

Editorials

Abandoned Wives

Elsewhere in this paper is an account of a project in Elmira concerning the problem of battered spouses. Because of the extremely personal nature of the problem it is very difficult to come up with healing programs. Apparently, as with child abuse, spouse battering is far more prevalent than apparent.

In no way do we intend to detract from the attention this situation sorely needs, but we would like to point out another marital anomaly which also cries to heaven for change — the abandoned wife.

In a column not too long ago in the Ann Arbor, Mich., diocesan newspaper, Father Charles Irvin aptly depicted the typical victim: "She devoted her whole life working for a man as a homemaker, raising seven children after he left her 11 years ago for a carefree life. Her husband wiped her name away from every insurance policy, annuity and pension fund so that now, as she looks ahead toward old age, she can look forward to nothing. Some of the children are in bad shape psychologically and after all of them had attended Catholic schools none of the children will even go near a Catholic church."

"... For such a woman retirement is a cruel joke. For that matter, so is all of life."

The bitter problem of the abandoned wife, much the same as intrafamily abuse, occurs far more than we probably care to admit. A priest in this diocese says it is one of the most frustrating things with which he deals.

This priest says that in the typical case, the husband when nearing middle age, for whatever reason, will decide that life is passing him by and will pursue what Father Irvin calls "the carefree life." This, of course, probably includes another woman, younger than the spouse.

What is even more damnable is that the man, equipped by years of training and employment, can work himself into his "new life" very easily, if indeed he has to modify his professional image at all in light of society's double standard regarding marriage.

On the other hand, the wife, who has devoted herself to the esteemed role of mother and homemaker and who very often has no employable training, finds herself not only emotionally, psychologically and financially embarrassed but also the object of ridicule for letting herself land in such a plight.

If any reader thinks this is exaggerated, he is wrong.

Father Irvin asks sharply, "Where are the organizers of movements for such women? Where is the great sense of injustice when it comes to them? What does the Equal Rights Amendment have to offer them? The answer is all too painfully evident.

Zilch, squat, zero and in the negative... please don't tell me now that they were fools to stay at home and raise the children. Please don't tell me now that they were crazy to send their kids to Catholic schools. You might, with equally ridiculous logic, tell me that I was crazy to have been born a middle-class, white, American."

Yes, there are more of these embarrassed, rejected, victimized women among us than we care to realize. Certainly they are not going to carry placards reading, "See me. I have been made a fool of by the very person I loved and trusted most in life. I have been victimized because I played by your rules as presented by Church and society."

What to do? Father Irvin suggests, "Please, just get mad. Get damn mad. Write letters to editors, write legislators, get into the women's movement on the local level. Get political."

What is needed first? Focus on the fact that the problem does indeed exist and, although such statistics are probably non-existent, is probably far more prevalent than would be guessed.

Then we need some laws to ensure that abandoned wives and mothers are not left without health insurance, pension benefits and rights and not only a share of the wandering husband's goods but also of his talent, to which she often has contributed especially by patient and enduring moral support.

Somebody out there. Please do something for the sake of justice.

and Opinions

On 'Problem' Parents

Editor:

I have been trying to analyze the reasons for the fact that six out of eight teenagers claimed that pressure from their parents is one of the biggest problems they have in their lives (Equal Time 5-24). At the same time, pressure from peers seems to be as much of a problem for the same teens. From experience, I know that these two pressures are not necessarily compatible with one another — which leads me to believe that perhaps today's teenagers are caught in the middle while trying to decide between the two.

Perhaps we are being unfair to them (and ourselves) by burdening them with this choice. Why aren't we, in fact, telling them what is right and wrong instead of "leaving it up to them"? Do they realize the MAIN purpose of our role as parents — that of being God's personal representatives on earth in order to lead our children to Heaven to be with Him for all eternity? Why are we leading them to believe that their's is a sophisticated, intelligent, knowledgeable generation which does not necessarily HAVE to live according to God's commandments? Why doesn't our experience and that of Christ's own Church (2000 years) count as some sort of guide in our society today? Why are we parents being told that we must "chatch up" with the times by ACCEPTING what our children are doing along with "an understanding" what they do? (Some of us have been understanding to a fault.)

How many of us are criticized severely when we do not take proper physical

care of our children and yet, are criticized even more when we want to do as much for them spiritually? If Christ is my model and I am His personal representative, then I have the obligation to strive to become more "divine" (in all humility) rather than make Christ more human to fit the needs of me and my children. As Catholics, young or old, we do not have the right to choose evil over good!

Thank God neither I nor my friends ever had to say that our parents were "problems." No generation will ever be without problems, but it is a sad commentary on our society when our young people say that pressure from their parents is a problem and when we allow them to say it!

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Catholics Aren't Sheep

Editor:

The Communist Party USA is a monolith whose members follow the party line handed down from Moscow. The Catholic Church has in the past been labeled a monolith whose members, like sheep, have to await word from Rome and the local bishop before taking a position on a public question.

If Catholics in public life, such as John F. Kennedy, Justice Brennan and Joseph Califano, acted as apparently Father Andrew Greeley thinks they should, then the indictment of Catholics as sheep would be true.

Fortunately, these good Catholics with minds of their own took positions on issues which in conscience they considered best for

the public good in accordance with their oath of office. They have given proof that Catholics are not sheep.

As one who has disagreed with the pope and the bishops as much as Father Greeley has, I think he should be the last to chastise anyone for not following a Catholic "party line."

Since the Catholic Church favors large families, we should be advocating a Family Allowance Plan similar to European plans, which could provide several hundred dollars a year per child of school age regardless of where the child went to school. It should be taxable income so that the government could recover most of it from the rich.

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Right to Self-Defense

Editor:

More deadly than "The Bomb" is mind conditioning designed to program the American people to welcome the instant peaceful Utopia which will appear if we render ourselves helpless. "Disarmament" the magic word is orchestrated in pious editorials and reiterated in maudlin lectures. In Catholic circles this process frequently misquotes Papal statements or disregards context. Ignored is the teaching of the Church which began in St. Luke's Gospel and quotes Christ as saying, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace his goods are in peace..." (11:21)

The "Catholic Encyclopedia" confirms the right of self-defense for individuals and for nations and outlines the moral obligations thereof. The New Catholic Encyclopedia (1967) sup-

ports and further states: "Catholic moralists are unanimous in upholding the right of self-defense."

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World — Vatican II (Gaudium et Spes) supports the right of self-defense as authentic Catholic doctrine: "War has decidedly not been eradicated from human affairs. So long as the danger of it persists... it will not be possible to deny governments the right of legitimate self-defense... Rulers and others sharing the responsibility have the duty of looking to the safety of those in their charge. (79)

Unilateral disarmament is an idle dream in this imperfect world. As Pope Paul stated at the United Nations: "As long as man remains as he is, defensive arms unfortunately will be necessary."

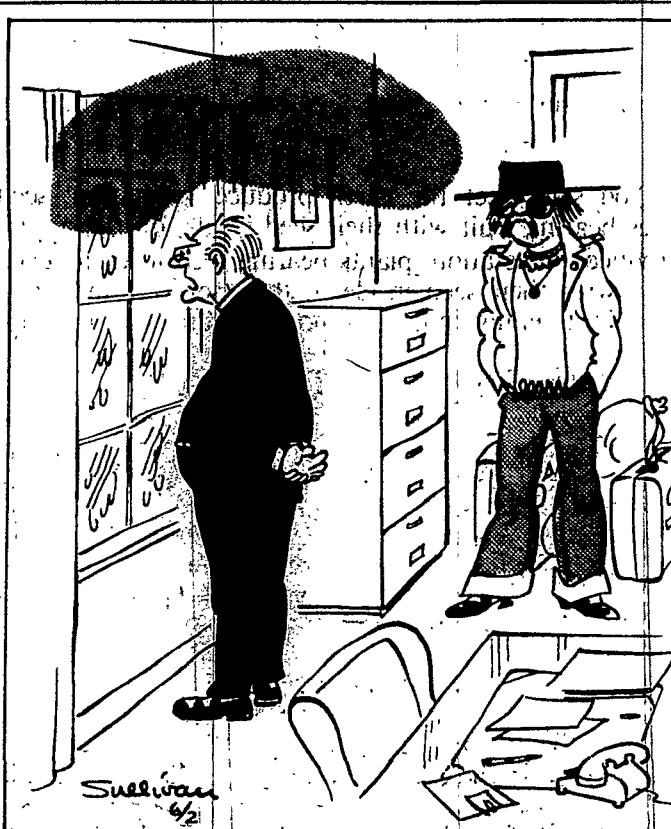
Cardinal Journet warned: "If the non-Communist bloc unilaterally disarmed it would give the world to the Soviet empire and would betray all the holy values, temporal and spiritual... This would be the evil of betrayal."

Unfortunately, truth, justice and freedom are not characteristics of authentic Communism. Treaties and agreements are viewed by them as "means to an end." Details of more than 100 Soviet major treaty violations appear in the Staff Study of the Senate Judiciary Committee, "Soviet Political Agreements and Results." The Committee chairman ended his comments, "I seriously doubt whether during the whole history of civilization any great nation has ever made as perfidious a record as this in so short a time."

We must pray to God daily that America may be spared the destruction now possible because our politicians are intimidated by the uninformed,

misinformed, and those who know exactly what they are doing.

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"I'VE BEEN PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH FOR 30 YEARS, AND I'VE HAD A LOT OF ASSISTANTS REPORT TO ME..."

Guidelines

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

Expressions of opinions should be brief, no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with names and addresses.

We reserve the right to edit as to length, offensive words, libelous statements, or to reject altogether. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and letters will reflect the writer's own style.

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