

Editorial

While Millions Starve...

Ignorance Not Valid As Excuse

On the eve of the World Food Conference which began yesterday in Rome, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati had some blunt words concerning the world's haves in the face of spreading starvation.

"The food crisis," he said, during an interview over Vatican radio, "has a special significance for Christians. The Gospel command to feed the hungry is lucidly clear; the command is put to Christians of this generation on a worldwide basis. We cannot plead ignorance. We know where the hungry are and what we must do to save them."

According to Religious News Service, Archbishop Bernardin said that "millions today face the prospect of death from starvation; equally as many face debilitating malnutrition and hunger. Even in the industrialized nations, segments of the population are hungry and undernourished."

"To grasp the statistics of the problem is essential but not sufficient. We need to go beyond statistics to the significance of the problem that in the food crisis we confront the reality of our interdependence today; we are destined to live together in a very limited globe."

Certainly while we must go beyond statistics, while we must come up with ways to turn our concern into action, while we must change our way of life, it is still enlightening to take a look at some of the figures which sadly reflect our way of life.

According to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith:

- Americans spent \$2 billion on candy in 1971.
- We spent \$1.3 billion on movie tickets in 1972.
- We spend about \$250 million annually on hair coloring.

And while a good deal of the world's population is suffering hunger pangs, we spend about \$150 million every year on diet foods.

Other agencies offer substantiating figures.

The World Hunger Action Coalition claims that in 1940, we Americans were able to survive on 55 pounds of beef, 18 pounds of chicken each per year. By 1972, we were consuming 116 pounds of beef and 51 pounds of chicken.

These figures are significant in more ways than one. First, we have hunger right here in the United States, which means that those that have the means are eating enough to boost the national average to those soaring figures.

Second, such figures take on even more graphic meaning alongside the fact that millions are hungry.

Third, when we consider that it takes 55 pounds of beef much more that weight in grain to get to our tables, we can see how the problem grows in geometric proportions.

We have pointed reminders at home. Inflation is biting into our food budget. For those of us who can afford, it will mean a kind of forced austerity. For those of us who already had trouble finding the means to survive nutritionally it amounts to disaster.

Pope Paul VI and such alert economists as Barbara Jackson have been warning for years that unless the haves wake up, the peril premeating the rest of the world would engulf us. The handwriting is becoming plainer. We must read it, understand it, and act. We must take a more incisive look at our own needs. We must make it clear to governmental officials that they must take the same kind of look within their purviews.

And if nothing but pragmatism will compel us, then we must consider that the skin we save may be our own. And the soul as well.

Bishop O'Meara Thanks Diocese

Editor:

We are most grateful for the wonderful coverage you gave Mission Sunday 1974. I am sure it will help the generous people in your diocese to a better understanding of the missionary work of the Church and also result in a successful Mission Sunday collection.

We truly appreciate your time and effort in this work and the very valuable space that you provide. I am well aware of the heavy demands for coverage in our diocesan papers which makes me all the more appreciative and thankful for your deep consideration and understanding of the work of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Again my personal thanks to you and your staff and assurance that my thanks are small indeed compared to the gratitude of love and benefits through your interest and support.

Bishop Edward T. O'Meara
National Director
Society for the Propagation
of the Faith

Laverne Ad Criticized

Editor:

This is a short letter to say that my husband and I feel that the Courier-Journal is not the place for candidates who favor abortion to advertise. We are aware that many of them are fellow Catholics, but they have made public that they are in favor of abortions, and the Catholic Church has clearly stated that abortion is no less than murder.

Since the Courier is a Catholic newspaper, we feel that it is wrong for you to print paid advertisements for persons who think contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. By printing such advertisements, we feel that many people will believe that the Catholic Church endorses people, and thus vote for them without looking into it any further.

We know this is too late for this year's campaign, but we feel it is something that should be said. We hope that this letter will be looked into, and you will review your policy before next year's election.

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Editor's Note: When a newspaper

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"IT WAS ONE OF THE LIVELIEST PARISH DISCUSSION MEETINGS WE'VE EVER HAD! THE TOPIC WAS 'GETTING THE WORLD IN ORDER!'"

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the public school system — a compromise allowing termination of life at 10 or 12 weeks may be the best we can do. See America for Aug. 10, and Father Drinan's article, "Strategy on Abortion," in America for Feb. 4, 1967.

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Must Speak Vs. Abortion

Editor:

In the Open Window column of 10/23/74, Father Hohman claims that a majority of Americans favor abortion-on-demand. Also, since we are a pluralistic society, we must live with the convictions of the majority.

To my knowledge, numerous polls have affirmed that Americans OPPOSE abortion-on-demand. The most reputable is a survey by the University of Michigan. Referendums also in various states have rejected abortion.

Using a distorted interpretation of "pluralism" to encourage people to learn to live with actions that are intrinsically wrong, is an overwhelming victory for the anti-life forces. It enables them to proceed with the elimination of the aged and retarded and pursue other utilitarian schemes for which society is now being conditioned.

Active, committed pro-lifers are perhaps a minority because the cause requires courage in times of insecurity, persistence in an era of dilettantism, and most of all, hope when the realities of a fragmented social order lend themselves to despair. But as one very perceptive priest has observed, "Society is rescued from chaos by the few men and women, never by the many."

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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

takes political advertising we must accept all such ads, provided they are in good taste. Of course, any ad promoting abortion would not be acceptable. The ad in question, however, did not do that. The candidate merely tried to explain his abortion position to the voters. Our alternative would be to refuse all political advertising, including those of anti-abortion candidates as well as pro-life groups. The Courier-Journal has long been in the forefront of the pro-life movement and has consistently put all candidates on the spot regarding their abortion viewpoints, very often to their discomfort.

Must Choose Lesser Evil

Editor:

In a letter in the Courier-Journal (Oct. 30) I said that the political feasibility of legislation concerning abortion must be carefully weighed. If we push the wrong legislation, millions will die.

In the light of this, let us examine the question on abortion proposed by the Courier-Journal to candidates for public office (Oct. 23). The question was, "Would you support ratification of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing legal protection for all human beings regardless of development?"

I submit that there is strong evidence showing almost no chance of such an amendment passing. This being so, a political shyster who realizes this can simply answer yes, or ramble on about his personal feelings with respect to abortion. A group which has assessed the political situation poorly will classify such respondents as "pro-life."

On the other hand, an honest person who is genuinely anti-abortion, but who perceives that this proposed amendment will get nowhere, must either answer no, or leave the question unanswered. He will then be libeled as "not pro-life."

With no help from the shyster those who have assessed the matter poorly will fail, leaving the horrible Supreme Court decision on abortion as the law. Those who support proposals bound to fail are morally responsible for the poor judgment which leads to the continued slaughter of millions of defenseless beings.

There is only one way to pass a right-to-life amendment. This is to pick a definition of "human life" which will be acceptable to a majority in the 38 states. As I explained in my previous letter we may have to choose not between what is morally good and bad but between the lesser of two evils. I should guess that in our society, infected by secular humanism — the philosophy of