior, he might go to hell. So I would like to warn him. Could you please see that this is printed on the front page of your newspaper?"

That, in effect, is what Vaughan did. If he is genuinely worried about Cuomo's soul, as I'm sure he is, why didn't he send a letter or make a call and say: "Governor, this is Bishop Vaughan, and I'm concerned that you might go to hell," etc., etc.

Instead he blabbed it to a reporter, assuring that it would wind up on the front page of most of America's papers, the network news, in the news magazines and on the Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters wires.

I realize that Cuomo is a prominent person, but I know of many prominent Catholics, including politicians, who have done things that must surely, in the eyes of their church, threaten them with hell's fire.

But I don't recall any bishops or cardinals phoning and saying: "Quick, give me rewrite. I want to issue a front-page warning to Sen. Bedhopper that if he doesn't knock off his sinful hanky-panky he's going to sweat through one long, hot eternity."

If Vaughan's approach were appropriate, then I urge his church to really do it. Don't stop with Cuomo. How about every archdiocese sending out a weekly news release listing unrepentant sinners? I'm sure that if Slat Grobnik and that barmaid saw their names on Page 1 they would cease and desist.

But until this happens, I have a modest suggestion for Vaughan. Thou shalt not blab about just one guy or you'll be suspected of playing politics, not religion. I don't know if that's a sin, but it's kind of sneaky.