

Good News Suffers A Bad Week

It must be admitted that the preposterous week that was last week gave those interested in the Good News some severe jolts.

Israel shot down an unarmed civilian airliner, a priest leveled a general insult at American prisoners of war, and a new baby noted her first day in this life stuffed in an airliner toilet.

The first two incidents produced quotes that are symptomatic of just how ridiculous mortals can get. Israel's prime minister, Golda Meir, while expressing her "deep sorrow" over the plane catastrophe, added that her country regretted "that the Libyan pilot did not heed the repeated warnings which were given him in accordance with international procedures."

So 105 unarmed civilians were slain.

On the same day, Father Philip Berrigan, if news services are correct, said that most of America's returning POWs are war criminals under "divine and human law."

Granting that he may be speaking just from a philosophical viewpoint, nonetheless he is making a general and public condemnation of fellow human beings, who, after all, had paid a high price.

The acerbity of such a remark was accentuated by the general scene of POWs being reunited in love with their families and by the fact that so many people, including Father Berrigan's brother, had worked so long and so tediously to free these very men.

Such scab-picking will hurt Father Berrigan's future antiwar activity. We hope it will not hinder the burgeoning efforts on the part of more people to secure the peace.

By the time of this printing the details should be known concerning the baby born on the airliner. True, abandonments of newborn human beings are not new, but they have generally been associated with trash cans and dumps in areas victimized by an insensitive society. The symbolism of a new life stuffed into the toilet in the comparatively plush surroundings of an airliner is enough to make us all stop and think what is happening to our values.

In the face of such horror, it may help to ponder some comic relief — a commodity abundant in Washington. Last week Dr. Arthur Burns, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, offered this advice to the American people beset by rising costs of everything, meat, in particular. Let them eat cheese, he said, forgetting that it, too, is sky-high in price.

"I think we would be just as well off if we had one meatless day a week," he said.

Next the government will suggest Friday as the day.

Amendment in Works

A resolution calling for a Constitutional amendment to insure that due process and equal protection of the law be afforded to individuals "from the moment of conception" has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

Rep. Lawrence Hogan of Maryland introduced the proposed amendment, the aim of which is not only to protect the rights of the unborn but also to safeguard against any future erosions of the respect for life.

The proposed Human Life Amendment states that "neither the United States nor any state shall deprive any human being, from the moment of conception, of life without due process of law; nor deny to any human being, from the moment of conception, within its jurisdiction, the equal protection of the laws."

The proposal also says that "neither the United States nor any state shall deprive any human being of life on account of age, illness, or incapacity."

At last report the proposed amendment, known as HJR 261, was in the hands of the House Judiciary Committee. Three-fourths of the states must ratify it before it becomes law.

Obviously HJR 261 will face a long, difficult battle. Everyone who believes in the right to life must help it succeed.

LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1½ pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Supporting Farah Strike

Editor:

We of the Parents' Board of Our Lady of Mercy High School, along with Bishop Hogan and the Bishops of El Paso, Texas, deplore the Farah Clothing Company's failure to respond justly to the efforts of the Mexican American clothing workers to form a union to correct unfair employment practices.

We urge a boycott of Farah clothing here in Rochester until the above situation is corrected.

Donald J. Wafer,
President
Parents' Board
of Our Lady of
Mercy High School

'Prison Is No Hotel'

I was at a loss to understand the item in the Jan. 31 issue, "GEM Calls for New Jury in Attica Riot Case."

I wish to state unequivocally that if our parish, St. Mary's, contributes one penny toward money for bail and lawyers' fees in connection with those indicated, I shall withdraw my support of the Church, together with many of its parishioners who feel the same way as I do. I believe that the Church should stay out of politics, peace marches, etc., and deal with the religious life and beliefs, and preach about such things that are sorely lacking in our society.

As the wife of a corrections officer, I believe that the indictments should stand. What the public does not realize is that these men are convicted felons already. I have the greatest compassion for the inmates who, for one unfortunate reason or another find themselves behind bars and are sorry for their offense. However, the men involved in such a disturbance as occurred at Attica are beyond rehabilitation. They deserve the full and just penalty as the law shall determine.

The rabble-rousers would have everyone believe that they are beaten for no reason and caused to suffer unduly. The inmates today feel that they have their "gripes" and that their every want and desire should be fulfilled. Prison is no hotel, and they should be treated as prisoners and not "guests."

It is no wonder that many former good Catholics have fallen away from the Church because of its interference in matters that do not concern religion or the religious life.

I seldom find reason to voice my opinion so vehemently, but after reading Barbara Moynihan's article I could not help but say what so many Auburn residents have been saying after reading such articles.



"IF THAT'S WHAT THE FEELING IS, I GUESS IT WON'T HURT ANYTHING TO HAVE A LATIN MASS NOW AND THEN!"

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Donna Passarello
27 Van Patten St.
Auburn

Editor's Note: Barbara Moynihan's story reported on an action taken by Genesee Ecumenical Ministry.

No Amnesty For Runners

Editor:

Father Henry Atwell ascribes higher motives than are apparent to the young men who chose neither to serve nor to resist this nation's role in the Indochina conflict. Father Atwell writes (Courier-Journal 2-14-73): "Those who followed their conscience against the war were convinced that by resisting that way they were actually serving their flag and our nation far better than by subservience." But the fact is that the current debate over amnesty does not concern those who "resisted" the war, but rather those who failed to resist. They turned their back on the problem. They cut and ran.

A society becomes unduly permissive when it refuses to require an individual to be held responsible for his or her own actions. Permissive courts, divorce or abortion on demand, easy bankruptcy laws all combine to allow individuals to escape the responsibility of their actions and weaken that elusive "moral fibre" of the nation. Blanket amnesty for those who fled their country would drastic-

More Letters On Page 17

ally and tragically accelerate this pattern.

The point is, I think, that Indochina — like all wars — prompted the highest and most base reactions of the human spirit. On the battlefield, there were countless examples of heroism and human compassion. And there were fraggings. And My Lai. At home there were draft board officials searching their souls for the right answers; there were POW-MIA groups searching for the relief of information about missing loved ones; there were peace marches, extra-legal protests, teach-ins, and refusals to cooperate with anything relating to our Vietnam efforts.

But in each instance, there was commitment by the individuals involved. Pat Farren did not cut and run. Neither did the Flower City Conspiracy. Nor did the Berrigans. To grant blanket amnesty now would be as much an affront to these people (even though they most likely would not accept it as such) as it would to the men who went to Indochina and fought honorably in keeping with the dictates of their consciences. The men who ran failed to make any commitment at all. It is doubtful at this stage that they are even capable of commitment. But refusal to grant amnesty would at least be a national encouragement here for them to make a commitment to their own lives in their new countries.

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