

Editorials

Death Penalty

There are many strange sights 'neath the Northern Lights, a poet once observed. And it could be added that one of the strangest of these is the way politics works in a democracy.

The case that prompts this thought is the current legislative look at capital punishment. The death penalty is itself doomed in New York State, thanks to Gov. Hugh Carey's heroic opposition (would that he took the same anti-death stance concerning abortion).

The governor vetoed the legislature's insistence on death as a societal remedy last year, as just about anybody who read campaign rhetoric before last November's election must realize.

The oddity in all this lies in the fact that the governor has always announced in advance his intention to veto the death penalty, which for unfortunate reasons, seems to be popular among the citizenry. We say "seems to be" because although all the polls indicate capital punishment is favored by the general populace, Gov. Carey, who practically single-handedly is keeping it out of the law in New York State, was nonetheless a smashing victor last November.

But as we plagiarized earlier, there are "many" strange sights and another of these lies in the unhappy political fact of life that many legislators, given Carey's

promised veto beforehand, can vote in favor of death, knowing that it will not become law anyway, and at the same time keep the voters back home happy.

At this time, as last year, there doesn't seem to be enough votes in the Assembly to override Carey's veto. Let's all who endorse the idea that there must be alternatives within the parameter of life to solve our crime problems pray that Carey's resolve remain unshaken and that his veto stay insurmountable.

Smoking

And speaking of life and death, we urge all to seriously consider the latest report on the dangers of cigarette smoking issued by the surgeon general of the United States.

Based on the findings of some 30,000 research papers, the report says that there is now almost unanimous agreement among doctors and scientists that cigarette smoking is harmful to health and causes diseases, including lung cancer and heart ailments. The new report warned that the death rate for smokers was two thirds higher than for nonsmokers among both men and women, and that new research ties smoking more closely to cancer and heart diseases.

We understand that the Tobacco Institute must defend itself but we think its spokesmen are committing an injustice to themselves and the rest of us when they classify the findings as "more rehash than research." This quick resort to Madison Avenue sloganism will not, we hope, create a smokescreen

around the obvious fact that cigarette smoking is a very dangerous pursuit.

Smoking, if it has not already, is becoming more and more a matter of morality. We wish to avoid being judgmental in the matter but at the same time we think it might be wise for every smoker to skip just one cigarette the next time it is lighting up time and use that short period to reflect on the benefits vs. the dangers of smoking.

No Billy?

We just have to repeat Art Buchwald's recent classic. He writes that Jimmy Carter hopes to be reborn again -- this time as an only child.

Thanks, Pilgrim

We are thankful that John Wayne has survived his most recent surgery, although he apparently faces some rugged going. We have a hunch that this bigger-than-life man will bear his burden well as he has in the past. It seems that a person who is able to stand success also can stand up to pressure.

For all the entertainment, actor Wayne has provided we tender him a sincere thank you. Thanks, pilgrim.

and Opinions

Helpful Column

Editor:
Father Shamon's column "Word for Sunday" has proved to be an invaluable help to me as a religious educator at Our Lady of Mercy School in Greece.

I use it in my classes to prepare the students for Sunday's readings. I find it motivates them to attend the Masses and we compare his interpretations with those of our homilists during our Monday classes.

I can highly recommend it to other religious teachers throughout the diocese.

Mrs. Hilda Smythe
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Literature For Missions

Editor:
Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines to the Foreign Missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Mary Conway
14, Castle Street
Cork, Ireland

Prayer Suggested

Editor:
Just about the time of Pope John Paul I's death, I became seriously ill, so I wasn't able to pay much attention to the events. My illness resulted in surgery, which was successful, but I did not improve. At that time it seemed every paper or book I picked up had a little picture of John Paul I. This little prayer formed in my mind: "John Paul I,

of the smiling face, pray for me." I believe he has.

I humbly suggest to anyone with a serious problem to ask his intercession. I truly believe that someday he will be canonized.

Mrs. L. H. Klem
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Discusses Infallibility

Editor:
Father Louis Hohman in his column in the Jan. 10 Courier-Journal asks for answers concerning the questions he poses concerning infallible decisions made by the teaching Church. I think the answer to his queries can be found in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church issued by the second Vatican Council. In Number 25 of this Constitution, we read the following: "Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they can nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly. This is so, even when they are dispersed around the world, provided that while maintaining the bond of unity among themselves and with Peter's successor, and while teaching authentically on a matter of faith or morals, they concur in a single viewpoint as the one which must be held conclusively. This authority is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an ecumenical council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church. Their definitions must then be adhered to with the submission of faith." This teaching of the Council is the basis for the article "Contraception and Infallibility" written by Father John Ford, SJ, and Germain Grisez in the June 1978 issue of Theological Studies, wherein they argue that the above conditions mentioned by the Council

are verified with regard to Humanae Vitae, and because of which they consider Humanae Vitae to be infallible doctrine.

Apart from infallible teaching, the Council had this to say, in a passage just prior to the above quotation, concerning teaching which is not ex cathedra: "This religious submission of will and mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when is not speaking ex cathedra.

"That is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known chiefly either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking."

In the interval since 1968, when the encyclical, Humanae Vitae, was issued, the supreme

authority has reaffirmed the teaching, and never deviated from it. It certainly binds all members of the Church, and unless the reasoning of Ford and Grisez is shown to be fallacious, the doctrine is infallible.

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Thank You, Diocesans

Editor:
Once again the people of the Rochester diocese have been very generous in their gifts to the Campaign for Human Development November appeal. A final collection total is still unavailable, but indicators show a continuing pattern of strong support by parish communities throughout the diocese for this anti-poverty effort created by the Catholic bishops of our country in 1970.

Now the important work of soliciting and evaluating proposals is before the seven regional CHD task forces of the diocese. Members of these

task forces are local people aware of Campaign for Human Development goals and community needs. It is their responsibility to allocate the local funds available.

I just want to say thank you to the people of the diocese and to CHD task force members. Your support and your efforts on behalf of the Campaign for Human Development are appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

Carole Lloyd
Diocesan Director
Campaign for
Human Development
750 W. Main St.
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NFP Instruction

Editor:
In the Jan 10 Courier-Journal we noted an advertisement for the Couple to Couple League's NFP Weekend Training Workshop to be Jan. 20-21 at LeMoyn College in Syracuse. The instructor is John Kippley from Cincinnati, Ohio. We wish to inform your readers they need not travel so far for instruction if they wish

to use Natural Family Planning.

We offer information sessions and private and group instruction in 12 counties for engaged and married couples wishing to use NFP. Our \$20 fee includes the cost of books and supplies as well as three instruction sessions over an 18-week period. The second two sessions are scheduled for follow up purposes although couples can begin to use the method after Session 1. We strongly feel that one weekend of instruction is not enough to successfully practice NFP over a period of time. Couples learning Natural Family Planning need help from time to time with charts and our instructors are available at all times for guidance and to answer questions.

Your readers are encouraged to call us if we can answer any questions or be of any help.

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Courier-Journal

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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.

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.



DON'T EXPECT ANY SYMPATHY WHEN YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT MY WATCHING TOO MUCH BASKETBALL ON TV!