

Editorials

Commendation

It is our feeling that the bishops of the United States deserve empathy.

They announce their opposition to liberalized abortion and the National Organization of Women implies that they are un-American and subtly links them with the John Birch Society, the KKK and other extreme right wing groups.

They support the new Panama Canal treaties and many, including unthinking Catholics, imply that they are part and parcel to a Communist takeover of that country.

They support that great apostle of peace, Pope Paul VI, in his call for world disarmament and they are categorized as promoting Communist dominion of the world.

It seems that they are the perfect object of the darned if you do, darned if you don't syndrome. The rightists call them too liberal, the leftists call them too conservative.

Well, bishops, let us tell you something. You must be doing something right. We appreciate your efforts in an often thankless atmosphere. For some 2,000 years, no one has been perfect. So you will probably make mistakes but it is in the trying that you hopefully will find satisfaction.

And please make note. Your leadership on so many issues that almost defy proper solution is indeed appreciated.

Choose Life

Have no doubt about it. The Church is opposed to the restoration of the death penalty, which will be considered by the present session of the State Legislature.

No one can claim that this issue is a simple one. As are most of the societal problems occupying our attention these days it is complex and tends to be divisive. In order to provide leadership for Catholics on this issue, the bishops of New York State have sent a message to the legislators stating their opposition to capital punishment. "In doing so," a cover letter with the short statement, says, "the bishops of New York State join with the bishops of the United States in urging that proposals to enact or restore capital punishment be defeated."

The statement is clear: "We hold that the heart of the Christian tradition is the belief that no person is beyond the mercy of God and therefore not to be beyond the bounds of human mercy. We wish to endorse and adopt the November 1974 resolution of the bishops of the United States, through the U.S. Catholic Conference (affirmed recently by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace): We go on record in opposition to capital punishment."

The death penalty and its possible restoration is just one of many ticklish problems confronting us. We congratulate the bishops for providing leadership on a number of these difficult subjects.

They oppose restoration of capital punishment.

They oppose liberalized abortion.

They support new treaties for the Panama Canal.

They urge support of disarmament in the world.

Well Done, CIM

Plaudits to the Elmira ecumenical group that sponsors the Christian Institute of Man lecture series. The winter adult education series listed seven speakers this year, offering a quality educational opportunity to the Elmira community.

This year, the theme was Christians and a Changing World: Toward an Ethic of Personal Responsibility. Speakers addressed the ethical implications in developments concerning the family, science, economics, politics and the food supply.

The CIM lectures began in 1971, sponsored by a group of Catholics. The effort became ecumenical in 1973 and through the support of several Chemung County Catholic parishes and the Elmira cluster of Protestant Churches, it has been offered each year, except for a 1977 hiatus.

The CIM series is a commendable example of ecumenical cooperation.

Opinion

ME Weekend Constructive

Editor:

In the article "Retreat Stresses Marriage Communications" (Courier-Journal, 2/22/78) some phrases and comparisons were made between Marriage Communications Retreat and Marriage Encounter.

Perhaps our deep belief in ME made us feel indignant because in this article ME seemed to come across as second best. These phrases were inside quotation marks concerning ME. "No group interaction" and "very structured and intense." Taken in context it read as if these were detrimental as opposed to Marriage Communications which was described as stressing weekend experiences "in a nondestructive way."

We believe in the structure of the ME weekend — that it is necessary for couples to concentrate on each other alone, in order to learn over again to love and accept each other first, then to grow outward to parish and community from there.

I'm very sure that ME, and Marriage Communications share common goals, namely, "To find out where they are in their marriage" and to bring couples together in love.

Our methods may vary and the concepts vary some but I am concerned by the inference of one being superior to the other. I hope no couple considering ME will view it in this light.

Robert and Beth Burns
17 Banta St.
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Sister's Work Commended

Editor:

"Christ will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live."

The following words of commendation and high praise are written in tribute to Sister Kathleen Kircher, SSJ, of the diocesan Office of Family Life, who is going about bringing a message of hope to divorced and separated Catholics and also to those who have remarried.

Let me not presume to insult the intelligence of our people by explaining what Sister said, or to imply that her message was not clear. Rather may I emphasize the importance of her message and make a strong appeal to all whom it can help to listen and heed.

To the divorced and separated, you are not barred from the sacraments! You have the same opportunities for God's grace and the same obligations of assisting at Mass, receiving the sacraments and practicing the Catholic Faith as any other Catholic. Your first step is to come to Confession! Then continue to live in God's grace and friendship with a happy heart.

For those divorced or separated remarried before you return to the sacraments your marital status must be reviewed by the Matrimonial Tribunal of the diocese. This process is ordinarily begun in your parish. You are urged to contact a priest or a sister who will kindly help you to get started on a solution and pray for you that the doors will be opened for your return to the sacraments.

"Creator of the earth and sky

To whom all truth and power belong
Grant us your truth to



"I DON'T WANT TO SEE THE MOVIE! I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF ANY KIND."

make us wise

Grant us your power to make us strong.

The Divine Office
Leonard A. Kelly
Pastor Emeritus
Church of the Assumption
Fairport, N.Y.

SJ Missions

Dated 1669

Editor:

A typographical error on the Vocation Directory page in the March 1 issue of the Courier-Journal represents the Jesuits as coming to Rochester in 1639. The date should read 1669. We have evidence from the Jesuit Relations that at least by 1669 Father James Fremin had come from Canada to the Seneca territory at the request of the Senecas and had established a mission in a Seneca village near East Bloomfield. Another Jesuit, Father Julien Garnier, from Three Rivers in Canada, was

working with the Senecas in a large Indian village near Victor in 1669. He remained in the ministry of the Senecas until 1684. Other Jesuit missionaries in the Rochester area in the late 17th century were Father Peter Raffiex, 1670-1672; Father John Rierion, 1673-1677; Father James Bruyas, 1673. There was at least one additional mission station at an Indian village near Lima.

The Jesuits did not return to a permanent residence in Rochester until, at the invitation of Bishop James Kearney, they opened McQuaid Jesuit High School in 1954.

Father William C. McCusker, SJ
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Church Position on Disarmament, Canal Treaties

Editor:

I am of the opinion that the Courier-Journal is the voice of the Catholic Diocese of Rochester. However, I certainly hope this is not the case. I have been reading this paper for a number of years. The trend of this publication has seemingly been slanted toward support of issues not conducive to Catholic teachings. After reading your last two copies, Feb. 15 and 22, I am compelled to express to you my feelings and opinions.

I will only briefly state my opposition to a few issues and dwell on the very current and critical issue of the Panama Canal treaties. First, your "holier than thou" support of the United

Nations disarmament sessions, that will take place May 23 to June 28, the only agreement that will be accepted will be a unilateral disarmament by the United States. This has been seen readily in our giveaway program at SALT meetings. We are presently rapidly approaching a second-class world power.

You stand against our only means of Communist resistance in Africa, Rhodesia, and South Africa because of the black vote issue. I agree brotherhood probably should prevail but if these countries lose out, a blood bath will prevail. Not one word by your paper states the condition of other countries in Africa under Communist rule where human rights are defiled!

Your support of the Panama Canal treaties was the final straw. It is incredible that, with the facts available, you would dare solicit support of the diocese. First, the canal was purchased at a price of \$166,326,173 (real dollars). This is more than we paid for any other property over which we hold Sovereignty. Last year we paid Panama \$243,197,000 by our presence there. We have honored every agreement and paid every bill. Yet, we are being harassed by subversive groups which defile our flag and invade our territory. There is a total population of 1.5 million with a gross national product of approximately \$600,000,000. Our presence supports almost half of this sum. This relinquishing of our rights will not serve the Panamanian people or our

Government.

It is known that Omar Torrijos is a Communist sympathizer. He is most friendly with Castro and the leaders in Moscow. Even before the treaty has been considered, Communist "advisors" are entering Panama. Torrijos is also a ruthless dictator suppressing religious freedom and human rights. If this treaty is ratified, the Communist takeover of Panama will be assured. If Archbishop McGrath is not aware of this, he is either very ignorant of the facts or blinded by propaganda.

I strongly resent your paper's stand. It is in direct contrast to Catholic beliefs. I also resent being solicited and hope to God you do not express the desires of our Catholic teachers.

L. Robert Haslip
16 White Birch Circle
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

Editor's Note: Pope Paul VI (Courier-Journal, Dec. 28, 1977, Jan. 11, 1978,) strongly urged the idea of disarmament and also commended the upcoming United Nations Assembly meeting on disarmament. "These hopes (for peace) are confirmed by the next Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to the problem of disarmament." He also talked about "the absolute necessity of Peace — peace not founded on the power of arms that today are endowed with an internal destructive capacity (let us recall the tragedy of Japan)." More recently, Ar-

chbishop Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican's top diplomatic negotiator, strongly urged total and general disarmament and indicated that the U.N. is the best hope for implementing a new international order for peace. Last week the U.S. Bishops Administrative Board echoed the Pope's call for disarmament and the Vatican's 1976 intervention at the United Nations when it said "the arms race is to be condemned unreservedly." Speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the canal treaty, Cardinal John Krol, representing the U.S. Catholic Conference, noted that in 1975 and 1976 the USCC and the bishops both adopted statements supporting a new U.S.-Panama treaty on the canal. "It was our view in 1975 and 1976, and it is our view today, that a new treaty which acknowledges in principle and in fact Panamanian sovereignty over its own territory is a requirement of justice and peace between our two nations." Archbishop Marcos McGrath is the bishop of the archdiocese of Panama and is a long time ardent supporter of a new canal treaty.

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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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