

Editorials

Practical Idealism

We have been advising promoters of good causes, such as those in the pro-life movement, to use their heads as well as their hearts. We have worried publicly that over-zealousness has often hurt worthwhile endeavors.

Thus we appreciated a phrase used by a young Jewish law student on leave from Boston University to help pro-lifers. Marvin Weisberger told the National

Right to Life convention in St. Louis recently that pro-lifers must be "practical idealists."

Weinberger who describes himself as "pro-life and proud of it" cautioned the convention to remember that pro-abortionists are not "stupid . . . they're really very smart." He said pro-lifers must develop "chutzpah," which he defined as having nerve or guts and be "menches" - real, nice persons.

Lest anyone think guess that Weinberger is all verbal fluff, he, along with Alan Segedy, an Akron lawyer, developed the recently enacted ordinance in that city which regulates abortion facilities and procedures. Among other things the Akron Ordinance requires "informed consent" by which a woman

considering an abortion must be informed of the fetal development, of alternatives to abortion and of the biological consequences of the abortion. It also requires that a "viable fetus" of more than six months capable of living outside the womb must be kept alive by medical means, that minors have parental consent for an abortion and that a 24-hour cooling off period take place between the "informed consent" time and the abortion.

Now Weinberger has formed Citizens for Informed Consent which offers services to states and cities interested in enacting similar legislation.

Weinberger himself appears to be the embodiment of his term "practical idealist."

and Opinions

Cartoon Draws Fire

Editor:

You published a cartoon on the Editorial Page (Courier-Journal, 7/5/78) depicting a couple in wedding attire sitting stone-faced in front of a priest counselor who was urging them to "give it a chance." We couldn't laugh. We would imagine that many counselors couldn't laugh; many newlyweds couldn't laugh; many separated and divorced people couldn't laugh. Perhaps our ministry among engaged people, as well as those who have experienced the trauma of separation and divorce, has deepened within us a perception of what is appropriately humorous.

We are realistic ministers who frequently face discouraging situations such as: the lack of understanding among engaged people of what Christian marriage must be - and what it cannot be; the abdication of responsibility on the part of parents and priests who perceive serious factors in engaged couples - detrimental to Christian marriage - and, yet, remain silent; contemporary social mores which undermine marriage and permanent commitment.

There are approximately 300 people in the Rochester diocese - married couples, separated or divorced people, priests and young women religious - who are concerned enough about preparing our young people for marriage that they are involved in Pre-Cana and Engaged Encounter programs designed to provide engaged couples with a realistic, and yet visionary, understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage. Concerned teachers in our parochial secondary schools are developing courses focused on the theology of Christian marriage and psychological principles of mature adult love and commitment.

The dedication of all these people is praiseworthy and their sense of ministry is an encouragement to those involved in an impending marriage. A cartoon such as the one you published is not encouraging! We recommend that there be a

more sensitive screening of such items in the future.

The Office of Family Life Team
James and Donna Fitch
Sister Kathleen Kircher, SSJ
Frank and Sue Staropoli

Infant Death Up 300 Per Cent

Editor:

According to recent studies by the World Health Organization, the infant death rate in hungry countries has increased three-fold in the past ten years. Economic, wholesome and sterile mothers' milk is being replaced by artificial formula. Lack of clean water, refrigeration, and fuel make adequate preparation of a commercial product impossible. Inadequate income to use the expensive formula in proper concentrations is causing malnutrition and death.

But no more than ten per cent of Third World Mothers have any real need for artificial food. Since population growth and hence formula sales have rapidly declined in the United States and other developed countries, formula manufacturers have aggressively marketed their product in the baby-booming areas of Asia, South America and Africa.

In 1976, the Sisters of the Precious Blood filed lawsuit against Bristol-Meyers for misstatement of fact regarding the formula marketing practices in the company proxy statement.

Nationally and locally, a boycott is being launched against the Nestle Co., the largest seller of infant formula to the Third World.

Several diocesan Human Development committees interested in corporate responsibility and world hunger, have sponsored education programs around the issue. Further information is available this summer from the Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center.

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'Put House In Order'

Editor:

Is time running out for this country? This nation in which we live contains two million mothers who have destroyed their children. Two million abortions are only part of the symptoms of a society which is sick to death by a disease called Sin.

Among the noticeable symptoms we see anti-Christian forces working to destroy our country and all that we hold dear including our faith in God.

How long will our Heavenly Father hold back His punishment of this nation for demoralizing its youth through drugs, pornography and X-rated movies?

These evils which we see in our society are not something to be lamented. Rather, we must consider them as a warning and a challenge; either this trend must be averted or we will face the wrath of a Patient God.

How long can the patience of God be tested? Wake up America and start putting your house in order.

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Should We Disarm?

Editor:

Reflecting on the COURIER-JOURNAL's June 14 article "Pope's Plea: Disarmament," it seems fitting that our Holy Father be more specific.

After all it is the Soviet Union not the United States who has and is now building more weapons than is needed for its defense.

In addition the Soviet Union has built underground facilities for industry and civilian populations not to mention their anti-ballistic missile system (ABM) which we dismantled back in 1972.

It has been estimated that if the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were involved in a nuclear war we would lose about half our population (100 million) while the Soviet Union would lose between five and ten million people.

In lieu of the massive arms buildup in the last decade by the Soviet

Union it is quite clear that they believe in the possibility of winning a nuclear war.

As Catholics and concerned Americans we must do all in our power to stop Soviet imperialism.

We will have failed in that task if we agree to disarmament agreements that keep us militarily inferior and do not provide for "on site inspection."

With all due respect to our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, Soviet imperialism not nuclear weapons are "... the most fearsome menace with which mankind is burdened."

The bloodbath in Cambodia is brutal evidence that the communists do not need nuclear weapons to practice genocide.

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Descriptions Are Resented

Editor:

I read with mixed emotion Father Benedict Ehmman's column on Catholic wedding music (C-J 6/14/78). Having several years of experience as a church organist and being in the midst of planning with my fiancé our own wedding, the topic was timely.

I certainly resent Father's description of priests as "cowed," brides as "tearful," mothers as "irate," and the wedding day as "the bride's one big day." It seems unfortunate that the prelims to a wedding were characterized so mockingly. A priest that can be "cowed" deserves to be! Who's afraid of pastoral counseling on music? As for tearful brides and irate mothers I met none and heard of only a few. And since when isn't their wedding also the groom's big day as well? In my experiences with weddings, couples took the responsibility of planning the ceremony seriously and sought the experience of their priest, organist and family for guidance.

I fully agree with Father that music should provide "for inspiration of faith and prayer" and "not at any indiscriminate time of the Liturgy." However the pragmatist will be quick to remind you that one of the beauties of music is its subjectivity and therefore no matter what is played or sung, you can't please all of the people all of the time. On the matter of timing it should be the responsibility of the priest and/or the organist/musical director

to give the couple the benefit of their experience and give clear directives on the timing of the music so it integrates with the spoken word smoothly.

I also agree that it is a "thankless toil to compile a list of 'acceptable' titles for wedding music," for surely one would have to toil long and hard to find enough attractive music from traditional Catholic sources to go with all the weddings. The selection is limited, and if choices were restricted, regardless of the list's musical beauty, they would soon be as hackneyed as the Mendelssohn Wedding March.

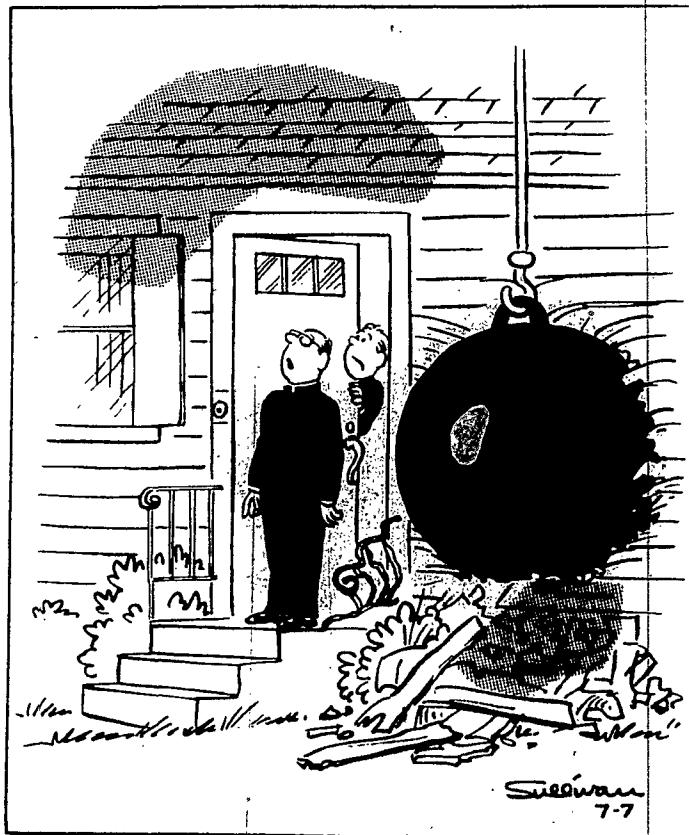
On another point, the Church sees fit to provide numerous options in the Marriage rite and Nuptial Mass to allow the couple to tailor the liturgy to reflect their relationship with God and each other. If they can

handle that responsibly, they can certainly handle the subordinate responsibility of music selection.

As a musician I am leery of subjective edicts on musical taste and was edgy through Father Ehmman's discourse on singing; I was relieved that later he admitted that "good taste . . . cannot be legislated," although he gave it a try.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I find it hard to believe that any couple purposefully plans their ceremony to be a circus rather than a wedding. Some preliminary discussion can serve to bring forth differences in taste and provide a forum for their resolve more efficiently than cumbersome musical edicts.

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"ALL RIGHT, MR. PUTNEY, LET'S TALK ABOUT IT AND FIND OUT WHY YOU'RE ANGRY AT THE CHURCH!"

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We encourage readers to submit opinions but since we try to print letters from as many different contributors as possible we will publish no more than one letter a month from the same individual.