

Editorials

By Any Name

While the thought of human beings being led to death in sterile gas chambers, or by the flick of a government switch, or by ripping bullets paid for by taxpayers should be repugnant to any Christian, the means used are not the prime objection to capital punishment.

Rather the sanctioning of killing by society in any form is to be condemned.

Thus it is gratifying to learn that Bishop Joseph A. Durick, a federal prison chaplain in Seagoville, Tex., has excoriated a plan to use lethal injections to administer capital punishment.

Bishop Durick was formerly the ordinary of Nashville but retired from that position to work in prisons. State killing by lethal injection has been approved by legislatures in Oklahoma and Texas and is under consideration in other states, Bishop Durick said.

"Proponents of death by injection do not seem to understand that killing is killing no matter what form it takes," declared the so-called "prison bishop."

"Whether you paralyze a person so he can't breathe or plunge a single needle directly into the heart, I can only conclude that this needlepoint legislation is merely a more antiseptic form of the brutal and barbaric nature of the death penalty," Bishop Durick correctly asserts.

We must be able to see through such insidious ploys. We will be told that such a death is painless and humane. We must not be conned by such pap. Such language is derived from the same mentality that presents death through abortion in such euphemism.

Catholics are urged to oppose the death penalty, per se, whether it be imposed by guillotine or by sugar coated pills.

Thank God there are Churchmen such as Bishop Derrick, No. 1, for taking what we're sure is a thankless position, and No. 2, for being unafraid to speak out though it will probably become quite uncomfortable for him.

Rx: Add Blacks

Of 59,000 priests in the United States, only 250 are black; of 8,000 Brothers (Religious, that is, not soul), only 100 are black; and of 135,000 women Religious, only 700 are black.

And we all are painfully aware of the death of priests, sisters and brothers within the Church.

We think these two facts are telling us all, particularly the hierarchy, what must be done.

For a moment, heed the words of Father Giles Conwill, director of the National Office of Black Catholics.

"We call ourselves a Catholic Church - a Church that's universal. If we are going to live up to this claim, then all ethnic groups - Mexican-American, Native American, and Black American - must feel comfortable in this Church. Nobody wants to come into a Church, where they have to deny their cultural roots and then worship God in another way. We blacks find it hard to worship God Europeanly."

We are happy to see the NOBC working for vocations and for broadening the base of the church which calls itself catholic. We applaud such effort for its pragmatic benefits but also for a more important reason.

The absence of blacks in the American Catholic Church is not only due to cultural differences. It also stems from racism within the Church, a malady which must be removed, erased, and obliterated, once and for all time, in the name of Christ.

Opinion

Nuestra Vida Welcomed

Being a native Rochesterian working with and for the Hispanic community in New York City, I was very pleased to receive the Nov. 23 issue of the Courier-Journal in which appeared the first presentation of Nuestra Vida, depicting the life and activities of the Spanish-speaking communities in the Rochester diocese.

I see this as an excellent forum for establishing enriching communications between the two communities. The youthfulness, vitality, and evangelical simplicity found in the Hispanic's living and celebrating of Catholicism can offer models to the other communities which are in the process of renewal. Struggles of the Hispanic community: the plight of the migrant farm-worker and undocumented alien, the problems of decent housing, the employment-unemployment picture, bilingualism and biculturalism, the possibilities for acquiring political power - all these struggles must be communicated to and shared with the larger Catholic community.

Congratulations to the Courier-Journal for taking this initial step. I hope that soon Nuestra Vida will become a weekly feature of your paper. Enclosed you will find my check to cover a one-year subscription.

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Editor's Note: Nuestra Vida is on Page 16 this issue.

Reliance On God

In Washington, D.C., the Nativity scene has always been on display symbolizing this country's belief in God for its protection and benefits. Yet, this may be the last year of its existence since the private American Christian Heritage Association of Bowie, Md., 20715, cannot afford further deficits (\$8,000) of the program. There is a similarity of Christ's refusal at the inn when this nation has refused prayer in the schools and now considers taxing churches and removing "In God We Trust" from our money.

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The most striking similarity is that the Holy Innocents' feast day mirrors this nation's inhumanity in killing a million unborn by abortion each year. As this nation falls away from God through continued moral decay in movies, promiscuity, drugs and pornography, we are ripe for our own destruction as was the Roman Empire. This may be nearer than we think when one considers our current money problems and Russia's increased military strength.

Time will prove to people in the end that reliance on God can be our only salvation, spiritually as well as materially.

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Say 'Yes' To God

Re a letter in the Jan. 11 Courier-Journal about the benefits of devotion to the rosary.

The only effective means of spreading the message of Christ's love is to live it every day of our lives.

It is through His love and the power of the precious blood of our Saviour that He shed on the cross that our sins are forgiven. The power of the Holy Spirit in our lives is what "sets us on fire" for the Lord and gives us the peace and wisdom to cope with trying situations.

There is no other way to pay back any debt to God except through our praises, thanks and total acceptance of Him in our hearts.

What could be more simple than to say "yes" to God? Do it today.

Barbara A. Rhoda
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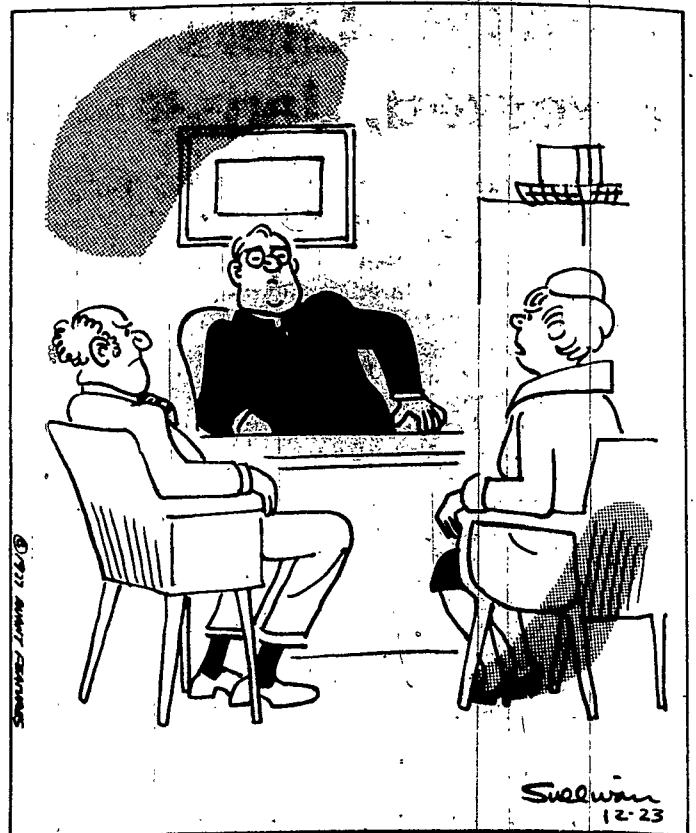
Panel Offered On Racism

As members of the Rochester Panel of American Women whose purpose is to promote intercultural understanding, we were pleased to read your editorial on Martin Luther King Jr. We agree that unfortunately Dr. King "never lived to see the end of racism in his country. And so far, neither have we." How true it is that until all Americans are free, none of us is free.

However, much we believe in the power of prayer, we don't think that prayers alone will fulfill Dr. King's dream. In addition to prayers, each of us in our own way and in our own personal environment can contribute to the quality of life for all members of our society.

If you would like a stimulating discussion on the topics of racial and religious prejudice, discrimination and racism for your church group, Human Development Committee, youth group or elementary, secondary or college classes, please contact the Panel of American Women, 17 Frederick Road, Pittsford, N.Y. 14534.

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"HE THINKS IF HE WATCHES CHARLIE'S ANGELS HE DOESN'T HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY!"

Carter Hit On Hungary

The Bible passage of St. Matthew that begins, "Do not give to dogs what is Holy..." clearly portrays President Carter's decision to return the sacred crown of St. Stephen to Communist Hungary.

Ironically, President Carter, who claims to be a born again Christian and Bible scholar, sees no contradiction or sacrilege in returning a sacred relic to a government devoid of religious principles.

I've heard people say, "He wanted to make a gesture." What gesture?

The government of St. Christopher's Not 'Cold'

This is in response to Rev. Paul J. Cuddy's "report" of Jan. 11. Although St. Christopher's parish church won the acclaim of many, it was not built for that purpose. It was intended to be a place where the community gathered in worship and prayer and yet be functional for meetings, learning sessions and fellowship. For me, there was a feeling of amazement that the body of the church could be so functional and the sanctuary still convey a "holy place." I, too, am reminded of the psalmist, "I have loved the beauty of Your house, O God, and the place where Your glory dwells." IT DOES NOT LEAVE ME COLD - I FOUND WARMTH IN THIS HOLY PLACE AND WARMTH IN THE GATHERING OF A PRIESTLY PEOPLE!

Christopher means "bearing Christ." The cross "is tilted" to remind the community that they are all Christ bearers. As I ministered along side of the parish team, the parish council, and the leaders of this community, as we prayed, struggled, risked, rejoiced and celebrated together, the tilted cross took on another witness for me - these are truly a people who take up their cross daily to follow Him. IT DOES NOT LEAVE ME COLD - I FOUND SUCH WARMTH IN THE INSPIRATION THAT THIS HOLY PEOPLE GAVE TO ME. At the time of leaving St. Christopher's parish community, I did not have to struggle over a final message for St. Paul said it very well!

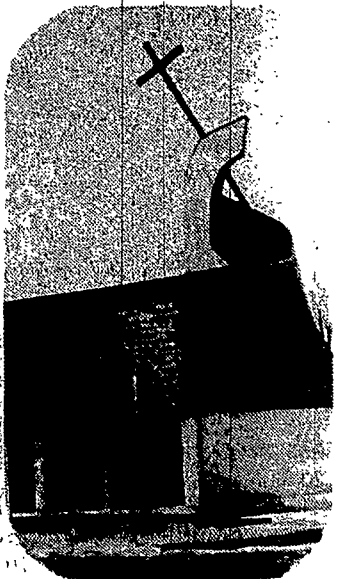
Hungary today is the same government responsible for killing Hungarian freedom fighters in 1956.

As Patrick Buchanan pointed out in his column, "No Hungarian government is considered legitimate by its people, without the possession of the sacred crown."

By legitimizing the illegitimate with the return of the sacred crown, President Carter acted like the Supreme Court when it legitimized murder via abortion.

Inasmuch as the Communist countries are the prime violators of human rights, concessions toward them are definitely out of line.

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ST. CHRISTOPHER'S

"I give thanks to my God every time I think of you which is constantly, in every prayer I utter - rejoicing, as I plead on your behalf, at the way you have all continually helped promote the gospel from the very first day. I am sure of this much: that he who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion."

"My prayer is that your love may more and more abound, both in understanding and wealth of experience so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct you may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the day of Christ." (Phil. 1:3-6; 9, 10).

IT DOES NOT LEAVE ME COLD - THE LOVE AND CONCERN OF THIS COMMUNITY GAVE TRUE WITNESS OF THE MEANING OF A KINGLY PEOPLE!

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