

**Editorial**

**Rights at Stake . . .**

Although no one is crying that last week's Supreme Court decision has doomed parochial schools, there is no doubt that hopes for assistance at least as presently formulated, have been dashed.

The high court not only upheld a lower court which invalidated state laws to provide "custodial" aid and tuition reimbursement for low income families, but also reversed the lower court's favorable ruling for the schools in the case of tax subtractions.

Strike one, is how Father Daniel Brent, diocesan superintendent of schools, described the situation.

In another action, the high court also ruled unconstitutional the Pennsylvania law which reimburses nonpublic schools for their expenditures on teachers' salaries, textbooks, and instructional materials used in secular courses.

Strike two.

Then in the most bewildering decision of all, the court in an 8-1 ruling, threw out the mandated services law whereby nonpublic schools in New York State would be reimbursed for expenses of administrative services required by law.

Strike three.

Since diocesan schools have not anticipated aid in budgeting, the rulings do not constitute a crippling blow to their operations. The pressure, however, falls on parents who for one year knew at least the balm of tax subtractions. This small assistance has been removed.

Nonetheless if people are determined to have parochial schools, they will have them. The latest rulings will test that determination.

While there is no overstating the frustration the rulings raise, there is still an even more ominous aspect to them. The court opined that the involvement of religious groups in public issues was divisive and must be opposed.

This, says Bishop James Rausch of the U.S. Catholic Conference amounts to a "gag rule for religion that is not tolerable in a free society."

Such high court opinion means that huge blocs of citizens should remain silent in the face of major issues of the day. Issues that include abortion, amnesty, war.

It seems that the First Amendment stricture against the establishment of religion is being followed so zealously that other parts of the amendment may be in jeopardy, such as not prohibiting the free exercise of religion and the right of the people to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

**. . . Be Careful**

The same amendment was the focal point of an earlier ruling by the Supreme Court when it set up new guidelines on obscenity which strike a blow at pornography. The most important aspects of the decision are that the court restored to individual communities the right to determine what constitutes obscenity and also that material does not have to be "utterly without redeeming social value" to be declared obscene.

Few who have been repelled by offensive marquees, lewd posters and the like in places so public as to be unavoidable could argue against the community's right to do something about them.

And while most will hail what may be the beginning of the end of public smut, we all should be on guard to prevent any overkill.

As one respected publisher warned, the new guidelines are "a call to arms to every crazy vigilante group in the country." Others express fears of "library raids" and book-burning.

We hope for sane and sturdy laws, whether they be local ordinance or state statutes, that will chase filth and its peddlers from our streets without endangering the greater import of free speech.

**Opinion**

**Teen Seminar Explained**

Editor:

Having just returned from college, I only recently read the article of the May 3 Courier-Journal concerning Teen Seminar. Although I was overjoyed to find that seminar had finally received the publicity it deserves, I was frankly disappointed in the coverage. The article did not show that Teen Seminar had been investigated thoroughly; in fact, it seemed that the writer related only minor first impressions. There were no interviews with participants or an alumnus of the program, the pictures, were accompanied by little or no explanation, and the writer never even attempted to define what seminar truly is! It was referred to as "Something for Youth," something that "deals with Baptism, Confirmation, Penance and Communion," and "a highly emotional fusion of Scout Camp, encounter groups and catechesis." These charming and somewhat amusing metaphors are hardly an adequate description of seminar's purpose and procedures.

Technically, a seminar is three days of intensive sessions. These sessions are of lectures or movies, small-group discussions, and large group relaxation, and are alternated so that the pressure does not become overpowering. A seminar is led by a priest (at this time, Father Robert Hammond of Newark) who is assisted by Dottie Hoysic, usually several other priests and/or seminarians, and a teen staff of chosen individuals who have made previous seminars. Through the guidance of this staff (who are certainly inspired by the Holy Spirit) 30 teenagers are led to a climax, where they finally face themselves and God and choose who to follow.

The value of the discussion group is not determined by "the amount of Kleenex consumed," but by its success in showing each person himself — his faults, his assets and his potentialities — and in fostering deeper relationships with a few people. It also provides an outlet for emotion and a place for counsel, either privately by the group leader or by the entire group, if an individual feels secure in opening up to it.

The followup program called Reality is more than a social service designed to "keep alumni in touch with each other." Similar to the practices of the early Christian communities, it is a weekly (sometimes more often) commitment to meet and talk, study the Bible and gain hope and encouragement.

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"EITHER I HAVE A GOOD CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE, OR I DRIVE THIS CAR!"  
MAKE UP YOUR MIND, LOUISE!"

And it was wrong to have the last words which the reader sees be: "We don't have room for any more." True, Father Hammond said those words, but I doubt that he meant them to be used to close the article. Maybe people will have to wait, but there will be room. Christ never says no to someone who wants Him. Also, an address or telephone number where information could be obtained should have been provided.

For me and many others, seminar is a miracle — a miracle which is even more miraculous in that it happens over and over again. To know God's love and the strength and power that can be derived from that love is to change one's life — to become a Christian in the truest sense of the word. And seminar is the vehicle through which Christ has opened the minds and hearts of many to Himself. I know that it is His will that Seminar survive; how else would it have grown from the 30 people who began in October of 1970 to the 2000 that now make up our joyous family?

**Anna Mancini**  
796 Embury Road  
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

**The Right To Abundance**

Editor:

The persistent campaign for "right to life" continues unabated, and well it should; but standing as it does, on one leg, its chances for success are slim indeed.

An equally important, and kindred right, is entitled to equal time; it must be considered if the campaign is to succeed. Our Lord proclaimed both rights in a single breath: "I came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." The Father provided abundance for all. They are denied it by the love of money, and a usurious system that multiplies it (unearned) in the hands of those who possess it; denies those who earned it.

Sustained by continual over-expansion of the money supply, the system motivates our vicious price-wage spiral; creates affluence and waste on the one hand, poverty and need on the other. Inflation of our currency has contributed more than anything else to prepare modern society for the most degrading innovation of its time; it fosters defiance of every command of God; yet we accept it, live by it, and steadfastly refuse to speak out against it.

We are now confronted with a rather logical question: Is it any worse to destroy an infant in its mother's womb than to starve it to death in her arms? We are presently guilty of both. There can be no repeal of abortion — or reform of any other kind — until money has been reformed. Secular institutions have challenged it since its inception over two centuries ago. How in God's holy name can Christianity remain silent?

**Edward A. Veith**  
2952 Atlantic Ave.  
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

**Vietnam Plea Yields Funds**

Editor:

You will be gratified to learn of the reader response to our plea on behalf of the Children of Vietnam, published in the Courier Journal. To date we have received contributions ranging from \$1 to \$100 totaling \$650. Soon the contributors will be receiving a personal thank-you note from our organization and we would like to publicly thank those donating anonymously. One anonymous letter contained \$100 cash and a very sincere message of concern.

Hopefully those interested in the children of Vietnam saw the televised NBC documentary "The Sins of the Fathers" Tuesday, June 19th. Producer Robert Northshield depicted the great need of the children in the orphanages in Vietnam on film for all of America to see.

Friends of the Children of Vietnam is dedicated to halt the appalling death rate of 70 per cent of these children by providing money for food, clothing and medicine as well as trained personnel. Our efforts along these lines will continue with the help of those touched by the plight of these unfortunate children.

**Nancy Wheeler, President**  
**Ina Orr, Vice President**  
**Friends of the Children of Vietnam**  
1014 Bay Road  
Webster, New York 14580

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