

Editorials

Savagery

Who needs war, the cynic might ask. "Peace" can be bloody enough.

At widely separated points all over the world, symptoms of a generally lessening regard for life are popping up — almost in every sector, almost in every culture.

The most vicious and current examples are being provided by the Irish Republican Army and the Ayatollah of Iran — unfortunately both involvements have religious overtones.

A great World War II hero, Lord Louis Mountbatten, and two other innocents were murdered by the IRA to attract some sort of attention to its cause. As if the situation has not received enough attention through its savagery.

But the IRA thugs, as is the style among today's public butchers, far from being chagrined about their shameful act, claim "credit" for murder, a la Palestinian Liberation Organization killers with their Munich massacre of Olympic athletes.

We hope that such inexcusable action redounds

against the cutthroats, but in today's world it doesn't necessarily happen that way.

And in case anyone is harboring the mistaken notion that such IRA acts have Church approbation, he should ponder this statement by the Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland.

"May this visit (Pope John Paul's stopover later this month) challenge all Irishmen to put an end to murdering hates and replace them with Christ's forgiveness and love.

"May the visit speak to the hearts and consciences of all those engaged in campaigns of violence and bring them back to awareness of the horrible evil of murder and of the absolute sacredness of human life.

"May these coming weeks of spiritual preparation for Pope John Paul's visit to Ireland not be marred by any more deeds of killing or of violence. Such deeds are abominable at any time. In these weeks, they have a special element of outrage and of scandal. They are an affront to the occasion for which we are preparing."

The IRA assassins have already caused the cancellation of Pope John Paul's visit to Northern Ireland. We wonder if they are proud of that.

And while the IRA and the PLO go about their bloody business, still leading respect in some quarters, we have a religious leader in Iran demanding and getting a bloody purge of those opposing his regime. We have all seen the frequent photos of his latest executions, read stories about the kangaroo courts and the harsh punishments, out of line with the offenses.

Idi Amin is not ancient history; the victorious Communists in Indochina push their brothers and sisters into the sea, and only God knows all that goes on behind the Iron and Bamboo curtains — but we have enough historical fact to make sad guesses.

We, however, cannot get self-righteous. Polls in the United States show that a majority favor the use of death as punishment. And our society has promoted abortion on demand as a birth control measure.

Pope Paul VI used to say that peace was not merely the absence of war; that it is a positive force in itself.

Unfortunately with the kind of "peace" we are going through, the absence of war is hardly noticeable.

Whether the disregard for the sanctity of life is spawned by radical political or nationalist causes as is the case in some parts of the world, or a senseless pursuit of self-comfort as is often the reason at home, it must be reversed. The world will not recover its sanity until it is imbued with a respect for life — ALL life.

and Opinions

Not 'Language' Of the People'

Editor:

Perhaps the most significant and far-reaching change in Catholicism to have developed in the years since Vatican II has been the introduction of vernacular into our worship. But Father Hohman's rationale for this change (C-J, 8-29) is far too simplistic and based on a rather flimsy historical perspective. He would have us believe that "Latin was the language of the people for centuries" and that "Vatican II was simply restoring the rule of using the language of the people."

Latin can be described as the "language of the people" for only an insignificant part of the millenium and a half during which time it served as the liturgical language of the western Church. At best, it was the language of the educated class for centuries, but not the language of the people.

Equally important to the argument is the fact that it is wrong to equate the Latin of conversation with the Latin of worship. Conversational or colloquial Latin was never used in the Roman liturgy, and no Roman ever spoke in the style of the Canon Missae. The same principle can be seen in the Byzantine liturgies of the Slavs. The Old Slavonic of their liturgies and scriptures was a hieratic language, not one ever used by the people in their conversation. It was a language understood by the people only insofar as they were able to comprehend the concepts.

Therefore, contemporary vernacular worship must be viewed as a significant new initiative for the Roman Church, not simply as a restoration of some long neglected ancient tradition. Father Hohman can look back in Catholic history for a "rule" of worshipping in the language only if he is willing to narrowly define

"people" or to accept as normative that which was really an exception. He might not even be able to find his "rule" at the time of Christ and the Apostles. The distinguished theologian and liturgist, Louis Bouyer, has pointed out that Our Lord worshipped in a language at least as dead in his time as Latin is in ours. Hebrew had ceased to be spoken by the people five or six centuries before Jesus was born. Even the Reformation did not introduce what was truly the "language of the people." The language of Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer and of the Authorized Bible was hardly the spoken language of Elizabethan England. If vernacular worship is for today's Church, today's people, it does not need to be supported by a weak historical argument.

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Fr. Greeley Re-Visited

Editor:

Father Ehmann in his letter of Aug. 23 takes exception to what he refers to as "my total condemnation of the Father Greeley column." My letter of the 15th was directed principally to the statement of Father Greeley that service to the priesthood (should) be limited to five years. This is one of the most irresponsible opinions I have ever read. The essential concept of the priesthood is that it is an "eternal priesthood." Even when priests are returned to the lay state, they still remain validly ordained priests. I cannot agree with Father Ehmann that Father Greeley is merely pioneering in theological thought. Catholic readers have a right to presume that the opinions expressed by their columnists are orthodox and trustworthy. If not trustworthy, a columnist's opinions are not worth the paper they are written on.

With the political season upon us, the Courier-Journal reminds Opinion Page contributors that we do not publish letters of endorsement of candidates.

Another letter, Mr. Richard Agnello requests that answers be given to the following questions: 1. Does Father Greeley have a right to an opinion? Answer: Yes. But a Catholic paper should not subscribe to a service which frequently and consistently is untrustworthy. 2. Would my letter have been published if I were not a priest? Answer: I called the editor and the answer is "Yes." 3. Father Greeley's opinions are unacceptable because they are unorthodox. I would propose orthodox opinions.

There were a large number of personal replies to my letter on Father Greeley. Without exception they endorsed my views. From a person in Albany, "Your letter in the Courier-Journal regarding Father Greeley is as welcome as a sunny day ..."; from a nun in Buffalo, "I laud you for your letter in the Rochester Catholic Courier's latest issue ... Father Greeley ... needs someone to take him to task ..."; from a lady in Elmira, "Our Lady must smile down on you for your courageous sweeping out of Father Greeley; it reminds me of Christ in the outer temple..."; from Ithaca, "... the letter brought tears to my eyes ..."

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Eucharist Recipe

Editor:

A very important letter concerning the use of unapproved recipes for Eucharistic bread was recently (June 4) sent to Archbishop Quinn of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops by Cardinal Franjo Seper, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the approval of Pope John Paul II.

Various parishes in our diocese have been experimenting with different recipes, but neither the local Roman Catholic or secular press have mentioned this letter.

The letter said, in effect, that the experimentation of the past several years must be stopped immediately. Eucharistic bread must be made only with wheat flour and water and "must be unleavened according to the tradition of the Latin Church." (From the introduction to the new Roman Missal). Therefore, Cardinal Seper stated, "Where there is question of slight additions (e.g. salt, condiments) the matter will be valid but illicit; where there is question of substitution of all or a large quantity of water by other liquids (e.g. milk, eggs, honey, etc.) the matter will be invalid."

Furthermore, any Masses which have been "offered for intentions promised by stipend" with the invalid bread must be celebrated again with the traditional bread made of wheat flour and water.

Archbishop Quinn was instructed to make the contents of this letter available to all the U.S. bishops. Each must assess how widespread the abuse has become in his diocese and must "ensure careful observance of the traditional theological interpretation about making of Eucharistic bread, so that the faithful can be assured that every Eucharist is celebrated with matter that is both valid and licit."

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Aquinas Booster

Editor:

It was with a bittersweet feeling that I read Father Cuddy's column Aug. 29.

It's too bad that he had to

defend Aquinas but he did an admirable job.

I hope that my fellow alumni not sit on their hands (or tongues) and allow anyone any opportunity to smear one of the greatest high schools in the country.

We alumni owe too much to too many to allow that.

God bless Aquinas!

James P. Donovan
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"ALL I'M SAYING, ARNIE, IS MAYBE YOU SHOULD FIND A HOBBY MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE VOW OF POVERTY."

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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Vol. 96 No. 20 September 12, 1979

Courier-Journal (USPS 135-580)
Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 25¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$10. Canada and Foreign \$15.00. Offices: Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604, (716) 454-7050. Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal