

Editorial

The American and Christian Way

President Ford's indignation at those who object to aiding the Vietnamese refugees is understandable. For many it was heartwarming to see and hear an American president speak with brotherly love of those who some see as "different." It also was edifying to hear Ford sternly remind Americans about their traditions.

Of course, the current refugee problems are complicated and the President admits that. We have economic woes and jobs are scarce. Worry on those scores in connection with influx is legitimate and must be part of any consideration of the issue. The President is aware of all this but he is making a personal effort that we do not leave out the moral ingredients of love and justice.

While the President has offered us guidance as Americans, Archbishop Joseph J. Bernardin, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference, has given us leadership as Catholics.

The archbishop has pointed out that while the domestic needs of Americans are pressing, "the needs of those who are fleeing, many due to fear of oppression because of their Catholic faith, cannot be ignored." He has requested the USCC Migration and Refugee Services to "work closely with designated representatives in efforts to provide new homes and jobs now required for these refugees." He pointed out that the primary responsibility rests with government but reminded Catholics that they, too, have a duty to perform tangible acts through their organizations.

Our moral support is imperative. We have all heard the objections to helping the refugees. Some are well-intentioned and legitimate. Others, however, reflect the bigotry that also has been part and parcel of American tradition. We cannot hide the fact that a certain brand of American has opposed every new wave of immigration to these shores.

Add to these, others who are not bigoted but who are lily-livered, if we may be excused the metaphor.

We think we know what the President had in mind when he told those who have questioned his concern for the refugees to read the inscription on the Statue of Liberty. To make it easy for our readers, here is that sonnet written by Emma Lazarus in the last century, probably with other generations of immigrants in mind:

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand,
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Providing the Tools

The picture of the child on Page 1 is proof enough for any who need it. There are those who desperately need the simplest necessities of life. The child on Page 1 is not an isolated case. Many in our world are deprived. In Africa. In India. In Latin America. In Appalachia. Yes, in our own diocese.

A question may be: But what can we do about it? If we had to depend on governmental bureaucracy, the prospects are frightening. If we had to establish a new structure, forbidding.

Fortunately we do not have to rely on those sectors. The Church's Missions Office is long established and capable. All the rest of us have to do is support it. And even that is easy; we will be handed the opportunity this weekend in the Missions collection.

If the Missions Office needed a motto it might be this paraphrase of Winston Churchill's famous plea, "Give us the tools and we will do the job."

Opinion

Drops Support Of Life Unit

Editor:

I have written The Rochester Area Right-to-Life group withdrawing my support. I am informing your paper because the decision to disassociate myself from the "Pro-Lifers" began with a recent Nancy Murphy column, a piece that Right-to-Life literature always urges its members to read. In the column, Mrs. Murphy sweepingly and abrasively takes sharp swipes at, among other things, Gay Liberation, ERA, NOW, and UNICEF. Said swipes are taken, of course, in the name of Life.

I am utterly, intellectually and viscerally opposed to abortion. I recognize, however, as Mrs. Murphy and Right-to-Life literature does not, that the human mind is complex enough to oppose a thing and support another thing simultaneously. I fail to see the connection between the rights our gay brothers and sisters have and the matter of abortion on demand. Such thinking as Mrs. Murphy's reminds me of the new-familiar San Diego bishop if you're a member of NOW, you must favor abortion. That thought isn't really too far away from, say, "If you're Catholic, you must be narrow minded," or, "If you're German, you must be a Nazi." Guilt by association, I think it's called.

I intend to continue to lend my deepest support to the opponents of abortion. I simply wish to assert that I also intend to reach out to the woman who seeks equality, the homosexual who asks only his share of human dignity, the organization like UNICEF that attempts, in its admittedly imperfect way, to better life-conditions for thousands and to prevent abortions.

William Blake said it best: "Everything that lives is holy."

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NCD Sharply Criticized

Editor:

As a parent of school-age children, and also as a writer and editor, I would like to make a few comments on the form and content of the current version of the National Catechetical Directory.

As far as form is concerned, the director says in 40 pages what could easily be said in four. The text is such an incredible mass of



cliches, involved metaphors, circumlocution, and gobbledeygook that the meaning is often obscured. The verbiage is so thick that you could cut it with a knife.

Here are just a few random items:

* The "Because" in line 126 (p. 6) is invalid. The sentence says that because one dream is two dreams, progress is judged by certain standards. This is nonsense.

* In the next sentence (line 131 ff), there are technological feats but not "scientific feats," and they are really not "incredible." The participial phrase beginning with "promising" is ambiguous. And it is a wild-eyed adoration of technology to state that the wonderful American science will bring the riches of culture within the reach of all.

* On line 150 (p. 6), technology is not a "grandchild" of the industrial revolution - it was a tool of that revolution. "Countless millions" is one of the countless millions of cliches used. The statement that technology is a grace from God (line 155) is probably a major heresy.

* Lines 277 - 281 (p. 7) say that resources, energy, etc. make Americans want to build a society "based on the practical needs of the people." Any community or country would want to build a society based on the practical needs of the people. The statement has no meaning.

* In lines 291 - 294 (p. 7), in what way is our nation "expanding," what is an "open continent," what does the "this" in line 292 refer to? (The previous sentence mentions moving, taking advantage of, and solving) "Generates a mobility of peoples" is just another example of the silly, pompous language used.

* Lines 535-538 (p. 8) state that an emphasis is being located in a horizon, and the next sentence says that practicality finds an echo in abundance - two of the almost innumerable examples of destroying meaning by verbiage.

* Lines 245 - 247 (p. 10) state that the human mind cannot take in the mystery of God "all at once." It's illuminating to know that taking in the mystery of God may take two or more efforts.

The whole report is rhetorical bombast, so inflated that it is almost meaningless, and written obviously by people who simply do not know how to write.

The content embodies the worst of the current elements in the teaching of religion - or rather the non-teaching of religion. Some of the main attitudes reflected are: imprecision of outlook; vague social goals; subjectivism; the sick preoccupation with feelings, attitudes, "awareness," personal relationships; and similar,

worthless, introspective nonsense. As one of hundreds of examples we have: "The dimension of message, community and service must be worked into a variety of models."

Forty pages of this mealy-mouthed sociological trash disguise the fact that the writers of the directory have abandoned any concern for teaching the truths of the Faith.

What is needed is clear, explicit, definitive teaching of the truths of the faith and of morality, and a rational defense of the Faith and morals to counter the present indifferentism and agnosticism. People - especially young people - need something solid to stand on, but, as this Directory reflects, they are being given nothing.

Robert Knille
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Victor Council Praised

Editor:

Congratulations to St. Patrick's Church in Victor for having the courage to urge its parishioners not to support the United Community Chest drive because of their contributions to "agencies which actively encourage, aid and abet the performance of immoral acts such as abortion."

Planned Parenthood is not the only member agency involved in the anti-life campaign. The YWCA, Girl Scouts, Salvation Army and local hospitals, who either espouse, counsel or perform abortions are also recipients of United Community Chest funds.

While many agencies within the Chest are doing very worthwhile work the anti-life endeavors of several agencies imply serious moral compromise for many who support a pro-life philosophy. The Victor Parish Council has very admirably rejected moral compromise with their stance.

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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.

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