

Editorials

We Are All Boat People

It is a philosophical metaphor to declare that all humankind is together in one great vessel. And that is one figure of speech which is also true. For when we say, "We're all in the same boat," we, often unwittingly, are expressing a fact.

But when we discuss the boat people of Indochina we are outside the realm of figurative speaking. For while philosophically all of us are in the same boat as those abused people, we are safe from the physical suffering, the rejection, the fear, the possibility of unnoticed death at sea.

This dire situation has engendered a togetherness of cause among the rest of the world's people that is at

once commendable and urgent. It is typified by the some 1,500 congregations from the New York City area who have joined in an interdenominational letter-writing campaign to President Carter. Concerned Christians for Boat People has the support of the Roman Catholic archdiocese, the Episcopal bishop, the United Methodist Metropolitan District and the United United Presbyterian Church of New York.

The letters urge the government to reopen the refugee camps in the United States, admit 10,000 refugees immediately and provide rescue ships at sea.

The drive is typical of many throughout the world and of others here in our own country. For instance, the National Council of Jewish Women has offered the President the services of members in 200 cities to help in the resettlement of refugees.

This common cause needs immediate support from all sectors.

Letters, simply expressing concern and urging action in behalf of the boat people, should be sent to President Carter, the White House, Washington, D.C.

It also is advisable to write your U.S. senators and congressmen.

True, in a certain sense, it is only figurative to declare that we are all in the same boat. But we should also remember that in the eyes of God we are all boat people.

Dichotomy

Perhaps never has the division between the "haves" and "have-nots," or the powerful and the vulnerable been more graphically presented to us than in recent events.

Such figures robed in the comfort and means of world power as Somoza, Pahlevi and Nixon simply retire to a posh life when exiled because of their deeds while the innocent boat people, who have literally done nothing, are set adrift to starve or drown in rejection.

and Opinions

Issues Praised

Editor:

Recently, one of the Sisters on our Mission with me at St. Vincent's Medical Center received the May 31st issue of the Courier-Journal entitled, "Matthew H. Clark Is Ordained Our Bishop," and also the June 6th issue, entitled, "A Busy Week for Our New Bishop". She shared them with me and I just felt I wanted to tell you personally what an outstanding and magnificent piece of journalism these two issues presented to the people of the Diocese of Rochester. The texts of both, for which I believe you were responsible, along with the excellent photography by Mr. Costello, the Publisher and General Manager of the Courier-Journal, made one feel as they read it, that they were a part of the ceremony of ordination in Rome as well as a part of all the other functions that took place before Bishop Clark arrived in Rochester for his installation. We also felt that we knew him from the interesting biography of his life as well as photographs of him, his family members and his various assignments through the years prior to his appointment as Bishop.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in Utica, New York and saw the issue of the Courier-Journal that was devoted to Bishop Clark's actual installation as Bishop of the Rochester Diocese. The coverage was excellent.

Mr. Costello, you and the entire staff of the Courier-Journal are to be commended for the most outstanding in-depth journalistic coverage on a particular subject I have ever seen in any Catholic Weekly as well as any local newspaper. It was not only informative, but beautifully and interestingly presented both in its photography, text and format.

Congratulations on a real masterpiece of journalism.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Costello and John Dash for all the interest, cooperation and assistance you gave me while I was at St. Mary's

Hospital in publishing the facts on our Obstetrical Service as we struggled to maintain this important service against many difficulties from our regional health planning agency. The Obstetrical Service today is very active at St. Mary's Hospital and the role that the Courier-Journal played in presenting St. Mary's story and actual information to its readers was a very significant aspect in accomplishing this goal. It will always be appreciated.

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Inmate's Tips To Elderly

Editor:

As an inmate at Attica Correctional Facility, I would like to offer a few "safety tips" for the elderly. I have heard many ways of ripping off the elderly.

Never carry a purse, if you have to, always carry one with long handles so that it can be used as a shoulder bag.

Have your Social Security check mailed to the bank and deposited in your account.

Just carry as much money as you think you will need and put it in a hidden place on your person, under your coat or dress.

Fill out a card for cashing checks at supermarkets and pay by check, hence avoiding carrying any cash.

Always carry loose change in your pocket for telephones or the bus, if you should ever become stranded.

When riding a bus never sit near the door because that makes it easy for a crook to snatch your purse and jump off.

Your purse becomes easy pickings on an auto seat when the windows are open. Always place your purse on the floor of the car or thread a seat belt through the handle.

Keep your car keys on a separate ring from your house keys.

When parking your car always give the attendant your ignition key only.

If you ever have to walk any place at night always try to be with other people because there is safety in numbers.

Just remember you're no expert and you can be ripped off any time. Most of all please don't ever resist if you should ever come face to face with a thief, who may have a weapon and appears to be dangerous. It's better to lose money than your life.

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Russia Is Not 'Magic'

Editor:

In response to Howard Easling's opinion on the Soviet Union's "magic" (C-J July 11, 1979), let me share my experiences with you.

I have just returned from a semester abroad at London University. While there, I lived in a boarding house with two other Americans, three Englishmen and four Russians, all of us being students. The Russians were friendly and anxious to talk to us "Yanks", yet retained a cautious facade.

Extremely curious about American life, they asked endless questions - most were connected with their stereotyped visions learned in the Soviet Union. My American friends and I tried to shatter these misconceptions.

We too had many questions to ask. My roommate was Jewish and she often brought up the question of Soviet-Jewish persecution. In answering this question (and so many others) they replied with vague and obscure responses that only added to our confusion. And at every possible instance they stressed the glory in being Soviet citizens and the wonders of living in the Soviet Union.

Their true feelings came out one night in the local pub after one-too-many pints of ale. We Americans became bolder in our questions and our Russian friends became even bolder in their answers. Persecution by the KGB is commonplace not only for Jews, but for other Russians as well; Christian groups such as Baptists and well-known dissidents such as Sakharov are frequent targets.

And as for Mr. Easling's

claim that health care is free in the Soviet Union - that is utterly false. Nothing is free, not in the U.S., U.S.S.R. or anywhere else in the world. It all comes out in the individual's taxes, which are exorbitant in Russia. Food and commodities are incredibly inflated, selection is poor quality is even worse. Being on a waiting list for a telephone for ten years, paying \$75 for a pair of jeans, or living in the fear that someone is spying on you is not my idea of "magic."

One cannot truly know a country until one experiences that country's people; not even after 35 years of reading press releases. Sharing the friendship of four unhappy Russians, unanxious to return home after tasting freedom in England, made me appreciate the U.S. in a way that I never had before.

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On Finding God

Editor:

A Hindu guru and his disciple were travelling. As they walked, they discussed the best way to reach God. Finally they came to a river. There the guru grabbed his disciple's head and held it under the water. The disciple struggled hard to catch his breath. When the guru finally released him and he had recovered from the ducking, the disciple asked: "Why did you do that to me?" The guru replied: "When you want God, as much as you wanted air, you will find Him!"

"I tell you most solemnly, insofar as you did this to one of the least brothers of mine, you did it to me." So spoke Our Blessed Lord, stressing a truth which should guide all our actions, our acts of charity, towards our neighbor.

Hasidism confirmed this compassionate identification but Lord expressed with the unfortunate in the following story. A king had a son gone mad. The insane prince relieved himself a dog. He talked about on all fours, and did all the other actions we associate with dogs. His worried father, the king, summoned all his wise men and asked for their help. One of them offered this remedy.

He became a dog too, aping the canine the prince had visibly become. The prince found it difficult at first to believe the wise man was a dog, but gradually came round to that conclusion. The two became fast friends, romping together in the palace.

One day the wise man put on a shirt. The prince was puzzled. "Why should a dog," he said, "wear a shirt?" The wise man replied: "Every one knows a dog is a dog no matter what

he wears." The wise man then began to eat as humans eat, and showed the prince other human actions. The force of his example soon convinced the prince he was not a dog. He got to his feet and remained upright forever after.

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More Letters On Page 5



"LOOK, IT WAS ONLY A SUGGESTION."

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 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.

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