

Editorial

**Abortion Plank
Hopeful . . . BUT**

Catholics in general and pro-lifers in particular did not do very well at the hands of the two major parties as they held their quadrennial national get-togethers.

Obviously the major difference between the Democrats and Republicans came with their platform positions on abortion. The Democrats departed from their otherwise bland platform to injure pro-lifers of all stripes by supporting the Supreme Court pro-abortion decisions.

The Republican party plank "supports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children." On the surface this almost appears cause for jubilation. Not quite so.

While platforms can give an idea of the candidate's stand on major issues they don't always work that way and the GOP abortion plank is a perfect example. Candidates are in no way bound by platform rhetoric and President Ford, the Republican nominee, already has made his position on abortion plain. He says he is personally opposed to abortion but does not think overturning the Supreme Court decision is necessary.

He would instead support an amendment returning the problem to the states for their individual laws. It is a kind of washing the hands. And, for what it is worth, it is difficult, or maybe even foolhardy, to forget that Mrs. Ford is an outright proponent of abortion on demand.

The Democratic nominee, Jimmy Carter, takes the "I oppose abortion, but" stance. Meanwhile, his platform takes the opposite view. Predictably, Carter has begun efforts to take the sting out of the pro-abortion plank by saying his party should not "obstruct" a change in the Constitution to bar abortion. Perhaps Archbishop Joseph Bernardin best summed up reaction to that new ploy by noting that Carter's stand on abortion is inconsistent and "deeply disturbing."

So while it is encouraging that a major party, Republican, is on record as supporting the constitutional amendment, such hope is diluted by the fact that their standard-bearer, an incumbent president, has shown no proclivity to act in that direction.

Last week we listed briefly some of the things a spokesman for the U.S. Bishops proposed to the Republican platform committee at their request.

Bishop James Malone asked for a "comprehensive national health insurance." The platform: No, but backs something called "catastrophic illness protection."

Bishop Malone asked for guaranteed income. Platform: No.

Bishop Malone asked for strong handgun control. The platform opposes federal registration of handguns.

Bishop Malone asked for a "right to eat" plank. The platform asks tightened eligibility for food stamps.

Bishop Malone asked for job creation programs to combat unemployment. The platform says leave job programs to the private sector.

Bishop Malone asked denunciation of the arms race. The platform proposes bigger Army and Navy, more submarines and support for the B1 bomber.

There are other points that may be compared but this by and large shows a canyon between Bishop Malone's views and those of the platform on both issues. As we said, however, a political platform is only a vague guideline for candidates.

So pro-lifers are faced with ambiguous stands by frik and frak candidates, although the Republican platform, if it have any weight, offers the best hope yet for the overturning of the Supreme Court pro-abortion decisions.

Both platforms support the Equal Rights Amendment.

Generally, the Democratic platform is more in tune with the U.S. Bishops' positions — the abortion difference constituting an unbridgeable gap. The Republican platform is at odds with Catholic views as expressed by Bishop Malone.

Conversely, where there may be cause for rejoicing that platforms do not really mean all that much, there may be further cause for despair on that same score in regard to the GOP anti-abortion plank.

Opinion

**Mission Aid
Appreciated**

Editor:

To the Mission-Minded People of the Diocese of Rochester:

The Sisters of Mercy would like to express to your their heartfelt thanks for the generous gift to our Santiago, Chile Mission from the Diocesan Missions Appeal.

This generosity is a genuine sign of the faith and support that the people of the Diocese of Rochester extend to our Chilean brethren.

We thank you and ask an abundance of the Lord's blessing on each of you.

Sister Mary Judith
Superior General
Sisters of Mercy

**Nice Show,
Charlie**

Editor:

In answer to an editorial appearing in the CJ 7/28/76 stating they agreed with Father Henry Fehren who wrote there is no good "reason" for missing Mass and that Christ is what the Mass is all about, I would like to say I do not advocate anyone missing Mass, however, when the liturgy gets in the way of Christ, as it so often does today, one wonders if they are attending a WORSHIP service or a SHOW. Seminars seem to be mass-producing toothy-smiling priests who greet the congregation with a "good morning, afternoon, or evening" as the case may be, and then immediately follow this greeting with the greeting of "The Lord be with You." They do not seem to be aware of the double greeting and that TWO greetings are a bit redundant. At the end of Mass, instead of departing from the congregation with the beautiful words, "The Mass is ended, go in peace," they say, "Have a good morning, afternoon or evening now," as the case may be, or some other mundane farewell, again separating the Mass and creating an atmosphere of show.

Too many celebrants have become "masters of ceremony," or "commentators," or worse, yet, "showmen," rather than leaders in the worship of the eternal Lord in His awesome presence. Too many celebrants appear to be preaching themselves, and not Christ crucified, in the spirit of St. Paul. Too many celebrants walk up and down the church aisle with microphones slung around their

necks, piercing the air with small talk, endless narrations, explanations, singing (too loud), using overhead projectors or some other mechanical device, eliciting the applause of the audience and are thrown into a state of utter panic if there is silence for a moment. They furtively seem to be trying to establish that "famous community" which we used to hear so much about. Honestly now, can you picture Christ acting like this when He worshiped His father in the Temple?

An eloquent example of how the Mass has disintegrated into a show and was observed even by a child is taken from Time magazine, 5/24/76 issue. "Bishop Charles Buswell, of Pueblo, Colo., a feisty innovator who parish-hops his diocese on Sundays, introduced himself to a 5-year-old girl at a recent Mass as "Charles." When he came down the church aisle at the end of Mass, the little girl shouted, "Nice SHOW Charlie!"

Father Shamon (CJ 7/21/76) quoted Rollo May as saying, "our world is a schizoid one." He, Father Shamon, went on to explain "that is, we tend to separate what belongs together. We drive a wedge between community and person; common good and individual good; public prayer and private prayer; action and contemplation, etc." How true!

To be able to create an atmosphere of divine worship where heart, mind and soul can be uplifted and edified, one needs a holy, sensitive, selfless, and Christ-like priest, like a breath of fresh air that refreshes the soul. There are still some left, thank God, and it is worth the time and effort to find them. I agree with Father Fehren when he says if we want entertainment we can always attend the Bolshoi Ballet. God forbid that we attend Mass to be entertained.

Anne B. Christoff
154 Crittenden Way, #3
Rochester, N.Y. 14623

**Sees Challenge
To Lawyers**

Editor:

Last year the Holy Father condemned as "false teachers those who are indulgent toward divorce." This week he spoke on the "lasting and exclusive" nature of marriage. These statements would seem to challenge the canon lawyers' position as reported in the CJ editorial "Another Hunger" that most Catholics in a second marriage are not excommunicated.

Louis J. Pasqua
133 Exchange St.
Geneva, N.Y. 14456



WE FINALLY HIT ON A TERRIFIC WAY TO LET PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THE PARISH SPAGHETTI DINNER!

**'Greeley Needs
More Charity'**

Editor:

I should like to comment on Father Greeley's column in your Journal of Aug. 4, 1976, in regards to the Eucharistic Congress.

While I suppose we all need the needling of some newspapermen, including Father Greeley, to alert us to many of our sins of commission and of omission of members of the faith, I would hope that he could employ some sense of charity rather than the acrimony he so fluently uses. To refer to the Eucharistic Congress as a "tasteless vulgar display of triumphalism" is a bit too much.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the Eucharistic Congress. I assume Father Greeley did. However, I did watch the closing ceremonies on TV of which the American people could well be proud. I am sure most "pilgrims" went to Philadelphia in a spirit of love and adoration to our triumphant king. For Father Greeley to label the persons attending this conference as exercising "phony Piety" is vulgarity in generalization, so much a part of Father Greeley's tools. Where he gets omniscience as to what all the people think is a mystery.

In rereading his article, it seems that he wrote the article before the Congress, since he refers to having "to endure it this summer." He evidently judged it adversely before he attended it. Is honoring our Eucharistic Lord enduring as if suffering?

Perhaps it would benefit Father Greeley and all his readers if he would take a leave of absence "from the office" and get into a parish and make it all so perfect for the people there and thus give us all a model of his expertise in action.

We do need the Greeleys, but please Father, a bit more kindness in expressing your disagreements.

Father Robert E. Brennan
St. Christopher's Rectory
103 Castle Creek Road
Binghamton, N.Y.

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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.

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Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
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Episcopal Advisor

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