

Editorial

'No' to Capital Punishment

The arguments concerning capital punishment can become mind-boggling. Arguments supporting either side are easy to come by, and despite prolonged disputation no one seems to be able to prove the deterrent question one way or another.

Emotions also enter into the argumentation. Some see the death penalty as a simple matter of justice, the "eye for an eye" thesis. Others see capital punishment as a barbaric act.

We would like to avoid all the rather well-known arguments, pro or con. We feel that statistics can be used to support either view. And we disdain picking on individual cases to transform them into generalities.

Capital punishment should be viewed in the context of our present-day world. A world, which we submit, accepts killing too easily. It is used as a tool by dictators, and as a solution by society for seemingly uncontrollable problems.

What the world needs now is not more killing. We have abortion on a grand scale, we have genocide, we have wars and near-wars, and we have senseless slayings by individuals. To countenance yet another form of sanctioned taking of lives simply is not acceptable.

Any time we have the opportunity to stand up and say, "No. Enough. No more killing," we must make the most of it.

The question of the reinstatement of the death penalty and the discussion of it as part of the diocese's Call to Action program offers all of us just such a chance.

Let us make the most of it. We say no to abortion. We say no to war. We say no to capital punishment.

Recess . . . Ugh!

We realize that the Regents proposal for a lengthy recess of five weeks at Christmas time comes in answer to the dire need for energy and fuel conservation.

However, and that's a strong however, it leaves us with a strong negative feeling on several counts.

We are sure that thousands of mothers across the state will not cherish the thought of trying to entertain their otherwise beloved offspring during the house-bound season for a period of five weeks. When the proposal was announced, one could almost hear the collective "ugh" sounded by the moms.

We also have a hunch that the pupils' continuum, if we may be permitted an academic word, will be hopelessly shattered by the long hiatus. Most pupils are just picking up momentum from their September takeoff when it would be "Goodbye, Dolly Gray" all over again.

And, perhaps most important, it will play havoc with that great institution — the family vacation. How many breadwinners will be able to coincide their annual R and R with their youngsters?

Fast Action

Just two weeks ago in our March 2 issue, we editorialized that the American Catholic Church was long overdue in naming a black bishop to head a diocese. We pointed that there were four auxiliaries in the United States, but not one ordinary (the bishop who heads a diocese).

We asked: "... how long can the Catholic Church hold out?"

Well, sir, in one week's time Pope Paul named one of those auxiliaries, Bishop Joseph L. Howze, to be ordinary of the newly-created diocese of Biloxi, Miss.

How's that for results?

Opinion

Parish's Stand Praised

Editor:

We are proud of the letter sent on our behalf by the St. Charles Parish Council. It appeared in the Feb. 23, 1977 Courier-Journal.

Bishop Hogan's openness about the ordination of women is a further reflection of his awareness that one of life's constants is change. This awareness goes beyond this one topic as well it should.

After being in many other dioceses we can say with confidence that we are fortunate to be in St. Charles parish and in the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y.

Alex and Cece Bodnar
153 Bauerdale Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14616

Different View of Issue

Editor:

The recent controversy surrounding the ordination of women, I feel, was a very revealing commentary on the state of the church today, aside from the issue itself.

First of all, it showed that very few of us really understand the nature of authority in the church. Both the Pope and our bishop were well within their rights when they spoke on this issue. In fact, it reminded me of the many fierce debates that were carried on in the early church between Peter and Paul over a whole range of issues. Neither man's position always prevailed. In fact, Paul was primarily responsible for opening up Christianity to the Gentile world over some of Peter's reservations. On this issue, the Pope did not speak "ex cathedra" and therefore, because he did not, invited other theological opinions on the matter.

Finally, I feel that the crisis facing the contemporary church is not one of priesthood but of faithfulness to the challenge that Jesus presents to us in the gospel. We will be judged, ultimately, by our commitment to a peace and justice that is grounded in true love and sincere compassion. Jesus exhorted us to love God and show that love in the world in which we live. Our world is

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in trouble. All our technology and scientific knowledge and research capabilities have not yet given birth to a new world. People are not fed, clothed, sheltered, or visited when in prison or sick; and Jesus himself told us that these would be the signs by which his followers would be recognized.

John Erb
Office of Human Development
750 W. Main St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14611

Restoration Help Needed

Editor:

The Rochester Diocesan Committee on Art and Architecture has been asked to assist in outfitting an old Catholic church in mid-19th Century style. Would any of our pastors or convents have in their attics or basements one or more of the items mentioned below, in pre-1900 style.

One hanging sanctuary lamp, small or medium size. One small baptismal, cast metal. Ornamental holy water fonts (two), in cast metal, floor-standing or wall-hanging. One set of high-Mass brass candlesticks. One set of low-Mass brass candlesticks. Plaster statues, about five feet tall, of Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Joseph.

Might there be an old wooden Gothic altar, with a high back and altar gradines. A large side altar might be just right as the main altar in a small church.

Father Robert F. McNamara
Chairman, Diocesan Committee on Art and Architecture

Column Disputed

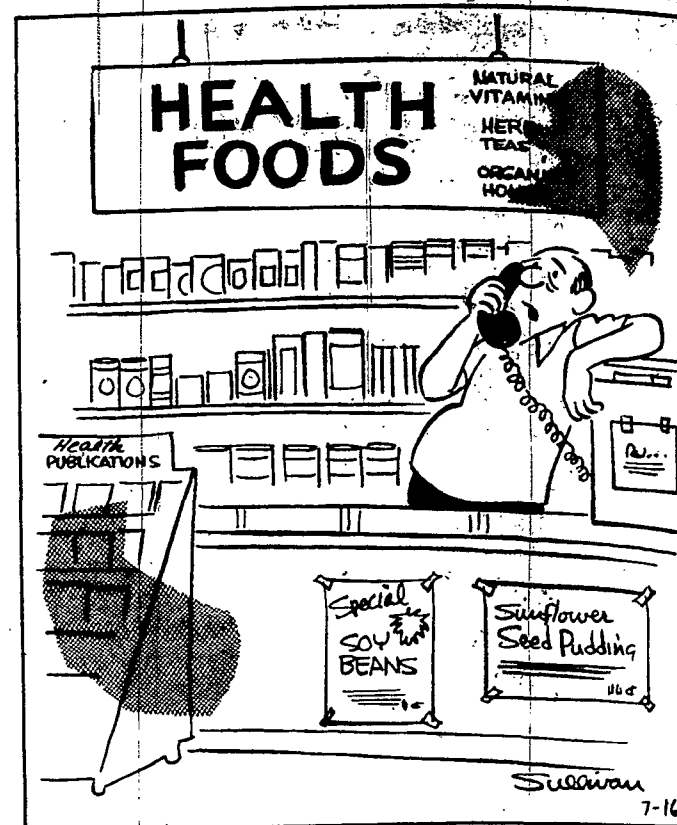
Editor:

In reply to the Declaration on Capital Punishment issued by Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) in the Courier-Journal on Feb. 9, Father Paul Cuddy says, "Bunkum."

After reading his reference to the "priorities" of many religious groups that purport to promote the Kingdom of God (your brothers and sisters in Christ, Father Cuddy?) — we wish to censure his insensitive lack of the spirit of ecumenism with a resounding "ARCHIE BUNKUM."

His graphic illustration of "retributive justice" (as compared to naked vengeance) in the story of Mayor Lynch of Galway, Ireland, who made the decision to "kiss and kill" his own son in order to implement the sentence of death by hanging (as dictated by Irish law) is so alien to the response of Jesus to the Law of Moses regarding an "eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" when He tells his disciples to "love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. In that way, you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:43-44).

The "retributive justice" adhered to by Father Cuddy and other confused believers, which preaches capital punishment as a deterrent to capital crimes, is so clearly disqualified in



"GOSH, FATHER, I'D LOVE TO HELP OUT ON THOSE PARISH PROJECTS, BUT I'VE REALLY BEEN FEELING LOUSY LATELY!"

the era, following the death sentence of one Jesus of Nazareth for "perverting the Jewish law."

But the main point of Father Cuddy's article is his ambiguous stand on the right-to-life concept wherein he A. condones the taking of life (euthanasia) through the due process of capital punishment, and B. deplors the killing of unborn babies (euthanasia) through the "legal" process of abortion.

Frankly, we are terribly troubled by the fact that Father Cuddy (and other clergy) can in conscience advocate the cause of capital punishment.

As Christian laymen attempting to lead the Christian life in grace, prayerfully directed by true conscience formation, we make the following stand:

We are against any form of euthanasia and stand for the "right to life" in every aspect of an individual's existence; B. in support of the Christian community responsibility to care for those born of unwanted pregnancies.

For the record our eighth child is God's gift to us by adoption.

Franklin H. Pierce
Mary C. Pierce
203 Ledgewood Drive
Rochester, N.Y. 14615

Bravo! for The Crew

Editor:

I really enjoyed your article, "The Theater's Unsung Heros," in RapAround on March 2. It brought back a lot of memories for me, as I was fortunate to be on the backstage crew for the Mercy-McQuaid plays in 1971, 1972, and senior year, 1973. The hard work put in by the stage crew for these plays really deserves as much commendation as any of the portrayals you see out front by the many talented actors and actresses of these two schools.

The best script in the world is only as good as its scenery and props and the people who make and move them. I know the Mercy girls put in long hard hours, especially on Saturdays when everyone else is still asleep. I still remember endlessly painting bricks

and stretching canvas under Sister Estelle's watchful direction. And if being an actor or actress and making people believe what they see gives one a sense of accomplishment, then a crew member feels the same lump in her throat when the curtain finally comes down on the last performance and she knows her hard work on the sets, lighting, props, makeup and costumes made the whole thing come alive.

I know when I go to see these shows, which are always first class entertainment, I applaud for the crew as much as for the cast. Bravo!

Janet Dangler
229 Doncaster Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14604

Pray for More Male Priests

Editor:

I want to express my feelings about women being appointed to priesthood. I do not approve of it. We have good and dedicated priests now — why change after so many years?

If there is a great shortage of priests, it would be good for all of us to have a prayer crusade for vocations. I'm sure God would listen and grant us the grace of a good result.

Our Holy Father inspired by the Holy Spirit is our true leader. When I read about the harassment and ridicule about the Holy Father, I often wonder if they realize what a heavy burden they put upon his frail shoulders.

Would it not be better to stand behind the vicar of Christ united in loyalty in a humble way and practical desire to build up rather than tear down?

Mrs. Mary Weger
593 Post Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14614

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