

Editorials

Autopsy?

A hue and cry has been raised concerning the failure of the Vatican to order an autopsy on the body of Pope John Paul when he died unexpectedly Sept. 28. While this is lamentable it should also have been anticipated by Vatican officials who could have avoided it by reasonable action.

But because consideration of the public is far from the minds of those who work behind closed walls in Vatican City, the world, and remember those who are not Catholic are involved, is subjected to such reports as appeared in the important newspaper Corriere della Sera of Milan.

"The Church," Corriere said, "had nothing to lose -- on the contrary much to gain -- if an autopsy had been conducted."

The cause of death was listed as acute myocardial infarction, heart attack. A niece of the pontiff said the family does not believe that a heart attack caused the death. They lean to the overburdening aspects of the papacy as wearing down the Pope. A heart specialist at Rome's largest hospital, San Camillo, said the death "could have been due to a cerebral hemorrhage" rather than a heart attack.

We agree that an autopsy should have been ordered immediately. Common sense would have dictated such in light of the stunning aspect of John Paul's death. It would have satisfied a natural curiosity but more importantly it would have headed off the even more ugly rumors of possible foul play that have arisen in some circles. And the latter was predictable too.

Three points present themselves:

Number one -- it would have been comfortable for the faithful to know beyond doubt the cause of the sudden death of their Pope.

Number two -- it would have erased any un-

certainties in the minds of those who are not Catholic.

But it must be admitted that those who fall into these two categories are just normally curious about the death cause. To them, it is not a burning issue.

However, Number three -- there are those who take some kind of odd satisfaction in manufacturing the most scurrilous rumors about the Church and her leaders. The shame is there are those gullible enough to believe anything, provided it is outlandish enough.

An immediate autopsy would have taken the wind from their sails.

But now the rumors are afloat, an autopsy at this late date would only add momentum.

There are lessons in this sad turn of events. A little more openness by Vatican insiders, much in the style of Pope John Paul, would help allay uncertainties of the faithful and also take away grist for the gossip-mongers.

and Opinions

Death Clouds Bright Hopes

Editor:

We are saddened by the unexpected passing of Pope John Paul which has suddenly clouded the bright feelings of only a month ago. We extend our most heartfelt condolences to our Catholic fellow Americans.

Pope John Paul inspired hope in millions throughout the world with his message of compassion, understanding, optimism and goodwill towards all members of the human community.

He was pope at a time of great and unexpected promise for peace in the Middle East, for which he prayed so earnestly, and he showed his generosity of spirit by indicating his concern for the security of Israel. We will remember him for the kindness and serenity of his personality which gave a warm face to these momentous times.

Irving Ruderman, president; Darrell D. Friedman, executive director
Jewish Community Federation

Why Not Use Word 'Mass'?

Editor:

I was extremely interested in Bob Palmer's letter to the editor, Sept. 20, 1978, because when I read Bishop Hogan's address, I was dismayed that he used such strange phrases in place of the word Mass. In fact, I reread it just to make sure that he actually was referring to the Mass.

What is wrong with using the word Mass? For centuries, almost anyone, if a Catholic, hearing the word Mass knew that it meant the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary; if not a Catholic, at least knew that it was an important part of Catholic worship. Very few hearing the words Eucharistic Liturgy or Liturgical Assemblies will call to mind Christ's passion and agonizing crucifixion -- isn't this the

basis of our faith and intent of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? After all, a bishop's ministry, as I understand it, is to the unlearned as well as the learned.

Admittedly, the Bishop was not addressing the general public. However, although I reluctantly have come to agree that many of the changes are good, I sincerely feel that changing well-known words of our faith simply for change's sake is one more step in the continuing trend toward the protestantization of the Roman Catholic Faith.

Anna C. Stadelmaier
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Pope Brought Out the Best

Editor:

There have been a very few leaders through the centuries who by force of personality forever altered the lives of those with whom they came into contact.

Some of these have been men of politics or of war. A few have been men of God. Pope John Paul was of the latter group.

His personality was infectious. It brought out the best in us, whatever our religion. It proclaimed us all children of God, objects of His love. It brightened the day and somehow brought all humanity closer together.

He had only 33 days to reign, too brief a time for any leader to even define his goals in detail. Yet his personality was such that all humanity seemed to respond, as if promising him we would all try to do better. Is it just coincidence that Egypt and Israel moved so much closer to peace during his reign? Perhaps, but I suspect his moral example played a part.

The world is sadder today for losing him, as I am sadder. But it is a better place, for in those five weeks he made it so. For that we can all rejoice.

Lawrence T. Kurlander
District Attorney
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Lawyers Guild Attack 'Brave'

Editor:

In regard to the article in which the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild attacked Planned Parenthood, may we say that we are very concerned. For more than two years now we have read articles and letters in the "Social Justice Review," the Catholic Register, the Our Sunday Visitor, the Osservatore Romano, the Democrat and Chronicle and the Times-Union which deal with Planned Parenthood.

Everything we've read so far shows that Planned Parenthood is as heavily involved in so-called sex education as it is in abortion. Also we point out that Planned Parenthood works very closely with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare whose idea of moral "neutrality" is to subsidize the abortion mentality.

We sincerely pray that the guild's brave attack on Planned Parenthood will inspire the Diocese of Rochester to present a truly Catholic program on human life and morality. The "Education in Love" series which has been used here for years, is, in our opinion, woefully inadequate as a vehicle of Catholic direction. Its incredible stress on the mechanics of the sex act is almost an echo of Planned Parenthood/HEW.

We understand that "Education in Love" is now under "revision" and we hope the results will be an improvement, but we are uneasy about it all. With due respect for well-meaning but poorly advised priests and nuns who project their personal theological interpretations all too often, we suggest that the following list of books is a good start toward a truly Christian/Judaic bibliography.

In the Image of God, O'Reilly; To Live in Jesus Christ, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB); Behold Your Mother, NCCB; the Choose Life Sex Education Series, Indiana Catholic Bishops; Man, the Greatest of Miracles, Dr. Doegfried Ernst; A Hedge of Roses,

A Jewish Insight into Marriage and Family Life by a Rabbi; Magisterial Teaching on Life, Boston Catholic Conference; Life, Liberty and Law (Sex Education Series); Declaration on Sexual Ethics and Human Life, Pope Paul VI.

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Lab Baby Discussed

Editor:

Re: M. A. Kocher's lab baby poem.

Father Albert M. S. Moraczewski, OP, president of the Pope John XXIII Medical Moral Research Center in St. Louis called the recent test tube birth in England a scientific wonder but at the same time expressed the Catholic Church's disapproval of the values involved.

The medical ethics expert noted that the basic criticism of test tube births in the Church's view is that externalization of reproduction violates the two-fold purpose of sexual expression in marriage: the procreative and the unitive aspects.

"Although in this particular case, the act took place in the context of marriage, it is not a natural process. Conception was

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not simply aided but was bypassed," he said, adding that "the unitive and procreative aspects of it must be kept together and not positively excluded."

In the Browns' case the scientist, Dr. Patrick Steptoe said he tried 40 times and had 40 failures

before successful fertilization took place. That means there were 40 human embryos discarded because of the difficulties; 40 human lives wasted in experimentation.

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