



Editorial

Joke's on Him

Without getting into the political ramifications of the whole situation, the Earl Butz case points up vividly the danger of one of America's social foibles — telling jokes at the expense of others.

We have no first-hand knowledge of Mr. Butz but are willing to accept President Ford's appraisal that he is a decent man. We feel this may hold despite the fact that he apparently is also a silly man who tells bathroom stereotype jokes about others. That he thinks jokes about blacks, the Pope, and Italians are acceptable.

We think it is just and fair that a man with such lip disservice to his fellows no longer work in government, particularly at the high level of the United States cabinet.

But we stress that Mr. Butz is not alone in this insensitive and inane preoccupation with ethnic joke-making. In this case, the joke ended up precisely where it should have — on the perpetrator.

But before the rest of us rise to dizzy heights of self-righteous indignation let us ask ourselves if we are in the position to cast stones.

Liberty and Justice

In what may turn out to be one of the most controversial meetings of the American Church ever, some 1,200 delegates from across the nation will meet at Detroit later this month to face contemporary church issues. The conference of laity, priests, Religious and bishops will climax the U.S. Bishops' Liberty and Justice for All bicentennial program.

Working papers for A Call to Action, the conference theme, were drawn up following hearings across the country, parish discussions which, according to the National Catholic Office for Information, produced seven volumes of testimony incorporating testimony from 800,000 responses from parishes, and reports, letters and independent submissions. This week this newspaper concludes a series synthesizing the recommendations made in the working papers.

These recommendations are by no means final. They will be analyzed, discussed and voted upon in Detroit then submitted to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) for its consideration next spring.

The papers cover the whole range of issues facing the American Church today, from family life to morality in U.S. foreign policy. Indeed the range is so broad that it is difficult to believe that any three-day conference can do justice to the subjects. On the other hand there is value in merely naming the issues that should concern American Catholics and in airing them before what some are calling the "first national assembly" of the U.S. the Catholic Church.

We hope that diocesans have taken advantage of the opportunity to see just what will be discussed at the conference and offer their own suggestions, criticism and ideas so that Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and other members of the Rochester delegation will be able to represent truly a diocesan consensus in Detroit.

Opinion

Vote Helped Ecumenism

Editor:

The Roman Catholic Women's Ordination Conference presence at the Episcopal General Convention in Minneapolis-St. Paul last month was the expression of our joyful and hopeful desire to offer sisterly support to all those Episcopalian women who had been unceasingly working and praying to hasten the day when their Church would allow the ordination of women to the priesthood. It was indeed a jubilant moment for us when the vote came—hope fulfilled and shared among ecumenical sisters.

Our presence at the convention was intended to show concern and agreement, concern regarding the issue, agreement with our Episcopalian sisters. We issued several public statements, helped collect and display signatures of those supporting the ordination of women, and we prayed — praying and fasting we felt was the most we could do. United in a sense of justice and hope we participated in our Episcopalian sisters' aspirations and desires. Their joy when the vote came was ours.

The priesthood in both the Episcopal Church and in our Church share roots in the Catholic tradition. Our sacramental theology in general and our concept of ministry have many similarities with those of the Episcopal Church. Because of this we see the Episcopal move as a step toward our own goal: the ordination of women in the Roman Catholic Church within the context of a renewed ministry.

It is our purpose to serve the Church, to help build the Church, to help in the renewal of our Church, this Church of ours which we love passionately. May the strengthening of ecumenical ties which our support of the ordination of women at the Episcopal Convention furthered hasten the day when we will all be one, when all distinctions will cease and we will be able to unite in proclaiming to the world that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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Right Track On Pro-Life

Editor:

We are thoroughly impressed with the strong Pro-Life Pastoral Plan presented by Bishop Hogan in the Sept. 29, Courier Journal. The three directives mentioned cannot fail to help turn the tide in favor of the sanctity of life issue. It is a most timely remedy for the ills that plague the most innocent among us.

Spreading the "good news" as to the miracle of life from the moment of conception is indeed vital. Thanks to science we are able to see the miraculous creation of a new human being and his continual development by simply flicking on a projector. What better way can there be to show our children their Creator at work? They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but these pictures would leave them with a mindful that could never be put into words.

With Natural Family Planning being stressed and with the aid of Birthright the women's needs would be met. This would insure that these young girls would not be referred to Planned Parenthood or some other clinic where abortion is the only solution. For those who already have had an abortion it must be emphasized that only in

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the Sacrament of Penance are we literally "born again" and set free from all guilt. It is the soul that experiences happiness or sadness, not the body.

On the political side, as Bishop Hogan mentioned, there must be protection for the unborn. Realistically speaking only those representatives who will support an amendment to protect the unborn child should be supported. This is a matter of utmost importance. From the moment of conception a new individual is existent, endowed with the right to life and destined to eternal life. To negate this right is to sever all ties with the Laws of the universe in turn, leaving us in utter chaos.

We sincerely hope all Catholics will stand with our Bishop, and with God's grace these programs will be used as the powerful instrument that truly are. On Nov. 4 will come the first stand as the Pro-Life candidates look for our votes. Let us all bear in mind that with the pull of a lever hangs a fragile, defenseless human being. That is the cold, hard facts. So choose wisely and choose life.

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Placement Questioned

Editor:

Please re-examine your priorities on selection and placement of news stories. It is hard to understand why your Respect Life issue of Sept. 29 has the story about Senator Buckley's and Daniel Moynihan views on abortion buried at the bottom of Page 7. Sen. James Buckley is the foremost proponent of a Human Life Amendment, while his opponent states that he would not support an amendment to protect life and would vote in favor of using taxpayer monies to finance abortion.

Sen. Buckley also recently introduced an amendment to the Health Education and Welfare bill that would have meant hundreds of dollars in tax savings for parents sending their children to parochial or private schools or colleges. Yet there has not been a mention of this in the Courier-Journal.

There seems to be more and more of a trend to cover other-than-Catholic news stories in the Courier. Most of these we have already read about in the secular daily papers. The particular season for reading a Catholic paper is to read news of particular concern to Catholics.

Marie Jesmer  
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Editor's Note: Reader Jesmer did not identify the "other-than-Catholic" news she is questioning. The Buckley-Moynihan story she mentions had already appeared in the dailies and we recognizing that it is of special interest to our readers, nevertheless ran it again.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.  
ANTHONY J. COSTELLO  
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