

Editorial

Crime and Responsibility

Curfews have been proposed in different communities across the nation as one way of curbing acts of juvenile crime on our streets after dark. While this may constitute an abridgement of the rights of a portion of our population, we are not using this occasion to comment on the proposals themselves.

Rather we are interested in the response already made to the idea. Many say that such curfews would be useless, that unless youngsters learn self-discipline and respect for the rights of others at a very early age, that is, in the home, then no law is going to change their behavior.

We tend to agree with that, though we also see such discipline coming from proper Church and school instruction as well.

We think it should be pointed out that permissive laws on the one hand and blind adherence to Church-state separation in every situation arising under the sun seriously hamper the Church, the school, and, most regrettably, even the family, in instilling such respect in our younger citizens. And may we quickly add that we in no way intend to demean our younger citizens. Such failings naturally persist in adulthood.

As an example of unsalutary governmental interference in family life, we point to the situation involving abortions committed on minor children. The Supreme Court in liberalizing abortions throughout the country, contributing to the general breakdown of respect for life, failed to decide on parental consent.

In New York State, a bill has been proposed to restrict abortions on a minor child without the consent of a parent or guardian.

The State Right to Life Committee rightly points out that this problem not only concerns abortion but also "the right and responsibility of parents to protect their children."

The State Right to Life seeks a million signatures to support the bill. Last year, 500,000 were ignored.

The school situation is another example. Government cannot see its way clear to help non-public schools financially, restricting the rights of many citizens to send their children to schools where religious values are paramount.

So we decry delinquency and crime by juveniles, contributing to unsafe streets. It is then implied that parents somehow are not doing their jobs properly. It is hinted that schools and the Church are lacking in teaching good citizenship and proper moral behavior.

Then we shackle these most important societal units. We allow the government to encroach upon even their most basic rights.

Bills such as the Parental Consent Bill must be supported to stem the erosion of our respect for life and for the family unit.

Right to Life

May we welcome delegates to the State Right to Life convention that begins Friday in Rochester.

They have persisted in working for a just cause, even though by so doing they have become unpopular in many corners.

They have persisted even though at times the cause has seemed lost.

They have persisted because the victims of liberalized abortion cannot speak for themselves.

They have persisted because they are truly Christian soldiers and the battle is not over.

For the Record

The 3,000 delegates at the religious convention affirmed: "Abortion violates the biblical principles of the sanctity of human life."

A Catholic gathering. No. Rather it was the biennial convention of the Mennonite Church at Eureka, Ill. Once again facts put the lie to those propagandists who claim that the anti-abortion stance is being forced on the populace by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Thankful For 'Harvest'

Editor:

It dawned on me this beautiful day that God my Father has deeply blessed me and while I have always so enjoyed the beginning of Fall with its crisp cool air and bright sunny days I have never just said, "O Lord, thank you." I take this time to thank Him for the abundant harvests this country has indeed been blessed with and it's all from Him. Our toil would all be in vain if He forgot us for a second.

As we think of our starving brother, let us thank the Father for our blessings. Let us not be afraid to ask for miracles from His Son — the miracles of food for all. For Jesus came that all men might have life more abundantly. "O Lord I can't seem to enjoy my abundance without knowing that my brother has his share! I pray in Jesus Name for good harvests where they are impossible, for You indeed are Lord of the impossible. Praise you, Jesus.

Barb Werzinger
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Gays Serious About Faith

Editor:

The current exchange of letters in the Courier-Journal on the issue of homosexuality seems, to me, to be generating more heat than light. I certainly do not want to add to the confusion.

But I do think it important for the Catholic community in Rochester to realize that this city is home for a large number of gay people most of whom are Christian and many of whom are Roman Catholic. Many of them are serious about the demands of their faith and are struggling to arrive at a moral stance that will allow them to be fully human and fully Christian. (The latter, of course, requires the former.) The traditional position of the Church in this regard is, as in every other moral area, open to development and change. In fact, her stance in regard to homosexuality is being re-considered with more concentration at present than in any other area I can think of.

You have only to look at recent issues of such publications as Commonweal, U.S. Catholic and Jubilee, The Critic, The Priest, and others to see evidence of this. In the face of this re-thinking, I, for one, would not want anyone to think that some of the letters which have appeared in this column, especially from the clergy, represent any sort of total picture. They read, rather, like a



Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

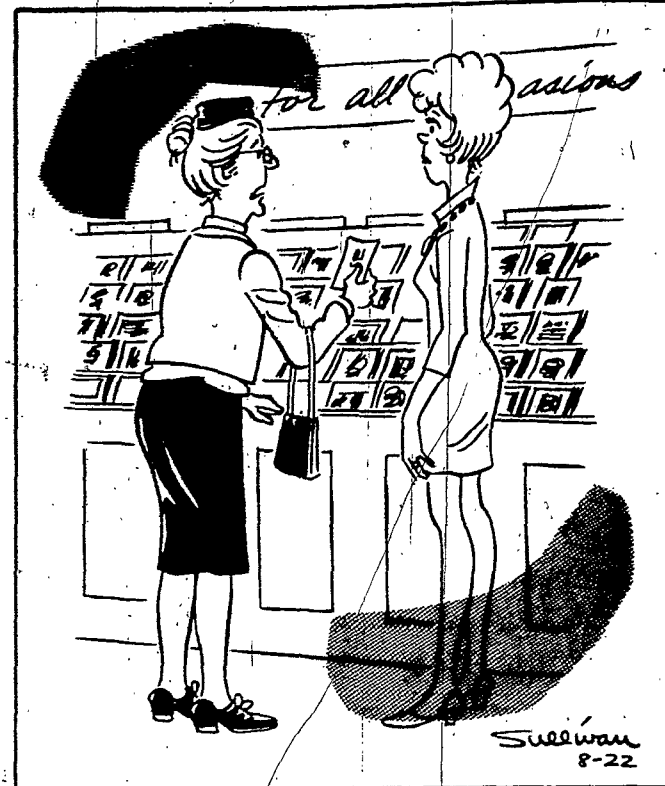
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"I'M LOOKING FOR A RELIGIOUS GET-WELL CARD FOR SOMEONE WHO ACCIDENTALLY SWALLOWED A BINGO-MARKER!"

surgeon's manual from the turn of the century — all terribly interesting from an historical point of view, but you would hardly want to perform your operations from them!

Anyone seriously interested in current thinking on this issue, as well as perspectives on the scriptures and past positions would be well advised to consult some of the publications I have mentioned or to write Dignity-National, 755 Boylston St., Rm. 514, Boston, MA, 02116 for a more complete listing of theological and pastoral resources.

Father John F. Robbins
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OB Proposal 'Stupid' Callous?

Editor:

The action of the Monroe County Health Council in voting to recommend closing of the obstetrics unit at St. Mary's Hospital was stupid, callous and totally unrepresentative of the sentiment of the majority of people in Monroe County. The fact that their shocking decision was taken in a secret ballot and that almost half the individuals who voted were themselves employees of various health care institutions which presumably had a vested interest in the result renders the decision of the Health Council suspect and meaningless.

The Monroe County Legislature, in an open vote, went on record overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution I introduced as chairman of the Social Services Committee urging that St. Mary's obstetrics unit be kept open. As the only county-wide elected body it would seem appropriate that some weight should be given to our point of view and to that of the 36,000 people who signed petitions presented to us.

The effect of the incredible action of the Monroe County Health Council, if ratified by the board of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council, would be to deny their right of choice to those many mothers who wish to give birth in a religiously-oriented hospital which also does not perform abortions. It would also close the only obstetrics unit on the west side of the county outside of Brockport.

In addition to my responsibilities as a County Legislator and chairman of its Social Services Committee I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the Genesee Region Health Planning Council which will make the final decision in this matter. Presumably, I was appointed to this board to reflect the sentiment of the Monroe County Legislature which also

provides an annual subsidy to the Council.

Therefore, I will strongly present these views at the Sept. 25 Council board meeting. I will also urge that the full board, which also includes many individuals connected with health care institutions, conduct its vote in an open ballot so that no members of the board will be afforded the luxury of keeping secret their position from an interested and concerned community.

James R. Breese,
Chairman
Social Services Committee
Monroe County Legislature

We Are All Sinners

Editor:

I agree with Father Hogan that the "wicked must be instructed" but just pointing out his sin and telling him that he is wrong is not instructing the sinner, it is condemning him.

Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin, be the first to cast a stone." I, for one, do not feel qualified to throw stones. So, let's start with some basic instruction for the sinner, instead of throwing stones at him. First of all, we are all sinners and therefore fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:21-25). When we recognize the fact and realize that without God we can do nothing then we have started on the right road. Next, we acknowledge the fact that God loves us. He is love, and He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us, so we could be righteous in His eyes. When we accept Jesus as Lord of our lives, we are cleansed by His precious blood and are born again. (John 3). We are new creatures in God's eyes and old things have passed away and behold, they are made new. (2 Cor. 5:17) God is faithful to His promise, if we are faithful to Him. Ask God for the faith you need to give Him your old life (sins and all) also He can give you a brand new one. (Rom. 10:8) Jesus came to save the sinners! Praise His name.

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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.