

**Editorial**

**What Can We Do About Famine**

If the World Food Conference accomplishes no other end it will serve to focus attention on the monumental problem of hunger in the world. Food, or the scarcity of it, is occupying more of everyone's thoughts lately.

High prices at home are, of course, a matter of concern. Farmers don't seem to be benefitting from the soaring figures and the grocery shoppers at the other end of the spectrum are suffering. Somebody in between is being enriched and hopefully government investigations will get to the bottom of this.

In the meantime, even though prices are sky high there is an even more urgent crisis — millions are dying of hunger.

We have been exposed meanwhile to televised accounts and newspaper reports of cattlemen slaughtering steer and dumping them into open ditches, to dramatize their point that if things do not get better for them there will be no beef. Period.

In the face of the complex problems arising from such situations, and you can add grain and sugar easily, it is difficult for the average citizen to know what to do. Concerned about world hunger, beset by inflation, angered at any number of the accompanying ramifications, one is apt to become frustrated, at the least.

So what many are cooking for are immediate plans of action on the individual level. In Bishop Hogan's Pastoral Perspectives on Page 3 today, a suggestion is offered that can be carried out by each of us.

He suggests voluntary days of fast to help us identify with those who hunger. While this would constitute a kind of spiritual identification it would also have material effects if enough people did it.

Another church leader, Episcopal Bishop Paul Moore Jr. of New York City, has called on his fellow churchmen to observe "meatless Wednesdays" to fight famine abroad.

He has 88,000 communicants and figures if each diocesan family ate one pound of meat less each week, "we will consume one million fewer pounds of meat in a year."

He makes the further point that "because meat comes from animals fattened on grain, we could release as much as 10 million pounds of grain that might be shipped abroad."

We have some 100,000 families in this diocese, so those figures would be much larger and would make an even bigger contribution that might be spread out to those reaching for help.

Of course, the key word is "might." If ideas such as those expounded by Bishop Hogan and Bishop Moore are to catch on, there must be machinery to assure that any surpluses go directly to those in hunger, not be used to jack up prices at home, nor utilized as a political weapon.

Bishop Hogan offers other ways we can all join in the struggle to help our brothers and sisters. There is indeed much individual action that can be taken by each of us.

**Our Survey**

Because a newspaper is such a public beast we have a tendency to want to share our work with our readers. Thus when we conducted our readership survey to learn what you think about the things we are doing, we also wanted to discuss the findings with you.

Thus the continuing series explaining the survey and its results. The findings were good in that they reflected that our readers like the job we are doing. We would have explained the survey in the same fashion if the results were otherwise.

And while generally your judgments are favorable there is still plenty of room for improvement with the product. You have made that clear and we will heed your advice.

Most of all we thank you for your interest. The people in Rockville Centre who conducted the survey have assured us that the numbers who responded represented a very healthy figure thus assuring the validity of the findings and also indicating reader interest.

Again we are pleased that is good news that we share with you and may we ask your continued concern and criticism. Together we can make this newspaper ever better.

**Response to Gun Control**

Editor:

In the Oct. 30 issue of the Courier-Journal, it is reported John Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago, as well as Cardinals Krol, Manning and Medeiros gave their testimony on gun control to the Senate legislators calling for more stringent controls. I hope we all write to our Congressman too, but not for more laws.

Write to your Congressman that making more laws is useless. We need judges to enforce the laws we already have. When the good, fine policeman catches a crook — murderer, mugger, burglar or hold up man — he brings him into the courts. But what happens? Our already overpaid judges for one reason or another have this crook free in five minutes or less, either on parole or out on bail. Are these judges as crooked as the mugger, thief or murderer? Are they paid off? Why do these crooks get off free?

This is where the trouble is, Archbishop Cody and cardinals. This is where you should put your efforts.

The Constitution of the United States reads that all (law abiding) citizens have a right to bear arms. Citizens who are not law abiding belong in jail and murderers belong in the electric chair. Or shall we also register clubs, knives hatchets or what have you.

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**Death Penalty Has Benefits**

Editor:

I support the death penalty and am tired of hearing how we should feel sorry for the criminals. Do they feel sorry for their victims?

The death penalty has two benefits.

1. It prevents a dangerous convict from killing again.

2. Someone contemplating murder may think twice before doing so, knowing that his life too is at stake, instead of knowing that he can get off on parole in six years.

As our system of justice is now, someone who has committed the crime of rape may well murder his victim knowing that he has killed his only witness. This way he knows that even if he is caught the penalty for murder is little.

**COURIER-JOURNAL**

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Vol. 89, No. 28 November 13, 1974

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$6.00; Canada and South America, \$8.50; other foreign countries, \$9.50. Offices, Richard Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y., 14604, (716) 454-7050. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

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"GOTCHA TEACHING RELIGION TO THE JUNIOR HIGH KIDS AGAIN THIS YEAR, EH, DAVE?"

more than it is for rape in many states.

The death penalty should be mandatory for premeditated murder, rape or robbery which results in the death of the victim, the killing of a police officer, and kidnappings, hijackings, and bombings which result in death.

There is constitutional ground for the death penalty in Amendment 14 which states "no one should be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." Furthermore, the argument that the framers of the Constitution did not intend capital punishment is absurd since capital punishment existed in the times of the Constitution itself.

The Bible itself shows concern for the victims of crime in its support of capital punishment.

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**Seminarians Urge Amnesty**

(The following letter was sent to President Gerald Ford.)

Editor:

Aware of the need to speak to value issues in American society, and mindful of our role as theological students within the Catholic community, we members of St. Bernard's Student Council address ourselves to the critical question of amnesty, considering we speak representatively of the consensus of the Student Body.

We consider amnesty to be a positive act of compassion directed to our brothers who are now exiled or imprisoned because of their response to laws relating to military service. Amnesty restores and begins to heal the deep wounds created by our country's involvement in South-east Asia.

There are sound scriptural and theological reasons for proposing a broad unconditional amnesty for draft evaders, war resisters and deserters. In the New Testament the theme of reconciliation is central to the understanding of God's love for persons in Jesus Christ. The Gospel calls us to a ministry of reconciliation, tolerance and even forgiveness, a teaching underscored by Pope Paul VI when he asked some weeks ago in the official document proclaiming the Holy Year 1975 as a Year of Reconciliation, that "proper authorities should consider the possibility of wisely granting amnesty to several groups of people, including those that may have been caught up in political and social upheaval too immense for them to be held fully responsible."

Historically amnesty is a well established tradition of the U.S. people. In the past our government has granted amnesty. President Andrew Johnson granted a general amnesty in 1868, in an attempt to heal the wounds of society so recently engaged in Civil War. And after World War II President Harry S. Truman established an amnesty review board which was the vehicle for recommendations of amnesty. We cannot accept the position of President Ford which was most recently expressed in terms that foreclosed any considerations for a universal and unconditional amnesty.

Because we cannot permit wounds to go unhealed;

Because we recognize that the law is not the sole judge of such men;

Because reconciliation recognizes persons who feel no guilt, since their actions were ethically motivated;

We, the St. Bernard's Student Council, call for a universal and unconditional amnesty.

In order to commit ourselves to the task of reconciliation, we are taking the following actions:

We are communicating our position directly to President Ford and local congressional representatives.

We recommend that local congregations provide a supportive community for all persons who desire reconciliation with their government, families and local communities.

We recommend our local dioceses provide programs and resources to help members, priests and local congregations to become agents of reconciliation. This might involve communication with and support of exiles and deserters in various parts of the world, the publicity of our services, and the education of local congregations.

Finally we pray that reconciliation may become a reality and that our nation can become unified around purposes that reflect the will of God in our time.

The Student Council  
of Saint Bernard's  
Seminary  
Peter Clifford, president

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.