

More Opinions

We Can Afford To Help Poor

Editor:

In the opinion column of March 26, Mary L. Panetti registers her concern for the 20 million poor of the U.S. She records several examples of the political and strategic use of so called "aid" to foreign countries, calling into question the whole effectiveness of foreign aid. I share her concerns, but need to register some disagreements.

A simple trade-off of the allotment of dollars from a foreign arena to our domestic scene will not solve poverty. Our own national programs can also be registered in millions of dollars, and yet, the poor we have still with us, and in greater number, and in starker contrast to the "haves". A concentration of energies and programs from foreign arenas to the U.S.A. will not make all things come out right. Poverty at home and abroad is intimately linked. As Christians, our love might begin at home, but MUST reach out to all, without exception.

Since charity has not seemed to be effective these many decades of plans, programs and "progress", let's try JUSTICE. It is harder to work for justice than to do a charitable action, because justice demands get us into the structural and systemic orders which control the running of our economy. Right now the economy is the base block of our living. Domestically and globally, agriculture is a business, an enterprise whose rule is the maximizing of profit. From field to market shelf, the food industry follows the dictates of the privileged corporations, whose influence is felt and measured to the tune of \$150 billion yearly.

In the U.S. and on the world market, who has money can buy food. Food is just another commodity up for sale—so spoke Mr. Butz.

Caught in the bind and oppression of little buying power, our own domestically poor, and the poor nations of the world suffer an inexorable survival pattern. Will we as a rich nation continue to overlook the calls for quality of life, for human dignity? Or will we begin to address the systemic challenges: guaranteed minimal income, revision of trade policies, redistribution of the wealth? If we choose to ignore the call to justice, future generations will judge us as lacking the will to address the issue. But never, never, Mary, could the fact be registered in truth that the U.S. "can't afford it."

One thing we can't afford to do is to waste more time lamenting the past. But let's learn from it, how to be wiser people, more loving and more just.

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Martin Luther Revisited

Editor:

In this ecumenical age, it has become fashionable for learned theologians to compare Catholic doctrine with the beliefs of other religions, particularly Lutheranism. This discussion of doctrine would be quite unnecessary if only we could understand the Lutheran faith, and hence the beginning of the Reformation in Germany, was merely the result of the abnormal mental state of Martin Luther.

The life of Luther can be summed up in three words. 1). SCRUPULOSITY. During his early years in the monastery, Luther became very scrupulous. He saw all his thoughts and actions as gravely sinful. He himself tells us that it took him as much as six hours to go to confession. He believed that he was constantly living in the state of mortal sin, faced with eternal damnation. Moreover, he believed, there was nothing he could do to change this situation. Prayer, penance, the religious life, were clearly of no help, so he thought. Try as he would, he still had those terrible temptations. He confused his temptations with sin. Temptation does not become sin until it is consented to. Luther was sure that he was living in sin and was damned.

2). HERESY "We are born in sin, we live in sin, we die in sin — we are cesspools of sin," he wrote. This was Luther's doctrine of the total depravity of human nature. Prayer, fasting, the sacraments cannot change this state of total depravity, nor save us from sin. **Good works are useless, of no avail.** How, then, can one be saved? Only by casting one's self upon God's mercy and **believing** that God will save you. **Salvation is from faith alone. Good works are of no avail.** This was not Catholic belief. Catholic theology taught that we are born in sin; that is, without the Divine Life of God in our souls. Original Sin; and with a certain propensity to evil, concupiscence. But we are not totally evil. Through baptism, the life of God floods our souls, making us children of God; thus removing the stigma of the sin of Adam. In Luther's theology sins are not forgiven. We are cesspools of sin. We are not truly God's children because we do not share the divine life. In Lutheran Theology, there is no room for grace. That is why Protestants do not have saints. A saint is one who shares the life of God. Sharing the life of God is holiness. There is no place for saints in Lutheran theology because there is no place for sanctifying grace, or holiness. Sin is not forgiven but merely not imputed. We remain in our sins.

3). APOSTASY. In his despair Luther had built up a philosophy which he felt assured him of salvation — salvation by faith without good works. By his teaching, Luther put himself outside the Church which Christ had founded. Thus began the Reformation in Germany.

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A Prayer Offered

Editor:

In 1940 I was riding on a bus and on the seat was a piece of paper. On it was a prayer with the notation, "Anyone says this prayer will go to heaven. But the prayer should be said every day or every night."

I have been giving this prayer to the nuns of St. Peter and Paul and lots of my friends. It is said like a rosary. On the large beads say, "Eternal Father, I offer the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the wounds of our souls."

On the small beads say, "My Jesus pardon and mercy through the merits of the Sacred Wounds."

Offer the prayer for the poor souls of purgatory.

Mrs. Anna Nicoletti
Rochester, N.Y.

Why Do Papers Ignore MIAs?

Editor:

Everyday in the newspapers, we are confronted with pictures of Asian refugees in flight, starving children and other sensational pictures relating to the present Asian crisis. As an American citizen, I wonder why these same papers in American cities all across the great U.S. of A, don't have pictures of grand headlines demanding to know what happened to 1,300 Americans who fought in southeast Asia in the last war. What has happened to us? Are we so caught up in everyone else's dilemmas that we have lost sight of our own?

The newspapers reach millions

of people every day, and very often take upon themselves to wage crusades where they see fit. Where are these newspapers now in this cause that presidents, politicians, military men and other influential people chose to ignore. All through history newspapers have had the power to sway political and even national priorities by their uncanny ability to bring into the open issues that often politicians would choose to leave shut. Newspapers are America's conscience. Why then has the media practically closed its eyes to this issue which should be public, which should be exploited to it's fullest to the citizens of this country? Newspapers have always been interested in the plight of various minority groups in this country. What about this minority? These 1300 men have 1300 families living here, paying taxes, working to support their

families. Is their plight to be ignored?

I am not related by blood to any of the men missing in SE Asia. I am related to them by the fact that they are part of this country. They are my brothers in America. If the newspapers felt any kinship towards these men and their families, they should wield some of their great power to make people all over aware of their plight, and the inactivity to do anything about it.

Mary Ellen Frisch
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Rochester, N.Y.

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