

# More Opinions

## Death Penalty May Be Valid

Editor:

The current debate concerning the death penalty has been much in the news lately.

I suspect that to an informed observer residing outside our community it must often seem as if we Catholics stand never so straight to attention as when the evening news is aired, while the rest of our days are passed with our heads together in conferences, seminars, delegations and groups plotting the strategy of the faith. What real difference, he is tempted to ask, is there between Catholics and, say, the Jewish Zionists? The one differs from the other only in that it took the Catholics somewhat longer to devolve into a political force; just as the Zionist listens attentively for news of the latest administration betrayal of Israel, so now all truly active Catholic believers dare not miss the first journalistic hint that Christ, like a bill, has once again been killed in committee.

But what is this faith we fear for, and feel must be guarded by an act of Congress? Will the re-institution of the death penalty in fact rebuke and negate the Incarnation?

I have seen in conspicuous, and conspicuously Catholic, places fliers which summarize the debate (in less than one page) and end with great bold letters in a call to action against the measure because of our belief in the love of Christ and the sanctity, dignity and integrity of the human person. Yet I wonder at the connection. Precisely, I wonder if it is the Christ-love, or even the love of the Christ-love at however great a distance that actually motivates our startling communal vociferousness. One cannot believe — and one may believe that any true lesson can be learned from a crowd. God Himself has ever only been a Single Mouth, or a still, small voice in the wind.

Unless we speak particularly of religious communities (speaking thus with qualification and always referring to the ideal which guides them); we can hardly say otherwise than that men, when they band together, do so not that they may love God better, but to find, instead a poorer but more comfortable substitute in numbers for that Community to which all are called though few chosen. It is, I feel, rather from this less radiant huddle — which we know as society — that the judgment of our motives must come and not surely from some privileged and largely fictitious life of at-oneness with God.

Within this perspective, then, it should not prove beyond the limits of human reason that the death penalty may actually stand

upon a certain validity of its own. Should we say only that at one time it was the result of a mystical idea in which the object was to "save" (in a spiritual sense) both society and the culprit, still, before the debate may be joined on either side we might want to consider the inordinate passion of our interest in this question. And precisely here may be revealed to us, however obliquely, a consequence of the depth of that division from God in which we all share, that we choose a side more readily when the cost to us is the least.

C.S. Crane  
16 Summit St.  
Fairport, N.Y.

## St. Joseph Helps

Editor:

The month of March is dedicated to the great St. Joseph, who is, like Mary, the perfect model for Christian life. His feast is March 19. On the 25th we celebrate the mystery of the Annunciation, when God became man in the womb of the Holy Virgin, a mystery with which St. Joseph is so closely associated. From guardian of the Holy Family on earth, he has become the powerful patron and protector of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church.

More devotion to him is certainly needed in our days. In his litany, St. Joseph is called the Terror of Demons, the Protector of Christian Families, the Consoler of the Miserable and the Model of Workers. Neither is there any better teacher of the interior and spiritual life. Above all he is the patron of a good death. If we go to Joseph daily, we may be confident that, on the day of our own death, he will come to us with Jesus and Mary.

St. Teresa spoke of St. Joseph thus:

"I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to this glorious saint for I have great experience of the blessings which he can obtain from God. I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to him and render him particular services who did not notably advance in virtue, for he gives very real help to souls who commend themselves to him. For some years now, I think, I have made some request of him every year on his feast and I have always had it granted. If my petition is in any way ill directed, he directs it aright for my greater good."

Not a single word of St. Joseph's is recorded in the Scriptures and this heightens the impression of his deep humility and profound interior life. As in the case of many other saints of the interior life, we know few historical facts about St. Joseph, so that he

is both a hidden personality and a hidden treasure.

To those who meditate on his role in the mysteries of Redemption and who cultivate his friendship in daily prayer to him, that personality and treasure are gradually revealed.

To such souls, St. Joseph emerges as the incredibly gentle, sweet, thoughtful and loving father who was the guardian and companion of Jesus and Mary on earth.

Mrs. Constance Hoffman  
503 White Springs Rd.  
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## Tax Credit Support

Editor:

I call our beloved Bishop Hogan's attention to an article by Father Andrew Greeley in your 2/15/78 publication.

In that article Father Greeley states, "Catholic educational leaders ought to mount a massive campaign in favor of Packwood-Moynihan and against the Carter-Califano subterfuges. Instead, it's a reasonable bet that once more, we'll lie down and play dead while they drive their snow plows over us."

I strongly urge our Catholic hierarchy to take the initiative in this matter and to encourage other parochial educational leaders to do the same.

Strong support of the Packwood-Moynihan Bill and rejection of the Carter-Califano endeavors is needed now... not after the vote is taken!!

Mrs. Pat Thomas  
100 Daley Blvd.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Editor's Note: We appreciate reader Thomas' concern for this important bill. We can assure her that Bishop Hogan is well aware of the column as well as of the front page story in that issue, "Diocese to Push for Tuition Tax Credit."

## Leper Unit Needs Stamps

Editor:

The Damien-Dutton Society for Leprosy Aid would be happy to accept cancelled stamps. Just be sure that a small amount of paper surrounds the stamps: They can be sent to Sister Mary Augustine, SMSM, at 616 Bedford Ave., Bellmore, Long Island, N.Y. 11710 which is the general headquarters of this worldwide organization aiding more than 40 leprosy hospitals, clinics and research centers in all parts of the world.

Howard E. Crouch  
President

# NFP Wins Increasing Favor, Research Physician Says

Melbourne (RNS) — More than 400 delegates from 35 countries gathered at the University of Melbourne recently for a conference called by the World Organization of the Ovulation Method (Billings). The majority came from Asia and Africa, and many stayed for a teacher-training program.

The conference marked the 10th anniversary of Pope Paul's Humanae Vitae, which reaffirmed the traditional Church ban on artificial birth control. The Billings in the international organization's title refers to two Australians who are regarded as authorities on natural family planning — Dr. John Billings and his wife, Dr. Evelyn Billings.

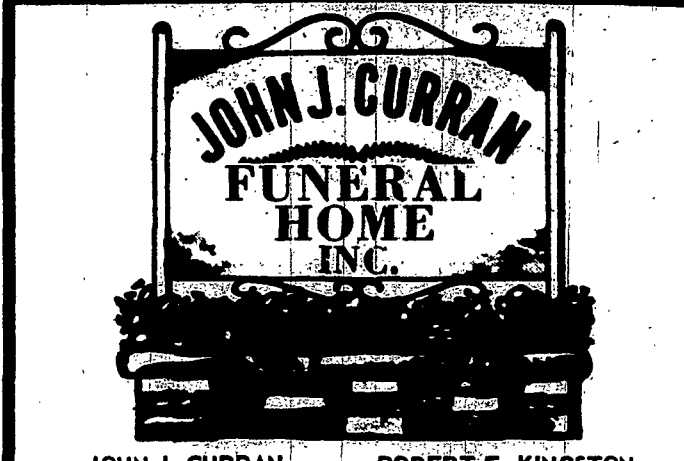
Delegates who took the training course are expected to run family planning centers in their own countries and to train more teachers of the Billings method, which involves determination of fertile and infertile phases in a woman's menstrual cycle. The method is being taught in more than 75 countries, according to Dr. Joseph Santamaria, a trustee of the

Ovulation Method Research and Reference Center of Australia. He was chairman of the committee that planned the conference. People came from India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Fiji,

Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Thailand, Iran, Syria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Gambia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ireland, Canada, Italy, Greece, Great Britain and the United States.

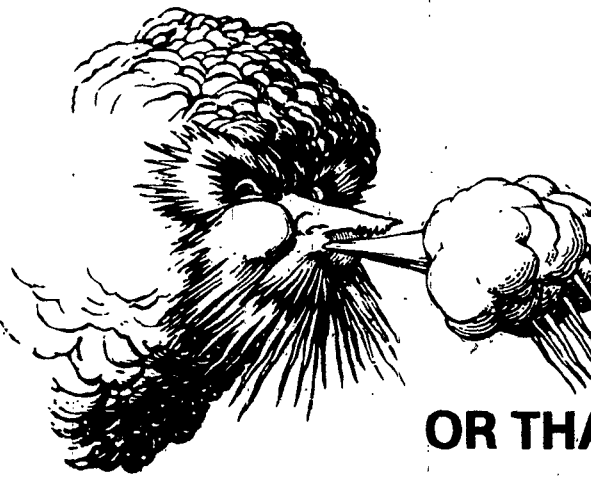


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