

Editorial Inflation Immoral

President Ford faces a gigantic task in trying to solve the national riddle of inflation and some of his early steps in that direction have come under fire from a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Charities (NCCC).

The panel was sharply critical of the administration plan to maintain high unemployment as a method of lowering inflation.

"A more realistic analysis of our present inflation would note the general lack of confidence in government, the role of worldwide hunger and consequent need and demand for goods, increased oil costs and profiteering in some industries," the report stated.

The statement also called for improved unemployment insurance and said that the kind of wage and price controls enacted by the Nixon administration are "completely unacceptable" and that they only amounted to wage controls while nothing was done to slow soaring costs.

It also claimed that food processors and retailers have not passed on lower farm prices to the consumer but have continued to reap high profits. The statement likewise assailed "profiteering" by the oil companies.

Referring to the recent economic summit, the statement said that it was "stacked with special interests: they were stacked against the worker, against the elderly, against the children, against the women, against the consumer, against the needy and against those on fixed incomes."

Many still believe that the Church should keep its holy nose out of such issues. But inflation is a moral problem and one doesn't need a degree in economics to realize that the people it hurts most are the elderly, those on fixed incomes, and the impoverished. When the price of gasoline spurts 10 cents a gallon it hurts the rich man but it devastates the poor man; when food prices soar it irks the rich man but he continues to eat well, the poor man must eat less.

As the nation's economic advisers go about their business of fighting inflation, it is pleasant to know that groups such as Catholic Charities will keep them aware of their moral responsibilities to all of the people of this nation.

Help Honduras

The figure of the dead, the injured and the homeless may be confusing but the fact is that the people of Honduras need our help. Badly.

The diocese has quickly responded, sending a check for \$2,000 from its disaster emergency fund. It also will act as a funnel for your contributions which should be sent to Disaster Relief Fund, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. The diocese will forward all money received to Catholic Relief Service.

We in this part of the world are safe from hurricanes and their fearsome destruction. We don't know the terror of the battering nor the misery of the aftermath. We are fortunate, others particularly now those in Honduras, are not.

Perhaps we must imagine what it would be like if our homes were leveled, water polluted, food scarce, and children in the streets with no place to go for help. We must make sure as our neighbor Hondurans turn to us for assistance that we will be there to respond. It is the Christian thing to do.

Clearly Seen

When great issues are personalized they become more comprehensible.

Thus when Mrs. Betty Ford is hit by cancer, the enormity of the disease is brought home far more forcefully than with all the reports and statistical studies of this killer. The necessity of national effort, including government support, to unveil the secrets blocking the cure of cancer becomes clear.

And when Frank Robinson is finally named a major league baseball manager we see clearly the folly of never having a black man so employed in our so-called national pastime. Blacks, once banned from professional play, now form the backbone of many teams. But until now baseball has been too foolish to see the logic of a black manager. Congratulations to the Cleveland leadership.

We pray for Mrs. Ford and her family and send our good wishes to Frank Robinson.

Opinion

GKC's Pen Hit Many Targets

Editor:

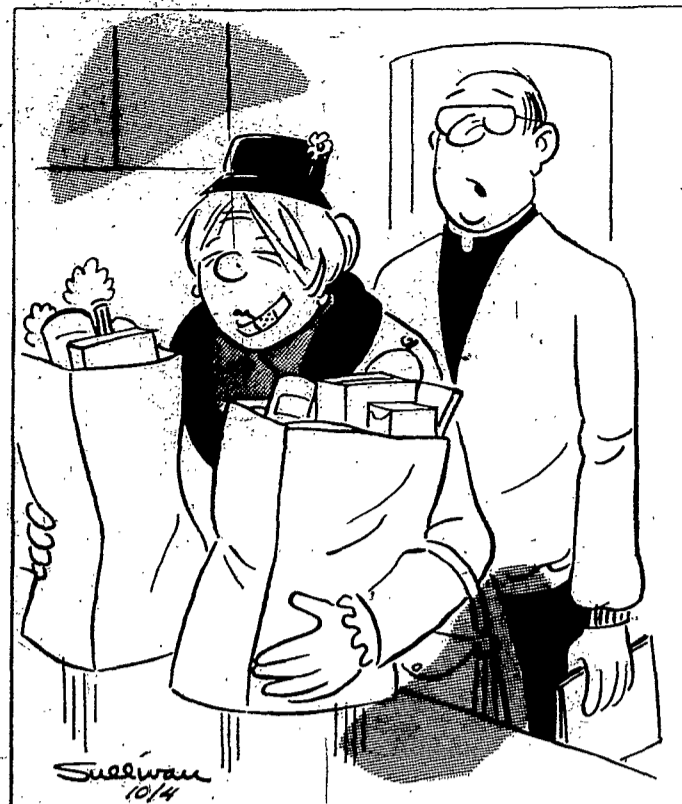
It is rather well known that G. K. Chesterton fought against "the superstition of divorce," about which he wrote an entire book, and that he despised birth control. There is one type of person for whom I feel what I can only call contempt. And that is the popular propagandist of what he or she absurdly describes as birth control. (The Well and the Shallows, 1935)

But it is perhaps less well known that GKC also wrote about what we now refer to as "the population problem," about man's relation to his environment, and about euthanasia, abortion, and related evils. Chesterton made the one point that even many of the dedicated people who are fighting against the obscenity of "population control" seem to neglect, namely that it is individual people who make up the "population"; it is not just a numbers game that is being played. He said, for example, "When a group of superciliously benevolent economists look down into the abyss for the surplus population, assuredly there is only one answer that should be given to them; and that is to say, 'If there is a surplus, you are a surplus'" (Charles Dickens, 1906). This shows, I think, a main point about speaking of "overpopulation." Are you a part of the surplus? Is your family part of the surplus, or your friends? Obviously, it is the people with whom we must start; the economic situation must be controlled to serve them, and not vice versa.

In an essay from his book *Generally Speaking* (1928), Chesterton spoke of the great confusion between means and ends. He replied to an article in an intellectual weekly which, as he said, asked whether "man has improved the earth he lives on; whether nature as a whole was better for the presence of man. Nobody seemed to notice that this is assuming that the end of man is to grow more grass or improve the breed of rattlesnakes."

He continued:

"A man may serve God and be good to mankind for that reason; or a man may serve mankind and be good to other things to preserve the



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standard of mankind; but it is very hard to prove exactly how far he is bound to make the jungle thicker or encourage very tall giraffes.

A man should be kind to a giraffe; he should if necessary feed it; he may very properly stroke it or pat it on the head, even if he has to procure a ladder for these good offices. He is perfectly right to pat a giraffe; there is no objection to his patting a palm tree. But he is not bound to regard a man as something created for the good of the palm tree. Nor is he bound to answer the question, with any burden on his conscience: "if there were no men, would there be more palm trees?"

Chesterton suggested the satirical euphemism "social subtraction" for euthanasia and, although the spectre of abortion was not the terrible presence in his time that it is today, he was quite aware of it as an undercurrent. He linked these evils to the political and legal questions surrounding the prevalent experimentation in genetics and heredity, and he remarked that:

"For under the smooth legal surface of our society there are already moving very lawless things. We are always near the breaking point when we care only for what is legal and nothing for what is lawful. Unless we have a moral principle about

such delicate matters as marriage and murder, the whole world will become a welter of exceptions with no rules. There will be so many hard cases that everything will go soft." (Come to Think of It, 1930)

Robert Knille
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Staff Objects To Criterion

Editor:

The staff of St. Mary's Parish in Auburn, takes great exception to Father Paul Cuddy's recent statement in the Courier-Journal judging the quality of a parish religious education program on whether or not the 5th thru 12th graders could recite the Angelus and the Rosary.

Father David Gramkee
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Opinions to the editor should be addressed: Letter to the Editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

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I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.
ANTHONY J. COSTELLO,
General Manager