

Common Cause

Abortion proponents have long told the tale that the right-to-life movement is strictly a Catholic operation. We do not intend to demean others' motives but in some cases repeating that theme just might appeal to anti-Catholic elements in our society.

And it is true that at last November's U.S. Bishops meeting, right to life received a strong boost when the prelates agreed to work for passage of a human life amendment to the Constitution. Although the hierarchy long has made it known that abortion is wrong, its members perhaps were reluctant to get bodily into the fray for the very reason of feeding grist to the mills of those who would say, "There, what did I tell you." Despite that, the statement by the bishops makes it clear that they are now more openly involved in the fight for life.

The fact is, was, and will remain that the pro-life battle is by no means strictly a Catholic one. Christianity Today, an evangelical fortnightly published in Washington, D.C., recently reiterated this point. Labeling the abortion question a "Catholic issue" is "irrelevant and invalid," the magazine editorialized — "whether brought on by sincere misunderstanding or bad motivation."

The editorial correctly acknowledges that Catholics do wield considerable political power and have been in the forefront of the fight to overturn the (Supreme Court) decision through a constitutional amendment. It then points out that Mormons also oppose abortion and in states where they exercise political clout the charge has often been made that abortion is a Mormon issue.

The editorial says that "the ethical questions posed by abortion focus on the most fundamental of human rights, the right to life."

Many right to life groups in the area have scheduled marches, services and prayers to note the Jan. 22, 1973 Supreme Court decision liberalizing abortion across the land. Many of these events will be primarily Catholic, however, that does not mean that the fight against abortion is a one-sided effort. If you think that you will be playing into the hands of propagandists who want other Americans to believe just that.

Pro-life is the proper concern of every God-fearing citizen, regardless of religious background. Many of every sectarian stripe, already realize this. Now it is the job for all to join the struggle for the right to life of the unborn.

As Christianity Today wonders aloud in its editorial, in talking about some of the liberal Protestant attitudes toward abortion, "What is yet undetermined is whether this change (in attitude toward abortion) has taken place at the grassroots level or merely among professional churchmen."

Such grass roots feelings, and we assume that most people are in favor of life, must be surfaced to bring added weight to the argument that the Supreme Court made a grievous error on Jan. 22, 1973.

Agatha Christie

When the feisty Belgian sleuth, Hercule Poirot, died in Agatha Christie's last published novel, the New York Times ran a Page 1 obituary.

And word has it that in the novelist's latest work her even more redoubtable character, Miss Jane Marple, also succumbs.

Now the author herself has died between the two fictional deaths. The demise of her characters is in keeping with the Agatha Christie style of always tying up all the loose ends before the finish.

True, most of her books concern murder and mayhem but they are by no means violent. The "action" is handled genteelly and is indeed only incidental to the cerebrations of the detective, the characterizations and the settings, whether in an English countryside drawing room or the Orient Express.

Some 60 detective novels, six more of the romantic variety (written under the name Mary Westmacott), 19 volumes of short mystery stories, 14 plays and other works. Her novels sold to the tune of some 350 million copies. With nary a line of smut Dame Agatha Christie, on top of everything else, may also have showed that we are not as bad as we sometimes think we are.

Opinion

Thankful For Comment

Editor:

As president of the Catholic Central Union of America, I like to take this opportunity to thank Nancy Murphy for mentioning our journal, the Social Justice Review. The Review is the oldest magazine of its kind in America.

In recent issues, the editor, Harvey Johnson, has begun publishing Dr. Rupert Ederer's translations of the works of Bishop William E. von Ketteler, the adviser to Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII. At a time when there is a renewed emphasis on the application of the social teachings of the Church, these articles alone justify the observation of your writer that the magazine is "underpriced at \$8 a year."

So thank you again, but permit me one small note, namely, that the address is 3835 Westminster Place, not 2835 as reported. For, we have learned that the one way digit will deter the mailman from making his appointed round and the letter will be returned.

God bless you always, and all the best for the new year.

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Life Fete Set in D.C.

Editor:

Few people are aware of the National Prayer Breakfast for Life '76 which will open pro-life activities, 8:30 a.m., Shoreham Americana Hotel, in Washington, D.C. Jan. 22, commemorating the third anniversary of the Supreme Court decision allowing abortion on demand.

The sponsoring organizations are American Citizens Concerned for Life, Inc., Education Fund, For Life, Inc., Christian Action Council, Baptists for Life and Women's Task Force for Life. They extend an invitation to "celebrate what it means 'To Be Alive'" (their theme) by joining with Americans of many creeds who share a concern for unborn babies, families, people who are physically and spiritually hungry and those who are rejected by the community of man.

They ask that we unite in asking God's help in the continuing task of affirming the value of each human life. The National Prayer Breakfast for Life will bring together clergy and laity of many faiths in prayer, song and meditation. Eminent spiritual leaders and congresspeople will conduct the



"WRITE MY NAME AMONG THE ELECT OF HEAVEN, O LORD, AND ERASE IT FROM ALL THE LISTS OF JUNK MAIL."

worship service, as Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Jews unite to proclaim their shared concern for life. Participants also will bring nonperishable foods to be sent to an area of need.

Those of us who cannot attend the Prayer Breakfast for Life may join in spirit by contributing to it and the Food for Life program. The National Prayer Breakfast for Life, 76, 1629 K St., N.W., Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Jeanne D. Sweeney [Mrs.]
Area Director
American Citizens
Concerned for Life

Courier Series Commended

Editor:

On behalf of the State Council of Catholic Charities Directors I want to take this opportunity to commend the Rochester Courier-Journal for its enlightening series on "The Children Who Wait." I hope this informative series of articles will bring forth positive response from families and individuals who have been considering adoption.

The State Council of Catholic Charities Directors and the State Catholic Conference has for years supported the legislation which now makes it possible for families that adopt hard to place children receive subsidies and which also provides other help to encourage families that undertake this responsibility.

It is good to see the Catholic press reaching out to its readers to provide a better focus and information as to how Christians can provide service and help to their fellow persons. To often this kind of service by the Catholic press goes unnoticed.

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Literature Not 'Catholic'

Editor:

For quite some time now, literature in the racks of our Catholic churches have been at odds with church teaching.

Consider for example the January issue of U.S. Catholic. Two articles boldly advertised on the cover: "Church divorce laws: they don't make sense," and "Maybe Jesus doesn't want only one church," are just a few samples of "Catholic" literature attacking the Catholic Church. Similar articles in other "Catholic" publications convey this same anti-Catholic attitude.

Too often articles by fallen-away Catholics, ex-priests and nuns, as well as sexual perverts occupy too great a portion of literature allegedly Catholic.

It's not so much a question of whether or not these people have anything to say. It's more a question of why they have so much to say in "Catholic" magazines, books and newspapers.

Catholic editors and publishers should be held accountable for articles that attack official church doctrine. They should also be required to publicize official church doctrine so more Catholics know what it is. It should be self-evident that the Catholic church is no place for anti-Catholic literature.

Hope our pastors, bishops and other members of the clergy recognize this fact and do something to correct this situation.

Robert Bart
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Plan Family Naturally

Editor:

I wish to address Father Louis Hohman and the majority of Catholics who think married people can decide only between contraceptives and sterilization.

Calendar "rhythm" as we know it, is passe, a foolish means to space children on past calendar calculations.

The Family Life Office has informational meetings on a regular basis for married or engaged couples at which qualified couples using Natural Family Planning can teach, answer questions, and provide reliable information on planning or postponing pregnancies using natural means. We teach an awareness of the possible fertile and infertile days in a woman's cycle. Finally, a marriage can be enriched through the joint effort of better communication resulting from the use of this Natural Family Planning method. It's safe, reliable, effective, easy to understand and offers peace of mind.

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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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