

The Aborted Baby At Heaven's Gate

Statistics on abortions performed since July 1 will soon disappear from the newspapers: death news becomes routine even when it runs into hundreds of fatalities weekly.

But even if parents willingly dispose of a child's body before birth, shouldn't Christians of this state be concerned about the infant souls "lost" because the aborted babies died without receiving the Sacrament of Baptism? Hasn't the salvation of souls always been the supreme law of the Church?

For sorrowing Christian parents who have experienced the death of an unbaptized infant, as well as pastors who have tried to console them, the question of the eternal fate of that child is a painful mystery. What happens to a soul, "uncleansed of original sin"?

Modern Protestant scholars generally find no basis in Scripture for an answer. But Catholic catechisms have long been quite specific: the limbo of infants is the final state of the unbaptized innocents; there they will probably enjoy natural happiness but will probably never receive the vision of God and the joy of Heaven.

Modern theologians are concerned with the subject of limbo because here in the question of the aborted foetus lie several of the most basic truths of Catholic theology: the nature of original sin, the necessity of Baptism as a means of salvation, and finally God's will that all men be saved. Their concern also covers the issue that in an abortion the parents willingly let the child be killed while realizing that baptism will be quite impossible. In cases of involuntary miscarriage or a still birth, however, it was providence rather than the parents which frustrated the baptism.

Limbo is the product of centuries of entangled debate. Stern-minded scholars of the earliest times sternly defended the necessity of baptism for salvation by holding strictly to Christ's words: "Unless a man be born again of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God". Later, admitting that water-baptism (sacramental) could be supplied by "baptism of desire", theologians taught that faith was the essential thing and what infant dying without the baptism could make an act of faith?

In the evolution of theory it was held that original sin, the heritage from Adam, would keep the unbaptized infant from ever entering heaven, but since there was no personal fault involved the child could not be condemned to any suffering. Thomas Aquinas later added the soothing proposal that although unbaptized children lost the eternal state of union with God they would exist somewhere through eternity, placidly unaware of the reward that was beyond their reach.

This teaching became the message of the Church, but not as a dogma of the faith. Because divine revelation does not directly teach about unbaptized infants we cannot assert, as incontestable dogma, that such babies will never enjoy the vision of God nor can we do more than wishfully predict this possibility.

In the past thirty years liberal Catholic thinkers have suggested that the "salvific will of God" — His desire that all mankind shall be brought to Heaven as "saved" — may get the unbaptized babies to heaven after all. Didn't Jesus become man, live and die for everyone, they ask, and weren't little children special objects of His love? Can a good God leave out of His eternal family a child who through no personal failure was denied a chance to live and an opportunity to be baptized?

A French theologian, P. Jean Glorieux, has argued that, at the moment of death, the unbaptized infant, through special grace, receives the power to choose to turn either toward or away from God. Several other respected scholars believe that limbo will exist for the unbaptized infants only until the Last Judgement. At that moment of Christ's final victory over Satan, they suggest the tiny souls will be joyfully welcomed into the company of the saints. The teaching office of the Church hears these opinions, but so far has neither endorsed nor rejected them.

No thinker today believes that the teaching on Limbo is the final answer to this centuries-old question.

How consoling for our age if the sickening toll of ever-rising abortions in this country would bring grace from God to open this door of mystery: the ultimate destiny of the aborted child.

—Fr. Richard Tormey

Courier-Journal

On the Line

Joe Colombo No Garibaldi

By Bob Considine



This doesn't seem to be a very propitious time for Joe Colombo, a reputed Mafia don, to promote the picketing of FBI headquarters here in Manhattan.

Gian Carlo Menotti, st. Joe Colombo, no.

The Italian-American Civil Rights League, which feels that the bureau is illegally intent upon rounding up suspects with Italian names, has unquestionably attracted some righteously indignant supporters. But Colombo, whose favorite son and likely heir to the elder's several businesses was arrested in Brooklyn recently, is hardly a modern Garibaldi.

The league might better apply its energies to doing something about the bad name being given to all hard-working, law-abiding, God-fearing Italian-Americans by a handful of Italian-named desperados and the public officials they corrupted. Matters have come to the point where a mishmash novel

like "The Godfather" is accepted as gospel by millions of American readers. And many more millions through the land and the world will believe the forthcoming movie even more.

The FBI and police departments everywhere are out to cut off the tentacles of the four or five leading Mafia families, not to deprive Italian-Americans of their civil rights. Race, country of origin, etc., play no part in this crusade, any more than such incidentals mattered in the tracking down of recent assassins and killers of civil rights crusaders.

I believe that J. Edgar Hoover and police chiefs of the timber of New York's Howard Leary are essentially color blind. All they can spot, basically, is the color of crime, even if it is concealed as artfully as the Mafia has been able to cover up its own tracks.

It is safe to say that there is hardly a realm of American business and industry today

that has not felt the termite encroachment of the Mafia, no matter what disguise it affects in the way of legitimate sounding (or genuinely legitimate) fronts.

The "families" and their soldiers are in real estate, unions, the amusement trades, services, transportation, food and just about everything else that touches the daily lives of their own people and others.

They operate from the unending proceeds of gambling, prostitution, narcotics and extortion. They spend millions in bribes, finding it safer to corrupt than to kill. They have become an albatross around the neck of John Q. Public, whether he knows it or not.

They have their own retired generalissimos and their own codes of behavior.

One former power, Frank Costello, has been in the news lately in connection with the latter. He was handed a "paper" while having his nails buffed in the barber shop of the Waldorf-Astoria. The "paper" ordered him to appear before Dist. Atty. Frank Hogan to answer some questions about an alleged connection with a multiple-figure gambling conspiracy.

Costello apparently convinced the D.A. of his innocence, but was sorely wounded—spiritually — when a local paper covered his appearance with a headline reading "Costello Squeals on Bookie."

"Frank comes from a breed that doesn't squeal, whether it be on friend or enemy," a mutual friend confided the other day. "He faced some great inquisitors: Kefauver, Halley, Hogan, Scotti, Dewey, over and over again, and never once did he blow the whistle, even though it meant serving three prison terms."

"When the cops grabbed the man who tried to kill him with a point-blank shot, which gave him a new part in his haircomb, and showed the fellow to Costello, Frank said, 'Sorry, I've never seen the guy before.' The bum was acquitted."

Apparently, Costello now lives a life akin to the last days of Don Corleone in the novel. He spends a lot of time puttering with his flowers in the garden of his modest Long Island home. He has surreptitiously entered his roses in flower shows along Long Island's wealthy North Shore and once won a blue ribbon. The mutual friend said that he was prouder of this than when he defeated the U.S. Coast Guard during rum-running days and, later, gained control of one of Scotland's most prestigious distilleries.

Whether it's significant or not, Costello was not in Joe Colombo's picket line.

The Word for Sunday

Saintliness And Daily Work

By Father Albert Shamon



To us over forty, the name "Amos" conjures up the comedy team of Amos 'n Andy. In the first reading for Sunday, the Church introduces us to the biblical Amos. He was a Judean prophet.

About 750 B.C. God gave him the unenviable task of going to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and telling them to get their house in order or else. Of course he was unpopular. The toadying Amaziah, who had a good thing going for himself, told Amos to go back home to his shepherding or else the King would hear about his preaching. But Amos refused on the grounds that this was his vocation. "The Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

Vocation seems to be the theme of all this Sunday's readings. The Gospel tells that Jesus summons the Twelve and sent them like Amos, to confront evil. In the second reading Paul reminds us that "God chose us before the world began, to be holy and blameless in His sight, to be full of love."

The readings, in a word, say everyone receives a vocation from God, but to different kinds of work.

Sometimes we tend to restrict a vocation solely to the priesthood or sisterhood, a calling to a work like that of Amos or the Twelve. It seems to some a little ridiculous to say that a wife, a husband, a scientist, a doctor, a nurse, a secretary, a teacher, a farmer, a mechanic has been called by God to do the work he is doing. The reason we think like that is because we make too great a division between the sacred and the secular.

In the Temple of Jerusalem, there was a "holy place" and a "holy of holies." Both were under the same roof and both formed the Temple of God. And

so it is with the things we call sacred and the things we call secular. Much of God's work is what we call secular. He makes the sun rise, the rain fall, the grass grow. And when He gives food and drink to mankind, He calls fellow-laborers into His vineyard. Such work is as truly a vocation as is the call to the work of religion pure and simple. The only difference is in the work. The vocation to religious life regards the things of God for man, the vocation to secular life regards the things of man for God's sake.

In the Imitation of Christ, there is a saying: "Do what you are supposed to be doing" — and do it full of love. That is all that matters. Newton said if two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to rule an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no desire to change employments. A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven. All devotion which leads to sloth is false.

St. Joseph Rosello said, "You will become a saint by complying exactly with your daily duties."

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