

Editorials

Legislative Report . . . 1979

Elsewhere in this edition a story reports on the general legislative program of the State Catholic Conference, that group which represents the interests of our bishops in Albany.

We would guess that most readers know what to expect in such a report - that the Church is concerned with the rights of society's underdogs - the unborn, the sick, the imprisoned, the condemned; you know, the same ones for whom Jesus Christ Himself so cared.

And we would venture that most people have a pretty good idea that besides letting our legislators know of such concerns, the Catholic Conference also works for specific legislation to reach such goals and opposes bills it deems detrimental to its aims.

So what we hope to pass on in a series of oc-

casional editorials on the work of the conference is a better insight into its more prosaic, nitty-gritty, watchdog labors.

Key members of the conference, including its executive director, Charles Tobin, recently presented a sort of workshop for diocesan editors, public information leaders and radio-television specialists from around the state. While most of the time was spent on the obvious problems facing the Church right now, such as the job of cutting off Medicaid funds for abortions or opposition to capital punishment, the visitors from around the state also learned about more subtle difficulties which have not as yet blossomed into full-grown concerns.

For instance, we were alerted to the beginning of what may be a concerted attack on the Hyde Amendment, that federal bill which would overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decision liberalizing abortion, because its opponents claim it incorporates a religious viewpoint into law.

Of course, the fact that a bill attracts religious support does not mean that religious groups are imposing the law on the populace, a Cath-Con official declared. But nonetheless there is worry that a court may affirm such a principle and that is the kind of early warning point that the state group must address in addition to its more obvious labors.

It is generally agreed that if a Number 1 issue were to be designated for this legislative session, it would be the dispute over Medicaid funding of abortion. Sides have lined up early and it looms as perhaps the biggest of all legislative confrontations this session.

But even this momentous issue is not the only important concern. There is, of course, the effort to restore another death-dealing remedy for societal ills - capital punishment. The conference will be keeping its collective eyes on the ongoing fight by Catholic hospitals to preserve obstetrical services; the possible strengthening of chaplaincy positions at state institutions (in this regard our diocesan team ministry at the Elmira Correctional Institute was deemed a praiseworthy example); the fight over real property tax, whereby so many are declaring themselves to be ministers thus avoiding payment of taxes; public assistance to welfare recipients; possible alternative to incarceration in some cases; sex education; the Year of the Child, and so on.

We plan to touch on these subjects from time to time in this space for two reasons - 1. to keep our readers informed on the live issues and the Church's position, and 2. to keep our readers aware that they have an ongoing and effective organization representing the Church's viewpoint right where it often counts the most, in the state capital.

and Opinions

Statement Issued by St. Bernard's Faculty Members

Editor:

In recent weeks several articles have been published in the Rochester and the national press which have been highly critical of the educational program and the theological orthodoxy of St. Bernard's Seminary. St. Bernard's has always welcomed constructive criticism, especially in these complicated post-Vatican II years when all American Catholic seminaries, under the direction of our bishops, have had to deal with the difficult problems of mapping new directions and providing for new needs. Public criticism which makes sensational charges based on inadequate information can usually be disregarded. Irresponsibility is normally self-defeating.

Unfortunately, these recent allegations and innuendoes seem to be multiplying rather than diminishing, and the good name of the seminary seems seriously threatened. It is time, therefore, for us as members of the seminary faculty to make our own position clear. As faculty members who are in a position to judge the status of the institution in which we work, we want to reassure friends of the seminary who are understandably disturbed by the current wave of unanswered allegations.

We, therefore, without hesitation, make the following affirmations:

1. The present program at the seminary is one of which we are rightly proud.
2. We have full confidence in the present administration of the seminary.

3. We, the signers of this letter, are individually and collectively committed to the official Program of Priestly Formation of the American Bishops.

- The Rev. Msgr. Francis B. Burns
- The Rev. Robert J. DiFulio
- The Rev. Anthony J. Eremito
- The Rev. George H. Hill
- The Rev. Joseph M. Jankowiak
- The Rev. David F. Kelly
- Mr. Joseph G. Kelly
- Dr. Anne Minton
- The Rev. John F. O'Grady
- The Rev. Jasper G. Pennington
- Dr. Joseph A. Torma
- The Rev. William A. Trott
- The Rev. Theodore J. Weeden Sr.
- The Rev. Joseph P. Brennan
- The Rev. Robert F. McNamara

Daddy's Love From Prison

Editor:

To my jewels of life, I know you are very worried about me and I know that you are all breathlessly awaiting my return home.

You have a very distressed "Daddy" who gives you quick hugs, listens to you and patiently waits for God to answer his prayers.

At times I have seen that look of love in your eyes and the ache in your little hearts. I am dreadfully afraid that it will be too late to reach you when some day I am released from prison.

You know that I love all of you so very dearly and deeply.

Through the years I have struggled to make a better life for all of you.

Your presence is as close to life as I have come to know.

To me you are life itself when I touch you, feel your hair, watch your

smile and feel your tenderness in my arms.

When, like a grownup, you pat my cheek and say "Daddy" in your cute, little way, I realize that you understand more than you let on.

You have thoughts and adventures I shall never share. Yet you are a part of me which is completely free and how I long to share it with you again.

I wish I had the opportunity to have the time to follow you more closely and to teach you the many wonders of our world as a "Daddy" should.

You will always be in my heart, my thoughts, my life and on my lips when I go to sleep at night. I love all of you, Daddy.

Anthony Liccione
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The Two Roads

Editor:

As baptized Christians, we live no longer under the old written code, but in the new life of the Spirit. God

has not called us to uncleanness but to holiness in Christ Jesus. You must awake from sleep for the night is far spent and the dawn comes quickly.

If you wish to live in the friendship of God then heed the Holy Spirit and follow the narrow road bearing on your shield these virtues, the fruits of the spirit, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, faith, hope, love, modesty, continency, compassion, mercy and humility. Against such, there is no law. On the narrow road you have become the children of God. Heaven is your reward.

To those who wish to continue on in their sin, then continue, follow the wide road and do the works of the flesh written on the scroll of Satan, the deeds are manifest - fornication, wrath, pride, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, (money) quarrels, dissension, greed, sects, envy, hatred, murder, reveling, drunkenness, cruelty and such.

Narrow, rough, rocky and winding is the road to life eternal with Jesus. Wide, straight and smooth is the road that leads to the

halls of never-ending darkness.

Christ has delivered all from the futile way by shedding blood beyond all price. Our life is a new rebirth not from a destructible seed but by the living and enduring word of God most high. Awake from sleep.

Brother Francis
125 St. Paul St.
Rochester, B.Y. 14604

Birthright Thankful

Editor:

Now that the Respect Life Sunday monies have been distributed, BIRTHRIGHT, Rochester, would like to offer heartfelt thanks to all the people of the diocese.

We are most grateful, on behalf of all the unborn babies and their troubled mothers who need emotional, financial and material help to carry their children to term.

You have shared so that others might have life.

Thank you so very much.

Kathi Piehler
President
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Rochester, N.Y. 14618

Help Asked For School

Editor:

St. Monica's School is struggling for survival. As the mother of four children attending St. Monica's, I would like to urge people to respond to the recent ad in the Courier-Journal requesting their support.

Especially those alumni of St. Monica's, I hope they will respond. If each one only sent one dollar, the crisis would abate for now.

Virginia Baker
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Rochester, N.Y. 14619

More Opinions

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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 1½ 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.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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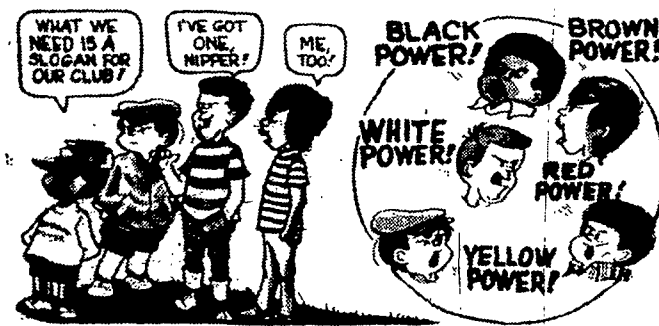
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Morrie Turner created this cartoon for the National Conference of Christians and Jews in observance of Brotherhood Week, Feb. 18-24. (RNS)