

Editorials

Yes to Life

It is almost as if Pope Paul in his moving message of peace at the beginning of this year had the American situation in mind when he embraced the ideas of peace and life in one comforting thought.

"The mother's womb and the child's cradle are the first barriers that not only protect peace as well as life but also build peace. The one who chooses peace in opposition to war and to violence automatically chooses life and chooses humanity in its profound essential demands."

These gentle papal words should be heeded by all of those who see the healing of society's wounds as imperative if humankind is to progress toward a better world.

The gentility of the words and of the thought are in striking contrast to the harsh rhetoric concerning present-day issues, particularly the tragedy of abortion. But though the Pope is not caustic he is, as always, firm in his convictions. Peace is correct. It is an affirmation of Christ. "Yes" to peace, this good Pope has been telling us for many years.

And abortion is wrong. It is a violent approach to society's problems. It is death's pawn and war's blood relative. The Pope has been adamant in teaching that abortion is not acceptable.

This unswerving defense of life should come as support to those ready to mark the anniversary of that national day of infamy, Jan. 22, 1973 when the United States sanctioned liberalized abortion.

The battle has been long; the losses many. Yet it will continue as long as abortion is the law of the land for there are those among us who cannot and will not look the other way in regard to slaughter of the innocents.

Yes to peace. And life. No to violence. And abortion.

For the Children

The Pope imparted other pertinent and important knowledge and direction in his magnificent message of peace. He thought of the children and he asked that "through some kind and thoughtful intermediary may our message reach them."

We have printed the entire message on Page 3, the first half last week and the second half with this edition.

The message that the Pope so fervently wants to reach youngsters is that "the peace of Christ does not weaken people, does not make them timid and victims of others' arrogance, but rather renders them capable of struggling for justice and of settling very many questions with the generosity, indeed the genius, of love."

He cautions children not to quarrel - "It is a harmful vanity to want to appear stronger than your brothers and sisters and friends by quarreling, fighting and giving way to anger and revenge. Do not hate anybody."

And why does the Pope want so badly to reach the children? It is because, he says to them, "When you grow up you must make a change in the way today's world thinks and acts, a world in which everybody is always ready to be different, to separate himself, or herself from others and to fight them. Are we not all brothers and sisters? Are we not all members of the same human family? And are not all nations obliged to get on well together and to create peace?"

He quotes Jesus:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another."

We, too, hope the children read this Pope's message. And the grownups also.

Opinion

Reporter, Story Draw Plaudits

Editor:

On behalf of our administrator, Sister Martha Gersbach, the Burn Team and hundreds of others in our twin tier communities who were and continue to be involved in the Specialized Burn Care Area of St. Joseph's Hospital, thank you.

Your recent coverage of the dedication of the unit in words and pictures by Martin Toombs fully captured the significance of the highlight of our Respect Life Week observance.

Your generosity in allowing the space coupled with the professional approach of Marty pleases us all.

As one who works with the press and other media, may I add that Marty has been an asset to your paper since his arrival on the scene as the Southern Tier representative of the Courier. We appreciate him and your increased interest in our area people, projects and pride.

Stanley J. Douglas
director
Community Relations
St. Joseph's Hospital

Chesterton Series

Editor:

I have two presentations relating to the great British writer and apologist G.K. Chesterton, either of which I would be happy to give as part of a parish educational program. The presentations are:

A lecture on "Chesterton Today," which brings out many of the reasons why GKC is important to us at the present time. This paper would take about one half hour, and I would combine it with a series of GKC "miniquotes" and a tape recording made by Chesterton. This recording, which I obtained from the BBC, is the only one in existence of Chesterton's voice.

A series of "Readings from Chesterton." This is an evening-long program, with a short intermission. It consists of several parts: essay excerpts, poems in various categories, Chesterton's writings about America, an account of his

Father Brown detective stories, etc. For several of the selections, I request volunteer readers from the audience.

With either of the above, I would present a display of books by and about GKC, copies of "The Chesterton Review," and other related items. So I would appreciate hearing from the educational representative of any parish that might be interested in either of the above programs.

Robert Knille
102 Lynnwood Dr.
Rochester, N.Y. 14618

On Proper Training

Editor:

Congratulations on your presentation in full-page format "Abortion: Questions and Answers" in your edition of Jan. 11.

Although the issue would appear to be clear-cut for all persons who value human life, the present confusion on the part of many theologians and others who should be our spiritual leaders promotes the spread of sentimental sociology which too often displaces sound religious thinking and practice.

Oftentimes, the same persons who become quite disturbed over the possibility of execution of even vicious murderers defend the practice of taking the lives of the innocent unborn, refusing to recognize abortion as murder. However, that is not a matter of great surprise, for nearly always where error prevails, inconsistency also prevails.

But while we rightfully deplore abortions, we must at the same time recognize the fact that unwanted pregnancies are frequently caused by a lack of proper moral training, even in some of our Catholic schools, by a disregard of the protective virtue of modesty of dress and demeanor (likewise even in some of our Catholic schools), by an obsession with sex and premature and unwise sex education, and by our current social practice which throws together young of both sexes at too early an age.

Unless these situations are put under some measure of control, we will continue to try to correct the aftermath (unwanted pregnancies) instead of preventing conception through the practice of virtue and self-restraint.

Contraceptive devices are not the answer, for they are likewise immoral means toward so-called birth control. As has been well said, these result in no-births and no control, fostering the grossest forms of sensuality. If any wish to remain chaste, they must learn to pray and to resist beginnings, admittedly a difficult — though not by any means an impossible — procedure, even in these days when the media are saturated with sexually provocative pictures and accounts. To be morally good, we have to have first of all the courage of our convictions and not allow ourselves to follow the crowd in what we watch or listen to or in the way we dress and conduct ourselves. We need to overcome the slavish cowardice that keeps us from striving to act like true Christians, embracing the saving virtues of modesty and con-



tinence. Before God we are each of us accountable to Him for our salvation and we must also give account to God if we entice others into sin. We will not be able to extricate ourselves from guilt by plea that we did only what everyone else was doing. The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (where "everybody was doing it") is a lesson in point. That is, if we still believe in the truth of Holy Scripture.

Father Salem Faddoul
pastor
St. Nicholas Melkite
Greek Catholic Church
20 Leo St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14621

'Public Order' In Salvador

Editor:

The letter which has recently been sent me by the 23-year-old Salvadorean seminarian "Chepe" is more pessimistic than the one he sent me only two months ago.

He talks about the chilling effect the new Public Order Law is having on the ability of the Church in El Salvador to hold parish meetings and to publish and distribute its widely read diocesan weekly, Orientation.

One quickly discovers that many Latins are much more critical of central authority than North Americans would be and therefore I usually temper charges Chepe makes by listening to differing viewpoints.

The thing is, others are in agreement with Chepe this time. Three nuns who work in a nearby parish, on returning from El Salvador agreed that the new law moves that country closer to fascism than it's been in recent memory.

A fellow American priest working in El Salvador who recently visited me, was afraid even to carry a copy of Orientation lest it cause him problems at the border crossing.

An American nun, Sister Joan Petrik, MM, sends reports that she and lay people she works with continue to be harassed. And then there's the early November incident in which Father Miguel Ventura was literally strung up and threatened by the military in Osicala. Father Ventura has since been given asylum by Bishop James A. Hickey of Cleveland.

A separate report arriving in the Latin America Political Report edited in London reports that the

activities of ORDEN, a paramilitary group that was harassing the youth of our parish last year, the parish of Lourdes in San Salvador where I worked until my expulsion in February, 1977, has stepped up its activities in the Salvadorean countryside.

So Chepe's letter carries considerable weight.

Father Bernard Survil
Apdo 676
Tegucigalpa
Honduras

Parish Is A Family

Editor:

This letter is about the Church of St. Margaret Mary as family.

We moved into St. Margaret Mary's parish 21 years ago. The people who were here before us told us about the church's beginnings. They told us how they literally rolled up their sleeves and pitched in to build the church buildings. As they built the physical plant, they built a family.

While the circumstances are completely different, the people who guide the parish today are trying to sustain and help that family grow. Hopefully the people who are new to the parish will look back on these days and say "What a prayer they said! What a song they sang! They were indeed a family."

Joseph E. O'Keefe
275 Titus Ave.
Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Thanks to St. Mary's

Editor:

Would you please put a note of thanks in your paper for a very fine human service?

I'm a volunteer at St. Mary's (Hospital) and also I'm a mother of a retarded adult. My thanks for the Hospital and their volunteer director Ms. Ann Pugliese for giving some of the retarded adults from the School of Holy Childhood an opportunity to do volunteer work for the hospital and get work experience in the process as well as doing a service.

So many times we forget to thank the consideration and kindness shown our handicapped young people. So may I say it now? Thank you.

Mrs. Henry Michaloski, Sr.
1741 Harris Rd.
Penfield, N.Y. 14526

COURIER-JOURNAL

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

Anthony J. Costello
Publisher &
General Manager

Carmen J. Viglucchi
Editor

Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

Vol. 92 No. 38 January 18, 1978

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 20¢. 1 year subscription in U.S. \$7.50. Canada and Foreign \$12.00. Offices, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604 (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal 1