

Editorials

Common Sense

We happen to think a recent editorial in Commonweal magazine was right on. Now, wait a minute, all you Wanderer adherents, you also may agree.

Commonweal's editorial, "Do Catholics Have Constitutional Rights?" raised some questions certainly worth the consideration of all. It maintained that the religious arguments advanced by plaintiffs in a class action suit in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn are discriminatory and would "disenfranchise all religious viewpoints from engagement in the political process."

The suit is McRae vs. Califano — a class action challenging the Hyde Amendment, which restricts Medicaid reimbursements for abortion.

According to Commonweal, the plaintiffs contend that the amendment is equivalent to the establishment of religion because of lobbying in its behalf by religious groups, particularly Roman Catholics.

Commonweal noted that the plaintiffs included the Women's Division of the Board of Ministries of the United Methodist Church and, among the plaintiff's representatives, lawyers from Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union.

"Curiously," the editorial asserted, the tenets of the mentioned groups "ought to place them squarely on the other side of the issue."

The editorial said the Methodist women were undermining "their own political rights to win an immediate victory."

The ACLU came in for sterner criticism. The editorial said the organization defended the right of American Nazis to march in Illinois but is "not as solicitous of the First Amendment when a controversy involves American Catholics as when it involves American Nazis."

The editorial admitted that the Hyde Amendment presented complicated questions but contended that the argument that one religious viewpoint is being advanced at the expense of another is not logical.

And what seems more important to us is the editorial's point that said the plaintiffs' argument, if accepted, would disenfranchise all religious viewpoints from political involvement. Such an argument, the editorial said, "would apply as well toward Jewish mobilization of the religious community for civil rights legislation, the nineteenth century agitation by religious against slavery."

Another consideration which should be remembered is that the Hyde Amendment does not reflect

only the views of Catholics but also of many other religions, including Orthodox Jews, Mormons and "various currents of belief among Lutherans, Methodists, and Baptists," as termed by Religious News Service.

Chalk one up for Commonweal: The editorial said something that needed saying. And coming from a liberal publication had even more impact in this context.

Extremists

And continuing in the same vein of reflecting on the work of other communications agencies, we also appreciate a recent commentary by Vatican Radio.

It sharply criticized both liturgical "progressives" and "conservatives" with equal fervor.

The "progressives," as characterized by the broadcast, are "impatient radicals" who "are damaging legitimate progress as they provoke extremist reactions and, in a certain sense, obscure the authentic spirit of the liturgy."

"On the other hand," the commentary evened its criticism, "the conservative groups lack correct knowledge of the history of the liturgy and its development."

Both positions were called "extremist... therefore sterile."

The same could probably be said for those on the polar ends of any issue.

and Opinions

Appreciated 'Perspectives'

Editor:

At this time I would like to express my appreciation to Bishop Hogan for all the encouragement he has given me as I go along in my Christian walk through his beautiful messages in the Catholic Courier each week.

One in particular that I really liked was when he used a quotation from St. Theresa: "We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future." What a blessing to me to see what the Lord has done in my life and what He's still doing and not even knowing one day I'd have a chance to say this to the bishop — but the Lord knew.

I would like to share with him now and all the other readers: "One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was on a beach walking with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

"When the last scene flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints and noticed that many times along the way there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest times of his life. He questioned the Lord about it, 'Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way. I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why in the times I needed you most, you would leave me.'

"The Lord replied, 'My precious child, I love you and would never leave you. You see, during your times of suffering when you see only one set of footprints they were my

prints — that's when I carried you.'"

Thanks to Bishop Hogan for being a wonderful shepherd to his flock of sheep.

Patty Genco
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Bishop Planted Seeds of Hope

Editor:

We hurry to be among the first to publicly thank Bishop Hogan for being a ray of hope, not only for our diocese but for divorced, separated and remarried Catholics across the nation. Bishop Hogan appointed one of the first fulltime coordinators of ministry to divorced-separated-remarried Catholics on the North American continent in August of 1976, when he appointed Sister Kathleen Kircher. She has become a model and resource person, recognized by her appointment this year to the Advisory Board to the North American Conference of Separated-Divorced-Remarried Catholics. The diocese has been a pacesetter in the divorced Catholic ministry.

Since 1975, 15 groups have sprung up from the seeds of hope and trust planted by Bishop Hogan. He has tended his garden well, showering us with love, understanding and encouragement. He has celebrated special liturgies for us, took the first donation from his own pocket to provide seed money for the Beginning Experience Weekend program — which is similar to Marriage Encounter — for formerly marrieds, and encouraged the recognition of lay persons' contributions in ministering to one another. We have blossomed in his garden. We are proud of our diocese being one of the pacesetters. We are not lukewarm Catholics or lost sheep anymore. We are

proud to be fully involved in one of the most dynamic ministries in the Catholic Church.

Thanks, Bishop Hogan, for reaching out to us.

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Deeply Saddened

Editor:

I was deeply saddened by the announcement made by Bishop Hogan concerning his retirement as Bishop of Rochester.

We are losing someone who by his word and example, reflected the love that the Lord has for each of us. He truly lived up to his motto: "Gladly will I spend and be spent."

The Church, if it is to continue its change and growth must have the kind of leadership that was displayed by Bishop Hogan.

I hope and pray that as we are choosing a successor we will be guided by the Holy Spirit and keep in mind someone who will continue to implement some of the programs that have already been started.

In closing, I would like to say, "Thank you, Bishop Hogan, for being a true and humble servant of our Lord to His people. I wish you well and I pray that your future years will be filled with the peace, love and joy that is our Lord Jesus Christ."

Patricia Russo
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PBS Movie 'Disturbing'

Editor:

I was disturbed that PBS, Channel 21, devoted

two hours on Nov. 30 to present Word is Out. This was advertised as "26 people tell what it's like to be homosexual in America."

The bible, for example Chapter 18 of Leviticus, condemns rather than rationalizes the above and related behaviors. Specifically verse 22 labels such conduct as an abomination. We may sympathize with, but not condone the actions of certain people, for which they should be alone accountable. If not, then are we to take the bible, and the lesson of Sodom and Gomorrah, with a grain of salt?

Francis Smith
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Inconsistent Morality?

Editor:

How can one support human development without first morally supporting development of the conceived being that is human?

Definition: Anomaly — a deviation or turning from the natural order.

Definition: Priority — the state of being first, in rank, time or place.

The one basic issue today, worldwide, is the demand for action to protect the very right to life.

Terresa M. Cameron
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Christmas Reflections

Editor:

During this Christmas season we would like to share with the readers of the Courier-Journal an appropriate message that came to us from the priests of the Marianist Mission in Dayton, O. It is called One Solitary Life.

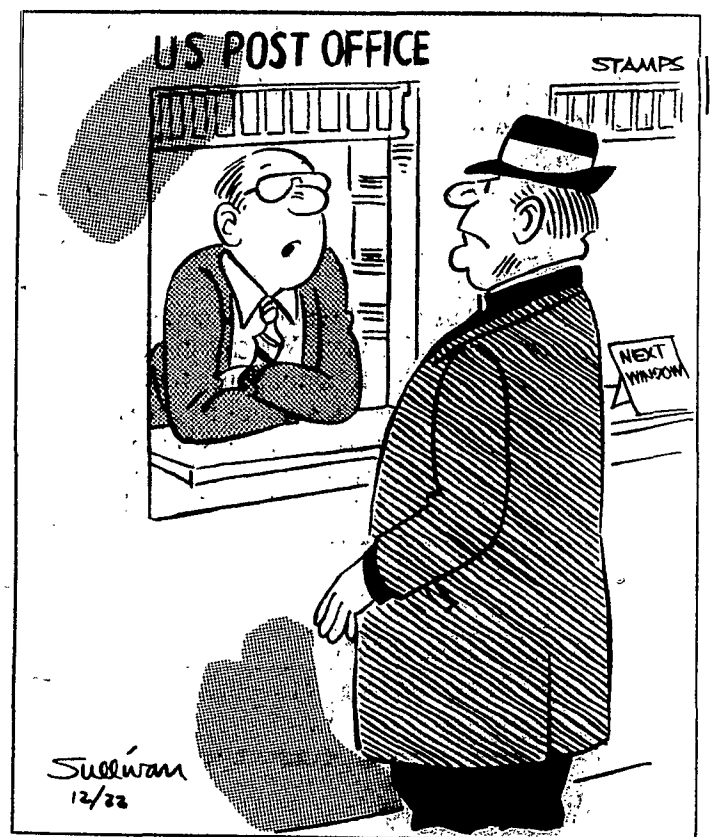
He was born in an obscure village./He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty./He never held an office./He never had a family or owned a house./He had no credentials./He was only thirty-three when the

public turned against him./He went through a mock trial./He was nailed to a cross between two thieves./His executioners gambled for his clothing, his only property./He was laid in a borrowed grave./Nineteen centuries have come and gone and/Today he is the central figure of the human race./All the armies that

ever marched and/All the parliaments that ever sat and/All the kings that ever reigned/Have not affected the life of man on earth as much as that/One Solitary Life.

William D. Morgan, Sr.
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To 5, 22



"LOOK, I DON'T HARP ON HOW SLOWLY THE CHURCH MOVES."

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