

Editorial

**Note to Both Sides
Of Canal Issue**

Father J. Bryan Hehir, associate secretary of the Office of International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Catholic Conference, supports a new Panama Canal treaty. And while telling the recent national conference of Catholic Charities delegates his reasons, he made an interesting ancillary point

Recognizing that opinion on the issue, even among Catholics, is divided, Father Hehir urged wide debate within the Catholic community on the treaty. Much discussion, he said, will help to educate and form public opinion

We agree, as long as the discussion is rational, in good taste, and respectful of the opinions of others. We are on record in favor of the treaty for a number of reasons enumerated in past issues. In our view the strongest argument expressed by those opposed to the agreement is that it may open the door to Russian or Cuban exploitation of the canal — and this is not a groundless fear as anyone who is aware of the world in which we live would agree

Among our chief reasons for supporting a new treaty is that the age of colonialism is past whether the fact is accepted or not and the canal issue presents the United States with a fine opportunity to take world leadership in recognizing the rightful aspirations of smaller nations.

And although debate is understandable, leaders of the two major American political parties, top Pentagon officials, present and past national administrations all agree that a new canal treaty is not threatening to this country.

In addition, we have the moral leadership of Pope John and Pope Paul who have stressed the need for larger and more powerful nations to respect the sovereignty of weaker countries. Then, too, the U.S. bishops have made it clear that they see the new treaty as "a moral imperative." Their position, it should be stressed, is not just academic moralizing. Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath of Panama has long urged a new treaty.

But to return to Father Hehir's corollary. Let us all educate ourselves on this issue so that we will not be mouthing platitudes or chauvinistic slogans. Then let us engage in wide and open discussion of the advantages and drawbacks of a new treaty

These are days of great contention within the Church, when sides are constantly lining up on this or that side of any number of issues. And while debate over the Panama treaty, if conducted properly will be healthy for all concerned, we must not let a canal divide us further.

Who Has Failed?

"I go to Mass every morning, support my church but I'm sick of hearing about the poor people."

Thus ends a letter from an anonymous person, labeling himself "An angry Catholic." This writer asked that we "please print" his letter but it is the policy of the Courier-Journal not to print unsigned letters.

Nevertheless that postscript mentioned above reveals a sad but obvious fact — there are many "Catholics" who are not "Christians" or at least they have failed to see the connection between their church and Jesus Christ.

Opinion

**Conflict
Of Morals**

Editor:

When speaking of abortion as a "right", proponents attempt to obfuscate the discussion with "pluralism of thought" or "morality clouds the issue". Flapdoodle!

By its nature, Truth can only be objectively singular (never subjectively pluralistic), and morality is the issue.

The essential sinfulness of abortion lies in the homicidal intent to kill innocent life. Argument as to when life begins has no working value as to the morality of abortion. From the moment of conception each fetus is a human being. Thus, at any time, abortion is a willing homicidal intention and gravely offensive to God and nature.

Sister Elizabeth Candon, a Mercy nun and Secretary of Vermont's Department of Human Services has publicly supported state funding of abortion. To counteract any scandal she created, her own bishop, Bishop John Marshall, found it necessary to publicly admonish her after she ignored a personal letter warning that this could "place her outside the sacramental life of the Catholic Church." He stated, "You maintain that abortion is immoral and that you personally oppose abortion. If such be the case, how can you and so many other politicians make that statement and then act contrary to your personal convictions?" (National Catholic Register — Sept. 11).

Sister Marlene Vigna, also a Mercy nun and National Association of Women Religious delegate for this area's Diocesan Sisters Council, states that the NAWR backs the Equal Rights Amendment (Courier-Journal, Sept. 21). Curiously, at their recent convention in Louisiana the NAWR backed Sister Candon's action causing the Archbishop of New Orleans, Philip Hanna, to declare, "Absolutely deplorable" and "contrary to Catholic doctrine" (NCR Sept. 11).

Obviously for members of the NAWR there is "no conflict in being against abortion and for ERA" as Sister Vigna expounded since, as a group they support both!

One can't help but wonder if NAWR delegates reflect the thinking of the religious they represent in their various orders and councils when it comes to

rights for everyone but the speechless unborn.

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**Article
Questioned**

Editor:

After reading the article Education for Justice (Sept. 21), I would like to know why was there no mention of Catholic encyclicals or social documents such as Rerum Novarum and the Function of the State in the Modern World? I thought, after speaking with the pastoral office last month, that this course was to be based entirely on the traditional positions of the Church, the teaching of the Fathers and Doctors, and recent documents issued by Pope Paul

In addition, what could the NCEA representative from Chicago possibly mean by his statement that the Gospel is a social document? The Gospel is the word of God, and His Kingdom is that of the spirit, not of economics. I support social action, not as a goal but as a means to earn salvation.

Joan Mueller
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(Editor's Note: Brother Edward van Merriënboer, OP, was the keynote speaker. The Courier-Journal reported: "In his speech, Brother outlined three main points: the gospel of Jesus Christ is a social gospel, Catholic education has a unique role in bringing and implementing the justice of the gospel, and educators have to be sensitive to the problems of the people they deal with."

**ERA
Questioned**

Editor:

Sister Marlene J. Vigna's lengthy attempt to separate the Equal Rights Amendment from the well-known policies of the feminist movement favoring such things as abortion and homosexuality is very interesting when compared with an article in the Sept. 26 Time: "Women's Movement Under Siege."

A report on a recent meeting of the National Women's Political Caucus in California definitely linked concern for the passage of ERA and concern about attacks on "reproductive freedom" as present troubles of the women's movement. Gloria Steinem is quoted: "I have great faith in women and in some men who understand that this is a revolution."

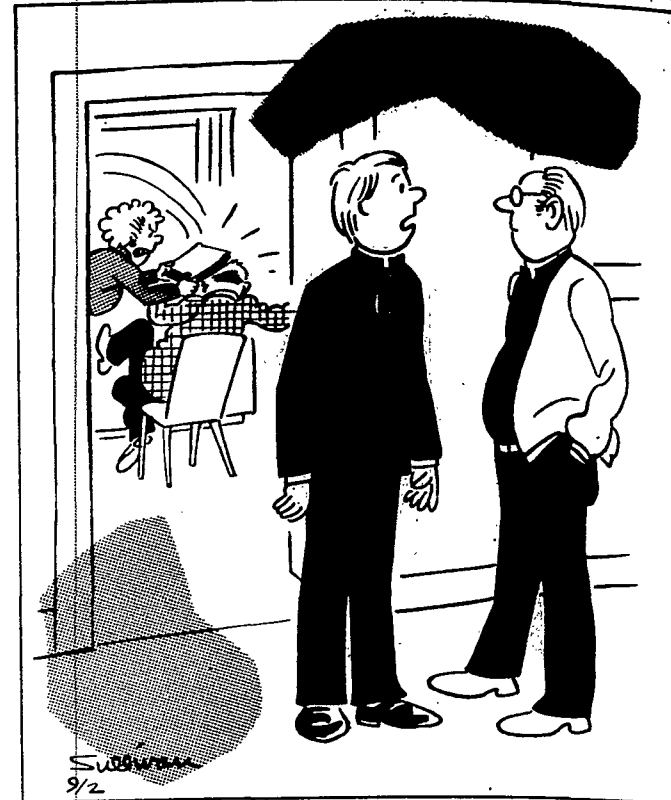
To search ERA wordings as if one were a lawyer is to miss the point. It would be much wiser to search Gertrude Newberry's letter in the Sept. 14 Courier-Journal that warns that some in this world use methods and words that seem so agreeable at the outset — until, with our help, they have gained control. We must not be naive.

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**Treaty
Plea**

Editor:

We have written Senators Javits and Moynihan as follows:



"OKAY, I GOT THEM TO BE OPEN WITH ONE ANOTHER! NOW WHAT?"

"We urge you to support ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty.

"We believe that the position of Ronald Reagan and the other Birch-types is the kind of selfish and extreme nationalism which is dividing the world today.

"We, as the richest and most powerful nation in the world, should be the leaders in breaking down the barriers between nations which are the basic reasons for most of the hunger, poverty, misery and violence in our world, and which seem to be on an ever increasing scale. The treaty with Panama could be a small contribution to this cause"

Unfortunately this treaty has become a controversial issue; we are sure your Senators would like to know how you feel about it.

ADOLPHE AND LOE
d'Audiffret
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**Christian
Education
Important**

Editor:

The need for Christian education is more compelling today than ever before. Catholic schools fill a vital function for our community. Aquinas is one of nine high schools in the Diocese that meet to provide an educated Christian laity to serve as leaven in a world redeemed by Christ, yet in many cases grown far from Him.

Aquinas is Christian — "Teach Me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge" is the motto of the Basilian Fathers who conduct Aquinas. Every subject and project at Aquinas is geared to this motto which keynotes a preparation for a Christian life in the community.

Aquinas is a challenge — since 1925 the present Aquinas building has accomplished well the job of developing the "whole man". Our countless graduates are active members of all the leading professions and occupations in the city and elsewhere. Here at Aquinas we seek to develop a well-rounded academic, spiritual and physical education.

Aquinas is people — people working in developing God given talents. Each faculty

member is personally interested in each student sitting before him in the classroom. Here you are an individual, not one of the masses.

Aquinas is sports — here the athlete learns to be a true Christian developing Christian attitudes toward the game and the treatment of fellow contestants. Aquinas offers all the leading sports on a varsity and JV level. Many dedicated hours are spent by the various coaches teaching the rudiments of all sports

We urge your many readers to support Catholic education in the community by realizing its importance for their own children and by praying often for its success.

William F. McCarthy
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**'Fitzpatricks'
Just Like Home**

Editor:

Thank God for The Fitzpatricks — 8 p.m. Tuesdays on CBS.

Life at our house resembles some of their episodes so far. It is good for us to find support in this day and age.

I hope the program will be supported, too, even though it is opposite Happy Days and Fonzie.

In the first episode, son drops cassock in mud on way home from serving Mass; and last night, mother (very pregnant) and teenage daughter discuss how it feels to be pregnant. Mother states that she gets so busy sometimes she forgets she's pregnant and then realizes that a whole separate person exists inside her.

As a mother of six, ages 17 years to 9 months, sometimes you can feel like an "Island" and any support is welcomed. The ideals we have at our house are not very welcome in our world any more, so again I say "Bravo" for the Fitzpatricks.

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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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